

THE GILMAN STUDIO TAI CHI CHUAN MANUAL

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About This Manual

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This manual is an idea that has been brewing in my head for many years. There are many books on Tai Chi Chuan, so why another publication? The main reason there are so many books is that each teacher wants to speak to his own students directly. There are three major schools of Tai Chi (Yang, Wu and Chen) as well as many variations on each. There are hard/soft, slow/fast, high/low, big/little as well as personal feelings that each teacher brings to the form.

There are elements of Tai Chi that I feel are essential for the student to know while other aspects are not very important, especially to the beginning student. This manual addresses the form and philosophy from where I'm at right now.

The manual is available in two forms—hardcopy and CD Rom. The hardcopy is in loose leaf form so that as I change, the manual can be updated easily. Items can either be added or deleted, mistakes rectified, and new understandings blended to make the picture clearer. I will update the CD on a regular basis.

This layout also makes it easy for the student to customize his or her own book so that the parts that are of main interest can be highlighted. The student can add pages that are important or useful while leaving out sections that are not. I have set this manual up with large margins so the student will feel free to make notes. I feel there is great flexibility to this system. I hope that you do too.

Pages for this manual will become available to you as you are ready for them. The separate movement explanation will be given you when you reach the place in the form when you might need them. Push Hands, Chi Kung and other specialized classes will have their own place in the manual. This way you won't be faced with a great deal of information for which you have no need.

Some sections will be constantly growing; for example the section on Chi Kung. There are hundreds of forms and practices related to Chi Kung and as they are introduced they will be available. Articles and other related material will also be offered so you can end up with quite a helpful book, I hope.

The sections on history, philosophy, classics will be fairly brief as these topics are well covered in other books. The sections on our forms will be most complete, as will the sections on energy and the mind. These are unique to me, and help to explain my understanding of Tai Chi, the body, health and healing, and energy in general.

There are many terms that will need explanation as we have no equivalent in English. I will use the spelling of Chinese words that I learned or is most comfortable for me. For instance, T'ai Ch'i Ch'uan is probably the correct spelling for this art. Most Westerners use the spelling Tai Chi Chuan or even Tai Chi. For ease of writing, I'll leave out the apostrophe. Ask me about any that you are unsure of.

Please feel free to offer suggestions or comments. The study of Tai Chi Chuan is the journey of a lifetime and hopefully I can be of assistance to you in making parts easier and more enjoyable.

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About The Gilman Studio

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Welcome to the Gilman Studio. The main focus of this studio is to provide an environment for the learning of Tai Chi Chuan and related subjects.

Classes start on time. Please make an effort to be on time so as not to miss any instruction or disrupt work in progress. If you have to be late for some reason come anyway because some practice is better than none. The studio was constructed in 1989. Prior to that time I taught Tai Chi in various halls around town, all of which had many limitations. Now I feel we have one of the best studios of its kind in the United States. Actually, there are very few studios dedicated to Tai Chi anywhere. We are lucky to have it.

The philosophy of The Gilman Studio is to provide the interested student the greatest opportunity for study at the most reasonable cost. That is why there is a low monthly fee that allows for unlimited classes. For the serious student that could mean *less than \$1.00 per class!* And as the student progresses in his or her studies the costs actually go down as the student can attend more classes for the same fee.

No street shoes are allowed in the studio. Tai Chi shoes are available for the cost of \$5.00. I feel this is the perfect footwear providing insulation from the floor, smooth bottom for ease of movement, and light weight. These are not the only possibility and students can use whatever they want just as long as they carry the shoes into the studio. Bare feet are not recommended as energy is lost through the bottoms of the feet to the cooler floor and the idea of Tai Chi is to build up energy.

Gilman Studio T-shirts are sold in all sizes, long or short sleeves and various colors. Light weight, loose clothing should be worn at all times to allow the free movement of energy around the body. Also try and wear natural fibers for the same reason.

Besides this manual, the studio sells books, magazines and related products that will enhance your enjoyment and understanding of Tai Chi and health in general. Most of these products are sold at a discount to students of the studio. You will find that reading about Tai Chi will encourage you to continue your practice, particularly through the times of difficulty. Tai Chi is easy to learn, yet it takes perseverance. You must see the goal as important for the rest of your life.

Please use the parking lot for your car. The city does not want to have Cherry St. narrowed by cars parked on either side. There is plenty of parking down by the studio.

Cassette tapes and video tapes are available covering many of the forms taught at the studio. These can help you in your study and are not meant to teach people who are not enrolled in classes. I'll let you know when these become available.

Often we do exercises with other people. These are designed to help you understand some principle of Tai Chi. You will never be forced to do anything you are not comfortable with or that could bring you harm. If there is something you don't want to do for any reason, don't. The class is for your learning and you should take care of yourself. If you have any problems be sure to talk to Michael about it.

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About Michael

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I began my studies of Tai Chi in San Francisco in 1968. Most of my students are interested in how I got involved with Tai Chi. My story is not all that unique.

I was working as a television director in S.F. I was unhappy, unhealthy, and lost. I was contemplating suicide. Through circumstance I saw a man give a demonstration of what I later found out to be Tai Chi. My first impression was one of wonder mixed with a sort of primal sense of seeing essential movement being performed. At this time I had never heard of Tai Chi nor had many people. It was mostly being taught in the Chinese community to Chinese.

I found out the man's name was Choy Kam-man and he was teaching in Chinatown. I went down and signed up for the first class I could. I still had no idea what Tai Chi was but it interested me from my gut, not my head.

I don't remember much about the beginning years with Master Choy, only that within a short while I was feeling better than I could remember having felt in years. I had been smoking for about 8 years and that stopped almost immediately. My energy started to increase, a sense of well being filled me, and within a short while I knew that I was meant to devote most of the rest of my life to the study and teaching of this wonderful art.

I spent most of the next five years studying with Master Choy, although I also studied Yoga during this time. It was shortly after my first class of Tai Chi that I met a mystic by the name of Master Subramuniya. He taught a form of meditation and yoga called Advita Yoga which was a traditional Hindu practice. It involved basically the same sort of practices as Tai Chi, namely the moving of energy to facilitate or attain the state of enlightenment. I became the personal chef of Master Subramuniya and lived in his ashram in Hawaii. I was with him for about one year and it was a period of rapid development of my abilities to concentrate and focus.

I went back to S.F. and continued my studies with Master Choy. I would take classes and then go off and travel the world, practicing and learning other forms of energy work. I met Swami Vishnudevananda and lived at his ashram while I learned his form of Hatha Yoga which I went on to teach for a while. I looked into Zen Buddhist practices and attended classes at the Zen Center in S.F. All this time I continued with Master Choy. I saw no conflict of interest, as all these studies are aimed at allowing the individual to be real, present, and simple.

Master Choy's classes were set up so the student could only attend one class a week for an hour. I never saw the whole form of Tai Chi demonstrated till I had learned it myself. Master Choy didn't speak English very well so most of the classes were devoted to following along with him as he went through the movements and then broke them down into little pieces, as I do now also. As a matter of fact, I owe most of my teaching style to Master Choy.

After a student had learned at least one form, he or she could attend a Saturday morning practice session at which you could see students working on other forms. I have followed this tradition for 21 years of teaching classes. I call it Saturday in the Park. The workout is open to anyone interested in Tai Chi. They don't have to be enrolled in my classes to attend.

More About Michael

After about three or four years I became Master Choy's main student. I would do demonstrations with him, sometimes alone and sometimes with other students. One memory that really sticks in my mind was when Master Choy, two other students and I did a demonstration at the Masonic Hall in S.F. The theme was Meeting of the Ways, which was to bring together many diverse spiritual paths and have these teachers talk or demonstrate what they did. Many well known teachers from around the world were there, including Master Choy. There were perhaps two or three thousand people in attendance. There were constantly people getting up and moving around in the middle of speakers presentations, as well as general shuffling about, etc. as many of the speakers could not speak English all that well. Our turn came and as it turned out we were given a tiny area in which to demonstrate, perhaps 6 by 6 or so for the four of us. And it was carpeted! We were shaken and really nervous. Master Choy said "just follow me and don't worry."

The energy was incredible. All those people focusing the energy on us and I took it in and transformed it into Chi. I was flying. Yet it was so difficult. Each step had to be so exact so as not to fall off the stage or run into each other. We moved as one. The audience was transfixed. No one moved. Not a sound was uttered. Toward the middle of the form I realized that I was going to have to do the Turn Around on this carpet! The move is hard enough on a smooth surface, and very difficult on carpet. I started sweating. The energy was so intense anyway and now the fear of failure crept in. I kept pulling myself back to Master Choy, to his movements. Just follow him I told myself. Still not a sound except my heart beating, my breath in my belly, and my blood moving in my veins.

A roar! An incredible sound filled the hall as people jumped to their feet and gave a wonderful sign of their approval. Without even realizing it I had finished the form, done the turn around correctly. What happened to those last moves I don't know. I always pride myself in being present during my practice, yet I had lost myself into Master Choy and the movement at just the right time. Master Choy got a lot of students from that demonstration.

In 1973 I received my teaching certificate from Master Choy. I moved to Tucson to begin my career. I feel very blessed as my classes were very well attended from the start so that I didn't have to do any other jobs to support myself. Tai Chi was very new to the U.S. then so I had to be very busy and give demonstrations on a regular basis. The newspapers found what I did interesting so I had good coverage for free. During my years prior to coming to Port Townsend, I taught over 1500 people and in the last 14 years here well over 1000 people have studied Tai Chi with me. That's a great deal of the town and surrounding area. Tai Chi is an important part of our community.

In 1979 I saw Dr. Milton Trager give a demonstration of his work. I immediately recognized it as doing Tai Chi to another person to facilitate release of tension so that the individual could move beyond the place where he or she is now. It is a very powerful approach for human development. I went on to apprentice with Dr. Trager over a period of 5 years and even taught for the Trager Institute for a while before moving to Port Townsend. This work, called Trager Work, has been a part of my practice since then.

More About Michael

Through the years I have studied with many of more well known teachers of Tai Chi including Jou Tsung Hwa, Yang Jwing-Ming, William Chen, T.T. Liang, George Xu, Wailun Huang, Liang Shou-yu, Sam Masich as well as having read just about every book on the subject. It is my gift to be able to take all this information and variety and blend it into a form that is easily learned by just about anyone. Even after all that input, my form remains very close to the original form as taught to me by Master Choy. I feel that says a great deal about the ability of Master Choy. His form is quite close to the form as taught by Yang Chen Fu as far as I can tell. That doesn't necessarily make it better, yet it is the form I prefer. I certainly encourage you to study with as many people as you can to get a better perspective on Tai Chi. But I feel you should know one form well before taking on others. It could get you rather confused if you don't have a solid grounding in one form before starting another.

In the summer of 1994 I entered Push Hands competition at the prestigious Taste of China in Virginia. I ended up as the Grand Champion, never losing a match. I feel good about that in the fact that I did no special training for the event. I know that I am on the right track with my everyday practice. I hope to help other people who are interested in Tai Chi as a sport to gain the necessary skills.

Many people ask me if I have ever **used** Tai Chi, meaning have I ever used Tai Chi in a fight. I usually answer, "Yes, I use it all the time." They look at me expectantly, wanting all the details of how I bested my opponent. I'll then say, "I use the principles of Tai Chi so I never have to get to the point where I get into a fight." They are always slightly disappointed, yet get the point. Fighting is the result of not being in control of a situation and I'm happy to say that I have never hit anybody out of anger.

I'm sure that Tai Chi will remain an integral part of my life. I find joy and happiness in being able to share this incredible art with others. I feel like a grandfather now that some of my students have gone on to teach and spread the art of Tai Chi even further.

Speaking of spreading Tai Chi, there are dozens of videos of Tai Chi on the market. I feel that almost nobody could learn a new form from them. They are helpful in that you can see what others are doing and I feel very strongly that you need a teacher to help you, particularly in the beginning.

In 1996, I wrote a Tai Chi book entitled *A String Of Pearls : 108 Meditations on Tai Chi Chuan*. It was very well received, went through two printings, then was picked up by YMAA Publishing and reprinted with a change in title - *108 Insights Into Tai Chi Chuan*. I hope all students of Tai Chi read this book as it offers encouraging advice to help you get started and stay on the Tai Chi path.

This book turned out to be very popular so I followed it up with a sequel, called *101 Reflections on Tai Chi Chuan*. Both of these books have been translated into French and Italian and continue to sell well.

I also write articles for Tai Chi Magazine, produce television lessons for Tai Chi and Energetic Releasing Technique, sponsor Push Hands Tournaments, organize the annual Energetic Retreat, and am involved with setting up the Port Townsend University of the Healing Arts.

What Is Tai Chi Chuan

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I'm inclined to summarize the history of Tai Chi here yet will refrain and save that for another chapter. Let me address this using my own understanding as much as possible.

As you'll read about in your studies, Tai Chi was, and is, a martial art first and foremost. The name Tai Chi Chuan translates as Supreme Ultimate Fist so you can easily see the main connection. If that element is not talked about in class the teacher has failed to do justice to what Tai Chi really is. Of course, most people don't study Tai Chi in order to learn a self defense and for that reason most teachers place little emphasis on the martial side of the form. I personally, at this time, can not separate out the martial aspects, so my first response to the question of what Tai Chi is, is that it is a martial art.

Assuming that Tai Chi is a martial art, what would be important for an individual to know in order to be good in this art? I think it could boil down to a sound mind and body, and a calm spirit. Achieving this takes most of a lifetime. Yet our journey toward this goal of sound mind and body has rich rewards all along the way. Each step brings life more into focus so that one makes fewer mistakes and can rebound from them quicker. Health and happiness can't help but improve. Our relations with others take on a much more relaxed attitude as we gain self confidence through constantly working on our self knowledge. Life becomes an adventure.

Another way to look at Tai Chi Chuan is to translate the Chinese in a different way. Tai can mean Ultimate or Spirit, Chi mind or energy, Chuan body or form. So I sometimes translate it to mean the form (Chuan) that allows the Universal Energy (Tai) to express itself (Chi). We practice Tai Chi in order to become more integrated with the energy of the Universe, to open and strengthen the body so that this energy can be channeled in an appropriate fashion.

So Tai Chi is about focus. If you want to do something, the more focus you can bring to it, the more energy is made available to you. The goal of Tai Chi then is to learn how to increase our ability to deal with energy. We need to identify what energy is, how to bring it into our body, how to channel and focus it, and how to use it to accomplish our personal goals. We might need to defend ourselves from without or within, to heal ourselves or others, to increase our enjoyment of life through gaining sensitivity and awareness, to go beyond what we could ever imagine through meditation, or enjoy a new sport in the form of Push Hands.

Tai Chi Chuan is

- 1. Martial art**
- 2. Relaxation**
- 3. Exercise (Balance, Flexibility, Coordination)**
- 4. Increased concentration**
- 5. Meditation**
- 6. Self healing**
- 7. Self knowledge**
- 8. Understanding energy**
- 9. Chinese history and philosophy**
- 10. Rejuvenation and Immortality**
- 11. International Sport**

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Classes At The Studio

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Yang Style Long Form 108 Movements

This is the style of Tai Chi Chuan as practiced by more people than any other. As you will read later in this manual, most of the popular forms today evolved from the Yang. Tai Chi started out with 13 basic movements and kept expanding until it reached 108 movements. All these movements are actually only variations on the basic 13. There are now many shortened versions of this long form, in fact not that many people teach and practice this long form, so why do I?

The main reason is the length of time for practice. The long form takes 20 minutes to go through, so when you start, you are committed to 20 minutes of concentrative exercise. If you don't have that much time for some reason, the form is divided into three sections that can be practiced in 5 or 10 minutes.

I also like the fact that with all this variety, you exercise more muscles and joints and are called on to make more connections between various parts of the body. That means there is more practice of mind/body coordination which helps in all aspects of daily life.

The form is taught in three parts. The beginning class works on basic Tai Chi principles, conditioning the body, relaxation, and the first section of the form (movements 1 - 19). The intermediate class continues with the form up to movement 57, and more time is spent with breathing, conditioning, and partner exercises. The advanced class finishes the form with more emphasis on applications, push hands, breathing, and meditation.

A student could stop at the end of any of the classes and have a complete form to practice, as well as an understanding of basic Tai Chi principles that can be applied to the rest of their lives.

Partner Form Two 44 Movement Forms

This form was kept secret until just recently. Two person form based on the Yang family long form requiring firm ground in Tai Chi practice. Two forms fit together to make a beautiful dance like movement, which is actually a fighting practice form.. Extremely useful to gain an understanding of the applications of Tai Chi, as well as aiding in sensitivity, awareness and understanding of Tai Chi principles. Can be practiced as a solo form

.Partner Cane Form Two 11 Movement Forms

The basic introduction to Tai Chi weapons. The forms fit together to explain practical use of a cane or short stick as a weapon. Develops coordination, timing, sense of space, concentration, and an understanding of how to move energy out into an external object. Can be practiced as a solo form.

Partner Sabre Form Two 8 Movement Forms

A short partner form to explain the use of the Tai Chi sabre. Can be practiced as a solo form. It is an easy form to learn and fun to practice with a partner.

Traditional Tai Chi Sabre 37 Movement Form

A beautiful form that combines the smooth, easy movements of Tai Chi with the use of a sabre. Can be very aerobic. Requires concentration and a good understanding of Tai Chi principles. Students learn how to bring energy to an external object.

More Classes At The Studio

Tai Chi Spear—64 Movements

This is a little known and practiced form. It is very energetic and teaches the student how to project chi. The entire body needs to be involved in order to use this marvelous weapon.

