



YMAA is dedicated to developing the most clear and in-depth instructional materials to transmit the martial legacy. Our books, videos and DVDs are created in collaboration with master teachers, students and technology experts with a single-minded purpose: to fulfill your individual needs in learning and daily practice.

This downloadable document is intended as a sample only. To order this book, please click on our logo which will take you to this product's page. An order button can be found at the bottom. We hope that you enjoy this preview and encourage you to explore the many other downloadable samples of books, music, and movies throughout our website. Most downloads are found at the bottom of product pages in our Web Store.

### Did you know?

- YMAA hosts one of the most active Qigong and martial arts forums on the internet? Over 5,000 registered users, dozens of categories, and over 10,000 articles.
- YMAA has a free quarterly newsletter containing articles, interviews, product reviews, events, and more.

**YMAA Publication Center**

**楊氏東方文化出版中心**

1-800-669-8892

ymaa@aol.com

www.ymaa.com

THE  
**TAI CHI**  
REFINING AND ENJOYING A LIFETIME OF PRACTICE  
**BOOK**



ROBERT CHUCKROW, Ph.D.

# Contents

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| <b>Author's Note</b> . . . . .  | <b>x</b>    |
| <b>About the Author</b> . . . . .   | <b>x</b>    |
| <b>Romanization of Chinese Words</b> . . . . .                                | <b>xi</b>   |
| <b>Introduction</b> . . . . .   | <b>xiii</b> |
| <b>1. What is T'ai Chi Ch'uan?</b> . . . . .                                  | <b>1</b>    |
| T'ai Chi Ch'uan as a Spiritual Teaching                                       |             |
| T'ai Chi Ch'uan as Meditation   |             |
| T'ai Chi Ch'uan as a System of Exercise, Health, and Healing                  |             |
| Strength • Flexibility • Endurance • Coordination and Reflexes •              |             |
| Alignment • Knowledge of Health and Healing • Attentiveness to                |             |
| Self, Surroundings, and Nature • Patience and a Sense of Timing • Inner       |             |
| Stability and Balance • Memory • Enhanced Visualization                       |             |
| T'ai Chi Ch'uan as an Embodiment of Taoism                                    |             |
| Yin and Yang • Being in the Moment • Principle of Non-Action • The            |             |
| Concept of Zen • Non-Action in Self-Defense • Principle of Non-Intention      |             |
| T'ai Chi Ch'uan as a System of Self-defense                                   |             |
| Some Background • How T'ai Chi Ch'uan is Used for Self-Defense                |             |
| The Interconnectedness of Taoism, Health, Self-Defense, and Meditation        |             |
| <b>2. Ch'i</b> . . . . .  | <b>18</b>   |
| Ch'i Kung • Some Basic Questions • What is Ch'i? • Other Benefits of Ch'i •   |             |
| How is Ch'i Experienced • Is There any Scientific Basis for Ch'i? • Why       |             |
| Some People Fail to Experience Ch'i • Sensing and Cultivating Ch'i • Sending  |             |
| Ch'i • Effect of Clothing on Ch'i • Ch'i From Inanimate Objects • Feng Shui • |             |
| Cautions About Ch'i • To Those for Whom the Concept of Ch'i is Difficult to   |             |
| Accept  |             |
| <b>3. Basic Principles and Concepts</b> . . . . .                             | <b>27</b>   |
| Air   |             |
| Balance   |             |
| Physical Stability of Inanimate Objects • Physical Stability of People •      |             |
| How We Sense Imbalance • The Effect of Others' Actions on Balance •           |             |
| Mental Stability • Balancing of Left and Right Sides                          |             |
| Centering   |             |
| Ch'i  |             |
| Circles   |             |
| Concentration   |             |
| Continuity  |             |
| Double Weighting  |             |
| Examples of Double Weighting  |             |
| Drawing Silk  |             |
| Gravity   |             |
| Levelness of Motion   |             |
| Leverage  |             |
| Macroscopic and Microscopic Movement  |             |
| Newton's First Law  |             |
| Newton's Third Law  |             |
| Opening and Closing of the Thigh Joints                                       |             |
| P'eng   |             |
| Perpetual Motion  |             |
| The Long River • Converting Translational Motion into Rotational Motion       |             |
| Precision   |             |
| Rotation  |             |

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Sensitivity  |           |
| The Effect of the Mind on Sensitivity • A Physiological Factor Affecting Sensitivity: Weber's Law  |           |
| Separation of Yin and Yang   |           |
| Sequence of Motion   |           |
| Shape  |           |
| Spatial Relations  |           |
| Stepping   |           |
| What Part of the Foot Should Contact the Ground First? • Relaxation of the Legs • Relaxation of the Feet • Walking Through Leaves • The Importance of Keeping the Center of Gravity Low During Stepping • The Importance of Additional Bending of the Rooted Knee During Stepping  |           |
| Sticking   |           |
| Strength   |           |
| Sung   |           |
| Suspension of the Head   |           |
| Unity of Movement  |           |
| Verticality of the Axis of the Body  |           |
| Vision   |           |
| Visualization  |           |
| Visualization in Daily life Situations   |           |
| <b>4. Breathing</b>  | <b>58</b> |
| Everyday Breathing   |           |
| The Importance of Efficient Breathing • Reasons for Inefficient Breathing • A Conjecture about the Direct Absorption of Oxygen to the Brain • An Abdominal Breathing Exercise  |           |
| T'ai Chi Ch'uan Breathing  |           |
| A Natural Pattern of Breathing • A Reconciliation of Different Breathing Patterns  |           |
| <b>5. Alignment</b>  | <b>66</b> |
| What is Alignment, and Why is it Important? • Why is it Necessary to Study Alignment? • Obstacles to Reversing Faulty Patterns • A Personal Story • A Story About an Acquaintance • Alignment of the Hand and Wrist • Alignment of the Knees • Alignment of the Ankle • Alignment of the Arch of the Foot • About Parallel Feet • Alignment of the Pelvis • Alignment of the Head • Alignment of the Shoulders • Alignment of the Elbows • Alignment of the Spine • Proper Sitting |           |
| <b>6. Warm-Up and Stretching</b>   | <b>75</b> |
| Flexibility  |           |
| Why Do We Lose Flexibility? • Why is Flexibility Important?  |           |
| Warm-Up  |           |
| Stretching   |           |
| The Benefits of Stretching • The Importance of Stretching Correctly • Monitoring Progress • Arresting or Reversing Inflexibility • Experiencing the Effect of Each Action • Getting Up After Stretching • The Best Time of Day to Stretch • Yawning • Spontaneous Stretching • Stretching Using Gravity • Hanging • Stretching Using Momentum • The Importance of Stretching Equally in Both Directions • The Importance of Repeating Each Stretch • "Cracking" of Joints          |           |
| <b>7. Stances</b>  | <b>83</b> |
| Definitions of Terms   |           |
| Planes and Lines • Terms Describing Stances • Additional Terms   |           |
| Descriptions of the Main Stances   |           |
| Fifty-Fifty Stance with Straight Knees • Meditative Fifty-Fifty Stance • Fifty-Fifty Stance with Bent Knees • Seventy-Thirty Stance • Diagonal Seventy-Thirty Stance • One-Hundred-Percent Stance • A Note of Caution  |           |

