

DR. YANG, JWING-MING
AND DAVID GRANTHAM

Tai Chi Ball Qigong

FOR HEALTH AND MARTIAL ARTS

Master Yang is "one of America's most
sought-after instructors of Qigong."
—*The Omega Institute*



太極球氣功

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

VADIM GORETSKY



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.

TIM COMRIE



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"Kung Fu Artist of the Year." –*Black Belt* magazine, 2003

"Man of the Year." –*Inside Kung-Fu* magazine, 2007

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Foreword 陰陽太極球氣功序

by Kao, Tao 高濤

太極球顧名思義是屬於太極拳多項輔助教材中之一環。昔時，太極球的練習是非常的普遍。可惜現在近乎失傳。俊敏與他多年的學生，David Grantham，寫的這本書當可以將這球藝傳至下一代。本人習楊氏太極拳逾四十年之久。緣當本人十二歲在上海拜河南樂奐之老師習拳時，母親一再叮嚀，祇要認真練拳，決不可練武打搏擊技巧。因本人外公（高重威）因諳武功在蘇州開設鏢局。某次得罪綠林人士，竟遭人暗算而喪命。年僅三十六歲而已。

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.

吾弟子俊敏，1963年在新竹唸高中時，即隨余習拳。同時亦隨南派白鶴拳老師曾金灶為師。嗣後又拜山東，青島李茂清老師習北派長拳。由於酷愛我國拳術，更以數十年時光，追研各種刀、槍、棍棒以及擒拿術等技能。今在美國東西兩岸開設武館多處，名楊氏武藝協會。在全球也多達五十多處，開館授徒。

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

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 generousities 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:

1. *Qigong for Health and Martial Arts*, YMAA Publication Center, 1985, 1998
2. *Eight Simple Qigong Exercises for Health*, YMAA Publication Center, 1988, 1997
3. *The Root of Chinese Qigong—The Secrets of Qigong Training*, YMAA Publication Center, 1989, 1997
4. *Qigong—The Secret of Youth*, YMAA Publication Center, 1989, 2000
5. *The Essence of Taiji Qigong—Health and Martial Arts*, YMAA Publication Center, 1990, 1998
6. *Arthritis Relief—Chinese Qigong for Healing and Prevention*, YMAA Publication Center, 1991, 2005
7. *Qigong Massage—General Massage*, YMAA Publication Center, 1992, 2005
8. *The Essence of Shaolin White Crane*, YMAA Publication Center, 1996
9. *Back Pain Relief*, YMAA Publication Center 1997, 2004
10. *Qigong Meditation—Embryonic Breathing*, YMAA Publication Center, 2004
11. *Qigong Meditation—Small Circulation*, YMAA Publication Center, 2006

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 (淡江學院), 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.

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*, 內功) 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.



Figure 5-1. Taiji balls

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.



Figure 5-2. Granite and marble taiji balls

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.

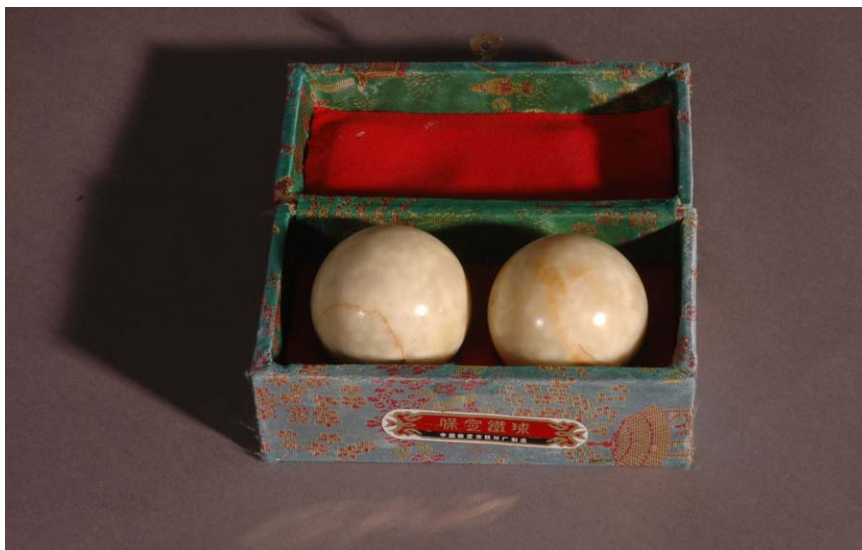


Figure 5-3. Taiji balls used for the hands



Figure 5-4. Taiji ball movement in hands

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.

