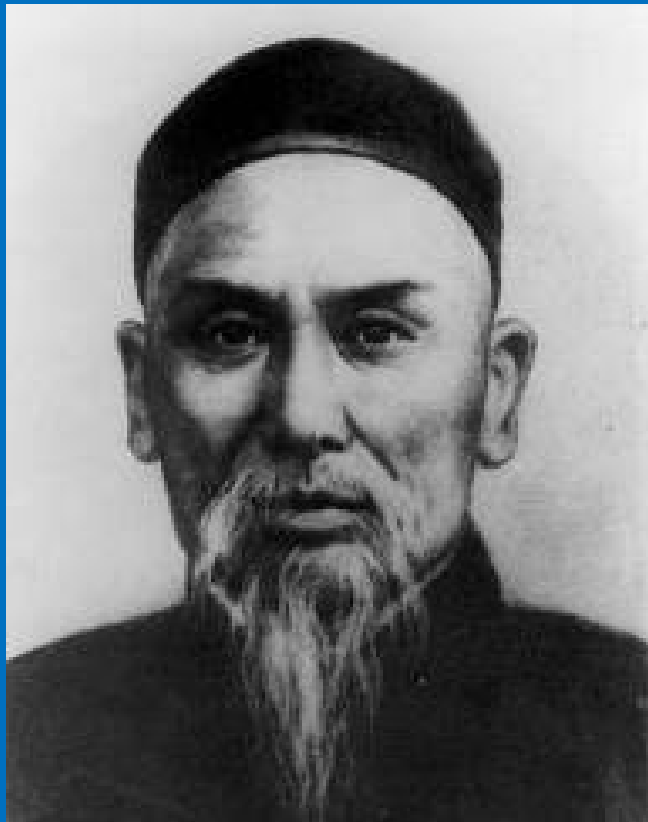


State, "the opponent moves 1st, but I arrive 1st."



Yang Lu Chan

Founder Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan

The following Tai Chi Classics are in the public domain, and are gleaned from many sources. They are reprinted here for the edification of my students.

Steven Allen, Dipl, Ac., H.H.P. MH.

7th Dan, Ju Tien Tse Dao, (The Way to Highest Attainment) Martial Art

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T'AI CHI CH'UAN CHING

Attributed to Chang San-feng (est. 1279 -1386)

In motion the whole body should be light and agile,
with all parts of the body linked
as if threaded together.

The ch'i [vital life energy] should be excited,
The shen [spirit of vitality] should be internally gathered.

The postures should be without defect,
without hollows or projections from the proper alignment;
in motion the Form should be continuous, without stops and starts.

The chin [intrinsic strength] should be
rooted in the feet,

generated from the legs,
controlled by the waist, and
manifested through the fingers.

The feet, legs, and waist should act together
as an integrated whole,
so that while advancing or withdrawing
one can grasp the opportunity of favourable timing
and advantageous position.

If correct timing and position are not achieved,
the body will become disordered
and will not move as an integrated whole;
the correction for this defect
must be sought in the legs and waist.

The principle of adjusting the legs and waist
applies for moving in all directions;
upward or downward,
advancing or withdrawing,
left or right.

All movements are motivated by I [mind-intention],
not external form.

If there is up, there is down;
when advancing, have regard for withdrawing;
when striking left, pay attention to the right.

If the I wants to move upward,
it must simultaneously have intent downward.

Alternating the force of pulling and pushing
severs an opponent's root
so that he can be defeated
quickly and certainly.

Insubstantial and substantial
should be clearly differentiated.
At any place where there is insubstantiality,
there must be substantiality;

Every place has both insubstantiality and substantiality.

The whole body should be threaded together
through every joint
without the slightest break.

Chang Ch'uan [Long Boxing] is like a great river
rolling on unceasingly.

Peng, Lu, Chi, An,
Ts'ai, Lieh, Chou, and K'ao
are equated to the Eight Trigrams.

The first four are the cardinal directions;

Ch'ien [South; Heaven],

K'un [North; Earth],

K'an [West; Water], and

Li [East; Fire].

The second four are the four corners:

Sun [Southwest; Wind],

Chen [Northeast; Thunder],

Tui [Southeast; Lake], and

Ken [Northwest; Mountain].

