

Integrative TaiJiQuan

&

Medical Qi Gong

BASIC PRINCIPLES

Workshop

with

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TAO TE CHING

CHAPTER 14

Translation by Stephen Mitchell

Look, and it can not be seen.
Listen, and it can not be heard.
Reach, and it can not be grasped.

Above, it is not bright.
Below, it is not dark.
Seamless, unnamable,
it returns to the realm of nothing.
Form that includes all forms,
Image without an image,
Subtle, beyond all conception.

Approach it and there is no beginning;
Follow it and there is no end.
You cannot know it, but you can be it,
at ease in your life.

Just realize where you come from:
this is the essence of wisdom.



Tai Chi Chuan

...a form of discipline that develops the individual on every level of being...physical, mental, emotional, spiritual.

Tai Chi philosophy and principles are based upon the universal laws of nature. Look closely at the natural world. It is formed of spirals, circles and sphere. It grows by evolving, moving, and expanding. It renews itself within endless cycles, finds strength in balance and flexibility, and binds it all together within an intricate web of connections whereby if any one element changes, it affects all the rest.

Practice to be:

Calm, aware, centered, relaxed, expanded, connected & continuous.

To establish:

Balance, flexibility, stability, coordination, harmony & unity.

And produce:

Energy (Qi), Power & Presence.

**The Foundation for the existence of life is
based on the combination of three elements:
MIND, BODY, QI**



PRINCIPLES

For

PRACTICE

CONFIDENCE
SINCERITY
MODESTY
PERSEVERANCE
UNDERSTANDING

What makes Tai Chi Chuan unique from other forms of exercise is that its purpose is to combine body, mind, and spirit. If that is not your reason for practice, then it becomes no different than any other aerobic exercise. The real treasure of Tai Chi Chuan is in discovering unity, balance and wholeness.

To accomplish this, we need to bring five special qualities to our practice. Each of these qualities is equal in importance, none is more important than the other and all must be present in high levels of practice.

CONFIDENCE The first of these qualities is confidence. This confidence comes from believing in yourself and that the goals you wish to achieve are worthwhile and based on correct theory. Confidence gives us the courage to take control of, and responsibility for our lives.

SINCERITY Another quality is sincerity. Have faith in what you are doing. This generates respect for your goals so that you put your entire mind, energy, and effort into accomplishing them with patience. Without wholehearted, sincere desire, there will not be the determination to commit, persevere and practice.

MODESTY is a quality which translates into a willingness to learn. Realize that there are no limits to knowledge that the more you know, the wider the universe unfolds and the more you need to grow.

PERSEVERANCE The fourth quality is perseverance, having the tenacity to accomplish our goals. Perseverance is self-discipline; no matter how difficult or what obstacles we meet on the path to our goals, we will not abandon our purpose. Use perseverance as protection against helplessness.

UNDERSTANDING The last quality is understanding. You must seek to learn the theory and philosophy that supports your beliefs. Confidence grows when you can answer the questions of what, when, where, why, and how. Understanding helps to protect ourselves against confusion, doubts and fears.

YI (Mind)

We begin with the mind,

It controls movement.

Learn to use the mind correctly;

On this everything else depends.

There are 2 main things we need to bring to mind:

Calmness and Awareness

Keep the mind **CALM** from the beginning to the end of your practice. Free it from thought so that it is open to notice what the body is doing and feeling. This is the way we begin to connect mind and body together. When the mind cannot calm down, the body cannot relax. Only when the mind is calm can it be aware to know if posture and balance are correct and if not, to adjust to make it so. As the body relaxes, the mind continues to calm down.

When thinking decreases, **AWARENESS** increases.

Awareness is the power of the mind to perceive actions, sensation, emotions, etc. It alerts us to changes so that we can make adjustments to protect ourselves. We live in a world that is constant motion. Everything is happening altogether, everywhere at once. Awareness is the natural ability we are born with that relates to this type of active environment. It hears all things, sees all things, and feels all things because it does not focus on any one thing alone. It is the guardian of life.

The mind adjusts posture...and influences Qi

Where the mind goes...Qi follows

Xing (Body/Posture)

Correct posture uses the body in the way it was designed to support optimum development, bring ease of function and efficiency to movement.