**8. On Being a Student. . . . . 91**

- T'ai Chi Ch'uan Practice
  - The Importance of Practice
  - Class is Not Practice
  - Continuity of Practice
  - Group or Individual Practice?
  - How Long Should You Practice?
  - Indoor or Outdoor Practice?
  - Time of Day for Practice
  - Self-Discipline
  - Fear of Mistakes
  - The Mind During Practice
  - Ways of Practicing
    - At Different Speeds • Mirror Image • Blindfolded or in the Dark •  
Compressed • Expanded • Extra low • On Different Surfaces • In  
Different Directions or Places • In Your Mind • Stopping and  
Repeating a Move or Part of a Move • Emphasizing a Principle or Idea
  - Supplementary Exercises
  - Exercises for Improving Balance
  - Use of a Mirror
  - Use of Music or a Metronome
  - Practice in Everyday Life
  - Eating Before or After Practice
  - “Cool-Down” of the Leg Muscles
- Teachers
  - Choosing a Teacher
  - Methods of T'ai Chi Ch'uan Teachers
  - Asking Questions in Class
  - Attitude Toward the Teacher
  - “Perfect Masters”
- Advice to Beginners
- The Learning Process
  - Goal Orientation
  - A Tale about a Ruler and an Artist
  - How is Progress Measured?
  - Perfectionism
  - Words and Speech
  - Images
  - Critical Evaluation of Ideas
  - Learning From Books
  - Learning From a Videotape
  - Learning From Dreams
  - Taking Notes in Class
  - Keeping a Journal

**9. Health, Healing, and Sexuality. . . . . 123**

- What is Health?
- How is Optimal Health Attained?
- Injuries
  - Learning from Injuries • Pain • Treating Injuries • Ch'i • Dit Da Jow •  
Broken Bones Bruises • Sprains • Tendonitis • Cuts • Scrapes • Infections •  
Massage • Rubs
- Vision
  - Palming
- Feet
  - Arches • Four Reasons Why Fallen Arches are Harmful • Rehabilitation of . . . . .  
Fallen Arches • Effect of Excessive Weight • Foot Exercises

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| Footwear  |            |
| Heels on Shoes • Wearing-Down of Heels • Ideal Footwear                 |            |
| Nutrition   |            |
| T'ai Chi Ch'uan and Optimal Body Weight                                 |            |
| Sexuality   |            |
| Taoist Sexual Practices • Ginseng • Sex Fast                            |            |
| Sleep   |            |
| Naps • Sleep Amounts • Pillows  |            |
| <b>10. Miscellaneous . . . . .</b>                                      | <b>141</b> |
| Male and Female Practitioners   |            |
| Art and T'ai Chi Ch'uan   |            |
| Dance and T'ai Chi Ch'uan   |            |
| Science and T'ai Chi Ch'uan   |            |
| Comparison of the Short and Long Forms                                  |            |
| Variations in Interpretation of the T'ai Chi Ch'uan Movements           |            |
| Straight or Bent Rear Leg? • Why Does the Rear Foot Pivot on the        |            |
| Heel Rather Than the Toe? • Pivoting of the Empty Foot in "Brush Knee"  |            |
| • Straight or Bent Wrist? • Pre-Positioning the Rear Foot at the        |            |
| Beginning of a Movement Compared with Pivoting it at the at the End     |            |
| T'ai Chi Ch'uan Compared to "Aerobic" Exercise                          |            |
| Other Teachings   |            |
| <b>11. Push-Hands Basics . . . . .</b>                                  | <b>150</b> |
| One-Handed Push-Hands   |            |
| Two-Handed Push-Hands   |            |
| Moving Push-Hands   |            |
| Basic Concepts of Push-Hands  |            |
| Concept of T'ai Chi • Yielding • Neutralization • Returning • Receiving |            |
| Energy • Correct Force (Softness) • Rooting and Redirecting             |            |
| Push-Hands Principles   |            |
| Use of Minimum Force when Neutralizing • Sticking • "Listening" •       |            |
| Non-Action • Replacement • Folding • Opposite Palms • Contacting an     |            |
| Opponent • Neutralizing Before Returning                                |            |
| Miscellaneous Concepts  |            |
| Importance of Stance • Circles • Equilibrium • Action and Reaction •    |            |
| Newton's Third Law and the Push-Hands Uproot • Controlling the          |            |
| Opponent's Balance • T'i Fang • Examples of T'i Fang • Mobilizing       |            |
| Intrinsic Energy • Stepping In • Grabbing • Pulling • Use of Speed •    |            |
| Push-Hands Versus Self-Defense • "Taking Punches"                       |            |
| Attitude  |            |
| Investment in Loss • "Feeding" the Beginner • Cooperation and Sharing   |            |
| of Knowledge Versus Competition   |            |
| <b>Appendix Postures of Cheng Man-ch'ing's Short Form . . . . .</b>     | <b>177</b> |
| Names of Postures   |            |
| Description of the Movements  |            |
| Photographs of the Postures and Transitions                             |            |
| <b>Bibliography . . . . .</b>   | <b>204</b> |
| <b>Index . . . . .</b>  | <b>206</b> |

# What is T'ai Chi Ch'uan?

In April, 1970, I had been pursuing a rigorous program of calisthenics, running, and diet. I had read every book that I could on nutrition and health. An artist friend said to me, "With your interest in exercise and health, you should visit the T'ai Chi Ch'uan Association where I am studying calligraphy." With little idea of what T'ai Chi Ch'uan was, I took my friend's advice and went to Cheng Man-ch'ing's school at 211 Canal Street, in Chinatown, New York City.

