

TAI JI QUAN SHI SAN SHI

(TAI JI QUAN THIRTEEN POSTURES)

BA MEN
(EIGHT GATES)

PENG
(WARD-OFF)



QIAN
SOUTH
NAN

ZHOU
(ELBOW)



DUI
SOUTHEAST
DONG NAN

CAI
(PULL-DOWN / PLUCK)



SUN
SOUTHWEST
XI NAN

AN
(PUSH)



LI
EAST
DONG

Ji
(PRESS)



KAN
WEST
XI

LIE
(SPLIT)



ZHEN
NORTHEAST
DONG BEI

KAO
(SHOULDER STRIKE / BUMP)



GEN
NORTHWEST
XI BEI

LU
(ROLL-BACK)



KUN
NORTH
BEI

WU XING

(FIVE PHASES)

JIN BU
ADVANCE
METAL
JIN

XIANG ZUO KAN
LOOK TO LEFT
WATER
SHUI

ZHONG
CENTRAL EQUILIBRIUM
EARTH
TU

XIANG YOU KAN
GAZE TO RIGHT
FIRE
HUO

TUI BU
RETREAT
WOOD
MU

TAI JI QUAN LUN

THE TAI JI QUAN TREATISE

by WANG ZONG YUE

Tai ji, being born of *Wu ji*, is the mother of *yin* and *yang*. In movement it differentiates; in stillness it consolidates. It is without excess or insufficiency. Follow, bend, then extend. When the other is hard and I am soft, this is called yielding. I go along with the other. This is called adhering. To quick movements, I respond quickly. To slow movements, I follow slowly. Although the transformations have innumerable strands, this principle makes them as one thread. From careful investigation and experience, one may gradually realize how to comprehend energy (*dong jing*). From comprehending energy, you will attain by degrees spiritual illumination (*shen ming*). Nevertheless, without an exertion of effort over time (*yong li zhi jiu*), one will not be able to suddenly have a thorough understanding of it.

An intangible and lively energy lifts the crown of the head (*xu ling ding jin*). The *qi* sinks to the *dan tian*. No leaning, no inclining. Suddenly hidden, suddenly appearing. When the left feels weight, then the left empties. When the right feels weight, then the right is gone. Looking up, it then becomes yet higher. Looking down, it then becomes yet deeper. Advancing, there is an even longer distance. Retreating, it is then even more crowded. One feather cannot be added. A fly cannot land. The other does not know me; I alone know the other. This is to be a hero with no adversaries along the way. Does it not all come from this?

There are many other kinds of martial arts. Although their forms are distinct from one another, overall they are nothing more than the strong taking advantage of the weak, or merely the slow yielding to the quick. Having strength to strike those without strength, the slow of hand giving way to the quick of hand – these are all from inherent natural ability, and bear no relationship to the capability that comes from earnest study. Examine the expression “four ounces deflect one thousand pounds.” Clearly this is not accomplished by means of strength. Observe a situation in which one who is aged can skillfully fend off (*yu*) a throng. How can this ability be one of speed?

Stand like a balance scale; active, like the wheel of a cart. Sink to one side, then follow. If double weighted (*shuang zhong*), then one will stagnate. Whenever we see those who for several years have perfected their skill, yet are unable to employ this neutralization and are generally overpowered by others, this is merely from not having come to understand the fault of double weighting. If you want to avoid this fault, you must know *yin* and *yang*. To adhere is to yield; to yield is to adhere. *Yang* does not leave *yin*; *yin* does not leave *yang*. The mutual cooperation of *yin* and *yang* is precisely what makes up the understanding of energy (*dong jin*). After comprehending energy, the more the practice, the greater the refinement. Silently memorize (*mo shi*) and ponder (*chuai mo*), and gradually you will attain what you wish from your heart and mind (*cong xin suo yu*). The foundation is to yield to the initiative of the other (*she ji cong ren*). Many mistakenly forsake the near in pursuit of what is far away. It is said: “To be off in one’s aim by the slightest fraction, one will lose the target by a thousand miles.” The student must therefore be carefully discerning of the details herein. This comprises the treatise.