Advance (Chin), Withdraw (T'ui),

Look Left (Tso Ku), Look Right (Yu Pan), and

Central Equilibrium (Chung Ting)

are equated to the five elements:

Metal,

Wood,

Water,

Fire, and

Earth

All together these are termed the Thirteen Postures

A footnote appended to this Classic by Yang Lu-ch'an (1799-1872)
reads:

This treatise was left by the patriarch Chan San-feng of Wu Tang
Mountain,

with a desire toward helping able people everywhere achieve
longevity,

and not merely as a means to martial skill.

THE TREATISE ON T'AI CHI CH'UAN

Attributed to Wang
Tsung-yueh [Wang Zongyue]
(18th Century)

T'ai Chi [Supreme Ultimate] comes from Wu Chi [Formless Void]
and is the mother of yin and yang.

In motion T'ai Chi separates;
in stillness yin and yang fuse and return to Wu Chi.

It is not excessive or deficient;
it follows a bending, adheres to an extension.

When the opponent is hard and I am soft,
it is called tsou [yielding].

When I follow the opponent and he becomes backed up,

it is called nian [sticking].

If the opponent's movement is quick,
then quickly respond;
if his movement is slow,
then follow slowly.

Although there are innumerable variations,
the principles that pervades them remain the same.

From familiarity with the correct touch,
one gradually comprehends chin [intrinsic strength];
from the comprehension of chin one can reach wisdom.

Without long practice
one cannot suddenly understand T'ai Chi.

Effortlessly the chin reaches the headtop.

Let the ch'i [vital life energy] sink to the tan-t'ien [field of elixir].

Don't lean in any direction;
suddenly appear,
suddenly disappear.

Empty the left wherever a pressure appears,
and similarly the right.

If the opponent raises up, I seem taller;
if he sinks down, then I seem lower;
advancing, he finds the distance seems incredibly long;
retreating, the distance seems exasperatingly short.

A feather cannot be placed,
and a fly cannot alight
on any part of the body.

The opponent does not know me;
I alone know him.

To become a peerless boxer results from this.

There are many boxing arts.

Although they use different forms,
for the most part they don't go beyond
the strong dominating the weak,
and the slow resigning to the swift.

The strong defeating the weak
and the slow hands ceding to the swift hands
are all the results of natural abilities
and not of well-trained techniques.

From the sentence "A force of four ounces deflects a thousand
pounds"

we know that the technique is not accomplished with strength.

The spectacle of an old person defeating a group of young people,
how can it be due to swiftness?

Stand like a perfectly balanced scale and
move like a turning wheel.

Sinking to one side allows movement to flow;
being double-weighted is sluggish.

Anyone who has spent years of practice and still cannot neutralize,
and is always controlled by his opponent,
has not apprehended the fault of double-weightedness.

To avoid this fault one must distinguish yin from yang.

To adhere means to yield.

To yield means to adhere.

Within yin there is yang.

Within yang there is yin.

Yin and yang mutually aid and change each other.

Understanding this you can say you understand chin.

After you understand chin,

the more you practice,

the more skill.

Silently treasure knowledge and turn it over in the mind.

Gradually you can do as you like.

Fundamentally, it is giving up yourself to follow others.

Most people mistakenly give up the near to seek the far.

It is said, "Missing it by a little will lead many miles astray."

The practitioner must carefully study.

EXPOSITIONS OF INSIGHTS INTO THE PRACTICE OF THE THIRTEEN POSTURES

by Wu Yu-hsiang (Wu Yuxian)
(1812 - 1880)

sometimes attributed to Wang
Chung-yueh

The hsin [mind-and-heart] mobilizes the ch'i [vital life energy].

Make the ch'i sink calmly;
then the ch'i gathers and permeates the bones.

The ch'i mobilizes the body.
Make it move smoothly, so that it may easily follow the hsin.

The I [mind-intention] and ch'i must interchange agilely,
then there is an excellence of roundness and smoothness.

This is called "the interplay of insubstantial and substantial."

The hsin is the commander, the ch'i the flag, and the waist the banner.

The waist is like the axle and the ch'i is like the wheel.

The ch'i is always nurtured without harm.

Let the ch'i move as in a pearl with nine passages
without breaks
so that there is no part it cannot reach.

In moving the ch'i sticks to the back and permeates the spine.

It is said "First in the hsin, then in the body."

The abdomen relaxes, then the ch'i sinks into the bones.

The shen [spirit of vitality] is relaxed and the body calm.

The shen is always in the hsin.

Being able to breathe properly leads to agility.

The softest will then become the strongest.