Push Hands

Two person exercise used to gain an understanding of the body's energy and how to work with a partner to achieve awareness of how to utilize this energy. This practice contributes to an understanding of balance, flexibility, strength, awareness, sensitivity, and all the principles of Tai Chi. There are actually International competitions in Push Hands, and a student can train in that direction if he or she wishes. Most students are interested in the sensitivity aspects of this work. Push Hands is quite a workout and a great deal of fun

Chi Kung Breathing Forms

Chi means breath or energy. The two are interrelated. Chi Kung means the study of how breath affects the body. China has been studying and practicing Chi Kung for thousands of years. There are forms or exercises from very general to very specific. Many are introduced in classes, while others are presented in workshop format.

Morning Class

A drop in class that meets Monday through Friday from 7 to 8 am. The focus is on conditioning the body, opening the joints, gaining strength and flexibility, learning how to move from the center, building and channeling Chi, and generally having a good workout to get the day started right. A person doesn't have to be enrolled in a Tai Chi class to attend.

Energy Focused Massage Workshop

These one or two day workshops are offered on an occasional basis. An individual learns how to help others move through energy blocks that manifest as tension, pain, stiffness, and holding. You can only give what you have so much of the class is devoted to the exploration of one's own energy and how to work with that.

Saturday in the Park

An open practice session that meets in Chetzemoka Park each Saturday morning from 9 to 11 am. Everybody is welcome.

Annual Labor Day Energetic Retreat

This is a get together for people interested in Tai Chi and related activities. It brings together teachers and students in an informal way to further the learning and practice of energetic and health related topics.

History

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Dreams and waking are two realities that cannot be separated. I have had dreams that I thought were real. The history of Tai Chi came to me in a dream, not in a waking state so somehow I trust it more. Let me tell you about it.

In the dream, I was sitting on a ledge overlooking a vast plateau. It was a dry grass beige with the strong scent of prairie sweet grass. I was watching a hawk lazily gliding in an updraft. The dark blue of the autumn sky made me squint. Squinting made me sleepy. I laid back and went into a deep sleep. When I awoke I remembered a dream that I just had.

I was a hunter. I had been out all day without sight of any prey. I was tired and sat down to rest. From nowhere, members of the tribe that were our enemies captured me and carried me off to their camp. Tied up, I was thrown into a hut by myself. I knew death would soon come by dismemberment as was their custom. I closed my eyes to get myself ready for the voyage to the next life. Suddenly a tiger appeared. I felt that somehow he was going to take me to the next world. As I watched he danced the dance of the tiger. He moved to and fro, up and down, slowly and quickly. His movements mesmerized me. I opened myself to him and at that moment he jumped into me, disappearing into the deepest part of me.

I felt incredible strength flow through every muscle. With little effort I pulled apart the ropes that were binding me. I rushed out of the hut finding about a dozen of my enemies. My speed, strength, and Spirit were so great that I killed them all with my bare hands in a short time.

I set about for home running at an easy pace when I spotted a deer. With a quick burst of speed I was upon him and with one blow from my fist I fell him. I threw the deer over my shoulder and headed home. When I arrived my family was so happy to see me, yet stood back as they saw that I had changed. They saw the Spirit of the Tiger had entered me. They stood in awe.

Sometime later I felt that I had to move. I did the Tiger Dance as I remembered it. The Spirit got strong. Others saw me and joined in and were also filled with the Spirit of the Tiger. It was then that I realized that if I could get the Spirit of the tiger by doing a special dance I might be able to capture other spirits as well. I would observe the animal whose spirit I wanted to capture then sit and visualize its movements and then dance the movements. I found I had the strength of the tiger, the flexibility of the snake, the balance of a stork standing on one leg, the quick movements of the monkey. My body contained all of these qualities which I could express at will. I discovered that I could teach these dances to others and they could also capture these spirits. Our family got so strong that no one dared to challenge us so we had a long period of peace.

When I awoke from this dream I returned to the Shaolin Temple where I was a monk and spent the next 20 years of my life watching nature and doing dances that would capture the spirit that I needed to complete myself as a person and lead the difficult life of a monk on the road to immortality. These dances I would call Tai Chi Chuan which mean Dance of the Ultimate Energy. For this I had been born and for this I will be remembered.

History Page 2

So that was my dream. In all the study of Tai Chi that I have done there is no reference to this pre-recorded history period of development. So I think I'll just take credit for its discovery.

The rest of the history is fairly well recorded. A Buddhist monk by the name of Bodhidharma came to China to spread the word of the Buddha. He ended up in the Shaolin Temple where he taught the physically degenerated monks a combination of exercise and martial arts that later became known as Shaolin Kung Fu. This was around 537 A.D. The monks of this temple became famous for their martial skill and remain so even to this day.

The next step in the evolution of Tai Chi comes in the person of a man known as Chang San-Feng, regarded as the founding father of Tai Chi as we now know it— sort of. His life spanned from 1247 till 1459. That is a period of 200 years. There are quite a few stories about Cheng San-Feng, so you will no doubt read more about him if you pick up Tai Chi books, especially Jou Tsung Hwa's.

My feeling is that Cheng San-Feng was a Taoist as compared to the Buddhist martial artists. The Taoists were more nature oriented and ended up making the martial arts conform more to their way of viewing things. The Taoists were also into immortality and added this idea to the martial arts practice. So I think Cheng San-Feng combined the techniques of the Shaolin Kung Fu, immortality practice and nature study of the Taoists, and the animal Spirit dance that had been handed down from our dreamer. He turned a martial technique into a practice leading to strengthening the body, mind, and spirit. This is essentially what Tai Chi is today.

Tai Chi Chuan has been recorded in formal documents since the time of Chen Wang-Ting. It is said that he started teaching Tai Chi in 1644. The early history of Tai Chi is completely tied to the Chen family. There is a great deal written about it so I won't write much about it only to say that Tai Chi was a Chen family secret until Yang Lu Shan came along. There were variations and changes as Tai Chi passed through the generations, but Tai Chi was first and foremost a martial art at this time. Yang changed all that.

Yang Lu Shan is probably the most important figure in Tai Chi modern history. He lived from 1799-1872. He was a good martial artist already when he heard of the skill of the Chen family. Unable to study with the Chen family, he got a job as a servant in the village. He learned Tai Chi by spying on the teaching sessions whenever he could and then practicing on his own. There are various stories about what happened next, but somehow Yang got discovered and Chen Chang Hsin, who was the head of the Chen family, recognized Yang's skill and decided to take him on as a student. Chen ended up teaching Yang all of the techniques, skills, and secrets.

It is at this point that Tai Chi comes out of the closet and starts to be made public. Yang left the Chen village and ended up teaching in Beijing to the royal family. He became quite famous for his skills as he loved to test himself against any and all comers. There are many great stories about Yang which really stretch the imagination, yet there is no doubt that he was gifted as a martial artist and teacher. I don't think anyone since has approached Yang's skill.

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It was during this time that guns started to appear, so the skills that Yang possessed were not nearly as important for fighting. It was then that the image of Tai Chi started to shift toward health and fitness. That is not to say that some people didn't still practice Tai Chi as a martial art, as many do today, but even greater numbers started studying Tai Chi solely for health.

Yang Lu Shan had two sons who were both famous Tai Chi experts. The youngest named Yang-Chien had three sons and one of these, named Yang Chen-Fu, is of utmost importance to us. He is the man who really popularized Tai Chi and spread it worldwide. Most of the important teachers of today studied either with Yang or with students of his. As Jou Tsung Hwa points out, Yang Chen-Fu represents the highest level of natural talent and achievement, as Yang taught himself Tai Chi after his father died. His example encourages us to practice even when we don't have a teacher- if we understand the theories and principles of Tai Chi Chuan.

Much has been written about Yang and we even have pictures of him doing Tai Chi. I have never heard of moving pictures of him which is too bad. That would have been wonderful. Every teacher nowadays that works with the Yang form thinks his way is the correct way according to Yang and the still pictures can be very misleading. In any case, he was the greatest master and teacher of our time and the one who had the greatest influence on how the form is practiced today.

Choy Hak-Peng was suffering from very bad arthritis. One of his friends suggested he study Tai Chi for his health and went to see Yang who took him on as a student. Choy went on to heal himself and become very good in Tai Chi. He moved to America in 1939 and in 1941 started Tai Chi Association in San Francisco. He is given credit for introducing Tai Chi to America. He wrote a widely published book on Tai Chi in 1956. He died in 1958.

His son, Choy Kam-Man, was my teacher. Choy was born in 1921 and died in 1994. Master Choy had thousands of students, only a few of us have gone on to teach. His son Frankie now carries on the family tradition. My classes are filled with Master Choy stories so I won't put them down on paper. I can only say that he had a great deal of influence on my life and on countless others. His life revolved around Tai Chi. When I saw him in 1992 his health was quite poor, yet the moment we started talking about Tai Chi his energy picked up and he could hardly stop. He really got going once he started demonstrating his Chi Kung form for me. I am filled with the highest regard for him.

The other main schools of Tai Chi were started with people who changed Tai Chi to a significant degree, namely Wu, Sun, and Dong. Yang remains the most popular even though in the last years there has been a push to have a standardized form that can be easily judged for competition and teaching. I like having various forms. It is like different accents around the country or different foods. It makes life more interesting.

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I Ching

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The I Ching or Book of Changes is one of the oldest books known to man. No one knows who wrote it or exactly when, yet it has influenced all thinkers and philosophers of China through all their known history. On the surface it was and is used as an oracle that one would consult on important questions. It uses lines which represent either Yin or Yang in combinations of three called trigrams which are combined into six lines called hexagrams. There are 64 possible hexagrams and these hexagrams, received in response to questions, represent the direction and intensity of energy which causes predictable results.

The I Ching is so deep that people have been studying it and ending up with so many interpretation that make it all very confusing to most people. I myself have used the Richard Wilhelm translation for over 30 years and feel comfortable with it. There are dozens, if not hundreds of translations now on the market, and if interested, you should read through a few and compare. Master Jou has a good book called *The Tao of the I Ching* and you might check that out.

The I Ching is important to the Tai Chi player for many reasons. Taoism and Confucianism have their root in the I Ching and Tai Chi is one of the branches of these philosophies. The theory of Yin and Yang is the basis for Tai Chi and the understanding of the natural flow of the Universe, which the I Ching so clearly illuminates, makes Tai Chi a superior Martial Art. I can not attempt to explain how the I Ching works or say much about it here, but can not recommend highly enough how important it is to have a copy of the I Ching at your disposal.

There are a couple of ideas that are especially important to the beginning student that come from the I Ching. Think about them carefully.

Hexagram # 30 — Li.

It is important to preserve inner composure and not to allow oneself to be swept along with the bustle of life. If one is serious and composed, he can acquire the clarity of mind needed for coming to terms with the innumerable impressions that pour in. It is precisely at the beginning that serious concentration is important because the beginning holds the seeds of all that is to follow.

Hexagram # 53 — Chien

Gentleness that is adaptable, but at the same time penetrating, is the outer form that should precede from inner calm. The very gradualness of the development makes it necessary to have perseverance, for perseverance alone prevents slow progress from dwindling to nothing.

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Four Important Points

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The most important points that I can give to the beginning student are these:

- ◆ **1. Know Yourself**
- ◆ **2. Do Your Best**
- ◆ **3. Do Not Overdo**
- ◆ **4. Make a Little Progress Everyday**

Let me explain each of these. Please study them carefully as it could make a great deal of difference to your success and enjoyment in the practice of Tai Chi Chuan.

1. Know Yourself — Without this there can be no real progress. Tai Chi is a physical, mental, and spiritual exercise and without taking time to look within, a student can never be aware of what is going on. Tai Chi is a martial art and as such it is of utmost importance to know your opponent and this is impossible if you don't know yourself. Hopefully most people come to Tai Chi to learn more about themselves, how they work and how they perceive, and this ability to know yourself can be increased. But the desire has to be there. So take the time to look closely at yourself and enjoy your growth and development. This is the foundation for all that is to follow.

2. Do Your Best — Life is not worth living if you don't do your best. You won't feel good about yourself or others if you don't try always to do your best. And it is important not to compare yourself with others. My best may not be as good as someone else's yet I will feel satisfied if I know I did my best. In order to do my best I must know myself first so I can know what my best is.

3. Do Not Overdo — If you know yourself it is difficult to overdo. Overdoing usually comes from trying to do as much as others without looking at yourself. It is so important in Tai Chi to feel what you are doing and also to take responsibility for yourself in classes and practice. Do not rely on others to fully direct your actions. Trust yourself and always start out slowly and softly and then work up speed and intensity while keeping close attention on how you feel.

4. Make a Little Progress Everyday — Tai Chi is designed to be practiced everyday. In the beginning, the student only needs to practice 10 minutes a day to progress if the practice is done with full awareness. An individual can hopefully work up to 20 to 30 minutes a day for the rest of his or her life. Progress should be slow and steady with the emphasis changing from the external physical to the internal mental to the unified spiritual. This is a lifelong journey and one that can be a great tool for keeping us healthy, happy and on the path to self realization.

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Tai Chi Chuan and Yin/Yang

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The study of Tai Chi Chuan is the study of Yin and Yang — how they relate, engage and disengage, in a never ending cycle. Every facet of our Tai Chi practice, and our life also, can be viewed through the Yin/ Yang perspective. It is important to remember that nothing is absolute. Yin contains Yang and vice versa, just as night contains day, up contains down, etc. Also, these two energies balance each other out. The Chinese have classified everything into Yin and Yang and their whole system of natural medicine is based on Yin and Yang theory. If something gets too Yin, add Yang. Let's look at how this theory relates to Tai Chi.

Tai Chi — Yang Side

Yang is given the attributes of male, hot, dry, expanding or outward and upward moving, hard, aggressive, positive, etc. If we think about Tai Chi, we can see that movements that use a fist (the most Yang part of the body), that push, pull, strike, kick, ward off, all can be considered Yang.

Tai Chi — Yin side

Yin is given the attributes of female, cool, moist, contracting or inward and downward moving, soft, yielding, negative, etc. Yin movements use open hand (the most Yin part of the body), yield, deflect, parry, move in toward the body, and usually downward.

It is important to remember that Yin contains Yang and Yang contains Yin. Every movement of Tai Chi is a combination of these two energies, with one being more predominate. Also remember that Yin balances out Yang and vice versa. If you look at the most basic movement, Ward Off, you'll get the idea.

The opponent pushes or punches to our center. This is a Yang movement on his part. We need to balance or neutralize this energy with Yin. In this case, we join his energy with the right hand (open and Yin) and lead it to the right side and slightly downward (Yin). At this point his Yang is neutralized and starts to turn into Yin (he starts to retreat back into his center for balance and stability). We then must change to Yang so we follow him forward and attack his center with the left forearm (Yang in that it moves out and up in an expanding nature).

Each movement of Tai Chi contains a movement from Yin to Yang or Yang to Yin in order to first neutralize the opponent's energy and then follow up with energy of our own. If the opponent uses Yin, I use Yang. When he Rolls Back, I Press. If he uses Yang, I use Yin. He kicks and I Retreat to Ride A Tiger. If he attacks my right side (Yang), I empty the right (Yin) and fill the left (Yang). When two people who are good at playing Tai Chi push hands get together, it is like a fine balance scale in that the slightest addition to one side must be met with an equal addition to the other side in order to maintain equilibrium. The master of Tai Chi will be so subtle in his or her addition or subtraction of energy that the partner will not know what is happening until it is too late to make a change. The Tai Chi Classics say " I know my opponent and he doesn't know me."

So meditate on the idea of Yin and Yang and see if your form doesn't markedly improve.

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Energy and Chi

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This is the essence of what Tai Chi is about. The recognition, movement, and cultivation of energy. The Chinese have many names for the various forms of energy or how the energy manifests. Let's be very clear about one fact. There is only one energy and this energy is expressed in varied ways. We talk about the body, mind, and spirit and really there is only one thing - this body/mind/spirit energy that is Michael in my case. The Chinese use the terms Jieng, Chi, and Shen to talk about energies that more or less relate to body, mind and spirit. I have spent most of my life studying energy and I have discovered much, yet so much more remains hidden in the shadows. So, let's try and explore energy, find out how it relates to Tai Chi and why it should be of more than passing interest to us.

Energy is the capacity to produce changes in matter or the ability to move something—to do work. Therefore, energy is recognized by what it can do, and you can be sure it is being utilized whenever reactions occur. Common forms of energy include heat, light, sound, electrical energy, mechanical energy, and chemical energy.

Although energy cannot be created or destroyed, it can be converted from one form to another. Light, for instance, is converted to heat when it is absorbed by the skin. An ordinary incandescent light bulb changes electrical energy to heat and light.

When most people in the west think of energy we think of fuel. We talk of atomic energy, caloric energy, or personal energy as in “that person has a lot of energy or that person really has good energy”. We tend to think of something being acted upon to release excess heat, light, or movement. Think for a moment about a car. We add fuel which gets mixed with air then set on fire by adding a spark and this fire or explosion causes pistons to move which in turn ends up moving the wheels if you want. Or I light a match to a pile of wood in my stove and the resulting fire gives off extra energy in the form of light and heat that warms me. Or I eat an apple and my metabolic rate goes up as my body “burns” that apple to provide heat that allows me to sit at this computer and type.

All of these examples show how we think of and use the idea of energy in our daily lives. Most people don't really think of energy, they just go about their lives. And they don't have to until something happens to make them aware of it like the gas shortage of some years ago or food rationing, that sort of thing. Another example would be dieting. The dieter needs to figure how many calories are in a particular food and how to run his or her body on the minimum possible without doing harm.

So now we are involved with the study of Tai Chi and we have to think of energy all the time. Even the name Tai Chi Chuan can be translated as “The Form that allows the universal energy to express itself through our body”. Yet I still haven't explained what energy is according to Tai Chi. I was getting you interested. Here it comes.

