



Tai Ji Quan

By Wang Zhuang Hong

What makes the difference between our Tai Ji Quan and other Tai Ji Quan? How we obtain the attractive force coming from the center of the earth (Di Xin Xi Li); if you don't obtain Di Xin Xi Li, there won't be any energy. If you use the strength that comes from extending your muscles, then that creates the different quality expressed in other kinds of Tai Ji Quan: other people and all kinds of martial arts are like that.

The emphasis is on Di Xin Xi Li because although the earth's surface is hard, its attractive power is always there coming from the core of the earth. When our bodyweight goes down with gravity, the downward effect of gravity is received, and obstructed by the surface of the

earth, producing an opposite rebounding energy. When a ball is hit to the ground, why can it spring back up? It is because of this opposite assisting force.

When moving downwards gravity functions and the reverse, moving upwards is also a function of gravity and the attractive force of the center of the earth. Moving in a downward direction is not really a problem, however, when moving upwards, if you aren't soft then the energy won't rise up. You need to both sink down and correspondingly rise up with the energy. They are both the function of the earth's attractive force, thus you must be soft (if you aren't soft, you can't do it).

How should it be then? You need to have the qualities of springiness, softness, and gentleness. Softness: it's usually said that as soon as strength is used, hardness is immediately produced: therefore, we can't use strength and need to instead use intention (Yi). We should continually be aware of whether or not our mass is going down with gravity.

It is like following a wave as it rises and falls. If it is swelling up and you don't allow yourself to rise along with it, then you will be tossed out. Taking the example of a boatman standing on a small vessel, if he follows smoothly with the undulating waves, he will be extremely free in his movement. Yet, ordinary people send out a hard stiffness through their legs and fall in to the water easily.

Therefore, when a wave goes down you need to follow it down and when it rises up you need to float up with it. Our emphasis is on a quality of softness like water. However, becoming like water requires a process. We are usually accustomed to use strength, but now we need to become water. First we need to be soft and gentle, with an appropriate quality of softness, closely approaching that of water: doing that requires us to pass through a training discipline and to change our training methods.

It's not about speed; it's about following this force, about relaxing and opening our bodies and getting rid of fixed and rigid places. It is like breaking up chunks of ice in our bodies. Only after we

have done that, we are able to become like water. We can see that the degree of transformation to water achieved by different people in their bodies is not the same. If you can obtain a transformation that results in a quality of water of 30%, then that is already very good.

Let's think about it. The world also has something that is as soft as flowing liquid and that's the wind, so we can also imitate wind. Into water add a little wind. By adding wind the water inflates to a Qi body that appears like clouds of fog or mist. This comes from the transformation of water. The more it is separated and distinguished clearly, the more refined it becomes. The more the transformation of energy, the bigger the energy gets.

The ultimate goal is the transformation of a fixed and stuck body to a flowing body, from a stiff and rigid body to a soft and tender one. Then, the most important point to be aware of is that the origin of energy is change. In regard to obtaining energy from the attractive force coming from the center of the earth, as much energy as you obtain, that much Gong Fu you will have.

What water? What wind? With inflation to a Qi body, the energy gets so big! Another substantial benefit from this is that you will have the freedom to change as you please. This is included among the natural laws of change. Of course, we need to carefully observe, analyze and research this. Among the most important principles to investigate are *change and transformation to a flowing body*, *point line area volume*, and *surpassing the three dimensions*. A Tai Ji practice that includes investigation of natural principles like these, is completely different from one centered on fixed and rigid movements.

Inferior Tai Ji Quan relies on fixed body movement that is always either too much or not enough, and isn't able to achieve the qualities of Zhan Nian Lian Sui. This is an accurate assessment: therefore, the use of fixed body strength will either be too much or too little. You cannot become good this way, only through the accomplishment of a flowing body, an air body, you can obtain the positive qualities of Tai Ji.

It is comparable to a fist hitting water; the water completely allows it. If you hit it quickly, it accommodates you quickly; if you hit it slowly, it accommodates you slowly. Not front and not back, it is always covering and controlling your fist. If it is water, and waves form one after another, the fist will immediately be thrown out.

Like water, the Qi body is the same. Air looks as though it is empty and doesn't contain anything, but it consists of atoms and sub-atomic particles. When you move, it opens and allows you to do so. It is always enveloping you, yet because it is three-dimensional movement and its changes are extremely small, you can't feel it. However, it is continually surrounding you. Therefore, with water, wind, and air, the inside energy is created by adding velocity. Enveloping you, it isn't easy to escape from. With the four faces and eight directions surrounding, the center opens and transforms. This is what is called Eight Gates Five Steps Tai Ji Gong Fu (Ba Men Wu Bu Tai Ji Gong Fu).

Like the statement from the Dao De Jing: *one gives rise to two, two gives rise to three, three gives rise to the ten thousand things*: the meaning of Tai Ji Quan's four faces and eight directions points to all directions. This kind of thinking and that of ordinary Gong Fu is completely different. Ordinary people can't conceive of this. We must change our way of thinking by establishing a Tai Ji way of thinking and use Buddhist theory and other methods of cultivation to know our Tai Ji Quan. Then the effects and results of our practice will be completely different.

Where does a wave come from? It is because the attractive force of gravity adds a rising opposite assisting force: torque and leverage. Its form is that of the left borrowing from the right, and the right borrowing from the left; above and below, front and back, and inside and outside are also like this. Wave after wave, the energy becomes bigger and bigger, until it reaches the infinite. Tai Ji Quan's movements are generated along with waves. Therefore, the Tai Ji form is also generated this way.

For example, with Grasping the Sparrow's Tail (Lan Que Wei,) upward and downward movement serve as the primary principle. Lift hands (Ti Shou Shang Shi) and Play the Pipa (Shou Hui Pi Pa) are governed by a retreating wave. Brush Knee with Twisted Step (Lou Xi Ao Bu,) by an advancing wave. The spiral of a whirlpool generates White Crane Spreads its Wings (Bai He Liang Ci,) Deflection Parry and Punch (Ban Lan Chui,) and other movements.

The entire form itself resembles a vast ocean with great waves billowing and rolling. Like this, the left borrows from the right, the right borrows from the left, up from down, down from up, front from back, back from front, inside from outside and outside from inside. What is the connection between them?

They are connected by the principle of Yin and Yang. Therefore, Yin Yang is Tai Ji Quan; Tai Ji Quan is Yin Yang Quan. What we practice is not merely the movements of Tai Ji Quan. It includes culture, art, philosophy, life, and nature: all of these have a connection. It comes from the synthesis of all kinds of thinking. Therefore, Tai Ji Quan has a great many kinds of meanings and implications that give even more expression to the content of Tai Ji Quan.

Transcribed from a talk given in 2000 by Wang Zhuang Hong to his students recorded in Hong Kong.

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