When the ching shen is raised,
there is no fault of stagnancy and heaviness.
This is called suspending the headtop.

Inwardly make the shen firm,
and outwardly exhibit calmness and peace.

Throughout the body, the I relies on the shen,
not on the ch'i.

If it relied on the ch'i, it would become stagnant.

If there is ch'i, there is no li [external strength].

If not focused on ch'i, there is pure steel.

The chin [intrinsic strength] is sung [relaxed], but not sung;

it is capable of great extension, but is not extended.

The chin is broken, but the I is not.

The chin is stored (having a surplus) by means of the curved.

The chin* is released by the back,
and the steps follow the changes of the body.

The mobilization of the chin is like refining steel a hundred times
over.

There is nothing hard it cannot destroy.

Store up the chin like drawing a bow.

Mobilize the chin like drawing silk from a cocoon.

Release the chin like releasing the arrow.

To fa-chin [discharge energy],

sink,

relax completely,

and aim in one direction!

In the curve seek the straight,
store,
then release.

Be still as a mountain,
move like a great river.

The upright body must be stable and comfortable
to be able to sustain an attack from any of the eight directions.

Walk like a cat.

Remember, when moving, there is no place that does not move.

When still, there is no place that is not still.

First seek extension, then contraction;
then it can be fine and subtle.

It is said if the opponent does not move, then I do not move.

At the opponent's slightest move, I move first."

To withdraw is then to release,
to release it is necessary to withdraw.

In discontinuity there is still continuity.

In advancing and returning there must be folding.

Going forward and back there must be changes.

The Form is like that of a falcon about to seize a rabbit,
and the shen is like that of a cat about to catch a rat.

SONG OF THE THIRTEEN POSTURES

by Unknown Author

The Thirteen Postures should not be taken lightly;
the source of the postures is in the waist.

Be mindful of the interchange between insubstantial and substantial;
The ch'i circulates throughout the body without hindrance.

Be still,
when touched by the opponent,
be tranquil and move in stillness;
changes caused by my opponent fill him with wonder.

Study the function of each posture carefully and with deliberation;
to achieve the goal is very easy.

Pay attention to the waist at all times;

completely relax the abdomen
and the ch'i rises up.

When the tailbone is centered and straight,
the shen [spirit of vitality] goes through to the headtop.

To make the whole body light and agile
suspend the headtop.

Carefully study.

Extension and contraction, opening and closing, should be natural.

To enter the door and be shown the way,
you must be orally taught.

Practice should be uninterrupted,
and technique achieved by self study.

Speaking of the body and its function, what is the standard?

The I [mind-intent] and ch'i are king,

and the bones and muscles are the court.

Think over carefully what the final purpose is:
to lengthen life and maintain youth.

The Song consists of 140 characters;
each character is true and the meaning is complete.

If you do not study in this manner,
then you will waste your time and sigh with regret.

SONGS OF THE EIGHT POSTURES

Attributed to T'an Meng-hsien

The Song of Peng

What is the meaning of Peng energy?

It is like the water supporting a moving boat.

First sink the ch'i to the tan-t'ien,
then hold the head as if suspended from above.

The entire body is filled with springlike energy,
opening and closing in a very quick moment.

Even if the opponent uses a thousand pounds of force,
he can be uprooted and made to float without difficulty.

The Song of Lu

What is the meaning of Lu energy?

Entice the opponent toward you by allowing him to advance,

lightly and nimbly follow his incoming force

without disconnecting and without resisting.

When his force reaches its farthest extent,

it will naturally become empty.

The opponent can then be let go or countered at will.

Maintain your central equilibrium

and your opponent cannot gain an advantage.

The Song of Chi

What is the meaning of Chi energy?

There are two aspects to its functional use:

The direct way is to go to meet the opponent

and attach gently in one movement.

The indirect way is to use the reaction force

like the rebound of a ball bouncing off a wall, or

a coin thrown on a drumhead,
bouncing off with a ringing sound.

The Song of An

What is the meaning of An energy?
When applied it is like flowing water.
The substantial is concealed in the insubstantial.
When the flow is swift it is difficult to resist.
Coming to a high place, it swells and fills the place up;
meeting a hollow it dives downward.
The waves rise and fall,
finding a hole they will surely surge in.

The Song of Ts'ai

What is the meaning of Ts'ai energy?
It is like the weight attached to the beam of a balance scale.
Give free play to the opponent's force

no matter how heavy or light,
you will know how heavy or light it is after weighing it.