Everything is energy! That's what energy is. Everything. A rock? The space between the stars? A piece of paper? All energy. Everything you can perceive of is energy. Even the thought about something is energy. I can't think of anything that isn't energy and I've thought about it quite a bit. So Tai Chi is the study about everything in its broadest sense.

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The symbol for Tai Chi is the double fish which signifies the interaction of Yin and Yang, the energies that are closest to the primordial all encompassing nothingness which is actually everythingness. In the beginning, there was Wu Chi. Nothing. The Great Void, the Tao. For some reason, Tai Chi (Yin and Yang energies as yet undifferentiated) is born out of this everything/nothing and is regarded as the mother of Yin and Yang. Out of nothing, Tai Chi appears and this gives birth to Yin and Yang.

So out of nothing comes something. Out of the Tao or the state of Wu Chi, Tai Chi is formed. We now have pure energy, undifferentiated stuff. It is like all of a sudden we have space. The Big Bang theory. The origin of the universe. No one quite has a grasp on what was before the origin of the universe and we are now just starting to understand with our minds what happened after that point when the universe appeared. We got Yin and Yang.

Yin and Yang are the poles, the opposites, the polarity that causes all of life to appear. Without Yin and Yang we can not have movement, and without movement we can not have energy and life. Without male and female, up and down, in and out, positive and negative, north and south etc., nothing would exist as we know it. Yin and Yang is about attraction/ repulsion and balance. Without this interplay of opposites, balance is impossible. To try and understand this, let's look at some examples.

If we look at the Solar System we see a good example of this attraction/ repulsion. Everything is kept in balance through attraction (gravity) and repulsion (centrifugal force). The sun is at the center and all the planets are held in place by this balance. When one of these forces gets out of balance, chaos appears. Something crashes into something else (imagine the moon crashing into the earth - gravity wins) or something loses the strength to hold the attracted object in place and it goes sailing off toward something that is stronger (imagine the moon losing orbit and crashing into the sun - centrifugal force wins in relation to the earth).

Man is standing on the earth. The earth is using its gravitational force to hold us down. If man would move to the outer reaches of earth's gravitational field he would float, as exemplified by the astronauts. In order to stand and walk, man has to exert an equal or greater force to counteract gravity. If we add a larger amount of counteractive force we can even leave earth's gravitational field for a short while (jump).

Another interesting example of this is particles suspended in a solution. We can add salt to water, for example, and for a while it will dissolve. The water has a greater field than the salt. At some point, however, the addition of just one more particle of salt will cause the entire amount of salt that had previously been suspended to overcome the strength of the water to hold it and they will all fall to the bottom of the glass. It was not a gradual change or collapse, it will happen all at once. There is a very fine line of balance.

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This interplay between Yin and Yang is at the base of what Tai Chi Chuan is all about. For health, martial ability, mental stability, spiritual growth, we need this interaction of Yin and Yang. The more we can realize this and work to understand the forces of nature, the more harmonious our lives become. The Taoists spent most of their time contemplating Yin and Yang. Out of these two opposing forces we get the energy for life so let's talk more about what the Chinese philosophers have to say about them.

Yin is expressed as: emotional, passive, receptive, emptiness, cerebral, night, earth, interior, inertia, cold, dark, rest, and the moon. Yin usually contracts, and flows downward and inward. Yin is deep inside the body, hidden and interior. Yin is the composition of intelligence.

Yang is expressed as: creative, fullness, active, day, motion, hot, exterior, fire, heaven, and the sun. Yang expands and flows upward and outward. Yang is superficial and what you see. Yang is the expression of intelligence.

It is important to realize that Yin and Yang are polarities of the same force, the front and back, the top and bottom, the upper and lower - all part of the same circle with each constantly changing into the other. If you throw a ball up in the air at some point the ball will reach the top and then start down. Up is Yang, the top is balance, down is Yin. You cannot have one without the other. And nothing can be completely Yin or Yang. Both always contain some of its opposite. Night is Yin yet there are stars that bring light. Day is bright yet there are shadows that bring darkness.

So according to the Taoist theory, humans are created by a harmonious balance between the Yang energy of the sun and heavens, and the Yin energy of the earth. What we consider good health is really a state of balance between the Yin and Yang energies of the body. Think about some of the opposites and I think you'll agree. We need balance between activity and rest, thinking and doing, eating and excreting, sadness and joy, tension and release.

The idea of Chi is central to Tai Chi Chuan. Tai Chi is different than Tai Chi Chuan. The Chuan is the form or practice that works with the Tai Chi or Universal Energy. Most people use the term Tai Chi to refer to Tai Chi Chuan and I must admit to it myself even though it is not correct, only easier to use. So be aware of this from me and others.

Anyway, Chi is the life force that permeates everything and is everything. We cannot see Chi in its raw state yet we can feel it. It seems strange that we are Chi and we can experience it at the same time. I wonder if water can experience itself as a wave? The Chi enters the body and flows through channels which are all over the body. Chi is either Yin or Yang when it enters our body. We can accumulate this Chi in various ways like eating, breathing and prenatal parental energy. Any excess Chi can be stored in vessels called Dan Tien. This excess can be consciously acted upon to be changed into a higher form of energy or Chi which can then be used to accomplish tasks, up to and including enlightenment and immortality. Don't forget that energy cannot be created or destroyed, but it can be converted. So gross Chi can be converted into refined Chi. The light Chi moves upward, while the gross moves down.

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Chi arrives as a wave force and is changed into matter which can be changed back. If you think of water you can get the idea. First we have space or Tai Chi. Next we get Yin and Yang which are Hydrogen atoms and Oxygen atoms. These combine and interact to form water. As water becomes more Yin it becomes colder and darker— thus we get ice. Conversely, as it moves toward Yang it gets hotter and lighter so we get steam. The only difference between ice, water and steam is the rate in which the hydrogen and oxygen molecules are moving and this is determined by the interaction with Chi. If you place ice in the sun, which is very Yang, the ice is made more Yang and melts. If the temperature surrounding the ice is extremely cold or Yin, the Yang of the sun might not be enough to change the balance to Yang.

This is all a very gross simplification of a universal law that states “everything is Chi and is either Yin or Yang which is constantly changing from matter to energy and back again.” So what does that have to do with your practice of Tai Chi Chuan?

I’m not quite ready to explain that. A little bit more philosophy or background will help. And for this discussion I am indebted to Mantak Chia who is an excellent teacher of the Taoist healing practices. I highly recommend you reading his books if this subject interests you. Our bodies are made up from Yin Chi from the energy of the earth, Yang Chi from the heavens including the sun, and Prenatal Chi that is the Chi we get from our parents and, if you so believe, God. This Prenatal Chi is predominantly Yin or Yang and determines our sex. This Chi is limited in quantity, sort of like a trust fund. If we are careful with this “trust fund” we will have lots to spend when we need it, especially when we get older. More about that later.

Blood and Chi are the fundamental circulating energies in the body. Blood is formed by combining Chi energy from food, Prenatal Chi, and Chi in the air. It circulates through the heart, arteries, capillaries, and veins. The arterial blood carries nutrients, oxygen, and nutritious Chi to all the body cells. Venous blood is that which has given up its nutrition and oxygen to the tissues and returns to the heart through the veins carrying carbon dioxide that will be eliminated through the lungs.

Blood and Chi flow together through the body in parallel channels. Chi is the force that moves the blood, giving it energy and power. It is said that “when the Chi moves, the blood flows; if the Chi stagnates, the blood congeals.”

You can see, if you can relate to this theory, the importance of Chi in relation to the health of the body. All cells need blood and the nutrients that it provides and all cells need to rid themselves of the waste products of metabolism. Chi is the driving force to accomplish this.

Now we come to the role of Tai Chi Chuan. The major purpose of Tai Chi is to train the mind to consciously move the energy around the body to bring health and healing to all cells, as well as to transmute the lower, denser Chi into a higher, finer form that can be used for transformation of the higher self. As Chi moves faster it lightens, moving upward. As it moves upward it charges up the energy centers (chakras) causing a transformation of this energy into a finer and finer substance until, when it reaches the top of the head, it has returned to its original primal force and there is an explosion which results in a rebirth as an enlightened being.

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The limited Self which was concerned with survival and reproduction gets replaced with the higher Self which is concerned with the furthering of man's possible evolution. We are in the process of making steam out of ice, an oak tree out of a seed, a human out of various forms of Chi. It is like being able to raise our consciousness enough to be able to see all at the same time instead of just a small portion. Instead of being down in the valley, we sit at the top of the highest mountain and from there we can clearly see in all directions. Even if your aspirations don't reach that high, there are many benefits from being able to work with your own energy in a conscious manner. If you stay open and feel your inner self, I'm sure you will feel something moving inside your body. That will give you the incentive to carry on to investigate the possibility of alternative ideas of life and health.

Don't forget that thoughts are Chi, just as a rock is Chi. Your thoughts can be dense and slow moving or quick and creative. The better you feel, the more open you are, the more frequent your inspirations. Let go and allow yourself to really be who you are without holding on to the past. Be here now and allow the universal energy to run through you. Tai Chi Chuan can help.

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Jieng, Chi, and Shen

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Jieng, Chi and Shen are the essential energies that make up, power, and maintain the human body. Without these energies, there would be no life. They are three expressions of the same energy - the Tao, yet they can be talked about separately. It is like body, mind, and spirit - inseparable, yet different. let's look more closely.

Jieng is the essence. In Chinese, Jieng can refer to semen or to our essential genetic building blocks. In this case, I'm referring to the basic substance of the body that is inherited from your parents. The amount of Jieng that is passed on determines the basic strength or constitution of a person. One's Jieng can be dissipated through illness or excess, or augmented by certain diet and meditative practices. Jieng is stored in the Ming Men point located between the kidneys. It is for this reason that the kidneys play such an important role in Chinese medicine.

Chi is the energy that most of us think about when we talk about our energy. It is the day to day fuel to keep our body and mind running. Chi is either Yin or Yang and we need to maintain a balance between these two. Chi is acquired from air, food and the cosmos. It is unlimited. Humans can have too little Chi which is caused by poor diet, smoking or tension. And we can actually acquire too much Chi which can become a problem for us. Too much cosmic energy can result in skin cancer, too much food in heart and stomach problems, too much air can cause dizziness and even make us pass out.

Chi needs to circulate and does so in meridians that connect organs to the extremities. Chi provides the energy needed to carry on the body's functions including thinking. Lack of circulation leads to most of the health problems we experience in our lives.

Shen is the highest form of energy that affect humans. It is very fine and light and is the source of our ability to realize our greatest potential, that of self realization. Shen can be experienced as inspiration and is only available to us in a deep state of relaxation. When Shen is produced and focused, it destroys man's ego that separates him from others and the universe. He no longer experiences good and bad. Past, present and future merge into the eternal now.

Tai Chi is designed to allow the movement of our consciousness from Jieng to Chi and Chi to Shen. This is accomplished through a very specific process that is as follows:

- 1) Relax the body/mind
- 2) Strengthen the body/mind
- 3) Open the body/mind
- 4) Gain control of energy movement
- 5) Convert Jieng and Chi into Shen
- 6) Move Shen to the crown center

The Tai Chi student moves along the same path that has been followed for many generations. Just do your movements, work on relaxation, concentrate, open yourself, use your imagination to move energy, feel the energy move, lift your head, meditate, and keep the ultimate goal in your mind. Believe that by following this process you will attain.

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Jing — Internal Energy

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One of the most important aspects of Tai Chi Chuan is the concept of Jing. I am extremely indebted to Yang Jwing-Ming for most of the following ideas and information about Jing. His excellent book *Advanced Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan* is a treasure chest of valuable information on this and other topics.

Jing is related to muscles and one definition of Jing is muscular strength or power. The definition or meaning that is more important for us is the use of the mind or Yi to lead the Chi which supports the internal power.

If you think of random acts of using your muscles, that use would be considered Li or muscular strength. If you use your mind (Yi) to concentrate, the Chi will then enliven the muscles and this would be thought of as using Jing. There are hard Jings where you tense your muscles, soft - hard Jing when you balance muscle use and Chi, and soft Jing when you use mostly Chi. In Tai Chi, we try and use the softest possible Jing to do the job. This takes a great deal of practice.

These soft Jings are much like a wave, vibration, or pulse. Think about throwing a rock into a calm lake. The result would be ripples. The rock would be the mind, the lake your Chi, and the ripples would be Jing. The energy can be delivered from a very short distance using soft Jing. This relaxed, smooth pulse should not have any angular changes in direction. Even in the softest Jings there is some use of muscles, but this should be mostly supported by Chi. The ultimate Jing is the issuance of energy that is supported not by Chi, but by Shen or spirit. A good example of this was Jesus who could send healing energy into someone's body with a touch or maybe not even that — just the thought.

Anyway, in Tai Chi we seek to develop this internal energy and this internal energy is what makes Tai Chi so powerful as a Martial Art or as a form of internal or external healing. As we get older, our muscular capacities diminish while our mind capacity can increase. For this reason, older people can sometimes perform feats that would seem impossible to the average person. Jing training is and should be an integral part of Tai Chi training.

In order to generate Jing we must have a root. The root is mostly in the feet and it is for that reason that the first part of a student's training is the awareness of how to use the feet and develop a root. If you do not have a root it would be like trying to push something heavy wearing slippery shoes.

Once the root is established, the Jing must be moved upward, so the legs are strengthened, aligned, opened, and relaxed. We spend quite a bit of time learning how to move our bodies, how to move outside weights, how to move the Jing from the root to the waist where it is then focused and directed. If you have ever tried to move a very heavy weight, you will know how important the legs are to generate energy.

The waist and spine are probably the most important structures in the ability to generate and emit Jing. The root supports the legs that bounce up energy to the waist or center. The Dan Tien, which is located in the lower belly, is a major storage vessel for Chi.

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As this muscular energy is pumped up to the waist, the Chi from the Dan Tien, activated by the Yi or mind, changes this Li into Jing which is then available for use. This is the point where the waist and spine come into play. The waist can twist, jerk, snap, bend or do a slow turn, all of which move Jing from the belly to the arms and hands or legs. Energy can also be stored in the marrow of the spine for easy conversion to Jing.

The hands and fingers are the final stage in Jing training. It is here where the Jing is focused into its final form. The hands touch the opponent, feel his energy, interpret what he is doing with this energy, neutralize his Jing, and counterattack. The hands can express our Jing in Yin ways such as listening, sensing, deflecting, or neutralizing. Yang expressions are punches, strikes, pokes, grabs, and ward offs.

So, the essence of Jing training in Tai Chi is as follows:

- 1) Relax the body.
- 2) Strengthen the body.
- 3) Learn how to use Yi or mind to move Chi.
- 4) Learn how to convert Chi to Jing.
- 5) Learn how to store, emit, and apply Jing.
- 6) Soften Jing and learn how to shorten the distance needed to apply.
- 7) Learn how to hide your Jing.

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Compression, Torsion, and Rebounding Energy

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Compression, torsion and rebounding are three of the main ways that we work with energy in Tai Chi, to produce seemingly effort less results. All of these actions are used in our everyday movements, yet when consciously applied to Tai Chi, we can gain a great deal of understanding of how to do the most work with the least output. That is certainly one of the greatest benefits of the study of Tai Chi — learning how to do the most with the least.

Compression requires two or more surfaces. At least one of these surfaces must be moved toward the other for compression to take place. In Tai Chi, we place weight on the feet and compression is the result. The more weight we place on the foot, the more compression. By placing the bodies weight on one foot instead of two, we increase the compression. By jumping or hopping, we can increase compression. By having someone else push their weight into us, we can increase compression.

Torsion is twisting or turning. One end is twisted or turned while the other is either held still or also twisted or turned but in the opposite direction. In Tai Chi, the feet and legs are rooted and still while the upper torso is twisted or turned. The turning can be done on our own or happens when our partner does it for us.

Rebounding is the result of compression and or torsion being released. One of the major tenets of Tai Chi is the idea of borrowing energy. If we think about the above mentioned processes, we can easily see the results of our partner or opponent giving us energy in the form of pushing us in some way. If we align ourselves in the proper fashion so that the compression or torsion is grounded into our root, the resulting rebound or release can be much stronger then if we didn't have the extra energy of our partner.

If we think of the rebounding of a ball, I'm sure this will be quite clear. Drop a basketball from waist level and it will bounce back (rebound), say to your knee. If you drop it from an over the head height, it will rebound higher, say to your waist. If you throw it down to the ground with a great deal of force, it will rebound even higher, say to the top of your head. The difference in all of these actions is the amount of compression that the ball undergoes when it hits the floor. The floor is passive in this process. The ball moves toward the floor and when it encounters the surface, the ball has two possibilities. Either it will continue in the same direction and the floor will move in the same direction (the ball pushes the floor away), or the energy in the ball is compressed as it hits a surface with a much greater mass and is rebounded in the opposite direction as the compression is released.

The idea seems silly that the ball could make the floor move away. The distinction between the mass of the ball and the mass of the floor is so great. Nobody would fail to see the result. Moving our body is quite similar. When we take a step, we put our weight onto a foot and compress the energy into it. One of two things will happen — either the floor will be pushed down or we will be pushed up (rebounded). This resulting rebound of our energy is translated into forward motion. This is how we walk. If we compress our energy to a greater extent, say squat down, the result will probably be that the release or rebound will propel us upward to a greater degree (jump). The more compression, the more rebound. If we walk on concrete, we are easily rebounded upward. If we walk on water, we sink. Our mass is greater at the point where our foot hits the water. Yet the water will rebound us if we lie flat upon it, spreading out our mass. We will probably float.

More on Rebounding Energy, Etc.