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What is Long Boxing (*chang quan*)? It is like the Long River, or a great ocean, flowing smoothly and ceaselessly. Ward Off (*peng*), Roll Back (*lu*), Press (*an*), Pull Down (*cai*), Rend (*lie*), Elbow Stroke (*zhou*), Shoulder Stroke (*kao*): these are the Eight Trigrams (*ba gua*). Advance, Retreat, Look Left, Gaze Right, Central Equilibrium: these are the Five Phases (*wu xing*). *Peng, Lu, Ji* and *An*, accordingly, are [the Trigrams] *Qian, Kun, Kan*, and *Li*, or the four cardinal directions. *Cai, Lie, Zhou*, and *Kao*, then, are [the Trigrams] *Sun, Zhen, Dui*, and *Ken*, or the four corner directions. Advance, Retreat, Look Left, Gaze Right, and Central Equilibrium, accordingly, are Metal, Wood, Water, Fire, and Earth. Taken together, these comprise the Thirteen Postures.

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SHI SAN SHI GE

SONG OF THE THIRTEEN POSTURES
AUTHOR UNKNOWN

The thirteen principle postures are not to be underestimated.
The source of meaning is in the region of the waist.

You must pay attention to the turning transformations of empty and full,
and the *qi* moving throughout your body without the slightest hindrance.

In the midst of stillness one comes in contact with movement, moving as though remaining still.
According with one's opponent, the transformations appear wondrous.

For each and every posture, concentrate your mind and consider the meaning of the applications.
You will not get it without consciously expending a great deal of time and effort (*gong fu*).

Moment by moment, keep the mind/heart (*xin*) on the waist.
With the lower abdomen completely loosened, the *qi* will ascend on its own.

The coccyx (*wei lu*) is centrally aligned, and the spirit (*shen*) threads to the crown of the head.
The whole body is light and nimble when the head is suspended at the crown.

Carefully concentrate upon your study.
The bending, extending, opening and closing: let them come on their own.

Entering the gate and being led to the path, this must come from oral guidance.
To ceaselessly exert oneself (*gong fu wu xi*) in the method is self-cultivation (*zi xiu*).

If you ask, what are the criteria of essence and application?
Intention (*yi*) and *qi* are the authority, the bones and tissues the subjects.

If you want to find out where, in the end, the purpose lies, it is to increase longevity and extend one's years (*yi shou yan nian*), a springtime of youth.

This song, oh, this song, has one hundred forty words.
Every word is true and concise, there are no omissions.

If inquiry proceeds without regard to this,
One's efforts (*gong fu*) will be wasted, and this will only cause one to sigh with regret.

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SHI SAN SHI XING GONG XIN JIE

THE MENTAL ELUCIDATION OF THE THIRTEEN POSTURES
by WU YU XIANG

Use the mind/heart (*xin*) to move the *qi*. You must cause it to sink soundly, then it can gather into the bones. Use the *qi* to move the body. You must cause it to accord smoothly, then it can easily follow your mind/heart (*xin*). If the spirit of vitality (*jing shen*) can be raised, then there will be no apprehension of dullness or heaviness. This is what is meant by suspending the crown of the head. The intent (*yi*) and the *qi* must exchange with skillful sensitivity, then you will have a sense of roundness and liveliness. This is what is called the change of insubstantial and substantial. When issuing energy (*fa jin*), one must sink soundly, loosen completely, and focus in one direction. In standing, the body must be centrally aligned, calm and at ease, supporting the eight directions.

