Tai Chi Ball Qigong
FOR HEALTH AND MARTIAL ARTS

Tai Chi Ball Qigong training is an important component of proper Tai Chi Chuan practice. For martial artists, Tai Chi Ball Qigong training can strengthen the torso, condition the muscles, and increase physical power by using the mind to lead the qi. It can be a major training tool to enhance pushing hands ability.

For general exercise, Tai Chi Ball Qigong training helps those who might overly focus on ‘core body exercises’ to strengthen their hips, knees, and ankles. You will improve movement of the spine, increase energy through various breathing techniques, and learn to move many joints properly at different angles. This book includes:

- History of Tai Chi Ball
- Theory of Tai Chi Ball Qigong
- Tai Chi Ball warm-ups
- Tai Chi Ball fundamentals
- Tai Chi Ball breathing
- Tai Chi Ball exercises
- Tai Chi Ball partner exercises
- Tai Chi Ball advanced practice

Cover design by Aimee Brosn
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Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming, Ph.D., is a world-renowned author, scholar, and teacher of Chinese martial arts. He is a leading authority on Tai Chi Chuan and Qigong. He has been involved in Chinese martial arts since 1961, has established over 55 schools in 18 countries, and authored more than 35 books and 80 instructional videos. Dr. Yang teaches and offers ongoing seminars at his schools and his California Retreat Center near Arcata, Northern California.

“Kung Fu Artist of the Year.” – Black Belt magazine, 2003
“Man of the Year.” – Inside Kung Fu magazine, 2007

David Grantham is a student of Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming and certified instructor. Involved in martial arts since 1989, he is an airline pilot for Continental Airlines and teaches at the Hunterdon Health and Wellness Center in Clinton, New Jersey. David Grantham resides in Hunterdon County, New Jersey.
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## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Editorial Notes</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contents</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>xv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How To Use This Book (如何使用這本書)</td>
<td>xxi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>xxiii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Chapter 1: General Qigong Theory

1.1 Introduction (介紹)  
1.2 What is Qi and What is Qigong? (何謂氣？何謂氣功？)  
1.3 Categories of Qigong (氣功之分類)  
1.4 Theory of Yin and Yang, Kan and Li (陰陽坎離之理論)  
1.5 Qigong and Health (氣功與健康)  
1.6 Qigong and Longevity (氣功與長壽)  

### Chapter 2: Qigong Training Theory and Procedures

2.1 Introduction (介紹)  
2.2 Five Regulatings (五調)  

### Chapter 3: General Introduction to Taiji Ball Qigong

3.1 Introduction (介紹)  
3.2 History of Taiji Ball Qigong (太極球氣功之歷史)  
3.3 Taiji Ball Qigong and Health (太極球氣功與健康)  
3.4 Taiji Ball Qigong and Martial Arts (太極球氣功與武術)  

### Chapter 4: Theory of Taiji Ball Qigong

4.1 Introduction (介紹)  
4.2 What is Taiji in Taiji Ball Qigong? (太極球氣功之太極)  
4.3 Theory of Physical Conditioning (強身之原理)  
4.4 Theory of Inner Qi's Cultivation (內氣培養之理論)  
4.5 Martial Grand Qi Circulation (武學大周天)  
4.6 Other Benefits (其他益處)  
4.7 Conclusions (結論)  

Foreword 陰陽太極球氣功序
by Kao, Tao  高濤

When you ponder the name and meaning of Taiji Ball, it can be understood that it is one of many assistant training tools of Taijiquan. Taiji Ball was once popular, but now it is almost lost. This book by Jwing-Ming and his longterm student David Grantham should preserve the art for the next generations. I have practiced Yang style Taijiquan more than 40 years. When I was 12 years old, I began learning from Master Yue, Huan-Zhi (樂奐之) from Henan (河南). My mother reminded me repeatedly that when I practiced the art, I should only focus on the forms and should not train the skills of the fighting techniques. The reason for this was because my grandfather, Kao, Zhong-Wei (高重威), was killed in a fight at the age of 36. Because of his high Gongfu skills, he had an escort company. One time, he offended a martial artist and was plotted against, and lost his life.

My student, Jwing-Ming, learned Taijiquan from me while he was studying in high school at Xinzhu (新竹) city in 1963. At the same time, he was also practicing southern southern-style White Crane from Master Cheng, Gin-Gsao (曾金灶). Later, he studied northern style Long Fist (長拳) from Master, Li, Mao-Ching (李茂清) of Qingdao, Shandong Province (山東, 青島). I saw that he was so in love with learning Chinese martial arts. Since then, he spent a few decades studying various weapons such as saber, spear, staff, and various qin na techniques. Presently, he has opened many schools around the world named “Yang’s Martial Arts Association (YMAA).” I am happy to see that he has created more than 50 of his schools spreading around the world to preserve the traditional arts.
本人親臨其設在加州北部地區之 Miranda 山莊的楊氏武藝協會加州特訓中心。見有七位洋弟子，每天練拳完畢，已是滿頭大汗，仍不得休息。立即各持一木球，放置手掌，然後上下、左右、前後邁步運轉。據俊敏謂太極係一圓形體，將球在兩掌心間翻滾運轉。此時全神灌注，拋除雜念，形成裡應外合，內靜意專。猶如太極隨個人之意念在上肢翻騰變化。此時無聲勝有聲，氣場充滿身，必可達到相當的境界。

I personally came to the YMAA CA Retreat Center, located in Miranda, northern California. I saw six of Jwing-Ming's disciples, who after finishing fist training were covered in sweat. Instead of stopping to rest, they immediately picked up a wooden ball between their palms to train Tai Chi Ball. They manipulated the ball with up-down, left-right, and forward-back stepping. Taiji has a shape of roundness, and when the ball is between the palms, one is able to rotate and circle it. At this time, the entire mind and spirit are concentrated and all random thoughts leave the mind. The external and internal bodies harmonize and the mind is calm. The Taiji follows the concentration and manifests through the upper limbs with tumultuous changes. At this time, soundless is more precious than soundness. The Qi field has reached its abundant level around the entire body.

吾本人習拳，祇求健身防身。雖無功夫可言，但數十年未曾一病。應拜習拳之賜益也。今年已實足七十九歲，仍在淡水社區指導鄰居拳術及養生法。

I practice martial arts only to strengthen my body and also for self-defense. Though my Gong Fu is so little it is not worth mentioning, I have never gotten sick in the last few decades. All of these benefits are gained from practicing Taiji and Qigong. Now, I have passed 79 years of age, and I am still teaching my neighbors Taiji and also the techniques of nourishing Qigong for longevity.

俊敏父子之兩大武術館在美國東西兩地，除一名華人外，餘皆為洋人。由於教規嚴格，洋弟子們執師禮甚恭。一次偷懶，受罰。三次犯錯，立刻開除。反觀我國青年學子喜習西洋歌舞，樂器或通宵達旦上網及電玩。難怪國有之拳術、書法等國粹漸趨式微。俊敏在八年前傾其全部資蓄在美加州北部，購得此二百四十畝土地，建造首座傳統武館，其發揚我國國粹之心血與毅力，值得讚揚。

Jwing-Ming and his son Nicholas have established prominent martial headquarters schools on both coasts of the United States. Except for one Chinese student, all of the disciples at the Retreat Center are Westerners from the U.S., as well from as Chile and Switzerland. Because of his strict teaching manners, all of Jwing-Ming's students are very polite and respect their teacher humbly. If one is lazy, the first time he will be punished. If one makes the same mistakes three times, he will be expelled from school.
When I look at youngsters in China today, they like to imitate Western culture with pop music, fashion, the Internet, and playing computer games for hours into the night without sleeping. No wonder our country’s quintessence, such as traditional martial arts, calligraphy, and painting, has declined. Jwing-Ming has spent all of his life savings to purchase 240 acres of mountain land in northern California and build this first traditional training center. His hard work and perseverance in preserving and propagating our country’s quintessence is worth great praise.

Humble Teacher
Kao, Tao
May 7, 2010

愚師
高濤 謹撰
二零一零，五月七日
Foreword
by Pat Rice

As we who inhabit the world of qigong and taijiquan strive to improve our understanding and to find methods for training that are both achievable and effective, we welcome another volume by Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming. We find inestimably excellent guidance in Dr. Yang’s works. All of his productions, whether in the format of books, videos, or workshops and seminars, are the ultimate in information and practicality and are examples of excellence. He has a very able collaborator in David Grantham, co-author of this book. In each succeeding book by Dr. Yang, we get an update on his understanding and interpretation of the theories that provide the substructure for experience. This current work on taiji ball qigong exemplifies his growing mastery in these areas. As he achieves more clarity for himself and finds deeper correlations within systems, we are the beneficiaries of his advancements. He continually researches the volumes of historical documents and steadily conducts intense personal experimentation in the actual physical training. With the same attentiveness, he is a keen observer of others: long-term and one-time students, learners with varied abilities, colleagues and associates at all levels of experience, and his own teachers and mentors. He applies scientific principles to the human energy field, combines this information with wisdom gathered from ancient sources and his own investigations and introspections, and then explains it all in language that facilitates our own endeavors.