Torsion is much the same principle as compression. Put an object under stress by torquing it, and it naturally wants to release the stress by releasing the torque. The more torque, the more stress, the more release. In most sports, this principle is used. Think about baseball. You twist the waist bringing the bat behind you. As you release the torque, the bat swings around and, if all goes well, the release of stress will be directed into contact with a ball, which being of smaller mass, will get propelled in the opposite direction. Golf is another easy example. You create stress by turning the waist, then release it and direct the release into a club head which hits a small ball. If the balls that you hit with both of these actions were quite large or heavy, the result would be quite different. The bat and club would probably go flying in the opposite direction (rebound).

In Tai Chi, we work with the physics of each situation to bring about the result that we feel comfortable with. We must first understand what is natural, what will be the likely outcome of compression, tension, and release in this circumstance, and align ourselves with that result. If we want to go against the natural way things work, we can do it, yet it will require an expenditure of energy on our part. If we follow the natural way, we will most probably not have to use much energy.

Think of it this way. Imagine that you want a trip on a river. You want to see the eagles nesting in a remote section only reached by being on the river. Ruling out a helicopter, you can go up the river or down the river to get to your spot. The most natural way would be to put in some where above the eagles and float along with the current. Easy. Or you could put in below the eagles and either row or motor up against the current. In either case you arrive, yet the natural and easy way seems better. You get the idea.

Every situation has these possibilities. You can accomplish tasks naturally and easily or you can do it another way and, most probably, it will be more difficult and take more expenditure of energy. I can hear arguments in favor of more “challenge” etc., but that isn’t my point. Just look at any situation closely enough and you’ll probably be able to align yourself with the natural laws.

I do a great deal of work with people and their bodies. Most people have very little knowledge of how their bodies work and trust others to take care of them when they break down. With a little bit of study and some common sense, we can avoid many potential problems. Take the spine for example. If we understand that gravity is pulling our body downward, we can align ourselves to that and use it to keep us upright. By making sure that all of our bones and muscles are placed like building blocks, one upon the other, we can have a stable structure that will require almost no energy to remain upright. The more that we deviate from a plumb, straight up and down posture, the more energy is required to stand. Instead of working with the natural laws of gravity, we will have to use our muscles to hold the body from falling over. We can do that for a short while, but over the long haul, we will suffer all sorts of problems too numerous to mention. With just some simple mental and physical adjustments, we can re-align ourselves with nature and start to heal the areas affected. Let me get back to Tai Chi and the idea of using physics and nature to teach us how to move.

More on Rebounding Energy, Etc.

Movement means life. One of the definitions of life is the ability to move. A rock doesn't move therefore it isn't alive. A person who is completely paralyzed seemingly cannot move, yet is still alive. There is movement inside. Usually, the more we can move, the more alive we feel. Tai Chi is movement within and without. The body moves to it's maximum — muscles work, joints open, bones get weight bearing exercise. At the same time the mind moves the internal energy through the entire structure.

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Chi Bank

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Working with Chi is a challenging adventure. In order to help you understand Chi and how the body deals with it, let me explain using the analogy of a bank. Some people find comparing Chi to money degrading, but that's their problem. It is only an analogy.

We are given a 'trust fund' at birth. This is our Prenatal Chi. It is determined by the Chi's of our parents (genetics, nutrition, environment) and the Universal and Earth Energies. These forces join to create a force that has no form and is like the Tao. This Original Chi is deposited in our 'bank' which is located at our Navel Center. Given proper management, this Original Chi lasts a lifetime.

If we compare Chi to money, we can reason that one can acquire money, save it, invest it, or spend it. Let's look at these in regards to Chi.

As stated we are given a trust fund at birth— Original Chi. We acquire Chi by breathing air, eating food and concentrative practices. The Chi acquired by these processes are deposited in our Chi Bank which is the Dan Tien, located just below our belly button. There is no limit to how much Chi can be deposited in the bank. The beauty of this system is that we earn interest on our deposits!

Chi is spent in many ways. Just being alive requires spending Chi. Tension uses up a lot of Chi. Thinking uses Chi, as does sex (especially for men if they have orgasms). We can't help spending our Chi, but the trick comes in getting the most for the least. Sort of like buying things on sale. You get the same result but spend less. If you want to get from point A to point B, you can run (costs \$10), walk (costs \$5), ride a bike (costs \$3), or get someone to drive you (costs you nothing). You might prefer to run so you have to be willing to spend your money on that. We usually spend our extra money on things that bring us enjoyment, or benefit.

The Chi Bank works with a balance sheet. If you take in more than you spend, you automatically get a deposit. You get interest on your saving by being able to be more efficient in acquiring Chi from food and air, and being in a higher state of health that requires less Chi to maintain. If you spend more than you receive, problems can appear.

If you run out of money, you can tap your reserves. The body stores Chi, just as it does chemical energy in the form of fat. There is Chi in between the cells, in certain organs, and in special places called Dan Tien. There is a lower, a middle and an upper Dan Tien. The body can draw on these reserves for a long while and the individual will gradually start to feel the loss of energy in various ways. Colds, flu, tiredness, lack of enthusiasm, impaired concentration, irritability, and shortness of breath are among the most common. This debt can be paid back fairly easily with a slight change in the balance between savings and withdrawals.

What is of the greatest concern is when an individual starts to get into heavy debt. Bankruptcy can be declared and the person can get a major illness. The body no longer has the strength to fight off invaders like T.B., AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, herpes, etc. Intervention is needed and the person either spends a long time in bed or goes to the hospital. Great care is needed to build up some reserves so the person can get back on his feet.

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One can spend his trust fund and at that time there are no reserves. The individual lives day to day and if something comes along that requires payment, the end might be in sight. Extreme care must be taken at all times to avoid any debt at all. Rejuvenation is the only answer to bring about change.

Tai Chi Chuan is a rejuvenating exercise. There may no longer be a trust fund, yet with the practice of Tai Chi the gross Chi can be used and refined. At the very highest stages of Tai Chi or Taoist practices the trust fund can be built back up. Very few ever reach this stage. A state of near constant meditation with emphasis on pre-birth breathing techniques is necessary. At this stage an individual can achieve the Ultimate Realization.

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Energy and the Mind

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The mind plays an integral part in any activity of our life. People are declared legally dead when their brain is dead, not when their body no longer functions. Tai Chi is totally concerned with the body/mind connection. For this reason I feel I need to talk about the mind and how it works so that you might gain some valuable insights.

The first person to really open *my mind* to how the mind functions was Master Subramuniya. His knowledge came from first hand experience, through meditation. His super-conscious mind could watch how his conscious mind worked. He would then lead us, his students, through exercises to enable us to have control over where our awareness was in our minds. He discovered that matter, the mind, was made up of energy. Energy is vibration and sound at some level. As he meditated he noticed that he could hear different sounds in different parts of the mind. As his awareness flowed to new areas he would remember how he got there and the sounds along the way- sort of like a road map. He would then lead us to various places in the mind by naming the vibrations along the way. It was much like chanting, but the sounds had no meaning other than being the actual vibratory sound of a particular part of the mind.

It is becoming common knowledge that the mind is made up of areas. Like experiences are filed in the same area. It has to be that way. You can imagine how difficult it would be otherwise. The more that an area is used the easier it is to get back to it. The road gets larger and more clearly marked. The most basic mind functions are located at the base or entrance to the brain so that they are easily gotten to. The higher functions like abstract thinking are way in the front of the brain or down deep. These functions aren't necessary to survival so they are harder to get to and the last formed.

Let's look at a couple of examples. When you were young and you first saw a fire you instinctively reached for it because it was so interesting and beautiful. Almost everybody would. If you moved quickly and tried to touch it before anybody could stop you, you probably got burnt. That experience was filed away in the survival, fear part of the brain. The next time you saw a fire your consciousness flowed to that area and you remembered pain so you didn't try to touch the fire this time. If you had had a particularly painful experience the first time you might even turn away or move away even though there is no threat now. The path way was well reinforced.

Now let's say that as you reached for the fire someone moved your hand away and said "no, that will hurt you." The next time you see the fire you still might reach for it because the survival pathway wasn't strongly reinforced — the no didn't mean very much. Yet if each time you reached for the fire somebody kept you from it and said no, that path would eventually get strong enough so you wouldn't do it anymore. Repeated small stimulations add up to large ones. That is how habits get built up so strongly and are so difficult to break.

When you were young and your parents stroked you and said "I love you" that was filed away in the love part of the brain. Later in life someone strokes you and your consciousness flows to the love part of the brain. Your consciousness would not go to the survival/fear part. There would be no reason. Like experiences are filed together so they can be compared, condensed, evaluated, and gotten to quickly and appropriately.

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This is where Tai Chi comes in. When you practice Tai Chi you go to a certain area of the mind — the Tai Chi area we'll say. It involves movement and relaxation among other things. Whenever you start practice your mind automatically flows to that area and even before you start the practice, you relax. It's a conditioned reflex. The body already knows what to expect to a certain degree. Of course, each session of practice will be slightly different but you are already in a relaxed part of the mind where learning is easy.

If you are practicing to gain martial ability, you do so from this relaxed state. If you ever needed to use Tai Chi to defend yourself the chances are good that you would be relatively relaxed. You have connected Tai Chi with relaxation and therefore they tend to go hand in hand. If you have been practicing Tai Chi with meditation in mind, you'll more than likely associate Tai Chi with meditation and even when doing movements with vigor you'll remain in a meditative state. Tai Chi will be pleasurable and enjoyable.

If you were forced to practice Tai Chi by your parents or had a teacher who worked you in a way that brought you pain, your practice would lead your awareness to an uncomfortable area of the mind and you'll shy away from learning even if you think that the learning of Tai Chi will bring some benefit in the future.

The state of mind that we approach our learning and practice of Tai Chi, or anything for that matter, has so much impact on what we get out of it. We can use this knowledge to our advantage at any time. Say you found yourself in an area of the mind that you didn't want to be in, like depressed or angry. Instead of fighting against this state which makes it stronger, or trying to go deeper into it to understand why (which doesn't always work), just practice Tai Chi and you'll almost surely move your awareness into the relaxed, pleasurable area. The more you have practiced the easier it will be for you to move your awareness. We all find ourselves in unpleasant areas sometimes. The wise person knows that he doesn't have to stay there if he doesn't want to.

To summarize, the mind is divided into areas. Like feelings, experiences, thoughts are stored in the same or closely related areas. The more powerful the stimulation, the stronger the path to the place where it is stored. Repeating even small stimulations make the path large and easy to follow. We have control over our feelings and moods. If we want to change our mood, just change the area of the mind that you are in. This is accomplished by thinking or doing something that is attached to the area of the mind you want to be in. Once in a particular area of the mind we tend to remain there until something stronger catches our awareness and moves it. Also it is how we perceive an experience that determines where in the mind it will be placed and the outcome we derive from it. A slap could either be pleasure (a friendly slap on the back from a friend) or pain (rejection of an action). The physical experience might not be different, but the mental experience sure is.

Think about this and meditate on it. See if you can use it for your health and well being. Tai Chi can become a powerful tool for your mental and spiritual growth, and one that will only get stronger the more you practice and the older you get.

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Chi Kung

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Chi Kung is the study of energy interaction with the human body. Through this study, we strive to understand how the universe works, to understand our interaction with this universe, to understand our purpose in this life. We need to look deeply at what the human body and mind is, and try and experience the reality of the moment, for it is only in experiencing the moment that we are wholly real.

Most of us are born like a clear mirror, reflecting back whatever is placed before us. As life goes on we become clouded and even cracked to the point that reality is no longer able to be seen and perceived. We live in a dream world of past and future. The past because we are always trying to understand events after they happen, and the future because we live by our desires, hopes, and fears. It is rare to feel the moment for what it really is.

Chi Kung is not just a series of exercises. It is a deep philosophy dealing with living and dying. We use exercises to accomplish certain specific goals, and we must be careful not to get stuck thinking that Chi Kung is only those exercises. Tai Chi Chuan is a Chi Kung exercise. It has goals of strengthening and balancing the body, learning relaxation, increasing sensitivity and awareness, for the purpose of martial excellence. It is what we call martial Chi Kung. There are also civil Chi Kung and spiritual Chi Kung.

Civil Chi Kung comprises the largest area of study for most people. It is the area concerned with our daily health and well being. There are hospitals in China devoted to this area. We want to attain good health and a positive out look on life. The exercises tend to be body oriented and generally tonic in nature. There are thousands of general and very specific exercises from improving eye sight to organ cleaning to helping the body overcome life threatening diseases. In this area we could also include external Chi healers, or people who can help others through the manipulation of Chi. Most Chi Kung classes taught tend to be in this area.

The last area is spiritual Chi Kung. This is the most difficult field of study as you are working with the idea of loss of ego or self identification. The mind wants to control everything it comes into contact with. The mind thinks that it is the god of your existence. In reality, the mind is an integral part of your team - body, mind, and spirit. There is even something greater than your spirit that has influence over you. We call this the Tao or Great Unknowable. In the west, it might be called God. So spiritual Chi Kung exercises mostly involve sitting and letting the body, mind, and spirit relax, calm, and return to whatever their natural state is. When our mirror is cleaned and repaired, it can again reflect true reality and we become whole.

So it is important to understand what you want to accomplish with your training. All three of these areas overlap and are interrelated, yet it is helpful to know what you want to do before spending too much time. There are many students who come to Tai Chi class looking for health cures and would do better with their time to find a class or health professional who could work more specifically in their problem area. That is not to say that Tai Chi doesn't aid one's health, it certainly does, yet for one specific problem to be solved, a person might not want to learn a whole martial system. Likewise, Tai Chi eventually leads to spiritual perfection, yet many people would not relate to spiritual development through a martial approach. So take the time to figure out what you want, do some reading to find out the benefits of whatever it is you think might help, then get in there and do your best and try hard and be open to whatever happens. Also, expect a miracle!

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Chi Kung -Da Mo Wai Dan

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Da Mo Wai Dan

Wai Dan is the practice of increasing Chi circulation by stimulating one area of the body until a large enough energy potential builds up and overflows through the Chi channel system.

In moving Wai Dan, a specific muscle or part of the body is repeatedly tensed and relaxed with full attention. The tension should be as little as possible because great strain will constrict the channels and prevent the flow of energy. Some people do not tense the muscles at all, but merely imagine tensing them. When one exercises a part of the body in this way for several minutes, the Chi accumulates in the area, which usually results in a warm feeling. At this time not only the energy, but also the blood will be collected in this high potential area. When the muscles relax, the highly charged Chi and Blood will spread to nearby low energy areas and so increase the Chi circulation.

In moving Wai Dan exercises, the mind concentrates on the breath and at the same time imagines guiding energy to the local area. The channel system and the brain are closely related, so that when one concentrates, he can control the circulation of Chi more efficiently. This in turn results in the muscles being able to exert maximum power.

Da Mo's personal philosophy:

“ Others are revolted, I am unmoved
Gripped by desires, I am unmoved
Hearing the wisdom of sages, I am unmoved
I move only in my own way.”

Note: Da Mo, also known as Bodhidharma, was an Indian sage that went to China to spread the teachings of the Buddha. He spent time at the Shaolin Monastery and taught the monks exercises to strengthen body and mind. These exercises had a great deal of impact in the development of Tai Chi Chuan.

The Da Mo Wai Dan consists of 12 exercises that are repeated 50 times each. There is a wonderful discussion of these exercises and all the above material in Yang Jwing-Ming's excellent book called *Chi Kung - Health and Martial Arts*.

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Chi Kung—Start And Finish

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A good way to start and finish any Chi Kung session

A. Getting Chi to Dan Tien

- 1) Stand in Wu Chi stance. Relax.
- 2) Dan Tien Breathing.
- 3) Thumbs in navel, Lao Kung on Dan Tien.
- 4) Men put left hand under right hand, women reverse. Lao Kung cover each other.
- 5) Exhale first and squat while exhaling.
- 6) Inhale fully and then stand up.
- 7) Repeat three times.

B. Open and Close Breathing — Chi starts to move

- 1) Hands in front of Dan Tien with palms facing each other, but not touching.
- 2) Concentrating on the little finger (Heart meridian), rotate palms inward until the back of the hands face each other.
- 3) Inhale as you separate the hands, pulling them to the sides until the hands line up with the sides of the body.
- 4) Concentrate on the little fingers, rotate the hands back again until the palms face each other.
- 5) Exhale as you bring palms together until they almost touch.
- 6) Repeat three times.

C. Do the specific Chi Kung Exercises.

D. Repeat sequence A.

E. Repeat sequence B.

F. Stand and relax for a few minutes.

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Chi Kung—Partner Exercise

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A powerful partner exercise and or a preparation for Push Hands.

You will need chairs or be comfortable sitting on the floor. You will also need a space to stand up in.

1) Sit across from partner. Hands folded on lap, right hand rests on left hand with palms facing up. Thumbs touch. Edge of hands press on Dan Tien.

2) Close eyes and get in touch with breathing into Dan Tien. Don't force the breath.

3) See if you can feel where the impulse for breathing is coming from. Involuntary breath is regulated from a place in the brain, between the ears in the center of the skull. The voluntary breath is controlled from the spine area in the center of the chest. See if you can feel these points.

4) Take control of the breath. Feel it like riding on a smooth, flat road. No effort, relaxed, with no space between the inhale and exhale. Then try moving the breath faster and slower and notice how that feels.

5) Hills start to appear and the breath needs a bit more effort to rise and fall, but not enough to cause any tension or space between the inhale and exhale.

6) Hills become steeper. There is a bit more effort required and a slight holding of the breath appears as you transition from up to down and down to up. Start to experience the feeling of full and empty.

7) Hills become very steep. Experience the inhale as if you were being pulled up by a cable, then as you exhale, feel as if you are dropped. The inhale is long, the exhale short. Reverse this by feeling a quick push up the hill and a slow let down. Inhale is short, exhale is long.