To push or pull requires only four ounces,
one thousand pounds can also be balanced.

If you ask what the principle is,
the answer is the function of the lever.

The Song of Lieh

What is the meaning of Lieh energy?

It revolves like a spinning disc.

If something is thrown onto it,
it will immediately be cast more than ten feet away.

Have you not seen a whirlpool form in a swift flowing stream?

The waves roll in spiraling currents.

If a falling leaf drops into it,
it will suddenly sink from sight.

The Song of Chou

What is the meaning of Chou energy?

Its method relates to the Five Elements.

Yin and Yang are divided above and below.

Insubstantiality and substantiality must be clearly distinguished.

Joined in unbroken continuity,

the opponent cannot resist the posture.

Its explosive pounding is especially fearsome.

When one has mastered the six kinds of energy,

the applications become unlimited.

The Song of K'ao

What is the meaning of K'ao energy?

Its method is divided into the shoulder and back technique.

In Diagonal Flying Posture use shoulder,

but within the shoulder technique

there is also some use of the back.

Once you have the opportunity and can take advantage of the
posture,

the technique explodes like pounding a pestle.

Carefully maintain your own center.

Those who lose it will have no achievement.

SONG OF PUSH HANDS

by Unknown Author

Be conscientious in Peng, Lu, Chi, and An.

Upper and lower coordinate,
and the opponent finds it difficult to penetrate.

Let the opponent attack with great force;
use four ounces to deflect a thousand pounds.

Attract to emptiness and discharge;

Zhan, Lian, Nian, Sui,
no resisting no letting go.

FIVE CHARACTER SECRET

by Li I-yu

CALM

The hsin [mind-and-heart] should be calm. If the hsin is not calm, one cannot concentrate, and when the arm is raised, whether forward or back, left or right, it is completely without certain direction.

Therefore, it is necessary to maintain a calm mind. In beginning to move, you cannot control (it) by yourself. The entire mind must also experience and comprehend the movements of the opponent.

Accordingly, when the movement bends, it then straightens, without disconnecting or resisting. Do not extend or retreat by yourself. If my opponent has li [external strength], I also have li, but my li is previous in exact anticipation of his. If the opponent does not have li, I am also without li, but my I [mind-intent] is still previous. It is necessary to be continually mindful; to whatever part of the body is touched the mind should go. You must discover the information by non-discrimination and non-resistance. Follow this method, and in one year, or a half-year, you will instinctively find it in your body. All of this means you use I, not chin [intrinsic force]. After a practicing for a

long time, the opponent will be controlled by me and I will not be controlled by him.

AGILITY

If the body is clumsy, then in advancing or retreating it cannot be free; therefore, it must be agile. Once you raise your arm, you cannot appear clumsy. The moment the force of my opponent touches my skin and hair, my mind is already penetrating his bones. When holding up the arms, the ch'i [vital life energy] is threaded together continuously. When the left side is heavy, it then empties, and the right side is already countering. When the right is heavy, it empties, and the left is already countering. The ch'i is like a wheel, and the whole body must mutually coordinate. If there is any uncoordinated place, the body becomes disordered and weak. The defect is to be found in the waist and legs. First the mind is used to order the body. Follow the opponent and not your own inclination. Later your body can follow your mind, and you can control yourself and still follow the opponent. When you only follow your own inclination, you are clumsy, but when you follow the opponent, then your hands can distinguish and weigh accurately the amount of his force, and measure the distance of his approach with no mistake. Advancing and retreating, everywhere the coordination is perfect. After studying for a long time, your technique will become skillful.

BREATH

To Gather the Ch'i

If the ch'i is dispersed, then it is not stored and is easy to scatter. Let the ch'i penetrate the spine and the inhalation and exhalation be smooth and unimpeded throughout the entire body. The inhalation closes and gathers, the exhalation opens and discharges. Because the inhalation can naturally raise and also uproot the opponent, the exhalation can naturally sink down and also fa-chin [discharge energy] him. This is by means of the I, not the li mobilizing the ch'i.

INTERNAL FORCE

The Complete Chin

The chin of the whole body, through practice, becomes one unit. Distinguish clearly between substantial and insubstantial. To fa-chin it is necessary to have root. The chin starts from the foot, is commanded by the waist, and manifested in the fingers, and discharged through the spine and back. One must completely raise the shen [spirit of vitality] at the moment when the opponent's chin is about to manifest, but has not yet been released. My chin has then already met his, not late, not early. It is like using a leather (tinder) to start a fire, or like a fountain gushing forth. In going forward or stepping back, there is not even the slightest disorder. In the curve seek the straight, store, then discharge; then you are able to follow your hands and achieve a beautiful result. This is called borrowing force to strike the opponent or using four ounces to deflect a thousand pounds.