His style of explication makes the information accessible; the personal touch of directly addressing the reader—“you”—reassures us that we can comprehend the complexities, that we can perform these exercises, and we can achieve the desired benefits. He has respect for us, his readers, but makes no assumptions about our level of expertise, and he speaks to us neither over our heads nor beneath our dignity. He and David Grantham explain as clearly as possible in the medium of paper and print what we are supposed to do and feel, and why.

They introduce the material with a solid foundation of theory and principles. In particular, they summarize and condense previous discussions in foregoing works, organizing the information clearly and concisely, and finally set it all into place as the basis for the training methods in Taiji Ball Qigong.

Play with a ball has been a component of most human cultures. Such activities serve many purposes, among them recreation, entertainment, physical cultivation, organized sport, and martial training. In Taiji Ball Qigong, we are introduced to purposes beyond the ordinary: not only the development of good health, but also the potential for longevity, spiritual growth, and even enlightenment. Granted, similar outcomes may possibly be derived from common uses, but in training with the taiji ball, these are specifically stated as purposes. In a unique combination of ball handling and qigong theory, patterns of physical movement are interwoven with esoteric aspects of internal energy. With these as foundation and as actualization, a portal is opened into a vast domain of possible rewards.

As director of a Taste of China, an organization that since 1983 has promoted

XIII
Chinese martial arts and health arts and has sponsored international seminars, as well as national and international tournaments, I have been pleased to include Dr. Yang as one of the most popular presenters. His depth of knowledge and his superb teaching style make him among the most valuable members of this community since its inception and of others nationally and internationally. Dr. Yang has consistently been very well received as he presented information on a variety of topics associated with Chinese health practices in general, and on taijiquan and qigong specifically. He introduced us to taiji ball qigong in 2002 over a weekend workshop, and we had a glimpse of the benefits and pleasures to be gained from this exercise. He not only taught the theoretical foundation and the core training exercises and led us through many of the drills; he also described the qualities to be developed and the correlations to internal qi development.

Dr. Yang is able to convey ideas not only in a classroom and from an active video, but also with his co-author, in this book. Here they teach effectively through the medium of written words and graphics. Always a master teacher, he is true to the ideals of the past and its histories and legends, hoping to maintain the standards exemplified by famous martial artists and desiring great achievements for every student; at the same time he accepts the realities of us as individuals, with our limitations and personal variables. In all instances, he has a manifest desire to be helpful, to provide true and usable information. He assists us in our struggle to learn, supports us in our desire to do well, encourages us as we make small gains, and befriends us in our hopes for reaching lofty goals. All these generosities we encounter when we are fortunate enough to have interactions with him, but we also find his great spirit shining from these pages.

The ancient saying that “words are helpful at first, only doing leads to understanding” perfectly describes the ideal approach to these exercises. I hope this book and these authors inspire you to learn the theory and to practice the movements and that you will ultimately realize the benefits that can accrue from taiji ball qigong.

Pat Rice
Director, A Taste of China
Winchester, Virginia
January 2010
Preface

by Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming (楊俊敏博士)

Qigong study and practice have become very popular since being introduced into Western society in the 1970s. However, many challenges still remain:

1. Many people are still skeptical about the science of qigong and only a few books explain qigong scientifically, bringing scientific theory and ancient experience together.

2. Few scholars and scientific researchers are pursuing and verifying this qigong science. Qigong is new to Western society, and few convincing scientific results are reported in scholarly studies and papers.

3. Many people are still in traditional and religious bondage, preventing them from opening their minds to another spiritual culture. Qigong is a science of inner feeling and spiritual cultivation. If you cannot jump out of your traditional matrix, you cannot accept this science, which has been studied by Chinese and Indian societies for more than four thousand years.

4. Few qualified qigong practitioners can read, understand, and accurately translate the abundant ancient qigong documents into Western languages. I estimate that less than one percent of the ancient documents have been translated into Western languages. Most have been hidden in Buddhist and Daoist monasteries, and have only been revealed in recent decades.

5. Many qigong practitioners have used qigong as a tool to abuse and mislead their followers. This has led people into superstitious belief and blind worship, making scientific scholars doubt the truth of qigong practice.

Chinese qigong derives from more than four thousand years of experience in healing and prevention of disease, and in spiritual cultivation. Four major schools have emerged: medical, scholar, religious, and martial. Qigong is one major essence of Chinese culture that cannot be separated from its people.

Western science has developed from its focus on the material world. That which can only be felt is considered unscientific. Inner feeling and development are ignored. To Chinese, feeling is a language that allows mind and body to communicate, extending beyond the body to communicate with nature (heaven and earth) or Dao (道). This feeling has been studied and has become the core of Chinese culture. It is especially cultivated in Buddhist and Daoist society, where the final goal is to attain spiritual enlightenment, or Buddhahood. Through more than two thousand years of study and practice, this cultivation has reached such a high level that it cannot yet be interpreted by material science. I believe it will take some time to break through this barrier and for Western scientists to accept this concept.

From my more than 42 years of qigong practice and from studying many ancient documents, I am at last confident that I have derived and understood the map of this qigong science. I believe that as long as a “Dao searcher” (Xun Dao Zhe, 尋道者) is
willing to study this map, even without guidance from a qualified master, he should still be able to stay on the correct path of study.

*                *                *

Dr. Yang has interpreted this map in several books:
7. *Qigong Massage—General Massage*, YMAA Publication Center, 1992, 2005
10. *Qigong Meditation–Embryonic Breathing*, YMAA Publication Center, 2004

When I was in high school in the early 1960s, taiji ball qigong practice was often seen in the early mornings in many parks in Taiwan, especially in Taipei. However, when the Taiwan society adopted a more Western style, this kind of practice gradually disappeared. Today, it is very rare to find anyone practicing openly. Due to this reason, it is even more difficult to find a qualified teacher who really knows the theory, principle, and the correct way of taiji ball qigong practice.

When I was studying physics in Taiwan University between 1968–1971, I often went to Taipei Park to learn and practice with those martial artists who were willing to share their knowledge with the public openly. I found an old man, Mr. Zhao (趙) who was teaching and practicing taiji ball qigong in the park. After obtaining his approval, I joined the practice for nearly eight months. When I was accepted to teach physics in Tamkang College (淡水鎮), which was located at Tamsui town (淡水鎮), I had to stop my practice. Since then, I had not had any chance to practice again until I came to United States in 1974.

From Mr. Zhao, I learned about 24 basic training patterns. After nearly twenty years of teaching and practicing taiji ball qigong in the United States and other countries, I developed these 24 patterns further into 48 patterns. I believe I have made this training program more complete. From these 48 basic patterns, countless combinations of practice have become possible.

I mentioned taiji ball qigong training in my books, *Advanced Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan, Vol. 1 and 2*, in 1986, which has brought wide attention to this practice. The
results were the 2004 Taiji Ball Qigong videotape and DVD production by YMAA Publication Center. Since 2003, more and more of taiji ball qigong practices have been revealed to the public by different styles, thus offering many possibilities for discovery and discussion. I hope the readers of this book will keep their minds open and continue to absorb more knowledge from other sources.

Taiji ball qigong practice can benefit your martial capability, and also condition your physical and mental bodies to a higher tuned state. From understanding the theory, I personally believe that taiji ball qigong most likely effectively prevents or heals both breast and prostate cancer.

In this book, Mr. Grantham and I have summarized these 48 basic patterns and some applications. We hope this book is able to offer you some foundation and guidelines of taiji ball qigong theory and practice.

Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming
Preface
by David W. Grantham

On occasion, I have had people ask me about taiji ball qigong. As I explained what it is to them, I began to realize that taiji ball qigong actually surrounds us everywhere in today’s society. Although the theory may not be as deep, you see taiji ball theories applied in basketball, soccer, hackey sacks, medicine balls, and even in the rubber exercise balls used today in aerobics classes. Each and every one utilizes the concentration of the mind and the physical training of the body to reach higher levels of skill.

In this book Master Yang, Jwing-Ming and I hope to expose you to the theories and exercises of taiji ball qigong. The book begins with a brief explanation of qi and qigong in Chapter 1. Chapter 2 follows up on this theory with the five regulations common to qigong practice. We then explore the history of taiji ball qigong as well as its relationship to health and martial arts in Chapter 3. This is followed with the theories of qigong applied to taiji ball training both internally and externally in Chapters 4 and 5. Finally, in Chapter 6, we show you applications of these exercises in solo and partner practices. With this knowledge, you will be able to increase the flow of qi and strengthen your body.

Taiji ball qigong is a vital tool for health and martial arts training. It is our hope that this book will assist in reintroducing it into our society.

David W. Grantham
How To Use This Book (如何使用這本書)

This book is to be used in conjunction with the Taiji Ball Qigong DVD series by Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming. While the DVD can provide you with the continuous actions, this book is able to offer you a clear explanation of the theory and movements. With both DVD and book, you will be able to reach a high level of practice without an instructor. However, if you have the chance, you should attend seminars. Often, seminars can lead you to the deep and profound feeling needed, which cannot be attained with the DVD and book alone.