The “24 Musts” For Correct Posture:

A) Head Straight

1. Top of head suspended from ceiling
2. Neck straight (hide Adam's apple)
3. Nose in line with navel
4. Eyelids relaxed
5. Center the vision ~ the Eyes are the window to the soul
6. Close the mouth
7. Tip of tongue lightly touch roof of mouth
8. Teeth slightly touch each other

B) Torso Straight

9. Relax the waist, opening the lower back
10. Shoulders slightly forward, armpits open
11. Chest in, back out
12. Tuck in the tailbone and sink it to the heels

C) Feet evenly touch the ground

13. Inner thighs open out, knees connected in
14. Knees relaxed and slightly bent, keep knees inline with toes
15. Toes lightly grab the ground, ankles & knees feel lifted
16. Bottom of the foot is hollow & absorbing

D) Back opened and rounded

17. Open the upper back so as to not see the shoulder blades
18. Shoulders relaxed down and level
19. Elbows never straight, point tips down and connect with the knees
20. Wrist curves smoothly, opening slightly outward like the ankles
21. Hand & fingers have a slight smooth curve, palms feel hollow
22. Have a space between the fingers as if holding a ball, the fingertips lightly grabbing
23. Have a space between the thumb & index finger like a half circle “mouth of the tiger”
24. Middle of palms feel absorbing, palms & fingertips feel connected together

Qi exists in posture

When the posture is correct, Qi will flow freely.

Qí (Energy)

“Qi” is the Chinese word that defines the energy of being. All of nature pulsates with it. Human beings, animals, fish, birds and insects along with all the flowers, trees, mountains and seas of the Earth, even the elements of heaven; thunder, lightening, wind and fire, everything shares Qi. It is the common language of the universe, uniting and binding all things together.

Qi is formless, illusive and without tangible qualities. It cannot be seen or touched yet it can be felt and perceived by its effects. Health and disease are characterized by this energy. Good Qi is lively and vigorous, in perfect balance, neither too much, nor too little, but always free flowing and clear like a fresh mountain stream. It manifests itself as flexibility, strength, endurance, confidence and contentment.

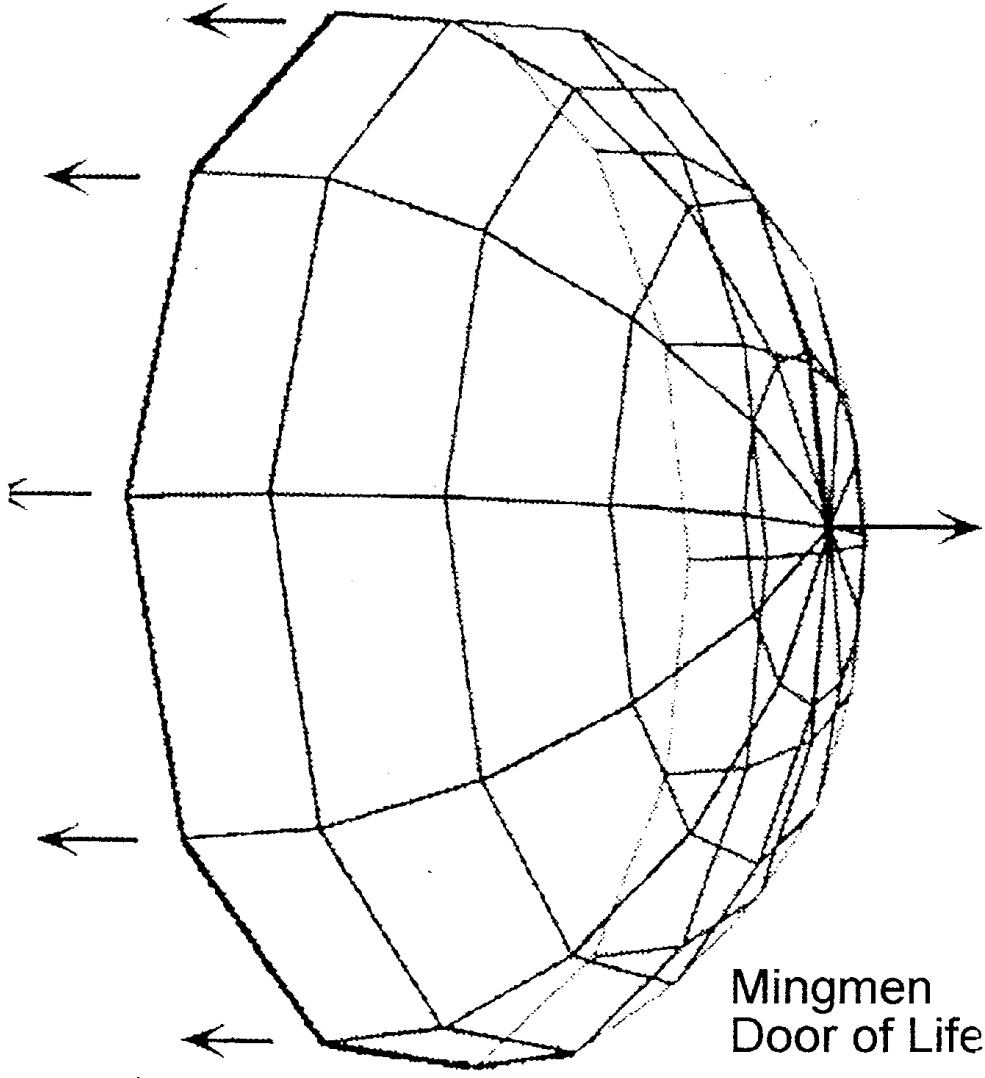
Qi can become blocked and just like a dam that holds back water, on one side exhibiting signs associated with excess: heat, pain, swelling, and stiffness. The longer it is held back the more sluggish and stagnant it will become. On the other side of this blockage, Qi becomes deficient, with symptoms of cold, limpness, weakness, exhaustion, anxiety and confusion. Unbalanced Qi then becomes the basis for illness and distress.