Canal Street was familiar to me, as I had frequented the electronics and hardware stores there hundreds of times and eaten in numerous Chinatown restaurants. As I looked for number 211, a remarkable incident occurred. A woman whom I did not know (but who, it turned out, was a student at the school) walked up to me, pointed upward, and said, "The T'ai Chi Ch'uan school is up there."

When I walked to the inner door of the school, the first thing I noticed was a skillfully hand-lettered sign stating, "Please remove street footwear upon entering." Immediately, a tall Chinese man greeted me and invited me in to watch.

I saw a number of people dressed in a non-uniform manner, doing movements that seemed very strange to me. Many of the students did not appear to possess much physical strength. Evaluating what I saw in terms of my emphasis on muscle building, I thought to myself that these "ridiculous" movements could be of some value if they were done faster, with a ten-pound weight in each hand. As a self-righteous weight-watcher, I looked with disdain at a few students whose bodily shapes I did not associate with a school for health and fitness.

The class ended, and a different class began in which all of the students had wooden swords. A quite stocky student in this class began doing movements with impressive grace, balance, and agility. My disdain suddenly disappeared, and I reasoned that, if a person that heavy could move with such extraordinary coordination, there must be something to this strange exercise. My curiosity fully aroused, I asked the tall Chinese man what benefit I could expect from studying T'ai Chi Ch'uan. He answered, "It is different for each person." Not only did this answer intrigue me at the time, but I eventually realized the truth of it. It embodies an important Taoist precept: *Defining things limits them.*

It is impossible to convey what T'ai Chi Ch'uan is in a book of *any* length. The art must be experienced directly for a substantial period of time. The concepts of T'ai Chi Ch'uan, which have approximate parallels in physics, psychology, physiology, spiritual teachings, and religion, intertwine in a complex and mysterious manner.

Even though T'ai Chi Ch'uan is complex and is experienced uniquely by each practitioner, it is still possible to characterize it in certain respects.

T'ai Chi Ch'uan is Chinese. While no one knows exactly how old it is, it dates back, *at the very least*, to 1750 A.D. Certainly, its principles of action are rooted in knowledge and philosophy that have developed over thousands of years.

T'ai Chi Ch'uan encompasses the following five interrelated aspects. Each of these aspects will be treated in detail.

- It is a spiritual teaching.
- It is a form of meditation.
- It is a system of health and healing.
- It is the physical expression of the ancient Chinese philosophy of Taoism.
- It is a system of self-defense.

#### **T'AI CHI CH'UAN AS A SPIRITUAL TEACHING**

The main purpose in studying a spiritual teaching is to come into harmony with the universe. Many of us are out of harmony in some manner. Wars, poverty, and disease all stem from a collective lack of harmony. Addressing these problems by trying to get others to change is certainly valid. However, the basic assumption underlying most spiritual teachings is that we were placed in the world primarily for our own inner growth and, secondarily, to help others to grow. Thus, individuals must work to eliminate in *themselves* those attitudes that, on a world-wide scale, lead to war, poverty, and sickness. Through inner-growth, the individual makes a *direct* contribution to the harmony of the world but, also, influences others to change by example.

T'ai Chi Ch'uan emphasizes (a) becoming aware of the relationship of all the parts of one's body to each other and to the environment and (b) moving these parts harmoniously under the direction of the mind. For most of us, complex movement, such as walking, was learned by trial and error in a haphazard manner. Without special training, our awareness of bodily parts and their interrelationship is minimal.

Learning to move harmoniously is much more than a physical exercise. Disharmonious bodily movement is a result of faulty messages sent by the mind to the bodily parts. With practice, the student learns to send messages that result in a fluidity of movement. While the vehicle is the physical body, the development is mainly that of the mind. Practicing the movements of T'ai Chi Ch'uan strengthens



bones, organs, glands, and muscles, but, at the same time, the mind is diverted from its usual mechanical mode to one that leads to increased harmony. Soon the practitioner begins to cultivate a similar harmony when approaching other pursuits.

After a student's solo movements have been sufficiently corrected, a two-person exercise called *push-hands* is taught. In push-hands practice, two students face off and alternately attack and defend using four reciprocal movements from the solo form. One main idea of push-hands is learning to yield rather than clash when attacked. Yielding does not mean that the defender gives up. In fact, T'ai Chi Ch'uan is a very effective means of defeating a skilled attacker.

Push-hands practice not only provides a foundation for self-defense but teaches principles of harmonious action. Being in harmony requires flexibility in thought and the ability to release an idea or preconception arising from the ego or societal programming. Yielding involves being in the moment instead of reacting in a routine or haphazard manner. Acting routinely (the same way every time) and acting haphazardly (in a random fashion) both involve inattentiveness. Neither of these ways of reacting takes into account the details of any particular situation. Eliminating routine or haphazard actions and replacing them by thoughtful actions predicated on centuries-old principles requires a willingness to discover and eliminate one's weaknesses. Through push-hands, practitioners become aware of their own imbalance, tension, resistance, and impulsive responses and are then able to correct them.

As students begin to see themselves clearly, there may be periods of alienation and isolation rather than connectedness to the universe as their disharmony becomes increasingly evident. Students may tend to blame themselves or others for their spiritual distress. Blaming ourselves makes taking responsibility for our actions painful. Avoidance of this pain leads to blaming others. But to blame others is to shun responsibility. This problem can be avoided by learning to observe actions without blame. Eliminating blame cultivates patience and the ability to forgive ourselves or others when we or they fall short of perfection. Push-hands practice develops a true spirit of cooperation that helps us to be objective and blameless when looking at our own or others' shortcomings. The proper practice of push-hands greatly accelerates spiritual growth and leads to true harmony.