SPIRIT

Shen Concentrated

Having the above four, then you can return to concentrated spirit: if the spirit is concentrated, then it is continuous and uninterrupted, and the practice of ch'i returns to the shen [spirit of vitality]. The

manifestation of ch'i moves with agility. When the shen is concentrated, opening and closing occur appropriately, and the differentiation of substantial and insubstantial is clear. If the left is insubstantial, the right is substantial, and vice-versa. Insubstantial does not mean completely without strength. The manifestation of ch'i must be agile. Substantial does not mean completely limited. The

spirit must be completely concentrated. It is important to be completely in the mind [1] and the waist, and not outside. Not being outside or separated, force is borrowed from the opponent, and the ch'i is released from the spine. How can the ch'i discharge from the spine? It sinks downward from the two shoulders, gathers to the spine, and pours to the waist. This is ch'i from up to down and is called closed. From the waist the ch'i mobilizes to the spine, spreads to the two arms and flows to the fingers. This is ch'i from down to up and is called opened. Closed is gathering, and opened is discharging.

When you know opening and closing, then you know yin and yang. Reaching this level your skill will progress with the days and you can do as you wish.

ESSENTIALS OF THE PRACTICE OF THE FORM AND PUSH- HANDS

by Li I-yu

Formerly people said: "being able to attract to emptiness, you can use four ounces to deflect a thousand pounds." Not being able to attract to emptiness, you cannot deflect a thousand pounds. The words are simple, but the meaning is complete. The beginner cannot understand it. Here I add some words to explain it. If someone is ambitious to learn this art, he can find some way to enter it and every day he will have some improvement.

Desiring to attract to emptiness and deflect a thousand pounds, first you must know yourself and others. If you want to know yourself and others, you must give up yourself and follow others. If you give up yourself and follow others, first you must have the correct timing and position. To obtain the correct timing and position, you must first make your body one unit. Desiring to make the body one unit, you must first eliminate hollows and protuberances. To make the whole body without breaks or holes, you must first have the shen [spirit of vitality] and ch'i [vital life energy] excited and expanded. If you want the shen and ch'i activated and expanded, you must first raise the spirit (pay attention) and the shen should not be unfocussed. To have your shen not unfocussed, you must first have the shen and ch'i

gather and penetrate the bones. Desiring the shen and ch'i to penetrate the bones, first you must strengthen the two thighs and loosen the two shoulders and let the ch'i sink down.

The chin [intrinsic strength] raises from the feet, changes in the legs, is stored in the chest, moved in the shoulders and commanded in the waist. The upper part connects to the two arms and the lower part follows the legs. It changes inside. To gather is to close and to release is to open. If it is quiet, it is completely still. Still means to close. In closing there is opening. If it is moving, everything moves. Moving is open. In opening there is closing. When the body is touched it revolves freely. There is nowhere that does not obtain power. Then you can attract to emptiness and use four ounces to deflect a thousand pounds.

Practicing the Form every day is the kung fu of knowing yourself. When you start to practice, first ask yourself, "Did my whole body follow the above principles or not?" If one little place did not follow them, then correct it immediately. Therefore, in practicing the Form we want slowness not speed.

Push hands is the kung fu of knowing others. As for movement and stillness, although it is to know others, you must still ask yourself. If you arrange yourself well, when others touch you, you don't move a hair. Follow the opportunity and meet his chin and let him fall naturally outward. If you feel someplace in your body is powerless, it is double-weighted and unchanging. You must seek the defect in yin

and yang, opening and closing. Know yourself and know others: in one hundred battles you will win one hundred times.

YANG'S TEN IMPORTANT POINTS

by Yang Cheng-fu (1883 -
1936)

1.) Head upright to let the shen [spirit of vitality] rise to the top of the head. Don't use li [external strength], or the neck will be stiff and the ch'i [vital life energy] and blood cannot flow through. It is necessary to have a natural and lively feeling. If the spirit cannot reach the headtop, it cannot raise.