During the course of practice, you should always ask yourself questions, such as “What is the purpose of the exercise?” “Why am I practicing it this way?” “What are my goals for this training?” and “What is the theory behind it?” Only with this kind of attitude can you remain humble and continue learning and pondering.

Upon reaching a high level in both action and understanding, you should keep the mind open and continue to absorb taiji ball theories and practices from other sources. In this case, you will obtain different views of the taiji ball practice; see it from various angles.

Finally, taiji ball qigong is an art, which can bring you great health benefits and improved martial arts capabilities. Since it is an art, it leaves room for creativity. The deeper, creative arts originate from profound feeling and understanding. Therefore, once having reached a grave level of feeling and understanding, you should be capable of creating different patterns or even comprehending new theory. This allows for further development of the already existing arts to a more precocious level. Only then can the arts survive, through preservation and development.
CHAPTER 5

Taiji Ball Qigong Training
(太極球氣功之練習)

5.1 Introduction (介紹)

Taiji ball qigong is a mixture of internal gong (nei gong, 外功) and external gong (wai gong, 外功). The internal gong includes the development of the feeling between the physical body and qi and also learning how to use the mind to lead the qi efficiently. Feeling is a language that allows your mind and body to communicate. If you are able to develop a high level of sensitivity, your alertness and awareness will be higher than others. Naturally, your mind will also be able to sense the problem of physical body’s tightness and qi’s stagnation. This implies the mind will be able to manipulate the qi’s circulation effectively. From this, you can see that your mind is the key of the entire practice. In qigong practice, the mind is just like a general who is in charge of the strategies and actions. It is also through this mind and sensitive feeling that your mind is able to regulate the body (i.e., battlefield), the breathing (i.e., strategy), and lead the qi (i.e., soldiers) effectively and efficiently.

Once you have all of these important internal elements, you can then manifest them into external actions. When the action is manifested, it is the coordination and harmonization of the external (wai gong) and internal (nei gong). Effective manifestation requires coordinating and harmonizing the external (wai gong) and internal (nei gong) into an action.

In this chapter, we will first introduce the basic taiji ball qigong training. The contents and procedures training will be reviewed in next section. Section 5.3 will discuss warm-up procedures used to begin the training while section 5.4 will discuss the internal training of taiji ball qigong. Finally, we will introduce the external side of training in Sections 5.5 and 5.6.

5.2 Taiji Ball Qigong Training Contents and Procedures (太極球氣功練習之內含與程序)

Before you begin practicing taiji ball qigong, you should have some clear ideas about the practice, for example, how to choose a good taiji ball, what are the contents of taiji ball qigong, and what are the correct practicing procedures. In this section, we will summarize important points related to these subjects.
5.2.1 Choosing the Balls

Material. The material used for making the ball should be natural. The best material for the ball is either wood or jade. A plastic bowling ball should not be used because it is too heavy for any beginner and not qi conductive. Also, a basketball is not a good choice because it is made from rubber. Basically, wooden balls are lighter and the qi led by the mind can penetrate through more easily. Wooden balls are commonly used by internal martial artists who consider qi development to be more important than that of physical strength (Figure 5-1). However, to external martial artists, the physical conditioning is considered more important than qi development. Therefore, the balls made by rock are often used (Figure 5-2). Actually, the best material for physical conditioning is jade due to its copper content. Unfortunately, jade is too expensive for most martial arts practitioners. Naturally, if a rock taiji ball is used, though a practitioner is able to build up a strong physical body, the development of qi will be difficult because it is more difficult for qi to penetrate through a ball made from rock. In addition, due to the resulting physical tension, it is more difficult to circulate or lead qi.
For a beginner, a wooden ball made with a single solid piece of wood is highly recommended. The material can be redwood or oak. Those balls constructed by gluing a couple pieces together are not as good as those made from a single piece since the glue will create a barrier for qi’s circulation. Though a taiji ball made from a single piece of wood is more expensive, it is worth it because you can use for your entire life.
Sizes. The sizes of balls are varied. They can be the same size as a ping-pong ball (Figure 5-3). These kinds of taiji balls are commonly used in Chinese medical society to improve the qi’s circulation in the hands, especially for healing arthritis in the hand. Normally, two balls are used at the same time. Through circling and rolling the balls, the qi at hands can be developed and then circulated (Figure 5-4).

The biggest ball ever documented is approximately one meter in diameter. The ball is very heavy and hanging from the ceiling. This kind of large ball is very rarely seen today. It was used in Wudang Mountain (武當山).
For a beginner, we highly recommend a wooden ball, 10-12 inches in diameter with the weight of 4-8 pounds. There are some wooden balls that are hollow at the center available in the market. They are very light and suitable for beginners to use to learn the pattern, but for long-term goals of the training, they are not as good as a solid wooden ball.

5.2.2 Training Rules

Light to heavy. The first rule is to prevent injury. Injuries are commonly caused by training with balls that are too heavy and by practicing with them too long.

Few to many. When you practice the routine patterns, begin with only a few repetitions. Only if you feel comfortable the next day should you increase the number of repetitions. You must proceed gradually since your body cannot be conditioned in one day. You must proceed slowly and gradually so the body can be conditioned gradually and safely.

Simple to difficult. You should begin with the simple patterns. Generally speaking, the simple routine patterns are the ones that can condition the body most effectively. Only when the physical foundation is established and feeling of control has been increased should you try more difficult challenges.

Mind-qi-body coordination and harmonization. If you wish to train both internal gong and external gong in taiji ball qigong, you must learn how to establish a fluent and smooth communication between your mind, qi, and body. Without this coordination, the effectiveness of the training will be shallow. You must practice until you reach the stage of “regulating of no regulating” (wu tian er tiao, 無調而調). Only then can your mind, qi, and body be in harmony.
5.2.3 Three Steps of Practice

5.2.3.1 Internal–Conditioning Qi Body (Without the Ball)

In this first step of practice, there is no physical ball. Place your hands, palms facing each other, about 10 inches apart. You may immediately feel a qi ball being constructed between the palms (Figure 5-5). This round qi field is established from the center of the palms, laogong cavity (P-8, 劳宮), and fingers. If you cannot feel this qi ball, do not worry. Your feeling will become more sensitive as you train. You might like to try this experiment: ask a partner to form the qi ball between his/her palms. Then, move your hand down at the center from top to the bottom (Figures 5-6 and 5-7). Most people can feel the qi established between the palms this way.

The purposes of this no-ball practice for a beginner are

• to establish a communication between the mind and the qi. If you have a physical ball, your arms will tense and the qi will be stagnant. In this case, it will be harder for any beginner to feel the qi.

• to become familiar with the training routines or patterns. Without a physical ball, the practice can last longer and this allows you to learn and familiarize yourself with the patterns.

The most important part of taiji ball qigong practice is the conditioning of the torso. If you have a heavy ball in your hands, your torso will tense and this will prevent you from moving your vertebra from section to section.

When you have a physical ball in your hands, you will pay more attention to the ball and the moving patterns of the arms instead of the torso and chest. Without the correct spine and chest movements, all taiji ball qigong conditioning will stay at the surface level.
5.2.3.2 External–Conditioning Physical Body (With Ball)

Once you have established the feeling of correct spine and chest movements, the mind, qi and body communication, as well as familiarization of the routines, then you can step into the practice with a ball in your hands. As mentioned earlier, you should begin with a light ball, and then gradually increase the weight of the ball. You want to condition from as deep as to the bone marrow, bones, and ligaments to as shallow as the tendons, muscles, and skin. In order to keep qi in good circulation, the physical body cannot be too tense. If you proceed gradually and slowly, you will see the progress of your physical body in a few months. The most beneficial product of this practice is a strengthening of your immune system. This is due to the expansion of the guardian
qi (wei qi, 衛氣) generated from practice. Another amazing benefit of this practice is the improvement of the bone density. Remember, our bones are constructed of piezoelectric material. That means if there is pressure applied to the bone, there is electricity circulating in the bone. Through this circulation, the bones can be conditioned.

5.2.3.3 Unification of Internal and External (Without Ball)
After you have conditioned your physical body and qi body, you will enter the third stage of the taiji ball qigong practice. In this stage, there is no ball necessary. Both the qi body and physical body have been conditioned. Now you need to learn how to lead the qi to the bone marrow to nourish the marrow and establish stronger marrow qi (sui qi, 髓氣). Marrow is the factory of blood production. When the marrow is healthy, the immune system will be enhanced and the body’s qi and nutrients will be transported efficiently and smoothly. This is also the basis of the secret of longevity as understood in Chinese Marrow Washing Qigong practice. The most amazing part of this stage of practice is when you relax the muscles and tendons, you can reach a very high level of qi circulation.