Patience and the curbing of impulsiveness are attained through the study of T'ai Chi Ch'uan because we learn to accept our own natural rate of change. The growth process is likened to water wearing away rocks. We know from geology that water acting over sufficiently long periods of time can cause mountains to be turned into valleys. While most of us are unaware of the daily progress of geological changes, we are occasionally impressed with the cumulative effects such as rivers and gorges. Similarly, after regularly practicing the T'ai Chi Ch'uan movements over a period of time, we may suddenly become aware of how much we have changed in our approach to the world. However, this change is so natural and gradual that it is often barely noticeable.

## T'AI CHI CH'UAN AS MEDITATION

Most people associate meditation with sitting in a stationary position rather than being upright and moving, as is the case with T'ai Chi Ch'uan. Let us therefore consider what meditation is in terms of the operation of the mind.

There are two main modes in which the mind operates: the mechanical and the direct. The mechanical mode is the everyday, practical one. In the mechanical mode, language is used to process sensory data from the physical world. Language is extremely powerful because it contains a body of accumulated knowledge. Unfortunately, language also contains the distortions, prejudices, opinions, and limitations of ourselves and others. Of course, the mechanical mode and its corresponding use of language has a valid function connected with our important existence in the physical world.

The direct mode is that of being in the moment. In this mode, the mind experiences directly rather than characterizing through language. The direct mode is unencumbered by self-blame, preconceptions, thoughts of either the past or future, opinions, prejudices, and limiting characterizations such as male/female, married/single, rich/poor, smart/stupid. Unfortunately, most people disregard and lose access to the direct mode.

During meditation, the mind shifts from the ordinary, mechanical mode to the direct mode for a period of time. The mind thus regains perspective by temporarily shedding the strong influences of the everyday world. In sitting meditation, the direct mode is attained by subduing the physical senses of sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste. This shift helps to eliminate thinking in terms of language.

Activities in which the mind is keenly attuned to inner natural processes such as breathing, tension of muscles, and circulation of ch'i<sup>1</sup> encourage discovering and experiencing directly instead of through words. Such activities lead to a meditative state by subduing emotions, expectations, preconceptions, comparisons, and characterizations. That is why many types of meditation begin by turning the attention inward to one's breathing or to the colors and patterns "seen" through closed eyes.

T'ai Chi Ch'uan differs from sitting meditation because it involves movement and emphasizes that which enters through the senses. However, practicing T'ai Chi Ch'uan helps shift the mind from everyday cares to an attunement with inner and outer natural phenomena. Events are experienced directly rather than abstractly, through words. Therefore T'ai Chi Ch'uan is a form of meditation.

During a radio interview in his later years, J. Krishnamurti said, "Meditation is understanding one's relationship with nature and the depth of life." We think of nature as trees, birds, insects, fresh air, sunlight, clouds, etc. It is to be remembered, however, that the same laws of nature that govern trees, clouds, etc., are also manifested in each of us. T'ai Chi Ch'uan brings us into touch with nature in a direct manner. The advantage is that, with T'ai Chi Ch'uan, only a mental com-

mitment and a four-foot by four-foot area of level floor are needed. As one of my esteemed students, Madeleine Perret, who is in her eighties, said, "T'ai Chi Ch'uan does not require much space—just a mind to do it."

*Without leaving his door one can understand the world.*

*Without glancing out of the window one can see the Tao of heaven.*

*The further one travels, the less one knows.<sup>2</sup>*

## T'AI CHI CH'UAN AS A SYSTEM OF EXERCISE, HEALTH, AND HEALING

For many people, exercise amounts to self-flagellation. They push and force the body beyond its limitations with little regard to the consequences. This disregard stems from goal orientation. Almost from birth, many of us are taught the erroneous idea that the result of an endeavor is more important than the process by which the result is achieved. Unfortunately, we accept this misconception.

Striving to achieve a goal by moving in a painful or harmful manner leads to an unconscious sense of vulnerability and results in a dread of exercise and even of movement itself. Stringent mental discipline is then required to initiate such exercise. Aside from causing immediate injury, forcing the body habituates faulty patterns of movement. These patterns become reflex actions, thus increasing the probability of an injury in daily life.

By contrast, if done correctly, exercise is an enjoyable, educational, and spontaneous process. Moving the body in a natural and harmonious manner gives us joy and renewed energy and generates a genuine desire to do exercise. Forms of exercise such as T'ai Chi Ch'uan teach optimal body use in daily life.

The following is a list of benefits, some of which are usually connected with exercise. These benefits are discussed in terms of the higher dimension of exercise encompassed by T'ai Chi Ch'uan.

**Strength.** Many people who are interested in attaining fitness overemphasize the importance of contractive muscular strength. While being strong is beneficial, it is necessary to let go of contractive muscular tension when the situation demands. The other side of strength is the ability to yield when appropriate. The entire range of *refined* (rather than *awkward*) strength, from complete relaxation to steel-like forcefulness, should be accessible to us. Instead, many untrained people are almost continually in a state of "driving with the brakes on." When one muscle is unknowingly pitted against an opposing muscle, the ability to physically react quickly and smoothly to an emergency is lost, and sensitivity to sensory stimuli is lowered. Note that muscular strength alone does not imply an ability to defend oneself. A person with a high degree of muscular strength can be easily overcome by a less muscular person who has a greater knowledge of timing and efficient body usage.

The strength of bones, organs (heart, lungs, kidneys, etc.), and the nervous system is far more important than muscular strength. In fact, health problems

result more from an excess than from a deficiency of muscular strength. Fixations of muscular strength constrict organs, glands, blood vessels, and the muscles themselves. These constrictions both diminish the ability of the blood to provide nutrients and oxygen and impede the removal of wastes. Finally, muscular fixations disrupt the natural and beneficial flow of ch'i.

