

Tai Chi Secrets of the Wu Style

Chinese Classics • Translations • Commentary

by Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming

YMAA Publication Center
Boston, Mass. USA

YMAA Publication Center

Main Office:

4354 Washington Street

Boston, Massachusetts, 02131

617-323-7215 • ymaa@aol.com • www.ymaa.com

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0

Copyright ©2001 by Yang, Jwing-Ming

Edited by James O'Leary

Cover design by Katya Popova

ISBN:1-886969-17-5

All rights reserved including the right of reproduction in whole or in part in any form.

Publisher's Cataloging in Publication

(Prepared by Quality Books Inc.)

Sample pages only

Contents

Acknowledgments	xxx
Foreword by Nick Gracenin	xxx
About the Author.	xxx
Introduction	xxx
About Wu Family and Wu, Gong-Cao 吳氏太極拳之背景	xxx
The Total Thesis of Taijiquan 太極拳總論	xxx
The Important Meaning of Taijiquan Thirteen Postures 太極拳十三勢大義 xxx	
The Detailed Interpretation of Five Elements 五行要義詳解.	xxx
The Secrets of Eight Techniques 八法秘訣	xxx
The Interpretation of Slow and Without Force 慢與不用力之解釋	xxx
Central Equilibrium 中定	xxx
Insubstantial Force Leading the Head Upward 虛領頂勁	xxx
Feeling and Sensing 感覺	xxx
Listening Jin 聽勁	xxx
Questions and Answers 問答	xxx
Insubstantial and Substantial 虛實	xxx
Gauging the Opponent 量敵	xxx
Knowing the Opportunity 知機	xxx
Weighting 重心	xxx
Double Weighting 雙重	xxx
Giving Up Self and Following Opponent 捨己從人	xxx
Drumming and Vibrating 鼓盪	xxx
Foundation 基礎	xxx
Teaching and Learning 授受	xxx
Appendix A: The Thesis of Taijiquan, by Xiang, Kai-Ran 太極拳論 - 問答·向愷然	xxx
Appendix B. Translation and Glossary of Chinese Terms.	xxx
Index.	xxx

1. The Total Thesis of Taijiquan

The Dao of the fist techniques (i.e., martial arts) is no more than strengthening the tendons and bones (i.e., physical body), and regulate and harmonize the Qi and the blood. However, Taijiquan follows the theory of the Taiji's movements and calmness as the methods (i.e., rules or theory), uses the marvelous variations of the insubstantial and substantial as the applications. Its postures are centered, upright, peaceful, and comfortable. Its movements are light, agile, round, and alive. Therefore, once moves, there is nothing without movement, once calm, there is nothing without calmness. Its theory of movements and calmness is consistent with the sitting Gong (i.e., sitting meditation) of the Dao's family (i.e., Daoism). In fact, it is the moving Gong (i.e., Qigong) of the Daoist family. (Therefore), from the viewpoint of the fist theory (i.e., martial theory), it can be called "internal family." It is because it contains the same body (i.e., same root and theoretical foundation) of the Dao.

拳術一道，不外強健筋骨，調和氣血。而太極拳，乃循太極動靜之理以為法，採虛實變化之妙而為用。其姿勢也中正安舒，其動作也輕靈圓活。故一動無有不動，一靜無有不靜。其動靜之理，與道家之坐功，互相吻合，實道家之行功。在拳理言之故稱內家，因與道本為一體。

Fist Techniques (Quan Shu, 拳術) is the general term for martial arts. The main purpose of training martial arts, other than self-defense, is to strengthen the physical body and to improve the circulation of the Qi and blood. Taijiquan was created in the Daoist

太極拳總論

monastery located in Wudang mountain (武当山) of Hubei (湖北) Province. It was developed based on the Taiji Yin-Yang theory recorded in *Yi Jing* (*Book of Change*, 易經) which was created more than three thousand years ago (around 1122 B.C.). Therefore Taijiquan theory adopts the Yin-Yang concepts of movement (Yang) and calmness (Yin) as the main training methods. In addition, it uses the theory of insubstantial (Yin) and substantial (Yang) strategic movements as the foundation of the martial maneuvers and applications.

In order to be relaxed and allow the Qi to circulate smoothly, the torso is upright, natural, and comfortable. The movements are round, relaxed, agile, smooth, and alive. Because of these conditions, the entire body acts as a single unit. Once there is movement, the entire body moves, and once there is stillness (or the movement stops), the entire body is still. This theory of movement and calmness, and also the internal and external cultivations that implement it, are consistent with Daoist theory. This is because, as in sitting meditation, the cultivations emphasize the same principles and practices of regulating the body (Tiao Shen, 調身), breathing (Tiao Xi, 調息), mind (Tiao Xin, 調心), Qi (Tiao Qi, 調氣), and spirit (Tiao Shen, 調神). Thus, Taijiquan can be accurately described as moving meditation, as well as an internal martial style (i.e., Nei Jia, 內家). In fact, Taijiquan belongs to the Dao and the Dao contains Taijiquan. They are closely related to each other.