8) Still steep hills. Slowly up, then slowly down but into a dark cave. Up to the light and down to the dark.

9) Relax and feel yourself. Let your mind relax.

10) Sense partners presence. See if you can smell him or her and feel the breath.

11) Partner A (decided ahead of time) inhales while partner B exhales. See if you can coordinate the breath, sort of like playing ping pong with breath.

12) Open eyes and continue flowing breath back and forth.

13) Focus on partners left eye. As you inhale partner's energy, you take it in through your left eye down to your Dan Tien, and as you exhale take it from the Dan Tien, out your right eye, into your partner's left eye. Try and relax and soften your gaze. Feel the connection.

14) Relax for a moment. Then stand up and move to open space. Face partner with right foot Bow Stance. Join back of right wrists together. Focus on center of partner's chest. Partner A inhales and moves to sit stance while B exhales and moves to bow stance. As you inhale and move to sit stance, imagine taking partner's energy from the wrist to the Dan Tien. As you exhale, imagine giving partner your energy from your Dan Tien, into his wrist, and into his Dan Tien. After you have established a solid connection, you can then move into any Push Hands practice. Try and keep the joining of energy the main focus of your playing at this time.

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Chi Kung

Guan Chi Fa: Threading Energy

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Chi Kung means breathing therapy exercises and has been a part of the Chinese culture for over two thousand years. Basically all chi kung must follow three principles: regulation of body posture, regulation of the mind (concentration), and regulation of breathing.

This particular exercise is a powerful way to move the Chi through the body and to ground it. It relaxes the entire body with the intention of sending any toxins from the body down and out into the earth, grounding them. In the morning class we call it integration breath.

Before you start

Stand with feet shoulder width apart. Keep the knees soft, letting the weight drop onto the soles of the feet. Let the head rise up as if suspended from above. Keep the buttocks slightly tucked under to straighten the spine. The tongue touches the roof of the mouth behind the top teeth to connect the front and back channels of energy. Let the eyes relax and breathe naturally. Keep your awareness on your Dan Tien.

The Exercise

- * Inhale as the arms raise overhead to the sides as if gathering energy. Then pull this energy or Chi into the “bai hui” point which is located at the top of the head. This is the major meridian point for Yang energy to enter the body.
- * Exhale as you lower the hands slowly with the thought that you are pushing the Chi down the body from the top of the head to the middle of the ears.
- * Continuing to push the energy till it is in the throat area.
- * At this point the Chi splits into two channels that go from the middle of the throat to the pectorals or nipples of the chest.
- * Continue pushing the Chi down the two channels till it gets to the navel where the two channels again unite into one.
- * The Chi is now in one channel as you continue to push it down to the Dan Tien.
- * With the Chi in the Dan Tien take a breath.
- * Exhale as you push the Chi down to the bottom meridian of the trunk called the “hui yin” which is located at the perineum or in front of the anus.
- * From this point the Chi once again splits into two channels that run down the insides of the legs and ends at the center of the soles of both feet. This point is called the “yung chuan”. It is the point where the yin energy enters the body from the earth.
- * When the Chi has reached the yung chuan point, continue to push it out the bottoms of the feet and down into the floor at least three feet. This is done so that all impurities of the body can be grounded into the earth.
- * Take a moment to enjoy the feeling of being clear and quiet.

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Chi Kung—The Eyedropper

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This exercise is designed to help you practice breathing into your Dan Tien, relaxing and cleaning all body systems, and connecting the center to various parts of the body.

- 1) Begin by standing in Wu Chi stance. Get comfortable and relaxed.
- 2) Imagine you have an eyedropper inside your body. The bulb end is in your lower belly, about midway between your front and back. The outlet end stops where the back of your nose and your throat meet. Make sure the air comes in and out through this central opening, not through just the nose or mouth.
- 3) As you squeeze the bulb end, the air is expelled through the opening end. As you relax the bulb end, the air is drawn into the body. The emphasis is on the exhalation, squeezing the bulb end. The inhalation is very passive. Viewed from outside the body, when the belly contracts, the air is expelled and when the belly expands, the air is drawn in. Continue this breathing pattern until it feels comfortable.
- 4) Now the fun begins. You are going to use this charged energy contained in the bulb to relax and energize your internal organs and other body systems. Start by squeezing the bulb end and expelling air. Let the bulb fill by relaxing. Feel the fullness, which allows the inhaled air to mix with your own natural chi, charging it up. As you squeeze the bulb point the tube end toward one of your organs and imagine warm, charged energy to bathe and cleanse that organ. You will take three breaths for each organ. You can do this in any order, yet I recommend starting with the lowest organs and working your way up to the master glands in the top of the head. A simple book on anatomy will really help with visualizing where your organs are. There is no end to the possibilities of this practice. You can clean and relax your structure, bones and muscles, singly or in groups. You can clean and charge your blood, and other bodily fluids. Don't forget your sense organs (eyes, ears, nose, and mouth).

Realize that not only are you relaxing and cleaning your body and all that it contains, you are also connecting your mind with your center and your center with every place you send energy out to.

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Chi Kung—The Propane Torch

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This exercise is designed to increase your internal energy and strengthen the flow of energy into your hands and to rid yourself of unwanted emotions.

- 1) Start in Wu Chi stance. Relax and take a few breaths. Breathe into your Dan Tien.
- 2) Assume Holding the Ball position. Continue to breathe into the Dan Tien.
- 3) When you feel relaxed and comfortable imagine that you have a propane torch located in your Dan Tien with tubes that run up the back to the center of your shoulder blades, then go down each arm and connect with each finger and the center of the palm. You have twelve tubes running from the center to the fingers and the center of the palms. At the end of each tube is a pilot light burning dimly.
- 4) Starting with the left thumb, each exhale makes the light at the tip of the thumb grow brighter. Take three breaths.
- 5) Continue with the left index finger, then middle, ring, and little finger. Three breaths each.
- 6) Three breaths into all the left hand fingers together. Make them glow brightly.
- 7) Repeat with the right hand.
- 8) Three breaths into all the fingers of both hands.
- 9) Turn the palms to face each other, about a foot apart. Three breaths into the center of the left palm, three into the right palm, and three into both.
- 10) While continuing to stand in the Holding the Ball position, think about something you want to get rid of - fear or insecurity or worry about something. Give it a simple name if you can. Put that name into the space between your two palms and burn it up, knowing you are destroying the thing it represents.
- 11) Allow the lights to dim back to pilot lights. Let the arms slowly drop to the sides. Continue to feel the connection between the center and the hands. Never let the pilot lights go completely out. Smile, knowing you got rid of something you didn't want.

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Standing Meditation

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Standing meditation or Zhan Zhuang is an ancient form of Chi Kung that is gaining popularity in China and the rest of the world. This system is simple on the outside, and as deep as the universe on the inside. Standing exercises are extremely important to Tai Chi training, and the essence of self healing.

The basic idea for all standing exercises is the use of the mind to move energy. These exercises can be as easy as just standing in a normal posture and breathing naturally, or as complex as twisting the body or sinking into a very deep posture and moving the breath in quite intricate patterns. In any case, the exercises always proceed from simple to complex as the student gains the necessary skills needed to use the mind to move energy.

T. T. Liang, one of America's leading Tai Chi masters, used the term "Imagination Becomes Reality" to describe how Tai Chi and standing meditation works. At first you imagine certain things, like holding a ball and feeling it expand and contract, or feeling energy circle in an orbit inside the body. Before long, you will actually be able to feel these sensations as the mind (Yi) acts on the energy (Chi) to create internal energy (Jing or Shen). These sensations are, at the beginning, quite obvious like tingling, shaking, vibrating, or heat. As the body opens and relaxation happens, the grosser sensations vanish and the movement of the finer energies becomes possible. In the final stages, time seems to vanish, the separate ego identity merges with the universal energy or Tao, and the person has realized his or her own potential. It is a journey requiring diligent and constant practice, yet is attainable by everyone. This path has been walked on by many individuals throughout history, and their teaching can and should guide you. There are many pitfalls, obstacles, and quite difficult places, yet if you follow the advice of those who have gone before, and listen to your inner self, the potential problems will be minimized.

I will not try and discuss specific exercises here as there are many good books that include information on standing (the best I have found so far is *The Way Of Energy* by Master Lam Kam Chuen), as well as instruction in my classes, but I want to give you a basic outline of how to proceed, and what the process will be.

- 1) Wear comfortable clothing and choose a quiet, well ventilated place for practice.
- 2) Do a few warm up exercises to get the energy and body moving and relaxed.
- 3) Stand in the Wu Chi or beginning posture to get the body, breath, and mind in the same place at the same time.
- 4) Assume a posture, usually Holding a Ball.
- 5) Breathe naturally until the energy starts to increase and move.
- 6) Direct the movement of energy with the mind, starting simply and working up to more complex as the mind and body learn to control the Chi.
- 7) After practice, make sure to shake your body some and or rub your face and body.

The practice of Zhan Zhuang or standing meditation is enhanced by daily practice. If you do this, energy will continue to build. If you skip days, the energy will start to decline and you will have to build it back up each time you want to practice.

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Open And Close Breathing With A Ball

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This Chi Kung exercise came to me one morning when I was practicing in Lithia Park in Ashland, OR. I didn't set about making up a new form, it just came out almost exactly as I've set it down now. I found it to be extremely powerful as a general tonic and energy builder, as well as being very closely aligned to Tai Chi Chuan.

There are thousands of different Chi Kung forms, some very specific and some general. The most important thing about Chi Kung practice is to find one general type of exercise to gain an understanding of Chi Kung and also help to start building the necessary psycho-physical balance and concentration to be able to use Chi Kung as a self healing tool. This exercise might work for you.

The basic movement of this exercise is what I call Open and Close Breathing. As the hands Open, you inhale, and as your hands move together or Close, you exhale. As your hands move toward your center, you inhale, and exhale as your hands move away from your center. All breathing is directed toward the Dan Tien, in and out through the nose. You also want to pay attention to the relationship of the two palms. They are like the two poles of a magnet, positive and negative. As the exercise progresses, I'm sure you will feel much tingling and other sensations in the palms. All movements are repeated three times. Each set of nine movements is repeated to the four directions, first moving counter-clockwise, then the four directions moving clockwise. The footwork is basic bow and sit stance, sometimes straight forward and backward, and sometimes we use turning of the waist.

1) Preparation

- ~ Start with feet shoulder width apart. Take an Integration Breath.
- ~ Inhale bringing arms upward to center of chest level, like Commencement of Tai Chi Chuan.
- ~ Exhale, bring right foot inward, next to left foot and sink the weight into the feet by bending the knees. At the same time, turn hands to face each other, like holding a ball, and bring them down in front of Dan Tien.

2) Concentration Breath

- ~ Inhale, separate hands as if pulling or stretching elastic. Hands move to outside of waist. Your body raises up to full standing position.
- ~ Exhale, hands move back towards each other, ending about six inches apart. At the same time, sink.
- ~ Repeat three times.

3) Transition Between Sets of Movements — First to the left four times, then to the right four times.

- ~ Inhale, lift up the left foot, open the hip till the left knee faces 90 degrees to the left, and place the foot down to face this new direction. Weight remains on right foot. At the same time, the left arm turns with the body to face the new direction with the palm still facing the other palm. As you step, the arms extend straight so that one straight arm faces the old direction and one faces the new direction. Palms face each other. Eyes gaze toward the old direction.
- ~ Exhale, shifting the weight to the left foot, turn the waist till the nose faces the left knee. As this shift takes place, the right arm is moved toward the left arm until they are in a holding the ball posture. Arms are straight.

4) First Movement — Turning Horizontal

- ~ Inhale, Shifting to right foot, turning the waist until nose points to right knee. Right arm moves with body until it is in line with old direction. Left arm does not move. Both arms straight. Feel the pulling apart of elastic connection between the palms and fingers.

Open And Close Breathing With A Ball

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~ Exhale, shifting the weight back to the left foot, turning the waist. Bring the right palm back to holding the ball. Feel the compression of energy in the palms.

~ Repeat three times.

5) Second Movement — Straight Back Horizontal

~ Inhale, shifting the weight straight back to sit on right foot. At the same time, the arms open until they are at a 180 degree angle. Keep arms straight. Feel the pull apart from the palms.

~ Exhale, shift the weight back to front foot. At the same time the arms are brought together until holding a ball.

~ Repeat three times.

6) Third Movement — Circle Palm and Compress From Overhead

~ Inhale, turn the left palm up and the right palm down, still holding a ball. The body shifts back and turns to the right until the body faces the rear. As the body shifts, the right palm circles down, back, around until it is facing straight back. You are looking at the right palm behind the body.

~ Exhale, The body shifts and turns back until it faces the left foot. At the same time, the right arm continues around in a circle, overhead, and ends up compressing the energy into the left palm. The left palm has not moved.

~ Repeat three times.

7) Fourth Movement — Opening Up and Back

~ Inhale, shifting straight back, arch the back as if rolling the back over a large ball behind you. At the same time, the arms open upward and outward, ending to the sides of the head. The palms still relate to the front as if the elastic ball was stretched up and out.

~ Exhale, returning to the starting position, compressing energy back into the ball.

~ Repeat three times.

8) Fifth Movement — Opening Down and Under

~ Inhale, as you shift the weight straight back, you bend over bringing the head towards the left knee. At the same time, the hands open down and back, ending behind the body. The palms still relate to the front as if you had stretched the ball down and out.

~ Exhale, return to starting position, compressing the ball.

~ Repeat three times.

9) Sixth Movement — Bringing Ball to Chest

~ Inhale, shift weight straight back. At the same time pull ball back close to chest. The arm movement comes from sinking the elbows to the waist level.

~ Exhale, shift to forward and at the same time extend arms back to straight in front of body.

~ Repeat three times.

10) Seventh Movement — Circle Ball In Front of Body

~ Inhale, shift weight straight back. At the same time, bring ball back to chest, then circle it down in front of Dan Tien. When the ball comes back, the fingers rotate to face upward, then they circle to face downward as the arms lower.

~ Exhale, shift the weight straight forward. At the same time, the arms complete the circle, ending up back in the center of the chest. The fingers continue to rotate until the end up facing forward.

~ Repeat three times.

Open And Close Breathing With A Ball

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11) Eighth Movement — Circle Ball Other Direction

- ~ Inhale, shifting the weight back, the arms circle down toward the lower belly. As the circle starts, the fingers face down and then rotate back to face forward in front of belly.
- ~ Exhale, shifting weight forward, the arms complete the circle. The fingers first turn upward as the arms raise, then rotate to end up facing forward at end of movement.
- ~ Repeat three times.

12) Ninth Movement — Lifting Ball Overhead While Standing On One Leg

- ~ Inhale, step up and place right foot next to left. Sink into knees. At the same time, the ball is brought in close to chest, with elbows directly under hands.
- ~ Exhale, body rises up and when straight, lift up right foot until the right thigh is parallel to ground. At the same time, lift the arms until the ball is straight overhead.
- ~ This movement is repeated two more times by bringing the ball down to the center of the chest while the foot is replaced next to the left foot and the weight is dropped into the knees.

13) Transition Movement

- ~ Step number 3 is repeated. The ball is held in front of the lower chest, the left leg is raised and opened to the left to face the new direction, the foot placed down, the arms extended. All that on the inhale. Then exhaling, shift on to forward foot, turning body, bring palms together to hold ball.

14) Repeat the Nine Movements

15) Transition Movement

16) Repeat the Nine Movements

17) Transition Movement

18) Repeat the Nine Movements

19) Concentration Breath

- ~ At the end of the fourth set of movements you are facing in the original direction. You then repeat step number 2 — open and close breath three times.

20) Changing Direction

- ~ You are now going to repeat the nine movement set to the four directions moving to the right instead of to the left. This will balance the energy and strengthen the other side of the body.

21) Concentration Breath

- ~ This time we repeat the open and close breath nine times.

22) Conclusion

- ~ Open the stance to shoulder width by stepping with the right foot. We will take three Integration Breaths. First bring the energy into the lower Dan Tien, then middle, and finally the upper. Let the hands relax to the sides and stand still for a few moments. Or you can concentrate on sending energy to problem areas in the body.

Yi Jin Jing -Limbering Up Exercise for the Tendons

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General Points: Eyes look straight ahead, teeth held lightly together, tongue touches the hard palette, behind the front teeth. Do not exert force. Breathe naturally, keep relaxed, concentrate on Dan Tien, swallow saliva when necessary. All movements executed with palms. Start with 7 repetitions each and work up to as many as 49. Between each form, relax for a moment, continuing to breathe into Dan Tien.

Form 1 - Respiration with Fist Clenched

Starting Position - Shoulder width stance. Clench both fists lightly, with knuckles facing forward and tips of thumbs lightly pressed against thighs.

Method - Inhale to Dan Tien. Exhale, clench fists firmly. Inhale again while continuing to clench fists, then exhale and clench fists tighter. Repeat .

Form 2 - Respiration with Palms Pressing Downward

Starting Position - Shoulder width stance. Palms press downwards, fingers pointing sideways with fingertips turned upward as much as possible.

Method - Inhale to Dan Tien. Exhale press downward. Continue to press downward on inhales, and on exhale press down more. Keep fingers pulling upwards. Do not bend knees. Body might vibrate.

Form 3 - Respiration with Palms Facing Upwards.

Starting Position - Shoulder width stance. Arms shoulder high, straight to the sides, with palms facing upwards.

Method - Inhale to Dan Tien. Exhale, imagine holding up a heavy weight. As you inhale and exhale the weight gets heavier.

Form 4 - Respiration with Palms Extending Outwards

Starting Position - Shoulder width stance. Arms shoulder high, out to sides, with palms facing outwards. Fingertips pull backwards.