T'ai Chi Ch'uan strengthens the bones and vital organs. At the same time it trains the mind to send the appropriate nerve impulses to the muscles.

In T'ai Chi Ch'uan, a high degree of strength is achieved. However, this strength is not the familiar contractive strength, which is awkward and unreliable. Instead, T'ai Chi Ch'uan cultivates relaxed but expansive strength. More will be said on the distinction between contractive and expansive strength in chapter 3.

**Flexibility.** Flexibility has two aspects: extensibility and pliability.

*Extensibility* is the ability of the muscles to move through the full range allowed by the physiological structure of the joints. We are born with a full range of extensibility. This range diminishes because of misuse or lack of use of our bodies. With educated use, such deterioration need not occur and can actually be reversed.

*Pliability* is the ability to adapt to the situation at hand through movement and requires that the mind send appropriate messages to the muscles to use whatever range of extensibility the person possesses. It is possible for a person to be potentially quite flexible but not be flexible when it is required. This deficiency results from the improper processing of sensory data and from a consequent lack of appropriate nerve impulses to the muscles. T'ai Chi Ch'uan trains us to process sensory data and react quickly, efficiently, and appropriately in an unexpected situation. Thus, the meditative, self-defense, and health aspects merge.

**Endurance.** We tend to think of endurance in the context of temporarily demanding activities such as a race or the repeated lifting of a weight. Another facet of endurance, however, is that of persevering over an extended period of time, patiently using knowledge of natural rates rather than trying to accomplish things all at once. The concept of endurance is an important aspect of Kung Fu.<sup>3</sup> True perseverance also involves knowing when to stop, when to rest, and when to turn to another activity in order to optimize progress over the long haul.

Here, goal orientation plays a significant role. It is common for those who are pursuing what would otherwise be a constructive regimen, to overdo, thereby squandering their effort. In some cases severe harm is done by pushing the body beyond its limits. It is not hard to find cases of athletes who have suffered injuries this way. Sometimes it takes more self-discipline to limit one's activity than to overdo it. It requires an inner security to know that, with perseverance over time, a beneficial result will inevitably occur.

**Coordination and Reflexes.** *Coordination* is the ability of the mind to direct the body parts to move efficiently and harmoniously. *Reflexes* are spontaneous responses to situations and occur without conscious thought. Properly coordinated reflex actions result from prior repetition of similar coordinated actions. Coordina-

meant that, to understand a situation, one must let go of all preconceptions and be empty, thereby allowing creative insight to penetrate.

*In pursuing knowledge, one accumulates daily.  
In practicing Tao, one loses daily.*

—Lao Tzu, (Ch. 48)

In the practice of the T'ai Chi Ch'uan solo form, we shed any prior ideas of how a body should move. Observing the natural manner in which all body parts move develops an open and efficient approach to learning. Similarly, in push-hands practice, we follow the moves of our partner rather than coercing him/her into a weaker position. Professor Cheng termed this approach *investment in loss*. At the beginning, false results can be obtained by incorrect means, e.g., using contractive muscular strength. Cultivation of the correct principles means foregoing initial false success but makes one stronger in the long run.

#### **T'AI CHI CH'UAN AS A SYSTEM OF SELF-DEFENSE**

**Some Background.** Because T'ai Chi Ch'uan is so peaceful, it is possible for some who study T'ai Chi Ch'uan never to think of it as pertaining to fighting. Nevertheless, T'ai Chi Ch'uan is a martial art. In fact, at one time T'ai Chi Ch'uan was the most highly regarded system of fighting and was kept a strict secret by the members of the Chen family. About a century-and-a-half ago, Yang Lu-Chan was a servant for the Chen family. Legend has it that one night Yang awoke before dawn. Hearing a commotion in the courtyard, he investigated and saw the Chen family secretly practicing T'ai Chi Ch'uan. Yang recognized the high level of training he witnessed. Thereafter, he watched night after night.

One night during practice, there was an occurrence that was so exciting that Yang forgot himself and yelled out. He was discovered and was then required to show what he knew. Because he had absorbed so much of what he had seen, Yang was “adopted” by the Chen family and was taught T'ai Chi Ch'uan freely.

Yang went on to become a famous fighter and win many tournaments. As a result, he was summoned to teach the Imperial Court T'ai Chi Ch'uan. Because he could not reveal what he had been secretly taught, he originated a modified version that would also be more suitable to aristocrats for whom it would be inappropriate to do certain highly martial movements. Nevertheless, Yang retained the essential philosophical concepts. “Yang-style” T'ai Chi Ch'uan then became public.

Today the Chen style is still secret, although modified public versions exist. The Chen style remains the most martial and retains explosive and physically demanding movements interspersed with subtle ones. The Yang style is more subdued. While the Yang style is a powerful system of fighting, many Yang-style practitioners pursue the health and spiritual aspects more than the martial aspects.

My first teacher, Cheng Man-ch'ing, studied with Yang Cheng-fu, a grandson of Yang Lu-chan. Cheng introduced a number of modifications, the most notable of

APPENDIX

# The Thirty-Seven Postures of Cheng Man-ch'ing's Short Form

**Comments:**

1. See chapter 7 for a discussion of the basic stances and for definitions of the terms referring to them.
2. All the figures showing the transitions and final postures are at the end of this Appendix.