2.) Sink the chest and pluck up the back. The chest is depressed naturally inward so that the ch'i can sink to the tan-t'ien [field of elixir]. Don't expand the chest: the ch'i gets stuck there and the body becomes top-heavy. The heel will be too light and can be uprooted.

Pluck up the back and the ch'i sticks to the back; depress the chest and you can pluck up the back. Then you can discharge force through the spine. You will be a peerless boxer.

3.) Sung [Relax] the waist. The waist is the commander of the whole body. If you can sung the waist, then the two legs will have power and the lower part will be firm and stable. Substantial and insubstantial change, and this is based on the turning of the waist. It is said "the source of the postures lies in the waist. If you cannot get power, seek the defect in the legs and waist."

4.) Differentiate between insubstantial and substantial. This is the first principle in T'ai Chi Ch'uan. If the weight of the whole body is resting on the right leg, then the right leg is substantial and the left leg is insubstantial, and vice versa. When you can separate substantial and insubstantial, you can turn lightly without using strength. If you cannot separate, the step is heavy and slow. The stance is not firm and can be easily thrown of balance.

5.) Sink the shoulders and drop the elbows. The shoulders will be completely relaxed and open. If you cannot relax and sink, the two shoulders will be raised up and tense. The ch'i will follow them up and the whole body cannot get power. "Drop the elbows" means the elbows go down and relax. If the elbows raise, the shoulders are not able to sink and you cannot discharge people far. The discharge will then be close to the broken force of the external schools.

6.) Use the mind instead of force. The T'ai Chi Ch'uan Classics say, "all of this means use I [mind-intent] and not li." In practicing T'ai Chi Ch'uan the whole body relaxes. Don't let one ounce of force remain in the blood vessels, bones, and ligaments to tie yourself up. Then you can be agile and able to change. You will be able to turn freely and easily. Doubting this, how can you increase your power?

The body has meridians like the ground has ditches and trenches. If not obstructed the water can flow. If the meridian is not closed, the ch'i goes through. If the whole body has hard force and it fills up the meridians, the ch'i and the blood stop and the turning is not smooth and agile. Just pull one hair and the whole body is off-balance. If you use I, and not li, then the I goes to a place in the body and the ch'i follows it. The ch'i and the blood circulate. If you do this every day and never stop, after a long time you will have nei chin [real internal strength]. The T'ai Chi Ch'uan Classics say, "when you are extremely soft, you become extremely hard and strong." Someone who has extremely good T'ai Chi Ch'uan kung fu has arms like iron wrapped with cotton and the weight is very heavy. As for the external schools, when they use li, they reveal li. When they don't use li, they are too light and floating. Their chin is external and locked together. The li of the external schools is easily led and moved, and not too be esteemed.

7.) Coordinate the upper and lower parts of the body. The T'ai Chi Ch'uan Classics say "the motion should be rooted in the feet, released through the legs, controlled by the waist and manifested through the fingers." Everything acts simultaneously. When the

hand, waist and foot move together, the eyes follow. If one part doesn't follow, the whole body is disordered.

8.) Harmonize the internal and external. In the practice of T'ai Chi Ch'uan the main thing is the shen. Therefore it is said "the spirit is the commander and the body is subordinate." If you can raise the spirit, then the movements will naturally be agile. The postures are not beyond insubstantial and substantial, opening and closing. That which is called open means not only the hands and feet are open, but the mind is also open. That which is called closed means not only the hands and feet are closed, but the mind is also closed. When you can make the inside and outside become one, then it becomes complete.

9.) Move with continuity. As to the external schools, their chin is the Latter Heaven brute chin. Therefore it is finite. There are connections and breaks. During the breaks the old force is exhausted and the new force has not yet been born. At these moments it is very easy for others to take advantage. T'ai Chi Ch'uan uses I and not li. From beginning to end it is continuous and not broken. It is circular and again resumes. It revolves and has no limits. The original Classics say it is "like a great river rolling on unceasingly." and that the circulation of the chin is "drawing silk from a cocoon " They all talk about being connected together.

10.) Move with tranquility [Seek stillness in movement]. The external schools assume jumping about is good and they use all their energy. That is why after practice everyone pants. T'ai Chi Ch'uan uses

stillness to control movement. Although one moves, there is also stillness. Therefore in practicing the form, slower is better. If it is slow, the inhalation and exhalation are long and deep and the ch'i sinks to the tan-t'ien. Naturally there is no injurious practice such as engorgement of the blood vessels. The learner should be careful to comprehend it. Then you will get the real meaning.