Method - Same as others with force extending outwards. Keep fingers pulling back.

Form 5 - Open and Close Respiration

Starting Position - Shoulder width stance. Palms together in front of chest, fingers face upwards, tips of thumbs press against chest.

Method - Inhale, keeping forearms parallel to floor, draw hands slowly apart, keeping thumbs touching chest, until hands reach sides of the chest. Exhale, palms press back together.

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Form 6 - Respiration with One Hand Propping Up and Other Hand Hanging Down

Starting Position - Left foot bow stance. Raise left palm upward, fingers face inwards. Right hand straight down on right side of body with fingers facing thigh.

Method - Inhale and exhale in same body position. Extend hands in both directions at same time. Repeat, then switch sides and arms.

Form 7 - Rise and Fall Respiration

Starting Position - Feet about one foot apart.

Method - Inhale, raise both hands to shoulder height with palms facing upwards. Exhale, turn palms down and squat with body erect. Inhale, turn palms upwards and come back up. Weight gets heavier. Repeat.

Form 8 - Respiration in Squatting Position

Starting Position - Wider than shoulder width stance. Hands behind back with right hand clenched into a fist, left hand holds wrist.

Method - Squat down, concentrate on Dan Tien, and breathe. Inhale and expand lower abdomen. On exhale, contract lower abdomen and elevate floor of pelvis.

Form 9 - Respiration in Bending Position

Starting Position - Shoulder width stance.

Method - Bend body slowly to 90 degree angle and let arms hang down naturally, palms turned inwards, fingers face downwards. Exhale bending forward, inhale straightening up. Concentrate on one vertebra at a time as you roll down and up.

Form 10 - Respiration While Turning

Starting Position - Left foot bow stance, then right foot bow stance.

Method - Left foot bow - twist body to left. Left hand is placed on back part of waist, palm facing outward. Right arm makes an arch up and around to the left at forehead height, palm facing outwards, about a foot distance from face. Look at right heel. When breathing, concentrate on right heel. Gradually increase waist turning and deepen breath. When finished repetitions on one side, switch sides.

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Push Hands

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Tai Chi Push Hands is a training exercise for developing many different skills associated with Tai Chi. They include:

- 1) Sensitivity training
- 2) Jing training
- 3) Understanding empty and full, substantial and insubstantial
- 4) Improving balance, flexibility, coordination
- 5) Knowing oneself and others
- 6) Working with Tai Chi classics
- 7) Understanding of fighting principles

I personally don't think a student can understand Tai Chi without doing Push Hands. There are many levels to training Push Hands skills. The most usual pattern I work with is:

- 1) Learning to root
- 2) Learning to neutralize
- 3) Learning to push
- 4) Learning Tai Chi Push Hands Forms (Single and double hands with fixed or moving step)
- 5) Free Form Push Hands (Single and double hands with fixed or moving)

Push Hands can not be understood by reading. It must be experienced. It can be one of the most informative tools for assessing one's understanding of Tai Chi principles. It can be a great deal of fun if approached in that way. Tournament Push Hands has a long way to go before it truly tests one's skills in this art, but Studio Push Hands can be quite effective. Don't be afraid to get pushed over time and time again. If you approach each encounter as a learning opportunity, you gain invaluable information about yourself and others. Some points I think are helpful and important are:

Listen and Feel

These are the two most important points of push hands practice. Without these abilities, you can practice a thousand days and make no progress. We listen with all our senses, with all parts of our body. As they always told us in school: Stop, Look, and Listen. In push hands it is very good advice. Stop the mind from wandering, look at the situation right now, and listen to your opponent. He will tell you what to do. Develop your sense of feel so you will not be misled. Be here now!

Yield (Neutralize), Lead, Relax, Return the Energy

This process is of utmost importance in push hands practice. Always deal with the incoming energy first even if your mind has already started an attack. Join with the energy and lead it into your center (close) so as to borrow the opponent's energy. Don't try to redirect this energy. Once you have borrowed the energy, relax and let it sink to your spine and root. Only then should you be in a position to release and return the energy back to the source. All this happens in an instant, almost simultaneous.

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Yi — Chi — Jing

Yi is the mind or intention. Every action is preceded by an intention. If an opponent wants to push us, first his mind will make the decision. If we are sensitive enough, we can feel this impulse or brain wave form. You must pay attention. The Yi then sends the signal to the body and the Chi starts to build. The Chi moves the muscles, so it must build to a certain level before there is movement. If you are sensitive enough you can feel this build up. Finally, the body moves and this is expressed as Jing. This we all feel, yet if we listen carefully, we can control this release before it is too strong. So the highest level of push hands training is to listen to the opponent's mind, then feel the Chi build before there is movement, then finally deal in a relaxed fashion with the Jing.

Keep the body upright

The energy from the opponent must be gathered to the spine and sent down to the root. This can only be accomplished if the spine is erect.

The Shen and Chi must be strengthened

You must think of yourself like a balloon or a tire. You need to be filled with spirit and energy in order to move smoothly. Then the push from the opponent can easily be redirected.

Contact the opponent's energy as far away from your body as you can

This means that you do not wait to touch the opponent until he is in your space. Go out and feel him and that way you will have plenty of room to make the appropriate response. You need to develop a strong sense of your space, your center, where your strengths and weaknesses are.

Use your Yi to project your Jing into the opponent

This is like a laser beam that guides the missile to the target. Send your mind into the opponent, not just on the surface.

Do not let the opponent get two points of contact on you

If this happens it is very difficult to deflect. Change the situation so that he touches you with only one point .

You can only push something

This means to be able to recognize substantial and insubstantial. Do not try and push if you do not feel tension in your opponent. Set it up first if you must by faking. Make him start to move. You want him to be over extended and into your strong centered place. Be like a spider and wait for him to enter your web.

Have Fun And Encourage Co-operation

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Push Hands Strategies

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It was a wonderful experience — being able to spend time with many of the greatest teachers and practitioners in Tai Chi. All of the Masters and teachers were so giving and open. By the time the tournament started, we the contestants, were anxious to practice what we had assimilated during the workshops. The level of co-operation and good sportsmanship made me proud to be a part. I would like to share some of my ideas and reflections about Push Hands and Tai Chi in general.

First and foremost, look to the form. All the skills and abilities needed to be an effective Push Hands player are contained in the form. My first teacher, Master Choy Kam-man, almost never taught Push Hands. In the years I studied with him, I only had one Push Hands class. We worked on traditional Yang style form, drilling the basics over and over. When I started teaching 21 years ago, I followed Master Choy's example and didn't work with Push Hands very much, and then it was mostly as a sensitivity training, not a fighting skill. There weren't Push Hands tournaments until a few years ago, so that was never a goal or training incentive.

I live in an isolated part of the country, The Olympic Peninsula in Washington state. It is difficult to get to places where good Tai Chi teachers are, so most of my skills are self taught. Jou Tsung-hwa tells the story of how Yang Chen-fu didn't practice much until the age of 20. It was only after his father's death that he got interested in carrying on the family tradition and basically taught himself. Master Jou gives this as an example of how we can become Masters ourselves, even without teachers, if we are willing to work hard. I train intensively, averaging about three hours a day, six days a week. I work mostly with the Yang form and a system of exercises I have developed to strengthen the body, connect and open the joints, and relax.

I can not stress enough how important rooting and neutralizing are, especially with the rules at A Taste of China, which awarded points for effective neutralizations. Observing many matches, I would say more were won by the pusher losing his balance following a neutralized push then by a good solid push. Flexibility, root, connectedness, and strength are of utmost importance. These are best trained by simple standing exercises and lots of time with the form.

There were two major ways that people dealt with incoming energy. One was keeping the weight mostly on the forward foot and using a strong waist turn to neutralize. The other was keeping most of the weight on the rear foot and using the "slippery" approach, getting the opponent to over extend. As a generalization I would say that smaller and lighter people tend to use the rear foot technique, and the larger people use the forward foot. I found with a strong, aggressive opponent I would tend to hang back and wait for him to make a mistake. With the rear foot players I use what I call the "water" approach. I imagine my arms like water that keeps on flowing towards the opponent's center no matter what barrier is placed in its way. I relax and flow, bend, twist, and mold to every attempt at neutralizing. In order for this method to work, I have to be very strong, rooted, and comfortable on the forward foot, ever ready to deal with a pull forward by my opponent. This is trained by relaxed standing and also a simple pulling exercise. One person stands in bow stance (weight on forward foot) with arms extended like push. The partner grabs both wrists and pulls back as if to uproot. The pull starts very gently and increases as the person being pulled gets the idea of how to relax the arms and transfer the pull force into the forward foot root. Be very careful not to resist the pull forward which would result in losing one's balance if the puller lets go. You can work up to being able to deal with sudden pulls and neutralizations.

The difference between the forward foot or rear foot neutralizer might have to do with how one practices forward stepping in the form. There seems to be quite a bit of controversy about whether to shift back, turn out the toe, shift the weight to the forward foot, then step, or keep the weight on the forward foot while turning. The thought I'm working on is that people who retreat first will feel more comfortable and natural on the rear foot, and the people who turn out the toe with the weight on the foot might feel stronger on the forward foot. Think about it.

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Personally I have worked with this idea of weighted or non-weighted turning by including both in my form. I feel that both are appropriate and useful, so why not do both.

Another area of controversy is the angle of the rear foot to the forward direction. I was very careful to observe the Masters and teachers during their demonstrations and workshops, as well as the tournament players and I can say that almost all used the 45* angle. I have tried various angles from 45 to 90 and feel so much more comfortable and able to root and move from the 45*. The rear foot is there for support of the pelvis and upper body. The incoming energy is absorbed by the arms or body, transferred to the spine, and is rooted into the legs and foot. It is essential that the pelvis face directly toward the opponent. If the pelvis is at an angle to the opponent, the incoming energy will end up not flowing to the foot but will tend to throw the buttocks into the space between the legs resulting in loss of balance. The 45* angle allows the pelvis to face forward. The 80-90* makes it very difficult, if not impossible for most people to feel comfortable facing the pelvis square to the front. Try it yourself. Make sure your pelvis is square and have someone push you straight and see if you can root well into the rear foot. Then try a different angle and see how that works. We are all different with different structures, so what works for me might not work for you. Be sure to feel what you are doing and very importantly, make sure to line up the knee with the toe no matter what the angle of the toe. In pushing with someone who presents you with a shoulder, or narrow stance it is easy to make them lose balance by pushing at a right angle to the forward shoulder. If the shoulder is well forward, push the chest and aim between the two feet. If a person is mostly square to you, set this situation up by pulling on one of his arms to turn him to the side and at the same time push the chest into the area between the two feet. This technique works well for the forward foot types.

The classic teaching that the top of the head should be lifted is also so important in Push Hands. Not only does it allow the body to turn easily on its central axis like a top, but also keeping the head up elevates the spirit which gives the player much vitality. The inner strength is activated. Leaning is a major fault and should be corrected. Many Tai Chi players lean when doing Push Hands because most people use a straight forward push almost exclusively and leaning helps to deal with that by tying up the opponent.. Anytime I am faced with a leaner I use a lot of pulls which is almost impossible for a leaner to deal with. He can't transfer the pull into the forward foot as the center of gravity is already too far forward. Besides, standing straight and tall is a powerful indication of health and vitality. Master Jou at 77 years old is very straight without being stiff. He is an inspiration for us all.

Lastly remember, you can only push against something. Tension is something. By relaxing you make it much more difficult for someone to push you. Hide your center. Play. Invest in loss. Listen to your opponent and understand where he or she is coming from. And very importantly, make sure you push your opponent's skeleton. Look to the core and push the bones not the soft tissue. If you push, push. Mean it.

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Essentials of the Practice of Form And Push Hands by Li I-yu

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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 improvement.

Desiring to attract to emptiness and use four ounces to 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) and *ch'i* (breath) 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* (internal force) 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* (way of practicing) of knowing yourself. When you start to practice, first ask yourself, "Did my whole body follow the previous principles or not?" If one little place didn't 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* (internal force) and let him naturally fall 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.

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Da Lu

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This is a translation of Chen Gong's book done by Mariko.

Da-Lu is a method to learn how the 5 steps and 8 gates are used.

Ward Off (Peng). When opponent tries to slap or hit (Shan), Rollback (Lu), or Push (An), Ward Off the attack with arm by using power from the waist and legs.

Rollback (Lu). When opponent tries to slap or hit face (Shan), or Push (An) arm, Rollback his arm by using power from waist and legs.

Press (Gee). After Rollback by opponent, you can follow his energy and change to Press.

Push (An). When opponent tries to shoulder strike (Kao), use hand method, step method, and body method, upper and lower body together, step up and Push with two hands.

Pull Down (Tsai). When you Rollback opponent, you could grab his wrist and pull downward by using waist and legs.

Split (Lieh). After Pull down, or Rollback to opponent, use waist and legs and hit diagonally with backfist.

Elbow Strike (Chou). When opponent tries to Rollback your arm, you could change the arm to elbow strike and attack his center.

Shoulder Strike (Kao). When opponent tries to Rollback your arm, you could step up to strike with shoulder to his center. Distance and timing are very important. Not too far, not too close. Body is centered. Step in between opponent's feet. Both shoulders are even. Use waist and leg. Sink and forward to shoulder strike.

Hit/Slap (Shan). After Rollback to opponent. To stop him from doing shoulder strike. Hit his face with palm of hand.

Break (Jue). As you Rollback opponent. One hand holds his wrist and with other hand break his arm at elbow. Use waist and legs.

Important Points: 1) Energy upward. 2) Chest in, round the back. 3) Sink shoulders, drop the elbows. 4) Lower waist and relax the Kua. 5) Tailbone centered. 6) Upper and lower body are connected. 7) Spirit of eyes gaze. 8) Waist and leg Jing is effective with Yi (mind) and Chi (internal energy). 9) Both hands must be "sticking" to opponent so you can sense opponent's energy and you can see when to protect yourself, to neutralize, and to attack.

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Thoughts

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Try to push someone. Imagine trying to push someone in outer space. What would that be like. Most probably the one with the greater mass would stay in place and the other would move backward. What this shows is the importance of root in tai Chi.

Put a pot of water on the stove. Add heat. Watch it start to boil. Watch how the water pops up and how the steam rises. Think of yourself as that pot of water. Your body is the pot, your chi the water, your intention the fire. The more intention you add to your chi the more refined your chi becomes. Chi turns to shen. Then you are truly there.

The slower that chi moves the more solid. Rock is very slow moving chi, water faster moving, steam faster, air faster, thought faster. If you have tension chi becomes more solid. You can make it more fluid by letting go or somehow making yourself open up. In push hands it is so important not to give your opponent anything to push against.

Be like water and seek out the smallest crack in your partners form and take advantage of it. Anyone can find the big places. Look for the most subtle.

Working with Chi

1. Chi is everywhere - it is everything
2. Your Shen (spirit) is a higher, finer magnification of chi
3. If you want to increase your available chi
 - a. Relax. Chi follows the path of least resistance.
 - b. Strengthen the body. Chi is very powerful and can do harm if the body is not ready to work with it.
 - c. Blocks (tension) are like dams. Everything upstream from them gets flooded; everything downstream gets dried up.
 - d. Chi follows the mind. You must concentrate. You must imagine what you want to happen.

Does form follow function or function follow form? Do I become a baseball pitcher because I have an abnormally strong arm or does my arm develop because I like the idea of pitching? Are we born with a body pre-disposed to certain activities or do our bodies develop because we hold certain desires?

I think both are true. If so it follows that we can change our structure by what we think or do later in life. If we change habit patterns that are limiting, we can open ourselves to new possibilities of growth in body and mind.

Some conditions for optimum health:

1. Regular, easy exercise with brief periods of more exertion.
2. Steady weight with slight fluctuations according to season - slightly heavier in winter for more warmth and slightly lighter in summer for more mobility.
3. Moderate diet with as much natural food as possible.
4. Even emotions.
5. Supportive environment - physical, emotional, and spiritual.
6. Challenging and rewarding work.
7. Loving relationships.

It is my experience that a moderate, non-stress type of exercise program, one that will encourage daily involvement, will stay, grow, and improve as the individual gets older. Faddish, expensive, stress activities will end up turning the individual off to exercise in the long run.

There is an aspect of exercise that is not usually talked about. It is the unification of the mind and body called conscious involvement or meditation. I have found that strength, stamina, flexibility, ease of movement, as well as enjoyment come from the mind directing the body. The body is the tool for the mind's focus of what is known as universal energy. As we let go of trying, let the muscles relax, focus this universal energy, there is no limit to what we can accomplish. It is like focusing the sun's rays through a magnifying glass - we can burn up anything.