## NAMES OF POSTURES

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Preparation                                | 20. Step Back to Repulse Monkey, Left Side            |
| 2. Beginning                                  | 21. Diagonal Flying                                   |
| 3. Ward off with Left Hand                    | 22. Cloud Hands, Left                                 |
| 4. Ward off with Right Hand                   | 23. Cloud Hands, Right                                |
| 5. Roll Back                                  | 24. Descending Single Whip                            |
| 6. Press                                      | 25. Golden Cock Stands on One Leg, Right Side         |
| 7. Push                                       | 26. Golden Cock Stands on One Leg, Left Side          |
| 8. Single Whip                                | 27. Separate Right Foot                               |
| 9. Lift Hands                                 | 28. Separate Left Foot                                |
| 10. Strike with Shoulder                      | 29. Turn and Kick with Heel                           |
| 11. White Crane Spreads Wings                 | 30. Brush Knee, Right                                 |
| 12. Brush Knee, Left                          | 31. Step Forward and Strike Downward                  |
| 13. Hands Playing the P'i P'a                 | 32. The Fairy Weaving at the Shuttle (NE)             |
| 14. Step Forward, Deflect Downward, and Punch | 33. The Fairy Weaving at the Shuttle (NW)             |
| 15. Withdraw and Push                         | 34. Step Forward to the Seven Stars of the Big Dipper |
| 16. Cross Hands                               | 35. Step Back to Ride the Tiger                       |
| 17. Embrace Tiger, Return to Mountain         | 36. Turn the Body to Sweep the Lotus                  |
| 18. Looking at Fist Under Elbow               | 37. Bend the Bow to Shoot the Tiger                   |
| 19. Step Back to Repulse Monkey, Right Side   |   |



Fig. A-1



Fig. A-2



Fig. A-3



Fig. A-4

## DESCRIPTION OF THE MOVEMENTS

### 1. Preparation

Stand facing north<sup>1</sup> with heels together and arms hanging at the sides (Fig. A-1). Lower the body by shifting the weight 100% onto the right foot. At the same time, the arms become alive and slightly bent at the elbows, and the hands rotate so that both palms face the rear. Next, step sideways with the left foot so that the heel moves directly west a distance of one shoulder width. In doing so, turn the body slightly to the right, rotating the left foot inward so that when it touches the ground, the center line of the left foot lies on a north-south line (Fig. A-2). Next, shift the weight to the left foot. Then turn the body slightly to the left, pivoting the right foot inward on the heel until its center line also lies on a north-south line. Next, shift the weight 50% onto the right foot, and at the same time, come up to standing with the knees straight but not locked. The palms of the hands face the rear, elbows slightly bent, and the thumbs are at the centers of the sides of the thighs. Both feet should be parallel, pointing north, and a shoulder width apart. Both heels should lie on an east-west line (Fig. A-3).



Fig. A-5



Fig. A-6



Fig. A-7



Fig. A-8

## 2. Beginning

Keeping the knees straight but loose, lift both arms until the tops of the wrists are at shoulder level. The hands, elbows, and shoulders droop. The elbows are slightly bent. When the wrists reach shoulder level, they stop (Fig. A-4). Next, the hands continue to rotate upward until they are parallel to the floor, with the middle finger of each hand pointing forward (Fig. A-5). Next, the elbows bend and lower, so that the wrists move toward the body and slightly downward until the elbows are slightly behind the back, and the tops of the wrists are at armpit level. While the wrists are moving inward, they flex, so that the hands remain parallel to the floor, and the middle fingers continue to point directly forward (Fig. A-6). Next, the wrists lower and flex, so that the fingers now point slightly upward. When the wrists reach their lowest position, with elbows slightly bent (Fig. A-7), the hands then rotate downward until the wrists are in their centered positions. The palm of each hand faces rearward with the thumb midway between the front and back of the thigh (Fig. A-8).

**Comments:** See chapter 7 for a discussion of the fifty-fifty stance with straight knees.





Fig. A-9



Fig. A-10



Fig. A-11



Fig. A-12

### 3. Ward off with Left Hand

Shift the weight 100% onto the left foot, and simultaneously turn the body to the right. At the same time, the right foot pivots on its heel to point eastward, and the hands move to a position of holding a large ball in front of the center of the chest, with the right hand above, the left hand below, and both palms facing each other (Fig. A-9). Then shift the weight 100% onto the right foot. While you are shifting the weight, the left heel rises slightly off the ground in preparation for a step. Next, turn your body slightly to the left. At the same time, step northward with the left foot, keeping the shoulder width of the previous posture (Fig. A-10). Next, the weight shifts 70% onto the left foot, so that the knee reaches a vertical line through the tip of the middle toe of the left foot (Fig. A-11). Next, turn the body to face north, simultaneously pivoting the right foot on its heel to point northeastward. At the same time, the left hand circles to a position in front of the center of the chest, palm facing inward, and the right hand moves vertically down, ending up with the palm facing the rear near the right thigh (Fig. A-12).

**Comments:** This is a 70-30 position facing north (see chapter 7). One of the most common errors is that of losing the width of the stance during stepping. It is essential that the left foot step northward without arcing toward the east.



## GET THE MOST FROM YOUR TAI CHI PRACTICE

The Tai Chi Book is a detailed guide for students who have learned a Tai Chi form and want to know more. It also introduces beginners to the principles behind great Tai Chi, and answers common questions.

The Tai Chi Book shows you how to use Tai Chi to gain strength, how to improve your balance and flexibility, and how to achieve remarkable vitality.

The author also introduces complex elements of Tai Chi, including ways to develop the relaxed strength known as *sung*, how to cultivate and feel Chi, how to train mindfulness, and a helpful chapter on being a student.

In addition, the author explores the debate over Tai Chi breathing patterns, explains in detail proper body alignment, and tells why Pushing Hands is more important than you might think.

The Tai Chi Book is your guide to the fullest health benefits of Tai Chi and to higher levels of skill and ability.

- Like two books in one—basic and advanced Tai Chi training.
- Find out how to choose and relate to a teacher.
- Develop remarkable vitality and longevity.
- Includes the Cheng Man-ch'ing short form.
- More than one hundred photos and illustrations.