Qi unites and binds us together.

It is the fuel that animates life, everything we do uses it up.

To maintain good health you have to learn how to nurture your Qi.

The ability for Qi to flow smoothly and continuously is based on good posture and a calm mind.



Mingmen
Door of Life

The foundation for the existence of life is based on the combination of three elements.

1. Mind/Spirit

~ the inspiration for being.

Calm the mind and Quiet the heart.
Reduced thought increases Awareness.

2. Posture (Shape)

~ something to contain the being.

“24 Musts”
Centering & Balance
Relaxing while Expanding
Flexible but Rooted

3. Energy (Qi)

~ the power that activates and animates life.

Accumulate – Balance – Circulate (the ABC’s of good Qi management)
Flowing – Smoothly – Continuously (circular)
From the inside out, From the bottom up
Emptiness with Fullness
Inside supports outside – outside protects inside

VERY IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE

Everything has relationship with everything else.

Mind, posture and Qi share an unbreakable bond.

Their careless interaction may either support or conflict with each other.

By our awareness, we can bring balance, coordination and unity to harmonize the interplay.

A fundamental Concept of Tai Chi Chuan

It is ~ It is Not ~ It is

Balance is maintained with counter-balance.

Right movement must have something, at the same time, going left.
Upward must have something going down.
Forward movement must have at the same time, something going backward.

In other words...

If you raise a foot, the tailbone must sink.
If the posture moves lower, the head top extends higher.
If you kick left, there must be an arm moving right.
If you step back, the fingers should reach forward.

Couple all action with its opposite in equal proportion.

Do not move one side and not the other.
Do not move one part too fast and the other too slow.
All must move smoothly and continuously;
Same time, same speed, same motion.

Form Connections

During movements that are opening, something must be closing.
When hands open, elbows close.
Motions that are moving further apart must feel internally connected.
When arms are separating, fingertips feel connected together.
When lifting the foot, you still feel a connection with the ground.
A raised foot is never completely empty.

The cooperation of contradictory opposites =

Balance & Unity

Calm within Moving ↔ Moving within Calm
Relaxing within Expanding ↔ Expanding within Relaxing
Separation within Connection ↔ Connection within Separation
Emptiness within Fullness ↔ Fullness within Emptiness
Firmness within Flowing ↔ Flowing within Firmness
Bend within Straight ↔ Straight within Bend



70% 30% 30% 70%
YANG YIN YANG YIN