Move the *qi* as though through a pearl carved with a zigzag path (*jiu qu zhu*, literally, “nine-bend pearl”), reaching everywhere without a hitch. Mobilize *jin* (energy) that is like well-tempered steel, capable of breaking through any stronghold. One’s form is like a hawk seizing a rabbit. One’s spirit is like a cat seizing a rat. Be still like a mountain, move like a flowing river. Store energy (*xu jin*) as though drawing a bow. Issue energy (*fa jin*) as though releasing an arrow. Seek the straight in the curved. Store up, then issue. The strength issues from the spine; the steps follow the body’s changes. To gather in is in fact to release. To break off is to again connect. In going to and fro there must be folding; in advancing and retreating there must be turning transitions. Arriving at the extreme of yielding softness, one afterward arrives at the extreme of solid hardness. With the ability to inhale and exhale will follow the ability to be nimble and lively. When the *qi* is cultivated in a straightforward manner, there will be no harm. When the energy (*jin*) is stored up in the curves, there will be a surplus. The mind/heart (*xin*) is the commander, the *qi* the signal flag, the waist is the directional banner. First seek to open and expand, afterwards seek to draw up and gather together, then you will approach refinement.

It is also said, if the other does not move, I do not move. If the other moves slightly, I move first. The energy (*jin*) seems loosened (*song*) yet not loosened; about to expand, but not yet expanding. The energy (*jin*) breaks off, yet the intent (*yi*) does not. It is also said, first in the mind/heart, then in the body. The abdomen is loosened (*song*) so that the *qi* gathers into the bones. The spirit is at ease, the body calm. Carve this, each moment, into your mind/heart; remember closely: when one part moves, there is no part that does not move. When one part is still, there is no part that is not still. Leading the movements to and fro, the *qi* adheres to the back, then collects into the spine. Within, consolidate the spirit of vitality. Without, express tranquility and ease. Step like a cat walking. Mobilize energy (*jin*) as though drawing silk. Throughout the whole body, the intent (*yi*) is on the spirit of vitality (*jing shen*), not on the *qi*. If it is on the *qi*, then there will be stagnation. One who has it on the *qi* will have no strength. One who does not have it on the *qi* will attain pure hardness. *Qi* is like the wheel of a cart; the waist is like the wheel’s axle.

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TAIJIQUAN JING

THE TAIJIQUAN CLASSIC
by WU YU XIANG

Once in motion, the entire body should be light and agile, and even more importantly, must be threaded together (*guan chuan*). The *qi* should be roused and made vibrant. The spirit (*shen*) should be collected within. Do not allow there to be any protuberances or hollows. Do not allow there to be any intermittence. It is rooted in the feet, issued by the legs, governed by the waist, and expressed in the fingers. From the feet, to the legs, then to the waist, always there must be complete integration into one *qi*. In advancing forward and retreating back, you will then be able to seize the opportunity and the strategic advantage (*de ji de shi*). In a case of not gaining the opportunity and strategic advantage, your body will become scattered and confused. The flaw in this case must certainly be sought in the waist and legs. This is so whether up or down, forward or backward, left or right. The cases are all of mind intent (*yi*) and do not refer to the external. When there is up, then there is down. When there is forward, then there is backward. When there is left, then there is right. If the intent is to go upward, then direct the mind intent downward, just as, if one is going to lift an object, then one in addition applies to it the force of a downward push. Thus, its root will be severed, and it will be collapsed quickly and decisively. Insubstantial and substantial must be clearly distinguished. Each point has its point of insubstantial/substantial. Everywhere there is always this one insubstantial/substantial. The entire body is threaded together joint by joint (*jie jie guan chuan*). Do not allow the slightest interruption.

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DA SHOU GE

THE SONG OF PUSHING HANDS
Revised by WANG ZONG YUE

In Ward Off (*peng*), Roll Back (*lu*), Press (*ji*), and Push (*an*), you must be conscientious. Upper and lower follow one another; the other has difficulty advancing.

Let him come and strike with great strength. Lead his movement, using four ounces to deflect a thousand pounds.

Attract him into emptiness, join, then issue.
Adhere, connect, stick, follow, without letting go or resisting.

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