*Robert Chuckrow has practiced Tai Chi Chuan since 1970, and has studied under renowned masters Cheng Man-ch'ing and William C. C. Chen. Chuckrow has a Ph.D. in experimental physics from NYU. He teaches physics at the Fieldstone School in Riverdale, NY and teaches Tai Chi Chuan in Northern Westchester. Chuckrow resides in Ossining, NY.*

YMAA PUBLICATION CENTER

(800) 669 - 8892

WWW.YMAA.COM

YMAA@AOL.COM

楊氏東方文化出版中心



ISBN 1-886969-64-7



9 781886 969643 5 2095

US \$20.95

## BOOKS FROM YMAA

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| 6 HEALING MOVEMENTS   | B906  |
| 101 REFLECTIONS ON TAI CHI CHUAN                                    | B868  |
| 108 INSIGHTS INTO TAI CHI CHUAN — A STRING OF PEARLS                | B582  |
| A WOMAN'S QIGONG GUIDE  | B833  |
| ADVANCING IN TAE KWON DO  | B072X |
| ANCIENT CHINESE WEAPONS   | B671  |
| ANALYSIS OF SHAOLIN CHIN NA 2ND ED.                                 | B0002 |
| ARTHRITIS RELIEF — CHINESE QIGONG FOR HEALING & PREVENTION, 3RD ED. | B0339 |
| BACK PAIN RELIEF — CHINESE QIGONG FOR HEALING & PREVENTION 2ND ED.  | B0258 |
| BAGUAZHANG  | B300  |
| CHIN NA IN GROUND FIGHTING  | B663  |
| CHINESE FAST WRESTLING — THE ART OF SAN SHOU KUAI JIAO              | B493  |
| CHINESE FITNESS — A MIND / BODY APPROACH                            | B37X  |
| CHINESE TUI NA MASSAGE  | B043  |
| COMPLETE CARDIOKICKBOXING   | B809  |
| COMPREHENSIVE APPLICATIONS OF SHAOLIN CHIN NA                       | B36X  |
| DR. WU'S HEAD MASSAGE—ANTI-AGING AND HOLISTIC HEALING THERAPY       | B0576 |
| EIGHT SIMPLE QIGONG EXERCISES FOR HEALTH, 2ND ED.                   | B523  |
| ESSENCE OF SHAOLIN WHITE CRANE                                      | B353  |
| ESSENCE OF TAIJI QIGONG, 2ND ED.                                    | B639  |
| EXPLORING TAI CHI   | B424  |
| FIGHTING ARTS   | B213  |
| INSIDE TAI CHI  | B108  |
| KATA AND THE TRANSMISSION OF KNOWLEDGE                              | B0266 |
| LIUHEBAFA FIVE CHARACTER SECRETS                                    | B728  |
| MARTIAL ARTS ATHLETE  | B655  |
| MARTIAL ARTS INSTRUCTION  | B024X |
| MARTIAL WAY AND ITS VIRTUES   | B698  |
| MIND/BODY FITNESS   | B876  |
| NATURAL HEALING WITH QIGONG — THERAPEUTIC QIGONG                    | B0010 |
| NORTHERN SHAOLIN SWORD, 2ND ED.                                     | B85X  |
| OKINAWA'S COMPLETE KARATE SYSTEM — ISSHIN RYU                       | B914  |
| POWER BODY  | B760  |
| PRINCIPLES OF TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE                          | B99X  |
| QIGONG FOR HEALTH & MARTIAL ARTS 2ND ED.                            | B574  |
| QIGONG FOR LIVING   | B116  |
| QIGONG FOR TREATING COMMON AILMENTS                                 | B701  |
| QIGONG MASSAGE 2ND ED. —FUND. TECHNIQUES FOR HEALTH AND RELAXATION  | B0487 |
| QIGONG MEDITATION — EMBRYONIC BREATHING                             | B736  |
| QIGONG MEDITATION—SMALL CIRCULATION                                 | B0673 |
| QIGONG, THE SECRET OF YOUTH   | B841  |
| ROOT OF CHINESE QIGONG, 2ND ED.                                     | B507  |
| SHIHAN TE — THE BUNKAI OF KATA                                      | B884  |
| SUNRISE TAI CHI   | B0838 |
| SURVIVING ARMED ASSAULTS  | B0711 |
| TAEKWONDO — ANCIENT WISDOM FOR THE MODERN WARRIOR                   | B930  |
| TAEKWONDO — SPIRIT AND PRACTICE                                     | B221  |
| TAO OF BIOENERGETICS  | B289  |
| TAI CHI BOOK  | B647  |
| TAI CHI CHUAN — 24 & 48 POSTURES                                    | B337  |
| TAI CHI CHUAN MARTIAL APPLICATIONS, 2ND ED.                         | B442  |
| TAI CHI CONNECTIONS   | B0320 |
| TAI CHI SECRETS OF THE ANCIENT MASTERS                              | B71X  |
| TAI CHI SECRETS OF THE WU & LI STYLES                               | B981  |
| TAI CHI SECRETS OF THE WU STYLE                                     | B175  |
| TAI CHI SECRETS OF THE YANG STYLE                                   | B094  |
| TAI CHI THEORY & MARTIAL POWER, 2ND ED.                             | B434  |
| TAI CHI WALKING   | B23X  |
| TAIJI CHIN NA   | B378  |
| TAIJI SWORD, CLASSICAL YANG STYLE                                   | B744  |
| TAIJIQUAN, CLASSICAL YANG STYLE                                     | B68X  |
| TAIJIQUAN THEORY OF DR. YANG, JWING-MING                            | B432  |
| THE CUTTING SEASON  | B0821 |
| THE WAY OF KATA—A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO DECIPHERING MARTIAL APPS.  | B0584 |
| THE WAY OF KENDO AND KENJITSU                                       | B0029 |
| THE WAY OF SANCHIN KATA   | B0845 |
| TRADITIONAL CHINESE HEALTH SECRETS                                  | B892  |
| TRADITIONAL TAEKWONDO—CORE TECHNIQUES, HISTORY, AND PHILOSOPHY      | B0665 |
| XINGYIQUAN, 2ND ED.   | B416  |