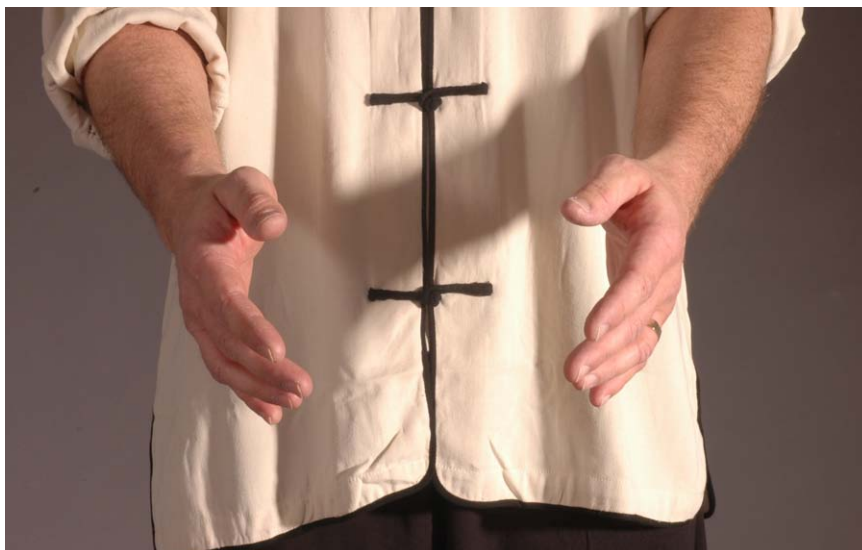


Figure 5-5

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, 勞宮), 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.



Figure 5-6



Figure 5-7

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 piezo-electric material.¹ 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.² 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.

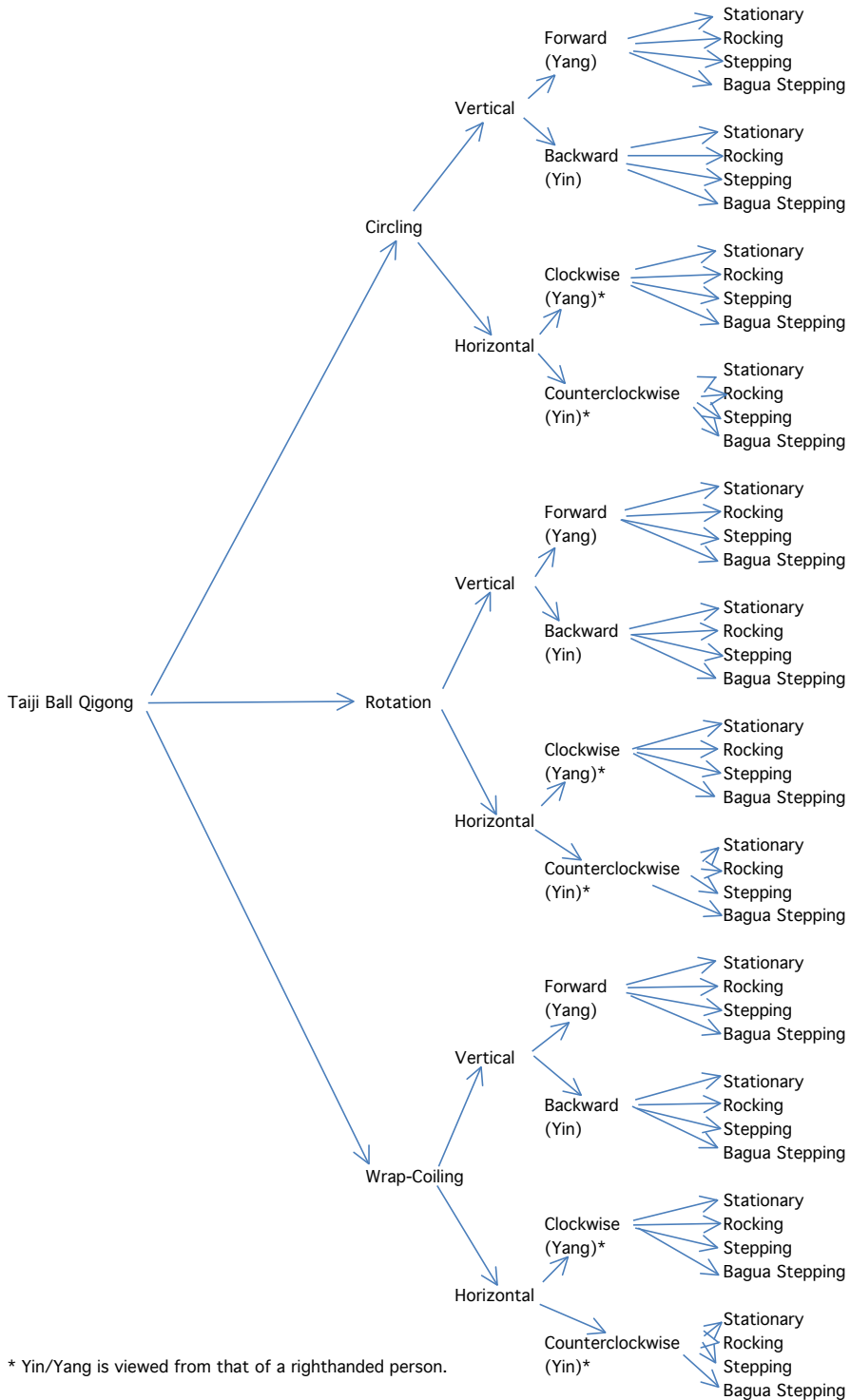
Against a point: The big challenge of this practice is to rotate the ball on a tiny tip.