In addition, you are learning how to lead the qi to the muscles and to the skin to enhance the guardian qi (wei qi, 衛氣). Through this enhancement, the immune system can again be boosted to an even higher level. However, to a martial artist, the main purpose of this training is not just for the immune system; it is also for jin (勁) (martial power) manifestation. If the qi can be led efficiently and effectively by the mind to the muscles and tendons required for a fight, the power manifested can be very high, which allows you to optimally manipulate your abilities.

5.2.4 Training Theory
5.2.4.1 Internal Gong (Nei Gong, 內功)
Internal gong includes five training elements: regulating the body, breathing, mind, qi, and spirit. We will discuss these five individually.

Regulating the Body (Tiao Shen, 調身). You are not just learning the moving patterns. The moving patterns are external. The internal communication that allows the body to relax to its profound state is internal. Without this deep relaxation, the qi cannot reach deep to the bone marrow or to the surface to enhance the guardian qi.

Regulating the Breathing (Tiao Xi, 調息). After you have regulated the body to its profound level, then begin to coordinate the breathing. Breathing is considered a strategy in qigong practice. With correct breathing techniques, the qi can be led by the mind efficiently.

Regulating the Mind (Tiao Xin, 調心). After you have regulated your body and breathing to their harmonious state, train to bring your mind to a high state of concentration, alertness, and awareness. In qigong practice, the mind can be compared to a general. When a general has a clear mind, rational judgment, and quick and precise response to the situation, the strategy will be effective and the soldiers (qi) can be controlled efficiently.
Regulating the Qi (Tiao Qi, 調氣). Once you have regulated your body, breathing, and mind, qi will be led effectively. Then you must train to increase the quantity of qi through correct abdominal methods.

Regulating the Spirit (Tiao Shen, 調神). Spirit is like the morale of the army. When the spirit is raised, the fighting units can be powerful and effective in carrying out their orders.

5.2.4.2 External Gong (Wai Gong, 外功)

Solo Practice

Without Object. There are 48 basic patterns of taiji ball qigong. These patterns can be divided into two main categories, vertical and horizontal. The vertical category is again divided into forward and backward. The horizontal category is further divided into clockwise and counterclockwise. This results in four major subgroups. Each subgroup includes four possible actions: stationary, rocking, stepping, and bagua stepping.

With Object. On the table: During the period of training with the 48 basic patterns, you may also practice with the ball on a table. Because the table supports the weight of the ball, it does not completely focus on the conditioning of the torso or joints. This training emphasizes increasing the sensitivity of hands.

On a book or a plate: Rotate and roll the ball along a plate edge. This exercise will develop the feeling of finding and maintaining contact with the center of another object. This will help you to develop the feeling of attachment to your opponent’s physical center. This is a crucial key of destroying an opponent’s balance in taiji pushing hands practice.

Against a wall: This is another example of a practice method. Roll the ball up and down a wall. Because the ball is heavy, you must know how to adhere to the ball with adequate power. If there is too much force applied to the ball, the ball cannot be moved smoothly and easily. Too little force and the ball will fall. You can also practice rolling the ball horizontally along the wall and in circles.

Against a point: The big challenge of this practice is to rotate the ball on a tiny tip.

With a Partner

Double hands. In order to improve your feeling of opponent, you should practice with a partner. When the opponent’s force is coming strong, you should not resist. Instead, you should lead it and neutralize it so you can create an advantageous situation for your counterattack. Listening and following is the key of this neutralizing practice.

Single hand. After you have practiced with two hands with a partner, then you may practice with a single hand. That means you and your opponent each touch the ball with one hand. Both of you must employ a high level of listening and following skills; otherwise, the ball will fall.

Seizing the ball: The final stage in taiji ball qigong training is to seize the ball from your partner. You may use circling, rotating, and wrap-coiling techniques to take the ball away from opponent. You should not use force. Naturally, it is not easy to reach the profound level of this practice.
Taiji Ball Qigong Yin-Yang Training—Single

* Yin/Yang is viewed from that of a righthanded person.
Yin Rotating (Yin Zhuan, 隱轉)

I. Stationary (Ding Bu, 定步)

Next, practice the yin vertical rotation. This exercise is the same as the previous one with the exception that the movement is in the reverse direction. The rotation section of this pattern is now done by twisting the waist and moving the hands backward while over the top of the ball and forward while moving under the ball.

Position yourself in ma bu with the taiji ball in front of your dan tian. Breathe deeply while leading the qi into your dan tian. To begin the yin pattern, slowly twist the waist back and forth in small increments while allowing the body to initiate the movement of the ball up and away from the body on its circular path (Figure 5-147).

The breathing method and chest movement follow the same principles of the yin circular pattern. Inhale with the chest closing when the ball is traveling toward the body. Then exhale with the chest opening as the ball travels away from the body (Diagram 6). Continue to increase the size of this pattern until you have reached your maximum range of motion; then complete 12 repetitions of the yin vertical rotations.
Next, move the ball diagonally from one shoulder to the opposite hip while rotating the ball (Figure 5-148).

Finally, twist your waist both to the left and right while in ma bu and complete 12 repetitions of vertical rotations in the yin direction (Figure 5-149). You may also include a diagonal motion for each side as well. Once you have completed this, return to the center and decrease the size of the pattern to your original starting point for closure.

2. Rocking (Qian Hou Dong, 前後動)

The next exercise is the vertical rotation in a yin direction while you are rocking. To start this exercise, step into si liu bu with your taiji ball in front of your dan tian. Using small slow movements, twist your waist back and forth to initiate the rotation of your ball. Push off your forward foot to rock aft while the ball ascends and is then drawn down toward your body on its circular path. You should be inhaling and your chest should be closing (Figures 5-150 and 5-151).

Pushing off your aft foot to rock forward, begin your exhaling and open the chest allowing the ball to follow through the bottom of the rotational pattern and return to the starting point (Figures 5-152 and 5-153).

Continue to increase the size of the pattern in small increments until you have reached your maximum range of motion; then repeat the patterns for 12 repetitions.

The next step is to move the ball diagonally while rocking, just as you have done while stationary. Repeat this section for an additional 12 repetitions. Finally, return to the center; decrease the size of rotations until you have arrived back at your original starting position, and step back into ma bu. Now step into si liu bu with the opposite foot forward, and repeat each section of the pattern for an additional 12 repetitions.
3. Straight Line Stepping (*Zhi Xian Xing Bu*, 直線行步)

Next, you should practice the yin vertical rotation using both the momentum and balance methods of stepping. Due to the similarity of this exercise to the previous one, we will not go into a detailed description. At this stage, you should be able to step forward and backward very easily while circling and rotating both in a yin and yang direction. Practice this exercise moving forward and backward until you are able to do so smoothly and without interrupting the pattern. This should include the balance method as well.

4. Bagua Stepping (*Bagua Xing Bu*, 八卦行步)

To complete the vertical portion of rotating, the next step is to practice the vertical rotations in a yin direction while bagua stepping. Due to the similarities of this movement to the yang side of bagua stepping, we will not describe this pattern in full detail. Remember that now your forward movement will entail exhaling, chest opening, and the ball traveling through the bottom of its circular rotation (Figure 5-154).

The aft movement will consist of inhaling, chest closing, and the ball traveling over the top of its circular rotation while being drawn toward you (Figure 5-155).

Continue to practice this exercise until you have completed 12 full bagua circles both to the right and left.
The next set of exercises will involve practicing the yin-yang exchange while rotating the ball vertically. These exercises will be described using a stationary position, followed by rocking, straight line stepping, and bagua stepping. Each exchange will begin with a yang vertical rotation. You may choose to begin with the yin pattern if so desired.

I. Stationary (Ding Bu, 定步)

The first exercise is the stationary vertical yin-yang exchange while rotating the ball. Standing in ma bu, begin your normal vertical rotations in a yang direction. Reaching your maximum range of motion, continue with a few rotations until you have reached the top far end of your vertical rotation.

To exchange to a yin pattern, begin to lower the ball and draw it toward the body just as you have done in the circling yin-yang exchange. As you reach the center of this pattern, the next rotation of the ball should move the hands horizontally around the ball instead of over the top, or vertically (Figure 5-156).

This will be the way to change back and forth between yin and yang when executing the vertical rotations. Once the hands reach their opposite sides, you may now change the direction of the pattern to a vertical yin pattern. Allow the ball to continue its path down toward the body and resume the yin side of vertical rotations. Your breathing pattern and chest movement will follow the pattern as described previously in the circling yin-yang exchange.

To switch back to the yang side, perform a few repetitions of the yin rotation. Once the ball has reached the bottom far end of your vertical circular rotation, begin to raise
the ball while drawing it toward the body. As the ball reaches the central wuji point, change the rotation from a vertical one to a horizontal one. As the hands reach their opposite sides, change back to a vertical rotation in the yang direction (Figure 5-157). Continue to raise the ball toward you and resume the yang side of vertical rotations.

Practice exchanging back and forth between yang and yin rotations until you are comfortable executing the exchange smoothly, without interruption. As you become more comfortable with the exchange, you may attempt to exchange back and forth at different positions of the pattern.