What are the movements and calmness? (It) is executing the original (thinking) of the Yi (i.e., wisdom mind). What are the insubstantial and substantial? It is the foundation of applying the Jins (i.e., martial power). Hidden internally is Jin, it is the main body (i.e., main content). Those manifested externally are postures and are the applications (of the internal). Use the calmness to govern the movements, and search for the movements in the calmness. Use the softness to subdue the hardness, and use the hardness to support the softness. To accept adversity philosophically and follow nature

instinctively. This can be done because the feeling makes it so. Feel in the body and awareness (i.e., understand) in the heart (i.e., mind). (Whenever) the body feels, the heart (is immediately) aware. Listen (i.e., Gauge) its insubstantial and substantial and request (i.e., testing) its movement and stillness. (Once I) have gained the opponent's center, then I investigate myself and gauge the opponent. Use the opportunity and situation, exchange (my) insubstantial and substantial to attack and defeat (my opponent).

動靜者，行意之本源。虛實者，運動之基礎。蘊之於內者曰勁，以為體。形之於外者曰勢，以為用。以靜制動，動中求靜。以柔克剛，剛以濟柔。逆來順受，任其自然。蓋由於感覺使然。感之於身，覺之於心。身有所感，心有所覺。聽其虛實，問其動靜。得其重心，然後審己量敵，運用機勢，變換虛實，攻而取之。

Your movement and calmness are initiated from your Yi (意)(i.e., wisdom mind). The mind then leads the Qi to the physical body for action. It is also your mind that makes the insubstantial and substantial strategic actions. Therefore, the mind's insubstantial and substantial is the foundation of the Jin's manifestation. The mind and the Qi generated internally are called Internal Jin (Nei Jin, 內勁). When Nei Jin is manifested into external postures, it is called External Jin (Wai Jin, 外勁). Therefore, those Jins that develop internally are the main body of the Jin's formation. Only when this internal Jin is manifested externally, can it be said that the Jin is completed.

Use defensive actions for offense. In order to execute this strategy effectively, mental calmness is the first crucial key. Even within the movements, internal calmness remains most important. When you are calm, the mind can be clear and your actions can be precise and firm. Softness and hardness are mutually exchangeable and support each other. In order to be connected, you must learn to be soft and follow the opponent's force naturally. Only then can you lead and neutralize the incoming force into emptiness. Success in this

depends on how sensitively you can feel (i.e., Listening Jin) the opponent, and see through his intention.

When the body is touched, the mind immediately responds, gauging the opponent's insubstantial and substantial and investigating his center. After knowing your opponent and evaluating your capability, exploit any advantageous timing and condition, and skillfully exchange your insubstantial and substantial. When all of this happens, you have grasped the key to victory.

The classic says: "Although in techniques, there are many side doors (i.e., other martial art styles), after all, it is nothing more than the strong beating the weak." Also says: "Investigate (consider) the saying of four ounces repel one thousand pounds. It is apparent that this cannot be accomplished by strength." That the strong beating the weak is due to the pre-birth natural capability which is born with it. It (the capability) is not obtained from learning. What is called "using the four ounces to repel one thousand pounds" is actually matching the theory of using the balance (i.e., leverage). It does not matter the lightness or the heaviness of the body, the large or small of the force, can shift the opponent's weighting center, and (finally) move his entire body. Therefore, the reason that the movements of Taijiquan are different from other (martial) techniques, is because they do not defeat the opponent with force. Furthermore, (it) can not only strengthen the tendons, keep the bone healthy, and harmonize the Qi and blood, but can also be used to cultivate (i.e., harmonize) the body and (mental) mind, keep away from sickness and extend the life. (It) is a marvelous Dao of post-heaven body cultivation.

經云：“斯技旁門甚多，概不外有力打無力。”又曰：“查四兩撥千斤之句，顯非力勝。”夫有力打無力，斯乃先天自然之能，生而知之。非學而後能之。所謂四兩撥千斤者，實則合乎權衡之理。無論體之輕重，力之大小，能在動之間，移其重心，使之全身牽動。故太極拳之動作，所以異於他技者，非務以力勝人也。推而進之，不惟強筋健骨，調和氣血，而自能修養身心，卻病延年，為後天養身之妙道焉。

Taijiquan emphasizes softness to counter hardness, and also uses the idea of four ounces to repel one thousand pounds to express the concept of early, gradual and precise interception rather than so-called “dumb” blocking (hard, stiff blocks). In order to reach this level of skill, you must learn how to exploit the dynamics of balance. If you can protect your balance and center, and at the same time move the opponent’s balance off and shift his center, you will put your opponent into a disadvantageous situation for your further action. Only if you can use your balanced force to lead the opponent into imbalance can you neutralize the incoming thousand pounds of force with just a little force.

Moreover, since Taijiquan emphasizes softness, the entire body and especially the joints must be relaxed, so that the Qi can be led by the mind efficiently and smoothly. These practices can not only improve your mental concentration, but also help to harmonize the Qi and blood to improve physical health.