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.



* Yin/Yang is viewed from that of a righthanded person.



Figure 5-147

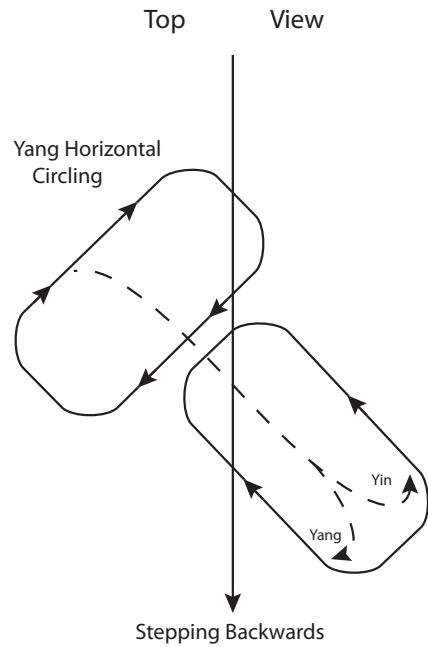


Diagram 6. Breathing and chest movements—yin rotating.

Yin Rotating (*Yin Zhuan*, 陰轉)

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.

**FOLLOW
ALONG**
VERTICAL
ROTATION—
BACKWARD (YIN)



Figure 5-148



Figure 5-149

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.



Figure 5-150



Figure 5-151



Figure 5-152



Figure 5-153



Figure 5-154



Figure 5-155

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.



Figure 5-156

Yin-Yang Exchange Vertical Rotating (*Yin Yang Hu Huan Chui Zhi Zhan Zhuan*, 陰陽互換垂直輾轉)

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



Figure 5-157



Figure 5-158

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

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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 (高濤). 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 (*Chanququan*) 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:

1. *Shaolin Chin Na*, Unique Publications, Inc., 1980
2. *Shaolin Long Fist Kung Fu*, Unique Publications, Inc., 1981
3. *Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan*, Unique Publications, Inc., 1981
4. *Introduction to Ancient Chinese Weapons*, Unique Publications, Inc., 1985
5. *A Martial Artists Guide to Ancient Chinese Weapons*, revised edition, YMAA Publication Center, 1999
6. *Chi Kung for Health and Martial Arts*, YMAA Publication Center, 1985
7. *Qigong—Health and Martial Arts*, revised edition, YMAA Publication Center, 1998
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9. *Advanced Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan Vol. 1—Tai Chi Theory and Martial Power*, YMAA Publication Center, 1986
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14. *The Eight Pieces of Brocade—Ba Duan Jin*, YMAA Publication Center, 1988
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29. *Baguazhang—Theory and Applications*, revised edition, YMAA Publication Center, 2008
30. *Comprehensive Applications of Shaolin Chin Na—The Practical Defense of Chinese Seizing Arts*, YMAA Publication Center, 1995
31. *Taiji Chin Na—The Seizing Art of Taijiqian*, YMAA Publication Center, 1995
32. *The Essence of Shaolin White Crane*, YMAA Publication Center, 1996
33. *Back Pain—Chinese Qigong for Healing and Prevention*, YMAA Publication Center, 1997
34. *Back Pain Relief—Chinese Qigong for Healing and Prevention*, revised edition, YMAA Publication Center, 2004
35. *Taijiqian Classical Yang Style—The Complete Form and Qigong*, YMAA Publication Center, 1999
35. *Tai Chi Chuan—Classical Yang Style*, revised edition, YMAA Publication Center, 2010
36. *Taijiqian Theory of Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming—The Root of Taijiqian*, YMAA Publication Center, 2003
37. *Qigong Meditation—Embryonic Breathing*, YMAA Publication Center, 2003
38. *Qigong Meditation—Small Circulation*, YMAA Publication Center, 2006
39. *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
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6. *Shaolin White Crane Hard and Soft Qigong*, YMAA Publication Center, 2003
7. *Tai Chi Chuan Classical Yang Style (long form Taijiquan)*, YMAA Publication Center, 2003
8. *Analysis of Shaolin Chin Na*, YMAA Publication Center, 2004
9. *Shaolin Kung Fu Fundamental Training*, YMAA Publication Center, 2004
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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 Circulatory System*, YMAA Publication Center, 2006
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21. *Shaolin Saber Basic Sequences*, YMAA Publication Center, 2007
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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
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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 37 Postures 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
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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 Liuhebaquan 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 taijiquan 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.