*more products available from...*

**YMAA Publication Center, Inc.** 楊氏東方文化出版中心

4354 Washington Street Roslindale, MA 02131

1-800-669-8892 • ymaa@aol.com • www.ymaa.com



## VIDEOS FROM YMAA

|  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
| ADVANCED PRACTICAL CHIN NA — 1, 2                          | T0061, T007X              |
| ARTHRITIS RELIEF — CHINESE QIGONG FOR HEALING & PREVENTION | T558                      |
| BACK PAIN RELIEF — CHINESE QIGONG FOR HEALING & PREVENTION | T566                      |
| CHINESE QIGONG MASSAGE — SELF                              | T327                      |
| CHINESE QIGONG MASSAGE — PARTNER                           | T335                      |
| COMP. APPLICATIONS OF SHAOLIN CHIN NA 1, 2                 | T386, T394                |
| EMEI BAGUAZHANG 1, 2, 3                                    | T280, T299, T302          |
| EIGHT SIMPLE QIGONG EXERCISES FOR HEALTH 2ND ED.           | T54X                      |
| ESSENCE OF TAIJI QIGONG                                    | T238                      |
| NORTHERN SHAOLIN SWORD — SAN CAI JIAN & ITS APPLICATIONS   | T051                      |
| NORTHERN SHAOLIN SWORD — KUN WU JIAN & ITS APPLICATIONS    | T06X                      |
| NORTHERN SHAOLIN SWORD — QI MEN JIAN & ITS APPLICATIONS    | T078                      |
| QIGONG: 15 MINUTES TO HEALTH                               | T140                      |
| SHAOLIN KUNG FU BASIC TRAINING — 1, 2                      | T0045, T0053              |
| SHAOLIN LONG FIST KUNG FU — TWELVE TAN TUI                 | T159                      |
| SHAOLIN LONG FIST KUNG FU — LIEN BU CHUAN                  | T19X                      |
| SHAOLIN LONG FIST KUNG FU — GUNG LI CHUAN                  | T203                      |
| SHAOLIN LONG FIST KUNG FU — YI LU MEI FU & ER LU MAI FU    | T256                      |
| SHAOLIN LONG FIST KUNG FU — SHI ZI TANG                    | T264                      |
| SHAOLIN LONG FIST KUNG FU — XIAO HU YAN                    | T604                      |
| SHAOLIN WHITE CRANE GONG FU — BASIC TRAINING 1, 2, 3       | T440, T459, T0185         |
| SIMPLIFIED TAI CHI CHUAN — 24 & 48                         | T329                      |
| SUN STYLE TAIJIQUAN  | T469                      |
| TAI CHI CHUAN & APPLICATIONS — 24 & 48                     | T485                      |
| TAI CHI FIGHTING SET                                       | T0363                     |
| TAIJI BALL QIGONG — 1, 2, 3, 4                             | T475, T483, T0096, T010X  |
| TAIJI CHIN NA IN DEPTH — 1, 2, 3, 4                        | T0282, T0290, T0304, T031 |
| TAIJI PUSHING HANDS — 1, 2, 3, 4                           | T505, T513, T0134, T0142  |
| TAIJI SABER  | T491                      |
| TAIJI & SHAOLIN STAFF — FUNDAMENTAL TRAINING — 1, 2        | T0088, T0347              |
| TAIJI SWORD, CLASSICAL YANG STYLE                          | T817                      |
| TAIJI WRESTLING — 1, 2                                     | T037, T038X               |
| TAIJI YIN & YANG SYMBOL STICKING HANDS—YANG TAIJI TRAINING | T580                      |
| TAIJI YIN & YANG SYMBOL STICKING HANDS—YIN TAIJI TRAINING  | T0177                     |
| TAIJIQUAN, CLASSICAL YANG STYLE                            | T752                      |
| WHITE CRANE HARD QIGONG                                    | T612                      |
| WHITE CRANE SOFT QIGONG                                    | T620                      |
| WILD GOOSE QIGONG  | T949                      |
| WU STYLE TAIJIQUAN   | T477                      |
| XINGYIQUAN — 12 ANIMAL FORM                                | T310                      |

## DVDS FROM YMAA

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| ANALYSIS OF SHAOLIN CHIN NA  | D0231 |
| BAGUAZHANG 1, 2, 3 — EMEI BAGUAZHANG                               | D0649 |
| CHEN TAIJIQUAN   | D0819 |
| CHIN NA IN DEPTH COURSES 1 — 4                                     | D602  |
| CHIN NA IN DEPTH COURSES 5 — 8                                     | D610  |
| CHIN NA IN DEPTH COURSES 9 — 12                                    | D629  |
| EIGHT SIMPLE QIGONG EXERCISES FOR HEALTH                           | D0037 |
| THE ESSENCE OF TAIJI QIGONG  | D0215 |
| QIGONG MASSAGE—FUNDAMENTAL TECHNIQUES FOR HEALTH AND RELAXATION    | D0592 |
| SHAOLIN KUNG FU FUNDAMENTAL TRAINING 1&2                           | D0436 |
| SHAOLIN LONG FIST KUNG FU — BASIC SEQUENCES                        | D661  |
| SHAOLIN WHITE CRANE GONG FU BASIC TRAINING 1&2                     | D599  |
| SIMPLIFIED TAI CHI CHUAN   | D0630 |
| SUNRISE TAI CHI  | D0274 |
| TAI CHI CONNECTIONS  | D0444 |
| TAI CHI ENERGY PATTERNS  | D0525 |
| TAI CHI FIGHTING SET—TWO PERSON MATCHING SET                       | D0509 |
| TAIJI BALL QIGONG COURSES 1&2—16 CIRCLING AND 16 ROTATING PATTERNS | D0517 |
| TAIJI PUSHING HANDS 1&2—YANG STYLE SINGLE AND DOUBLE PUSHING HANDS | D0495 |
| TAIJI PUSHING HANDS 3&4—YANG STYLE SINGLE AND DOUBLE PUSHING HANDS | D0681 |
| TAIJIQUAN CLASSICAL YANG STYLE                                     | D645  |
| TAIJI SWORD, CLASSICAL YANG STYLE                                  | D0452 |
| UNDERSTANDING QIGONG 1   | D069X |
| UNDERSTANDING QIGONG 2   | D0418 |
| UNDERSTANDING QIGONG 3—EMBRYONIC BREATHING                         | D0555 |
| UNDERSTANDING QIGONG 4—FOUR SEASONS QIGONG                         | D0562 |
| WHITE CRANE HARD & SOFT QIGONG                                     | D637  |

more products available from...

**YMAA Publication Center, Inc.** 楊氏東方文化出版中心

4354 Washington Street Roslindale, MA 02131

1-800-669-8892 • ymaa@aol.com • www.ymaa.com