2. Rocking (Qian Hou Dong, 前後動)

The next exercise to practice is the yin-yang exchange while rocking and changing the direction you are facing. To exchange while rocking, simply pass the ball through the center of the pattern, allow the hands to move horizontally around the ball, and then continue on with the vertical rotations in the opposite direction.

In order to perform the yin-yang exchanges while changing the direction you are facing, start from si liu bu, and begin to vertically rotate your ball in a yang direction. Increase the size of the pattern until you have reached your maximum range of motion. To execute your exchange, begin from the most forward position of rocking. Push off your forward foot and draw the ball through the center of the pattern toward your dan tian. While your weight is shifting aft, simultaneously turn your forward foot in toward you and twist your waist toward the opposite direction. Reaching the midpoint with the ball in front of your dan tian, you will change the rotation by allowing the hands to rotate the ball horizontally (Figure 5-158).

This will be followed by the vertical yin rotation. Turn the opposite foot out while
Index

abdomen  
  massaging 41
abdominal breathing 83  
  exercises 120
  producing qi 41
abdominal muscles 29, 84, 116
abundant qi 63, 76
adhering jin 227, 239
adhering to the ball 228
aging 14, 22, 27, 28, 60
alertness 93
along the wall horizontal 239
arthritis 14
attaching jin 227
attaching to the ball 231
awakening 52
awareness 93
Ba Duan Jin 10
bagua stepping 139, 172
  horizontal circling 160
  horizontal rotation 194
  vertical-horizontal, yin-yang,  
  circling-rotating mixed training 203
  vertical-horizontal, yin-yang,  
  circling-rotating-wrap-coiling mixed training 225
  vertical-horizontal yin-yang  
  exchange circling 172
  vertical-horizontal, yin-yang  
  exchange rotating 200
  vertical-horizontal, yin-yang  
  exchange wrap-coiling 223
  yang vertical rotation 179
  yang wrap-coiling 210, 219
  yin circling 147
  yin horizontal circling 164
  yin rotation 196
  yin vertical rotation 184
  yin wrap-coiling 213, 221
  yin-yang exchange 153, 188
  yin-yang exchange circling 168
  yin-yang exchange horizon tal  
  rotating 198
  yin-yang exchange wrap-coiling 217
bajhui 78, 87, 89
bajhui breathing 88
balance stepping 138, 200, 210
ball tossing 267
Bao-Xi 66
ba shi 125
bio-battery 34, 43, 45, 79, 82
bioelectricity 2, 15
Bodhidarma 59, 84
body
  excess yang 14
  ligament, muscle, and tendon  
  conditioning 76
  regulating 26, 104
  relaxed 27
  body breathing 29, 34
  body structure 62
  bone 75
  bone density 75, 104
  bone marrow
    qi entry 75
  bow and arrow stance 126
  bows 114
  brain
    control of body 21
    leading qi to 5, 12, 40
    limbic system 37
    lower dan tian 21
    xin and yi 37
  Brain/Marrow Washing Qigong  
  75
  brains
    two in humans 80
    upper and lower 22
  breathing
    adjusting kan and li 17
    coordinating actions 63
    embryonic 32, 43
  four gates 88, 123
  harmonizing body and mind  
  38
  harmonizing the mind 39
  increasing qi 82
  kan and li 15
  kan-li method 27
  laogong 123
  martial grand circulation 124
  methods 29
  normal 29
  normal abdominal 29
  pre-heaven 41
  purpose of regulating 27
  regulating 27, 41, 104
  regulating and 27
  regulating exercises 119
  reverse abdominal 30
  shen and 50
  skin 34
  spiritual 88
  taiji ball 125
  techniques in taiji ball training  
  60
  wuji 121
  yongquan 122
  brick training 266
  Buddhism 52, 85
  observations 52
  qi circulation 40
  religious qigong 11
  bumping 264
  calmness 52, 78
  calm shen 17
  capturing the ball from a partner  
  264
  cavities
    four gates 88
    leading qi to 45
    pointing 12
  cell replacement 27
  central energy 89
INDEX

channels
   qi channels 22
   qigong and 5
Cheng, Bi 59
Cheng, Ling-xi 59
chest
   thrusting and arcing the 118
chest breathing 29
Chinese medical qigong 14
circling
   horizontal 154
   partner practice 245
   yang 130
   yin 141
   yin-yang exchange 147
circling on a point 238
circling pattern 129
circling the waist 116
coiling 69
concealed qi 43
conditioning
   Taijiball qigong 62
taiji ball training 63
Confucius 10
connecting jin 239
conscious mind 52
cultivating qi 11, 42, 43
Da Mo 12, 17, 19, 59, 84, 85
dancing 6
dan tian
   keeping mind in 44
Dao
   achieving true 54
   human qi 4
taiji and 67
Dao De Jing 10, 44, 46, 67
Daoism 10
Daoist breathing 30, 39
Dao-Yin 4
defeated qi 2
deep feeling 94
desires 11, 53
dian mai 12
dian xue 12
ding shen 49
double-hands
   vertical yin-yang circling partner practice 245
dual cultivation 43
dual circulation 43
earth power 1
earth qi 1, 3
Eight Pieces of Brocade 10
eight reservoirs 5
eight stances 125
eight trigrams 66, 67, 139
   kan and li 13
   Yi Jing and 3
eight vessels 5, 9
   qi accumulation 22
electromagnetic energy 2
electromotive force (EMF) 22, 81
elixir
   external 7
   internal 8
   nei dan 8
   wai dan 7
elixir field 5
elixir qi 21
embracing singularity 77
Embryonic Breathing 27, 121
   self-wakening 52
embryonic state 54
emotional bondage 22, 51
emotional mind 14, 15, 37, 87
   regulating 36, 39, 42
   regulating benefits 38
emotional mud 51, 52
emptiness 52
endurance 59
improving 63
energy 1, 71
   as qi 2, 4
   electromagnetic 2
   ha sound 30
   vital 34
energy center 21
energy dispersion 13
energy field 1
energy patterns 69
energy state 2
energy status 40
enlightenment 23
cultivating spiritual 51
observations 52
qi circulation 40
regulating shen 50
religious qigong 11
essence 83
exercises
   breathing 119
   loosening 107
   spinal warm-up 114
   stretching 111
taiji ball training 128
exhalation 15, 28, 30, 92
fire activity 15
external elixir 7
external gong 97, 105
external styles 13, 85
fa jin 267
false lower dan tian 29
Faraday, Michael 54
feeling xv, 7, 25, 54, 61, 94, 97, 102, 103
gong fu of inner vision 44
   of opponent 105
   roundness 58
   self-awareness 51
training 62
feng shui 3, 43
fire 13, 14
fire mind 16
fire qi 14, 40, 48
Five Animal Sports 4, 9
Five Gates Breathing 34
Five Regulatings 25
flying dragon plays with the ball 237
following jin 227, 228
forearms (on the)
   rotating the ball 236
   forward-backward attaching 234
Four Gates Breathing 36, 88, 123