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Basic Pointers

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1. Back is always straight without being stiff.
2. The top of the head is held as if suspended from above.
3. The knee always points in the direction that the toe is pointed.
4. The knee just covers the toe unless you aren't strong enough or want to go further for competition or demonstration.
5. Nose points to one knee or the other or in the middle. The nose never goes outside the knee. That leads to imbalance.
6. Always step as far as you can without moving the body until the root is established with the stepping foot.
7. When stepping forward the heel always touches down first.
8. Never use tension - only attention.
9. Tuck the buttocks under to help keep the spine straight.
10. Eyes glance forward at a 45 degree angle downward. It relaxes the eyes as well as trains the eyes to focus on opponent's center.
11. Eyes follow the hands glancing about one foot beyond.
12. Speed of practice is constant no matter how slow or fast. Practice at different speeds.
13. Keep the top of the head lifting up. It stabilizes the body and keeps it in balance.
14. Energy follows the mind.
15. Energy is released like a spring. First you compress or create tension, then release.
16. Make sure that the energy has a clear, open channel between the source and the exit.
17. Make sure the legs do the work. The legs generate the energy and the hands express it.
18. Any tension restricts the flow of energy, like bending a hose. You'll end up with only a trickle.
19. Pay special attention to the joints. This is where the energy transfers from one part of the body to the next. It is easy to cut off or restrict energy at these junctures. Practice Silk Reeling to open the joints.
20. If you want to push, you must pull first and vice versa. If you want to go up, first you must pull down.
21. Don't open the joints more than straight or 180 degrees. The joint loses its strength past this point.
22. Don't let the elbows get behind the body. The arm is very easily controlled if this happens.
23. Let the wrist assume the posture of Beautiful Maiden, open and soft. The energy will then easily flow out the Lao Kung or Chi exit point in the center of the palm.
24. Tai Chi is natural. It is fast movement done slowly, not just slow movements.
25. Pantomime real movements. Without understanding what the movement really is in a martial sense, you'll never be able to do Tai Chi Chuan.
26. Do not break the energy by changing speeds. It is like a river running downhill toward the sea — always moving.
27. Mind leads the movement. Be clear what you want the body to do, then practice until the mind and body move as one.
28. There is no time lag between the mind movement and the body movement. They move as one.
29. Pay attention to open and close. The object is for you to stay open while closing up the opponent.
30. Look for Ready position in all of the movements. That is the moment when you are ready for anything to happen. Don't just do movements, one after the other.
31. Make sure to press the weight of the body onto the Bubbling Well Point on the bottom of the foot.

Basic Pointers

32. It's all one movement from beginning to end. Eliminate the breaks.
33. The feet move like a cats. Deliberate, sure, soft, and quiet.
34. Tai Chi stepping is like walking on a newly frozen lake. Test the ground when you place the foot before committing all your weight. You want to be able to withdraw at anytime without jerking your body back. The same with stepping backwards.
35. The body of the Tai Chi practitioner is like a horse and rider. The legs are the horse, the upper body the rider. It is important to separate the rider so he can turn around and do actions while the horse does something else, yet they are one unit.
36. Drill an oil well with your coccyx. This means to keep the buttocks tucked under and the spine erect. That way you can bob up and down without interfering with your alignment.
37. Never lock your joints.
38. Keep in mind that you would most likely want to step behind or to the side of your opponent, so when practicing your form, step accordingly.
39. When stepping, make sure not to break your root from where you were until you establish your root where you are going.
40. If you have any thoughts in your head at all they will keep you from being in the moment and seeing clearly.
41. Energy in the body is like a ball. If you push it down, it will bounce up. The harder you push down, the further up it will bounce. If you want to push or strike an opponent, first sink your weight into your feet and legs.
42. You always want to keep in touch with your opponent. That is why in Tai Chi when we move backward we leave our hands forward until the moment of change happens. Examples are the transition from Push to Single Whip or in Repulse Monkey.
43. The eyes follow the hands. You need to train the eyes to do this so they can be involved in the movement. The eyes are major receptors and creators of energy.
44. When moving weight, make sure to open all the joints between the center and the part of the body connected to the weight. If your joint is not all the way open, it will be the joint that will end up dealing with the weight and the joint is the weakest link in the movement of force or weight. That is why we straighten out the arms in all the movements. Also, make sure not to lock the arms straight. Any locking blocks the flow of energy.
45. Even in movement the mind remains calm and still, like a still lake, in order to reflect reality clearly.
46. It is important to realize that the Tai Chi Chuan form is all one movement made up of various parts. We break it down in order to look at it in more detail but it is still one continuous movement. It is like talking about the body — we can look at the hand, arm, foot etc., yet it is all part of one whole.
47. Open the Yung Chuan point on the bottom of the foot in order to allow yin energy to enter and spent Chi to leave.
48. There is no good or bad chi. There is only chi. Some chi we can use and we might call it good while other chi we can't use and might call bad. We must get away from good and bad discrimination of things.
49. Learn to do the most with the least. That is one of the major benefits of Tai Chi.
50. Walk like a tiger — place each step exactly where you want it to go with total control. When the tiger is stalking he is crouched very low to the ground so as to compress his chi for the spring.

Basic Pointers

51. Before starting your practice be sure to take a moment to hook up your basic energy points to your Dan Tien. To do this you concentrate your mind first on your Dan Tien then on the Yung Chuan points on the bottoms of the feet, the Bai Hui on the top of the head, and the Lao Kung in the center of the palms. Just by concentrating on these points you will send the energy to them.

52. Think of your body and energy like a bow and arrow. One end of the bow is your Bai Hui on the top of the head; the other end of the bow is the Hui Yin point at the bottom of the pelvis. The length of the bow is the spine. The bow string is pulled back by inhaling. The arrow of energy is discharged from the Dan Tien by exhaling.

53. The eight cranial bones of the skull are capable of minute movements. This movement is important to pump the cerebrospinal fluid which surrounds the brain and the spinal cord. We can increase the movements of the joints of the cranium and increase the function of the pumping action of the cranial pump . Use your mind to do this.

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Foot Positions and Movements

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The feet and legs are the foundation of Tai Chi. The Classics say that if there is a problem with the form look to the legs. The feet and leg angles are also one of the areas of the most controversy. I continue to use the angles that Master Choy used after I had investigated the other options. These work for me, yet some people find other angles are more comfortable for them for various reasons. Don't be afraid to experiment with other angles and use the ones that work for you. No one can feel your body but you.

The basic stances are bow/sit, ding bow on heel and toe, and horse riding stance. The basic steps are forward, backward or side ways.

As a general rule the rear foot should be at between 45-80 degree angle to the direction you are headed. The front foot always points in the direction you are going to end up. Of course, if you think of Tai Chi as a martial art then you should be able to react from any direction with little loss of power and flexibility. If health is your major concern then the body will dictate the proper foot positions. But you have to really know yourself to make the best foot positions. The reason being that the body might not be properly aligned now— your knees might not line up with your toes or other problems might affect your ability to move. Then when you make the correct movement it might not feel right because you aren't used to it. Most of the time we have to give the body time to adjust to something new.

Another important point is to always have the knee line up with the toe and go in the direction the toe is headed. Many people have knees that don't line up. Most knees tend to face inward in relation to the toe. This makes for many potential problems with the knee, hip and ankle. In the beginning you should make a concerted effort to make sure the knee stays in line with the toe and does not extend over the toe. Extending over the toe puts a lot of stress on the knee, shin, and ankle with a loss of root and stability.

On the bottom of the foot just below the ball in the center is a place called the Bubbling Well or Yung Chuan point. This point corresponds to the kidneys and is related to our utilization of energy. This point is the opening in the body for the Yin energy to enter. It is therefore important for this point to be pressed down on the floor as much as possible. In doing so you will feel more energized as well stable. It is also very important that the feet always be shoulder width apart. The body's stability depends on this.

Also, energy is gathered into the inside of the foot and released from the heel and the outside. This is very important. Practice until it feels natural.

One more important thing to consider — the stepping foot acts as a brake to stop your forward or sideways momentum. Therefore, make sure to step wide enough *in the direction the movement is headed* to establish a root and be ready to brake.

The more you practice the foot movements by themselves the quicker you will feel comfortable and gain more benefit and enjoyment from the form. You can overcome chronic physical limitations through the proper practice of Tai Chi. As a general rule most people tend to get a bit sloppy with their foot placement after a short while because the upper body and especially the hand movements are so intriguing. Don't let down on your awareness of and concentration on the feet and legs. It is your root and foundation upon which all else is placed.

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Stance Practice

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It is of utmost importance to get the foot movements correct. If you do not, your forms will never be correct and you will not be able to relax and move energy. Please practice these stances until they become natural. Also remember that these foot movements are natural movements done slowly. They are practical and purposeful. Pay close attention.

Bow and Sit Stance Practice

1) Start in Wu Chi stance — a natural stance with weight on both feet that are shoulder width apart with the toes facing forward.

2) Lower weight and shift weight to the left foot. You should be able to bob up and down easily which means that the weight is being transferred to the feet and not to the knee.

3) Turn out the right foot to a 45* angle right of straight ahead. Be sure to pivot out on the heel without lifting the foot off the floor.

4) Shift the weight to the right foot and turn the body to face the same angle that the toe is facing. You should be able to bob up and down.

5) Step forward the left foot. Be careful not to narrow the stance, and be sure to step as far as you can without moving the trunk of the body. Always step with the heel first, place the rest of the foot down, then shift the weight on to the left foot and turn the body to face forward. You move ahead until the knee just covers the toe and the knee always moves in the direction the toe is headed. In order to get the trunk to face forward, you have to relax the Kua (the junction of the leg and hip joint). You are now in Left Foot Bow Stance.

6) Shift the weight straight back and sit on the right foot. The trunk was transported back without moving up or down, without leaning in any direction. The body still faces straight forward. The front leg has straightened out without becoming locked. This is Right Foot Sit Stance.

7) Continue to move the body forward and back without changing the level of the body. The feeling is like folding a pleat or playing an accordion. After going forward and back about 10 times, end in Sit Stance, lift up the forward toe, and without moving the trunk, lift up the left foot and replace it back to where it started.

8) You can now practice the other side by reversing the process.

Bow and Sit Stance with Turning

This is basically the same practice as the straight Bow and Sit, but as you shift the weight from one foot to the other, you turn the trunk so that the nose will point to one knee or the other. You want to make sure that the legs do the same action as straight Bow and Sit, being careful not to pull the knee out of alignment when you shift and turn coming back into Sit Stance. You also want to make sure you are coordinating the turning and shifting so that you *turn as you shift*, not turn then shift or shift then turn. You practice this about 10 times each leg.

Ding Bow Stance on Heel and Toe

These stances are sometimes referred to as empty step because you put a foot forward without putting weight on it. Ding Bow on Heel is a foot kick or foot stomp movement, and Ding Bow on Toe is a transitional or getting ready to do something else stance.

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Ding Bow Heel

- 1) Stand with heels touching, toes turned out to a 45* angle.
- 2) Lower weight until the knees just cover the toes.
- 3) Step out with the left foot, touching the left heel to the ground in line with the left shoulder, as far to the front as you can *without moving the body*. The toe should be only slightly off the ground, not held up with tension. The toe faces straight ahead.
- 4) Bring the foot back to the starting position *without moving the body*. Be sure to keep the body (center) on the same level as you do these stances. Try not to raise and lower the body.
- 5) Alternate stepping with one foot and then the other about 10 times each.

Ding Bow Toe

- 1) Stand with heels touching, toes turned out to a 45* angle.
- 2) Lower weight until knees cover the toes.
- 3) Step out with the left foot, touching the left toe on the ground in line with the left shoulder. The toe faces straight ahead with the knee slightly bent. The heel is just slightly off the ground.
- 4) Bring the left foot back and replace it in the original position. Do not move the body while you step or replace the foot.
- 5) Alternate feet and do about 10 times with each foot.

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Tai Chi Hand Postures

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At the most basic level, as well as the very highest, Tai Chi Chuan is a martial art. Every aspect of this art must adhere to the martial principles or it can't be called Chuan which means martial form or fist. Many people are adverse to the study of a martial art and therefore look at Tai Chi Chuan as a Chi Kung exercise, which of course it is, yet it is a martial chi kung. Many people like Tai Chi as a meditation art, which it is, yet it isn't a transcendental meditation to take us away from the body, but a natural meditative system with the intention of unifying the body, mind and spirit.

With this in mind I want to talk about the role of the hands in Tai Chi Form. The hands are the main tools for our interacting with others and our environment. The hands contain over one quarter of all the bones of the body. One sixth of all the muscles of the body are used in hand movements. A single hand movement can involve as many as 50 muscles working together. There are as many as 21,000 sensors of heat, pressure, and pain per square inch of the fingertips. The hands can destroy or heal, cause pleasure or pain.

Tools are designed to perform certain tasks. A hammer is used to sink a nail, a saw to cut, a screwdriver to insert or extract a screw. Hands are also designed for specific tasks. The long, slender fingers of the monkey are used for grasping branches. The mole has short fingers with broad, strong nails used for digging. The whales fingers are webbed to move through water. Each hand or tool has been designed to get a job done in the best possible fashion. This is not to say that the monkey couldn't use his hands to swim or the mole couldn't grasp anything, but each has its optimum use.

The human hand is an incredible design. It is very general, not limited to a few very specific tasks, and it has evolved to have almost unlimited possible uses. The hands of the Tai Chi player certainly express this variation of abilities to the fullest. They can grab, pull, push, twist, poke, strike, neutralize, adhere, smash, slap, chop, and more. Most of the time one hand will be performing one task while the other hand is doing something else. Just as you would never cut a board with a hammer, or sink a nail with a screwdriver, one would not grab something with a fisted hand, or slap with a finger. The fist is used for striking, the finger is used for poking.

Most Yang Style Tai Chi players do not change their hand postures to reflect the different uses of the hands in each movement, and I feel it is a short coming. Changing hand postures takes understanding of what one is doing at all times in the form. Changing postures and intention go together and I believe that intention is the master key to success in Tai Chi Chuan. So let's look at some the hand positions, their uses, and where they are expressed in the Yang Style Tai Chi form. These are the most common hand postures and is not meant to cover all possibilities. The hand postures reflect the application so the examples given are only one out of many possibilities.

Normal Hand

This is the most common hand position (inactive). It is relaxed with just enough peng in it to keep it aware. In all martial arts that use open hand techniques, this is the *at ready* hand. A hand is in the normal posture if it is waiting to do something, or if the other hand is involved in activity and it is just relaxing. This posture is used between movements as a transitional hand posture. An example would be waiting to go into Fist Under Elbow, or the waiting in Repulse Monkey.

Tiger's Mouth (Neutralizing, pulling, grabbing, twisting)

This hand posture is quite open, with a large open space (lots of peng) between the thumb and index finger. This ability to grasp and clasp things between the thumb and other fingers has allowed man to reach the top of the survival pyramid. This posture is very active, ready to grab and twist. It is not good for strikes as the energy would be dispersed over too large an area and the thumb is vulnerable to attack as it sticks out. Examples are the left hand in Left Brush Knee, the pulling hand in Repulse Monkey, the right hand in High Pat on Horse.

Striking Palm

In this hand posture, the thumb is held quite close to the palm of the hand, and the fingers are held erect, slightly back. The main area of energy is in the lower palm, as the bones of the forearm are quite close to the surface here. This palm allows a great deal of concentration of hard jing (yang) with the purpose of sending energy deep into opponent's body. Examples include Brush Knee (the striking hand), Repulse Monkey (striking hand), Fan through the Back.

Tai Chi Hand Postures

Pushing Hand and Neutralizing Hand

Probably the most common active hand posture, the pushing or neutralizing hand is an intermediate step between the Relaxed Hand and the Tiger's Mouth. It is soft enough to be able to mold to the surface it is attached to, yet firm enough to transmit solid energy. The thumb is held closer to the palm than Tiger's Mouth, and the fingers have a bit more spread than a Striking Palm. Examples include Push, Withdraw and Push, Brush Knee, Roll Back (right hand).

Slapping Palm

This is an open hand with the thumb held fairly close to the palm. It is a softer hand posture than striking palm as it is used in a whip like fashion without the intention of energy penetrating deeply. This slapping palm is used to confuse the opponent and to set up other movements. An example is High Pat on Horse.

Chopping Hand

The fingers of this posture are held together firmly, have lots of peng energy, and the thumb is tucked firmly into the palm. The energy is concentrated on the edge of the hand that is used to do the chopping, and can be done in an upward or downward motion. An example of downward chop is Deflect Downward and an example of upward chop is Slanting Flying.

Finger Poke Hand

The hand is held very firmly, fingers straight, thumb tucked tightly into palm. It is very important for the forearm, wrist, palm, and fingers to line up straight, as the poke puts a great deal of stress on the joints if not in line. Examples include Plane Cross Hands, Needle At Sea Bottom and White Snake Puts Out Tongue (left hand).

Back of Hand Striking Hand

This is a very difficult hand posture to master as the area of energy release is quite limited due to the fact that the bones on the back of the hand are quite close to the surface and therefore easily broken or damaged if not used correctly. This posture is used mostly to stun or distract, focused generally on the face and especially the nose. The shape is rather round with most of the energy in the knuckle region. An example is White Snake.

Fist

The fist is used in many ways in Tai Chi. One can punch, chop, use front, back, sides. Knuckles can protrude to concentrate energy into small areas. The most common fist is the straight punch, like in Step Up, Parry, and Punch. Be sure to close the fist firmly but not too tightly. The energy for the most effective forward punch comes from the two large knuckles of the index and middle fingers. Be sure to line up the forearm, wrist, and hand so that all force comes from the back and nothing will bend out of shape when the force is released. When we punch in Tai Chi we usually use a half twist (ending with the thumb of the punching fist facing upward) to help focus and concentrate the energy. We don't use a full twist (ending with the fingers of the punching fist facing down) as that puts a lot of stress on the connective tissues of the shoulder, elbow, and wrist.

Hook Hand

This is the hand position for Single Whip. It is a very versatile tool used for striking (mainly sides but also knuckles, wrist area, and back of hand), poking (fingers concentrate energy into a small area), neutralizing (fingers wrap mainly around wrist of opponent). In the long form of Yang style, there are 10 Single Whips. I do a different variation for each so I can practice more of these interesting possibilities.

Conclusion

I hope I have given you some food for thought and I encourage you to explore the almost unlimited possibilities that the hands present to the martial artist. Paying attention to the changes in hand postures will help you focus and keep your mind from wandering thereby increasing the generation of Chi. For those of you interested in self healing, changing hand postures causes a greater variety of energy transmission pathways and mind/body interaction, both of which lead to improvements in health. Meditators will find deeper involvement in understanding the form will contribute to a richer and vastly more interesting experience.