B1996 text layout.indd   290
11/17/10   11:25 AM
four phases 68
four-six stance 127
ghost qi 2
gong 3
gongfu 3
gongfu of inner vision 44
grand cyclic heaven circulation 45
Grand Cyclic Heaven Circulation 45
grand extremity 71
grand qi circulation 36, 61, 86
grand transportation gong 91
grand ultimate 71
gu 49
guan xin 51
guan zhi 51
 guardian qi 28, 104
gu shen 49
hands
holding taiji ball 128
Han, Gong-yue 59
Hao, Tang 60
hard gong 13
hard styles 6
harmonization 15, 62
 body and mind 38
breathing and mind 39
mind and body 27
shen and qi 18, 44
yi and qi 45
yin and yang 21
ha sound 30, 87
health 18
regulating shen 50
heart mind 15
heaven eye 47
heavenly cycle 46
heavenly timing 3
heaven power 1
heaven qi 1
hen sound 30, 87
herbs 82
producing qi 40
holy embryo 43
horizontal circling 154
horizontal rotation 188
horizontal single-hands rotating
the ball with a partner 259
horizontal single-hand wrap-coiling
with a partner 262
horizontal wrap-coiling 217
hormones 19, 21, 41
horse stance 126
huiyin 78, 84, 87, 89
human emotional matrix 54
human energy 20
human power 1
human qi 1, 4
human qigong 6
human suffering 11
imaginary opponent 90
immune system 34, 85, 103
inhalation 15, 28, 30, 92
 water activity 15
inner feeling xv, 25
intention 37
internal elixir 8
internal gong 97, 104
internal gongfu 119
internal martial qigong 13
internal organs
 Taiji Ball Qigong 76
internal qi 12
internal styles 85
jin 90, 227
 storing and emitting 90
 two-person ball tossing 267
jin manifestation 89, 90, 91, 104
jin skills 227, 243
joints 14, 61, 62, 75, 93
 kan 13
 mind and 26
kan-li
 water and fire 13
kong qi 2
Kong Zi 10
laogong 88
laogong breathing 35, 123
Lao Zi 10, 67
leading the qi 45
li 13
lian qi 11
Li, Dao-zi 59
lifestyle
 health and 18
regulating 41
Li, Shi-zhen 5
listening jin 227
Liu, De-kuan 60
logical mind 23
longevity 20, 44, 61
breathing 34
Daoists and 20
key points 20
reaching 21
regulating shen 50
spiritual cultivation and 22
loosening exercises 107
lotus seed
 original shen 52
lower dan tian 9, 60, 64, 82
 brain 21
elixir field 5
storing qi 32
man power 1
marrow 85
Marrow/Brain Washing Classic 59, 85
Marrow/Brain Washing Qigong 82
marrow breathing 32
marrow qi 31, 104
Marshals Yue, Fei 10
Martial Grand Circulation Breathing 124
martial grand qi circulation 86, 87
martial qigong 12
martial styles 12
massage 82
massaging the abdomen 41
material bondage 53
medical qigong 9, 14
medical taiji ball qigong training 57
meditation internal 59
natural energy 43
scholar qigong 11
meditation 60
meditative mind 38
Mencius 10
Meng Zi 10
mental bondage 53
mental health
   mental healthy in side 18
mental relaxation 26
meridians 91
regular 5
strange 5
metabolism 60
mind
dan tian 44
emotional 14
foundation of power 59
guan zhi 51
in qigong practice 7
kan and li 15
key to practice 97
qi and regulating the 42
qi and the 21
qi circulation and the 40
regulating 11, 104
xin and yi described 37
mind training 86
mingmen 87, 91
momentum stepping 151, 156, 158, 192, 198, 203, 219
monkey mind 39
mountain climbing stance 126
mud pill 47
Mud Pill Palace 47, 54, 79
muscles 111, 114
   power and efficiency 12
muscle/tendon change 59, 85
Muscle/Tendon Changing 75
Muscle/Tendon Changing Classic
   19, 59, 85
Muscle/Tendon Changing Qigong 82
muscle/tendon changing theory 85
muscular power 227
mutual harmony 50
mu zi xiang he 50
natural energy 43, 76
   nourishing qi 43
natural force 1
natural shen 47
nei dan 8
   internal martial arts 13
nei dan qigong practice 8
nei gong 97
   breathing exercises 119
ning 49
ni wan 47
ni wan gong 47
no-ball practice 102
no extremity 44, 71
normal breathing 29
normal qi 2
nothingness 44
observations 51
Ohm’s Law 81
original shen 52
pagoda 47
partner practice 243
   capturing the ball 264
   circling the ball 245
   straight line listening and following 243
   yin-yang circling 245
   yin-yang horizontal circling
   training 252
passions 11, 53
patterns
taiji ball training 128
vertical and horizontal 105
physical body
   conditioning 103
Taiji Ball Qigong and 75
physical health
   yang side 18
physical relaxation 26
piezoelectric material 75
pin 47
pivotal force 71
pointing cavities 12
pointing vessels 12
post-heaven qi 40
post-heaven techniques 59
practice methods
   patterns 105
pre-heaven practice 52
producing qi 40
qi
   as bioelectricity 2
   bone marrow 75, 104
   bone marrow and 21
   breathing and 41
   building for endurance 64
   Chinese characters 2
   connection with yi 44
   cultivating 11, 42
   definition in China 2
   fire 40
   fire and water 14
   foods 40
   general concept 1
   harmonized with shen 17
   in sick person 5
   keeping mind in dan tian 44
   leading 7, 13, 45, 64
   methods of producing 40
   mind and 21
   mutual harmony with shen 50
   narrow definition 4
   natural cycles 3
   nourishing 41
   post-birth 27
   post-heaven 40
   preserving 42
   producing extra 82
   protecting the 41
regulating 105
storing 43, 45
Taiji Ball Qigong 60
training 11
transporting 44
qi ball 102
qi channels 5, 28
qi circulation 9, 45, 46, 77
abdominal breathing 32
arthritis 14
manifestation 84
using the mind 40
qi field 102
qi flow 5
breathing 15
qi gates 87
qigong
breathing methods 27
categories 9
channels 5
Daoist and Buddhist society 5
ergy and time 3
genral definition 4
martial 12
martial arts society 6
medical 9
origins in dancing 6
qi circulation 6
regulating processes 25
religious 11
scholar society 5
spinal warm-up 114
tu-na 4
qigong practice 7, 59
five regulatings 26
goals 44
health and 18
health benefits 60
spiritual cultivation 61
Taiji Ball Qigong 74
qigong training 28
shen 16
the general 15
qi manifestation 86
qi ocean 78
qi reservoirs 22
qi residence 78
qi rivers 22
qi storage 89
qi transport 46
qi vessels 21, 28
raised shen 17
real dan tian 70
real lower dan tian 21, 27, 32,
34, 40–45, 50, 54, 76–82, 88,
92, 121
regulating of no regulating 101
regulating qi 40
regulations 25, 104
regulating shen 50
regulating the body 26
regulating the mind 11, 36, 38
relaxation 26, 86
religious belief 18
religious qigong 11
reverse abdominal breathing 83
exercises 121
righteous qi 2
rocking 162
horizontal rotation 190
horizontal single-hand rotating
the ball with a partner 260
horizontal single-hand wrap-coiling with a partner 263
single-hand yin-yang horizontal circling training with a partner 254
vertical double-hands rotating
with a partner 256
vertical-horizontal, circling-rotating mixed training
with a partner 261
vertical-horizontal, yin-yang, circling-rotating mixed training 202
vertical-horizontal, yin-yang, circling-rotating-wrap-coiling mixed training 224
vertical-horizontal yin-yang exchange circling 170
vertical-horizontal, yin-yang exchange rotating 199
vertical-horizontal, yin-yang exchange wrap-coiling 223
vertical-horizontal, yin-yang mixing circling with a partner 255
vertical single-hand rotating with a partner 258
vertical single-hand wrap-coiling with a partner 262
vertical yang circling partner practice 250
vertical yang circling with partner 246
yang circling 155
yang vertical rotation 174
yang wrap-coiling 208, 219
yin circling 143
yin rotation 194
yin vertical rotation 182
yin wrap-coiling 212, 220
yin-yang exchange 150, 186
yin-yang exchange circling 165
yin-yang exchange horizontal rotating 197
yin-yang exchange wrap-coiling 214, 222
yin-yang horizontal circling training with a partner 252
rocking pattern 134
rooting training 266
rotating pattern 172
rotating the ball 235
rotating the ball on the forearms 236
rotating the ball with a partner 258
roundness 58, 59
Sardili 84
sea bottom 89
self-awakening 52
self-awareness 51
self-recognition 51
seven passions 11, 53
Shaolin monks 59
training 12
Shaolin Temple 59
shen 16, 78
awakening 52
breathing 17, 50
condensing 49
control kan and li 17
harmonized with qi 17
lotus seed 52
mutual harmony with qi 50
natural 47
protecting 48
raising the 48
regulating 47
stabilizing the 49
trainings for regulating 47
shen cultivation 47
shen qi xiang he 17, 50
shen training 46
shen xi 17, 50
shen xi xiang yi 17
shou 48
shou shen training 48
sideways attaching 232
single-hand
vertical yin-yang circling partner practice 248
sitting on crossed leg stance 126
six desires 11, 53
skin breathing 32, 34
small circulation 45
small cyclic heaven circulation 45
small nine heaven 59
soft martial skills 64
softness 13, 59, 93
soft styles 13
spine 93
qi vessels 21
waving the 117
spine muscles exercising 114
spiraling 69
spirit
regulating 105
residence 46
spirit of vitality 22, 38, 61
spiritual bondage 54
freedom from 53
spiritual cultivation 12, 23, 61
four steps 51
spiritual cultivation triangle 80
spiritual embryo 43
spiritual enlightenment 6, 7, 61
cultivating 51
practice 45
spiritual mountain 52
spiritual valley 46
stances 125
stationary
horizontal double-hands rotating the ball with a partner 259
horizontal rotation 189
horizontal single-hand rotating the ball with a partner 260
horizontal single-hand wrap-coiling with a partner 263
single-hand yin-yang horizontal circling training with a partner 254
vertical double-hands rotating with a partner 256
vertical-horizontal, circling-rotating mixed training with a partner 261
vertical-horizontal, yin-yang, circling-rotating mixed training 201
vertical-horizontal, yin-yang, circling-rotating-wrap-coiling mixed training 224
vertical-horizontal, yin-yang exchange rotating 199
vertical-horizontal, yin-yang exchange wrap-coiling 222
vertical-horizontal, yin-yang mixing circling with a partner 255
vertical single-hand rotating with a partner 257
vertical single-hand wrap-coiling with a partner 262
vertical yin-yang circling partner practice 250
vertical yin-yang circling with partner 245
yang vertical rotation 173
yang wrap-coiling 206, 218
yin rotation 194
yin vertical rotation 181
yin wrap-coiling 211, 220
yin-yang exchange 185
yin-yang exchange circling 164
yin-yang exchange horizontal rotating 196
yin-yang exchange wrap-coiling 214, 221
yin-yang horizontal circling training with a partner 252
stationary circling
yang 148, 154
yin 162
stepping
balance method 178
horizontal double-hands rotating the ball with a partner 259
horizontal single-hand rotating the ball with a partner 260
horizontal single-hand wrap-coiling with a partner 263
straight line 136
vertical double-hands rotating with a partner 257
vertical-horizontal, circling-rotating mixed training with a partner 261
vertical-horizontal, yin-yang, circling-rotating mixed training 201
vertical-horizontal, yin-yang, circling-rotating-wrap-coiling mixed training 224
vertical-horizontal, yin-yang exchange rotating 199
vertical-horizontal, yin-yang exchange wrap-coiling 222
vertical-horizontal, yin-yang mixing circling with a partner 255
vertical single-hand rotating with a partner 258
vertical single-hand wrap-coiling with a partner 262
vertical yin-yang circling partner practice 251
vertical yin-yang circling with partner 247
yin-yang horizontal circling training with a partner 253, 254
storing qi 43
straight line listening and following 243
straight line stepping horizontal circling 156
horizontal rotation 192
vertical-horizontal, yin-yang, circling-rotating-wrap-coiling mixed training 224
vertical-horizontal yin-yang exchange circling 171
vertical-horizontal, yin-yang exchange rotating 200
vertical-horizontal, yin-yang exchange wrap-coiling 223
yang vertical rotation 175
yang wrap-coiling 208, 219
yin 145
yin horizontal circling 164
yin rotation 196
yin vertical rotation 184
yin wrap-coiling 213, 220
yin-yang exchange 151, 187
yin-yang exchange circling 167
yin-yang exchange horizontal rotating 198
yin-yang exchange wrap-coiling 216, 222
strange meridians 5
strengthening 76
stretching exercises 107, 111
strokes 264
subconscious mind
yin 52
supernatural divine light 47
table (on the)
  adhering to the ball 228
  rotating the ball 235
  wrap-coiling the ball 236
taiji 65
  Dao and 67
  theory 71
  xin and yi 74
  xuan pin 47
  yin-yang symbol 76
taiji ball
  adhering-connecting 236
  adhering to 228
  attaching to the 231
  flying dragon plays with 237
  forward-backward attaching 234
  jins 228
  material 98
  rolling along the right edge 237
  sideways attaching to the 232
  sizes 100
  solo maneuvering 228
  taijiquan sequence and 266
  tossing with partner 267
  up and down the wall 239
  walking along the edge practice 237
Taiji Ball Breathing 125
taiji ball qigong
  history 58
  training purposes 58
Taiji Ball Qigong
  theory 65
taiji balls 58
taiji ball training
  exercises 128
  history 60
  internal benefits 60
  rules 101
  strengthening 61
taiji palm 128
taijiquan sequence
  holding the ball 266
taiji yin-yang symbol 148
The Book of Changes 3
Theory of Qi’s Variation 3
third eye 50, 55, 88
natural shen 47
thirty-seven postures 59
thought 16, 22, 52, 54, 81
three dimensions
  spiraling 68
three powers 1, 3
thrusting vessel 87
tian mu 47
tiantu 87
tiao 25
tile hand 128
torso
  conditioning 62, 102
  training methods
    Taiji Ball Qigong 57
    training rules 101
    triple burner 112
  true Dao 54
  trunk muscles
    exercising 114
  two gates 91
  two-person jin 267
  two polarities 66, 76, 79, 87
  human body 76
  upper dan tian 21, 46, 47, 52, 76, 79
  upper dan tian breathing 36
  valley spirit 46, 47
vertical circling 129
vertical-horizontal, yin-yang, circling-rotating mixed training 200
vertical-horizontal, yin-yang, circling-rotating-wrap-coiling mixed training 224
vertical-horizontal, yin-yang, circling-rotating-wrap-coiling mixed training with a partner 264
vertical-horizontal, yin-yang exchange rotating 199
vertical-horizontal, yin-yang exchange wrap-coiling 222
vertical-horizontal, yin-yang mixing circling with a partner rotating 256
vertical-horizontal, yin-yang mixing circling with a partner 255
vertical rotation 173
vertical single-hand rotating with a partner 257
vertical wrap-coiling with a partner 261
vessels 5, 21
pointing 12
qi accumulation 22
vitality 22, 38, 40, 61
vital qi 2
wai dan 7
wai dan qigong practice 8
wai dan training 13
waist
   circling 116
   rotating 172
walking along the edge practice 237
Wang, Zong-yue 70
warm-up
   spinal 114
warm-up exercises 107
water 13, 14
   inhaling 15
water mind 16
water qi 14
White Crane Waves its Wings 118
wind water 3
wisdom mind 26, 39
without ultimate 71
wood balls 58
wrap-coiling 204
   ball on table 236
vertical-horizontal with a partner 261
Wudang Mountain 60
wuj 44, 66, 71
wuj breathing 121
wuj point 148, 157
wuj state 73
Wu Tao 25
xin 14, 15, 26, 37, 39
Taiji Ball Qigong 74
Xi Sui Jing 59, 85
xiu qi 11
xuan 47
xuan pin 46, 47
xu mi 42
xu wu 44
Xu, Xuan-ping 59
yang
   conscious mind 52
   excess in body 14
spiraling 69
yang 48
yang circling 130
yang fountain 76
yang shen 48, 78, 89
yang wrap-coiling 206, 218
yi 14, 15, 26, 37, 39
   connection with qi 44
Taiji Ball Qigong 74
Yi Jing 3
Yi Jin Jing 59, 85
yin
   spiraling 69
   subconscious mind 52
yin circling 141
yinjiao 87, 91
Yin, Li-heng 59
yin rotation 194
yin shui 78
yin spirit 77
yintang 87
yin vertical rotation 181
yin-yang
   Taiji Ball Qigong 73
yin-yang circling
   vertical 245
yin-yang derivation 68
yin-yang exchange
   circling 147
   freestyle circling 169
   rotating the ball 185
vertical-horizontal, yin-yang, circling-rotating mixed training 200
yin-yang exchange horizontal rotating 196
yin-yang exchange wrap-coiling 213, 221
yin-yang horizontal circling training with a partner 252
yin-yang polarities 69
yin-yang spiral derivation 69
yi shou dan tian 43
yongquan 88
yongquan breathing 122
yu men 47
Zhang, Dao-ling 10
zhi guan 51
Zhou Wen Wang 66
Zhuang Zhou 10
Zhuang Zi 34, 122
About the Author

Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming (楊俊敏博士)

Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming was born on August 11, 1946 in Xinzhu Xian, Taiwan, Republic of China (新竹縣,台灣,中華民國). He started his wushu (武術) and kung fu (gongfu, 功夫) training when he was fifteen years old in Shaolin White Crane (少林白鶴) under Master Cheng, Gin-gsao (曾金灶, 1911-1976). As a child, Master Cheng learned Taizuquan (太祖拳) from his grandfather. When he was fifteen years old, he started learning White Crane Style from Master Jin, Shao-feng (金紹峰) and followed him for 23 years until Master Jin’s death.

After thirteen years of study, from 1961 to 1974, under Master Cheng, Dr. Yang became an expert in the White Crane Style of Chinese martial arts, including the bare hand and various weapons such as saber, staff, spear, trident, two short rods, and many others. Under Master Cheng, he also studied White Crane Qigong (氣功), qin na (or chin na, 擒拿), he (推拿), dian xue (點穴按摩) massage, and herbal treatment.

At the age of sixteen, Dr. Yang began the study of Yang Style Taijiquan (楊氏太極拳) under Master Gao, Tao (高滔). He later continued his study of taijiquan under several other masters and senior practitioners, such as Master Li, Mao-ching (李茂清) and Mr. Wilson Chen (陳威伸) in Taipei (台北). Master Li learned taijiquan from the well-known Master Han, Ching-tang (韓慶堂), and Mr. Chen learned from Master Zhang, Xiang-san (張祥三). Under these masters, Dr. Yang mastered the taiji bare-hand sequence, the two-man fighting sequence, pushing hands, taiji sword, taiji saber, and taiji qigong.

When Dr. Yang was eighteen years old, he entered Tamkang College (淡江學院) in Taipei Xian to study physics. During this time, he began studying traditional Shaolin Long Fist (少林長拳) under Master Li, Mao-ching in the Tamkang College Guoshu Club (淡江國術社) from 1964 to 1968 and eventually became an assistant instructor to Master Li. From Master Li, he learned northern-style wushu, including bare-hand and kicking techniques, and numerous weapons. In 1971, he completed his Master of Science degree in physics at National Taiwan University (台灣大學) before serving in the Chinese Air Force from 1971 to 1972. He taught physics at the Junior Academy of the Chinese Air Force (空軍幼校) while also teaching wushu. Honorably discharged in 1972, he returned to Tamkang College to teach physics and resume his study under Master Li, Mao-ching.

Dr. Yang moved to the United States in 1974 to study mechanical engineering at Purdue University. At the request of a few colleagues, he began to teach gongfu, founding the Purdue University Chinese Gongfu Research Club in 1975. He also taught college-credit courses in taijiquan. In May 1978, he was awarded a Ph.D. in mechanical engineering from Purdue University.

In 1980, Dr. Yang moved to Houston to work for Texas Instruments and also founded Yang’s Shaolin Kung Fu Academy, now under the direction of his disciple Jeffery Bolt. In 1982, he moved to Boston and founded Yang’s Martial Arts Academy. In 1984, he gave up his engineering career to devote his time to research, writing, and
teaching of Chinese martial arts. In 1986, he moved YMAA to the Jamaica Plain area of Boston and established this location as Yang's Martial Arts Association (YMAA) headquarters. YMAA became a division of Yang's Oriental Arts Association, Inc. (YOAA, Inc.) in 1989.

Dr. Yang has been involved in Chinese wushu since 1961, studying Shaolin White Crane, Shaolin (Bai He) Long Fist, and Taijiquan (Changquan) under several different masters. He has taught for more than 40 years: 7 years in Taiwan, 5 years at Purdue University, 2 years in Houston, 26 years in Boston, and 5 years at his YMAA California Retreat Center. He has taught seminars all around the world, sharing his knowledge of Chinese martial arts and qigong: in Argentina, Austria, Barbados, Botswana, Belgium, Bermuda, Canada, China, Chile, England, Egypt, France, Germany, Holland, Hungary, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Mexico, Poland, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Spain, South Africa, Switzerland, and Venezuela.

YMAA has grown into an international organization that includes 60 schools spread across 19 countries: Argentina, Belgium, Canada, Chile, France, Holland, Hungary, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Spain, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. YMAA publications, books, and videos have been translated into French, Italian, Spanish, Polish, Czech, Bulgarian, Russian, Hungarian, and Farsi.

In 2005, Dr. Yang established the YMAA California Retreat Center (楊氏武藝協會特訓中心), a dedicated training ground for a small committed group of selected students. Located in the mountainous regions of northern California, the center was formed to host a 10-year training program, directed and taught by Dr. Yang himself, beginning in September 2008. It is Dr. Yang’s wish that through this effort, he will be able to preserve traditional Chinese martial arts to the same standards and quality of ancient times. He remains the chief supervisor of YMAA International and in January 2008, his youngest son Nicholas has succeeded him as president of YMAA.

Dr. Yang has authored other books and videos on martial arts and qigong:
6. Chi Kung for Health and Martial Arts, YMAA Publication Center, 1985
8. Northern Shaolin Sword, YMAA Publication Center, 1985
11. Advanced Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan Vol. 2—Tai Chi Chuan Martial Applications, YMAA Publication Center, 1986
12. Tai Chi Chuan Martial Applications, revised edition, YMAA Publication Center, 1996
14. *The Eight Pieces of Brocade—Ba Duan Jin*, YMAA Publication Center, 1988
18. *Qigong the Secret of Youth, Da Mo's Muscle Tendon Changing and Marrow Brain Washing Qigong*, revised edition, YMAA Publication Center, 2000
23. *Qigong for Arthritis*, YMAA Publication Center, 1991
24. *Arthritis Relief*, revised edition, YMAA Publication Center, 2005
25. *Chinese Qigong Massage—General Massage*, YMAA Publication Center, 1992
27. *How to Defend Yourself*, YMAA Publication Center, 1992
32. *The Essence of Shaolin White Crane*, YMAA Publication Center, 1996
34. *Back Pain Relief—Chinese Qigong for Healing and Prevention*, revised edition, YMAA Publication Center, 2004
35. *Taijiquan Classical Yang Style—The Complete Form and Qigong*, YMAA Publication Center, 1999
38. *Qigong Meditation—Embryonic Breathing*, YMAA Publication Center, 2003
40. *Tai Chi Ball Qigong—Health and Martial Arts*, YMAA Publication Center, 2010

**DVD Videos by Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming**
1. *Chin Na In Depth Courses 1–4*, YMAA Publication Center, 2003
2. *Chin Na In Depth Courses 5–8*, YMAA Publication Center, 2003
3. *Chin Na In Depth Courses 9–12*, YMAA Publication Center, 2003
5. Shaolin White Crane Gong Fu Basic Training Courses 1 & 2, YMAA Publication Center, 2003
7. Tai Chi Chuan Classical Yang Style (long form T'aijiquan), YMAA Publication Center, 2003
8. Analysis of Shaolin Chin Na, YMAA Publication Center, 2004
9. Shaolin Kung Fu Fundamental Training, YMAA Publication Center, 2004
10. Baguazhang (8 Trigrams Palm Kung Fu), YMAA Publication Center, 2005
11. Essence of Taiji Qigong, YMAA Publication Center, 2005
12. Qigong Massage, YMAA Publication Center, 2005
13. Shaolin Long Fist Kung Fu Basic Sequences, YMAA Publication Center, 2005
14. Taiji Pushing Hands Courses 1 & 2, YMAA Publication Center, 2005
15. Taiji Sword, Classical Yang Style, YMAA Publication Center, 2005
16. Taiji Ball Qigong Courses 1 & 2, YMAA Publication Center, 2006
17. Taiji Fighting Set—88 Posture, 2–Person Matching Set, YMAA Publication Center, 2006
18. Taiji Pushing Hands Courses 3 & 4, YMAA Publication Center, 2006
19. Understanding Qigong DVD 1—What is Qigong? Understanding the Human Qi Circulation System, YMAA Publication Center, 2006
20. Understanding Qigong DVD 2—Keypoints of Qigong & Qigong Breathing, YMAA Publication Center, 2006
21. Shaolin Saber Basic Sequences, YMAA Publication Center, 2007
22. Shaolin Staff Basic Sequences, YMAA Publication Center, 2007
23. Simple Qigong Exercises for Arthritis Relief, YMAA Publication Center, 2007
24. Simple Qigong Exercises for Back Pain Relief, YMAA Publication Center, 2007
25. Taiji & Shaolin Staff Fundamental Training, YMAA Publication Center, 2007
26. Taiji Ball Qigong Courses 3 & 4, YMAA Publication Center, 2007
27. Understanding Qigong DVD 3—Embryonic Breathing, YMAA Publication Center, 2007
28. Understanding Qigong DVD 4—Four Seasons Qigong, YMAA Publication Center, 2007
29. Understanding Qigong DVD 5—Small Circulation, YMAA Publication Center, 2007
30. Understanding Qigong DVD 6—Martial Arts Qigong Breathing, YMAA Publication Center, 2007
32. Saber Fundamental Training, YMAA Publication Center, 2008
33. Shaolin White Crane Gong Fu Basic Training Courses 3 & 4, YMAA Publication Center, 2008
34. Taiji 37Postures Martial Applications, YMAA Publication Center, 2008
35. Taiji Saber, Classical Yang Style, YMAA Publication Center, 2008
36. Taiji Wrestling—Advanced Takedown Techniques, YMAA Publication Center, 2008
37. Taiji Yin/Yang Sticking Hands, YMAA Publication Center, 2008
38. Xingyiquan (Hsing I Chuan), YMAA Publication Center, 2008
39. Northern Shaolin Sword, YMAA Publication Center, 2009
40. Sword Fundamental Training, YMAA Publication Center, 2009
41. Taiji Chin Na in Depth, YMAA Publication Center, 2009
42. YMAA 25-Year Anniversary, YMAA Publication Center, 2009
43. Shuai Jiao–Kung Fu Wrestling, YMAA Publication Center, 2010
About the Author
David W. Grantham

David Grantham was born on September 22, 1965, in Dorchester, Massachusetts and raised in Weymouth, Massachusetts from the age of three. At the age of eighteen, he attended Bridgewater State College to pursue his dream and currently is employed by Continental Airlines as a pilot based in New Jersey.

Mr. Grantham began his martial art training at the age of twenty-four, studying Liuhebafaquan under the tutelage of instructor David Zucker. Mr. Zucker studied under the late Master John Chung Li. He also trained in a fighting form taught only to advanced students. After training for one year with Mr. Zucker, Mr. Grantham was encouraged to further his knowledge of Chinese martial arts and was recommended to attend Yang’s Martial Arts Association headquarters in Boston. He joined YMAA and started training under the Shaolin curriculum. Over the years of training at the school and attending seminars abroad, Mr. Grantham expanded his studies to include taiji-quan and qigong. On January 28, 2000, he was awarded assistant instructor of chin na and on January 30, 2007, he was awarded the rank of chin na instructor. In 2008, Mr. Grantham was awarded a coach instructor position by Nicholas Yang.

David Grantham has been training in martial arts for twenty-one years. He continues to train the YMAA curriculum and currently teaches at the Hunterdon Health and Wellness Center in Clinton, New Jersey. David Grantham resides in Hunterdon County, New Jersey with his wife, Jenifer, and two children, Jillian and Alexander.