Breaking Down the Movements

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This is the heart of the manual. It will be the most important part for students, as a majority are very concerned with getting the movements correct as soon as possible. When the movement is correct, the energy will flow more smoothly and the mind can relax. So pay close attention to how you are doing each movement. Take responsibility for your learning and progress. Practice diligently. You will be rewarded with a feeling of satisfaction that you are doing your best, as well as gaining a life skill.

I will make reference to an opponent in explaining the practical aspects of each movement. I could also use the term partner because in class we always use a partner to work on our understanding of the movements. Most students are not interested in studying Tai Chi for fighting and might object on the term opponent, yet for many reasons I will retain use of that term.

Please excuse the use of the masculine in referring to partner or opponent. I get tired of writing his or hers so I will just say his. That certainly doesn't mean the opponent couldn't be feminine.

The explanation is broken down into sections. Let me explain what they are and why they are important.

1. **Basic Idea** — This section will explain what the practical aspects of the movements are—the application, what we are trying to accomplish. Each movement has many possible applications or purposes, yet for the sake of sanity I will explain the most common ones—the ones we talk about in class.

2. **Feet** — The foot section will deal with the direction the feet are headed, the type of stance used, the weighted foot, and any other points that are important pertaining to the placement of the feet. The feet are the rooting structures of the body and Tai Chi Chuan can not be practiced with relaxation and effectiveness without the feet being in proper position. There is quite a bit of controversy regarding the relationship of the two feet, yet with over 25 years of personal practice and having worked with thousands of students, I believe I can safely instruct the student in the best way to place the feet for health, relaxation, and martial application.

When breaking down the movements, the sequence usually involves stepping with a foot before the weight is shifted onto it. So be aware of this when I say to make a step. I will also usually remind you to turn in a toe at the end of a movement. This is accomplished by pivoting on the heel and allowing the toe to move. This is important, as the power comes from the heel portion of the foot. You don't want to break your connection to the ground. Also, turning in the back toe allows you to line up your pelvis with the direction of your force.

3. **Torso and Arms** — We will look closely at the relationship of the two arms — what each is doing and how they relate to the torso. Remember that the feet are like a horse and the torso like the rider. They need to be independent, yet act as one.

4. **Focus** — This refers to where you place your energy or attention. Remember that the energy follows the mind, so it is very important to use the mind to guide the flow of energy. This section can also expand on the Basic section.

Important — Each movement starts where the previous movement ended. For example, if you want to know the beginning hand and foot positions for Snake Creeps Down, you would first look to the ending positions for Single Whip. This is true for all the movements in this manual.

Also Note — The same number in the sections mean that they are happening at the same time. Feet 1), Torso 1), and Focus 1) are all the same part of a movement. I broke it down in this way so you could just look at one part separately if you want.

The beginning direction is referred to as north (even though this might not be true), and all directions relate to this beginning direction.

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#1 Commencement of Tai Chi Chuan

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Basic:

Moving From Wu Chi to Tai Chi. Bringing awareness to the major energy points of the body: Bai Wai on top of head, Yung Chuan on the bottoms of the feet, Lao Kung in the center of the palms, and the Lower Dan Tien below the belly button.

If the opponent pushes you with both hands, your hands deflect upward, wrap around his wrists, and pull him down with a jerking motion.

Feet:

Horse Stance

Torso and Arms:

- 1) Wrists rise to shoulder level until arms are parallel to the floor.
- 2) Hands straighten out sending chi into the finger tips. Elbows bend, pulling the hands toward the body. Keep the hands parallel to the floor.
- 3) Palms push downward until they reach the Dan Tien level. Be careful not to allow tension in the wrist.
- 4) Body lowers until the knee just covers the toe. Palms return to the sides of the body, yet retain chi in Lao Kung.

Focus:

The beginning is the seed of all that is to follow. It sets the mood, the pace, the level of knees from the floor. You are moving from nothing (Wu Chi) to something (Tai Chi). It is a simple movement, yet do not take it too lightly.

When standing in the horse stance, be sure to open and press the Yung Chuan point to the floor so you can have good interchange of Yin energy from the earth. This will also stimulate the kidneys where chi is stored.

Lift the top of the head and open the Bai Wei point so as to connect with the Yang energy of the cosmos.

As you inhale, bring up the yin energy from the earth, pull down the Yang energy from the cosmos, and mix in the Dan Tien. As you exhale, send this chi down to the Hui Yin point at the bottom of the pelvis, then up the spine to the Da Tzui point at the base of the cervical vertebrae, down the arms to the Lao Kung in the center of the palms. When all these points are stimulated and the energy is connected, you are ready to begin.

- 1) When the arms rise, concentrate on the wrists.
- 2) When the hands straighten, concentrate on the finger tips.
- 3) When pushing the palms down, concentrate on the Lao Kung.
- 4) When squatting, concentrate on the Dan Tien.

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#2 Ward Off Left

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Basic:

Opponent attacks your center with his right fist. You move left to avoid his attack, neutralize with your right hand to your right side, step behind him to seal a possible retreat, then attack his center with the back of your left hand.

Feet:

- 1) Shift to left foot.
- 2) Turn out right toe to 45* angle right of north.
Note: My computer does not have a degree key so * stands for degree.
- 3) Shift to right. Nose points to right knee.
- 4) Step straight ahead with left foot. Be sure to plant foot before shifting weight.
- 5) Shift to left foot. Nose points to left knee.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) As you shift to the left foot, the body turns slightly until the nose points to the left knee. This movement starts the movement of the right arm.
- 2) Body turns to right which allows the right hand to swing up to the center of the chest, with the right palm facing inward.
- 3) Right palm turns down as you shift the weight to the right foot. Left arm moves to the front of the body guarding the center. Nose points to the right knee.
- 4) You are now in center position. * **See note below.**
- 5) As you shift the weight forward, the right hand moves down to the right side at waist level. The left wrist leads the arm up to the center of the body, palm facing inward. Wrist is in the center of the chest. Nose points to the left knee.

Focus:

- 1) Attention straight ahead.
- 2) Focus on the back of the right hand as it comes up to neutralize incoming force.
- 3) The energy wraps around the right hand until it gets into the palm. Sink weight into right Yung Chuan. Some attention to the left inside forearm in case of block.
- 4) Focus on step so as to step behind or to the side of opponent.
- 5) The right hand continues to neutralize energy but most of the attention is shifted to discharging the energy from the Dan Tien into the back of the left forearm and wrist. Make sure that the waist does all of the work and open the left arm and shoulder so the energy can move without restriction. Keep the knees in line with the toes at all times.

Note: Center Position

Center position is a transitional position when you come into a balanced, guarded stance. In Ward Off, you come into right center position which means you are sitting on the right foot with the left foot empty and in front of the body. The right hand is up by the right shoulder, and the left arm is down in front of the groin.

I call this center position because you are in a place where many responses are possible. There is also a left center position which is the opposite of this.

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#3 Right Push Upward

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Basic:

Opponent kicks you from the right side toward your center. You step inside his kick, grab his lower leg with your right arm, and push him backwards and upwards to uproot.

Feet:

- 1) Pull in right toe and turn it to face east.
- 2) Step with right foot to 30* angle right of east. Be sure not to narrow stance. You should be in left foot sit stance.
- 3) Shift weight to right foot, turning waist until nose points to right knee. At the end of the movement, turn in the left toe.

Torso and arms:

- 1) Sinking the weight into the left foot, the body turns to right and the arms come into center position. Side of body faces east.
- 2) The right arm circles upward and grabs opponent's leg with your forearm as your body turns right. Right arm faces inward. Left hand stays in upper center of chest, palm facing your right elbow, to protect body.
- 3) The right arm continues to move upward and slightly away from the body until it lines up with right leg, palm facing inward at shoulder level. Left arm remains in the center of the chest position.

Focus:

- 1) Energy is pulled to center. Right toe is pulled in so as not to be attacked and to be able to kick.
- 2) Awareness moves to the upper side of the right arm to catch, attach and neutralize incoming energy.
- 3) Chi explodes from the right arm sending the opponent backwards. Left hand can help in the push.

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#4 Roll Back

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Basic:

Opponent pushes your center with his left arm. Incoming attack is neutralized to your left side.

Feet:

Turning right foot bow to left foot sit. No foot movement.

Torso and Arms:

Body withdraws and turns to left. Left palm turns upward and right arm turns slightly to the left and stays at the same level. As the body retreats, the left palm moves down to end at waist level while the right arm remains at same level. Nose ends up pointing to left knee. Don't lean and don't let the right knee pull around to the left.

Focus:

Body neutralizes the incoming energy by turning to the left. The left palm encounters the incoming energy first with palm facing inward, then by doing Chen Ssu Jing (silk reeling energy), turns upward to grab opponent's wrist. The right forearm attacks opponent's elbow to control or break. Attention is on left palm pulling inward and the right forearm pressing outward..

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#5 Press Forward

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Basic:

As opponent tries to recover from Roll Back and regain equilibrium, you immediately press him off balance by pressing energy from the left palm into your right forearm, wrist or hand depending upon which one is attached to your opponent.

Feet:

No foot movement. Body moves from left foot sit to right foot bow with turning waist.

Torso and Arms:

Right arm moves to center of the chest level, parallel to the floor, with palm facing inward. Left palm makes a small circle and ends up facing the right wrist, close but not touching. Body turns as you move forward until the nose points to the right knee.

Focus:

Focus your attention on the outside of the right forearm as it stays attached to the opponent. The left hand then squeezes or presses energy into the right forearm in order to release the energy into the opponent. Be sure to keep the right shoulder open and relaxed so as not to restrict the release of chi.

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#6 Push

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Basic:

The push is easily accomplished if you break the opponent's root by pulling first. Also remember that the push is much more effective if you push slightly down then upward to break the root.

Feet:

Body moves from right foot bow stance straight backward to left foot sit then straight forward to right foot bow.

Torso and Arms:

Following Press, the arms continue their forward motion until they are parallel to the floor at shoulder level with the palms downward, like in Commencement. As the body retreats, the arms bend at the elbow. Be sure not to lean backwards as you retreat. Don't let the elbows get behind the body. There is a slight pushing down as you move backward. When you are in sit stance, the palms face forward. You then move to bow stance with a pushing motion. Make sure to keep the shoulders and elbows open so as not to restrict the release of energy. Be sure to push with the legs, not the arms. Don't let the knee go past the toe.

Focus:

Opponent tries to regain balance after Press, so you first have to pull to keep him off center. Your palms attach to his elbows for the pull in and remain on his elbows for the push. You have a great deal of control that way. It is so important to realize that this movement is made with the legs, not the arms. The legs are so much stronger. Be aware of the line of energy from the rear foot to the center to the palms.

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#7 Single Whip

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Basic:

Single Whip is one of the most important of the Tai Chi movements as evidenced by the fact that it is repeated so often. As in all movements, there are many possible applications. This is the first one we will look at.

The attack comes from the north. The opponent attacks your face with his left hand. You neutralize the incoming punch with the back of your left hand and lead it to the left, opening the opponent's chest to your attack with the right hand whip.

Feet:

- 1) Shift weight straight back to left foot sit.
- 2) Turning the waist to the left, turn in the right toe to face 90* north. Keep the weight on the left foot.
- 3) Shift to the right foot.
- 4) Left foot opens to the left until the left toe is past the right foot.
- 5) Step 90* to the west with the left foot. Be sure to open the stance enough to the left so as not to weaken it. Don't shift the weight yet.
- 6) Shift weight to left foot bow, turning the waist until the nose points to left knee.

Torso and arms:

- 1) As you shift back, the arms lengthen and fingers straighten. Don't round the shoulders too much.
- 2) Arms follow the body as it turns to the left.
- 3) As the weight shifts to the right, the left arm starts to drop slightly and the right starts to bend at the elbow.
- 4) As the body turns to face 45* (half way between both feet), the left arm continues down until it is hanging in the front of the body. The right arm bends at the elbow until it is parallel to the floor and to the north, palm facing downward, in the center of the chest.
- 5) As you step, the left hand circles up inside the bent right arm until the left hand is in line with the right wrist. The left palm faces inward, about one hands distance from the chest.
- 6) As you shift the weight, the left hand with palm facing the body, continues to the left side and ends up in line with the left knee. The palm turns to face north by the end of the movement. As this is happening, the right arm opens (whipping motion from the elbow) until it is slightly behind the body. The right hand forms the whip which means the wrist is bent and the fingers are all joined with the thumb. Hips face left knee.

Focus:

- 1) Be sure to keep in contact with the previous opponent while you move backward by leaving the hands where they were while moving the body back. The energy also moves into the finger tips as the hands turn palm downward.
- 2) As you turn, keep the energy in the palms as you might be throwing the opponent to the left. Be sure to keep the root in the right heel as it pivots in.
- 3) Starting the movement into the center. Energy moves to Dan Tien.
- 4) Guard your center by pulling into center position. Energy in both hands but mostly in the Dan Tien.
- 5) Energy moves to the back of the left hand as it joins with incoming energy.
- 6) Energy moves into left palm as you grab and into right whip as you attack. The energy is quite connected between the two hands. The feeling is sort of like stretching open a large rubber band.

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#8 Raise Hands

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Basic:

Opponent attacks your side under your right arm with his left hand. You retreat into empty step and trap his arm (wrist and elbow) with your two palms, while having the option of using your right leg to kick.

Feet:

- 1) Shift straight back to right foot.
- 2) As body turns to right, turn in left toe to 45* angle left of north.
- 3) Shift to left foot.
- 4) Ding Bow stance on right heel. Body faces 30* angle right of north.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) Body moves straight back and right elbow drops slightly to block incoming energy or to guard arm pit area. Left arm lengthens.
- 2) Body starts to turn to face opponent at north. Right palm turns inward as if attaching to opponent's left elbow. The left palm follows body to the right.
- 3) Body continues to move to the right bringing the left hand to the right elbow. The right leg is empty.
- 4) Right foot does Ding Bow stance on heel.

Focus:

- 1) Concentrate on right elbow as it blocks.
- 2) Energy into right hand as it attaches to opponent's elbow.
- 3) Energy into left palm as it strikes opponent's wrist.
- 4) Focus on right heel for kick downward.

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#9 Stork Spreads Its Wings

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Basic:

Opponent attacks your center with his left arm. You neutralize to the left with your left hand as you step behind him with your right foot, and then attack his neck with your right hand edge. Possible knee kick with left knee.

Feet:

- 1) Replace right foot in same spot at 45* angle right of west.
- 2) Shift to right foot, starting turn to left.
- 3) Ding Bow stance on left toe facing west.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) As you replace the right foot, the right arm drops to protect lower body and the left hand moves to center chest, palm down, as if to attach to opponent's wrist.
- 2) Left hand moves to left side at downward angle as right hand starts upward and slightly in a circle to the right.
- 3) The right hand ends up on right side of your body at about neck or head level, palm facing forward. The left hand is at left side and slightly in front of left knee with palm down. Body faces to the west.

Focus:

- 1) Awareness in the left hand as it attaches to opponent. Also, be careful to step behind opponent with right foot to prevent escape.
- 2) Energy stays in left hand and starts to fill into right hand.
- 3) Most of the energy is in the right hand, with a bit in the left hand as it is still attached to opponent. Some energy into the left leg as it replaces slightly.

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#10 Left Brush Knee and Twist Step

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Basic:

Following Stork Spreads Its Wings in which you ended up attacking the opponent's neck with your right hand, you now follow up with an attack to his other side with the edge of your left hand, and finally a strike with your right palm.

Feet:

- 1) First you pull in the left toe closer to the body, then step behind the opponent with your left foot at 30* left of west to block his retreat.
- 2) Shift weight onto left foot.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) The body turns to the right bringing up the left hand, palm down, across the body at neck level. Nose points to right knee with left hand at right shoulder. Right hand circles up to end up in front of right shoulder, palm relaxed.
- 2) As you step with the left foot, the left hand first pushes down to open opponent for the strike that follows with the right hand. The body turns to the left and you end up facing 30* to the left of west, nose points to the knee. The right hand ends up on the right side of the center of the chest, palm faces forward. Keep the elbow bent. The left hand returns to the left side of the knee, slightly to the front as in Stork Spreads Its Wings.

Focus:

- 1) Energy in the thumb edge of the left hand.
- 2) Energy into left palm. Be mindful of the placement of the left foot as if stepping to the side of opponent. Then move most of the energy into the right palm, reserving some for the left palm that is still attached to opponent's arm.

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#11 Play the Fiddle

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Basic:

Opponent grabs your right hand from the bottom with his right hand.. Your right hand presses slightly downward to seal opponent's hand and then you hip-hop inward and attack upward to his elbow with your left palm. Left foot can kick.

Feet:

- 1) Step forward with the rear foot, placing it at a 45* angle right of west, just in front and to the right of the left foot.
- 2) Do Ding Bow stance on left heel facing west.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) Right palm relaxws downward.
- 2) As you do Ding Bow, the left hand comes straight up in front of the body and ends up chest level, palm slightly facing upward. Both wrists "sit" to emit energy. The opposite of Raise Hands.

Focus:

- 1) Focus on the right palm as it seals or presses the opponent's hand.
- 2) Be aware of space when you hip-hop. You can move forward, backward , or stay in the same place. The hip-hop is used to generate energy upward from the legs. Your awareness then shifts mostly into your left palm as it strikes upward. It is very easy to break an arm with this movement.

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#12 Left Brush Knee

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Basic:

The opponent strikes your center with his right fist. You neutralize to the right with your left arm, open his center by pressing down on his arm, then attack with your right palm.

Feet:

- 1) Coming from Ding Bow on left heel, first pull into Ding Bow on Toe, then step to the left, 30* left of west, with the left foot.
- 2) Shift the weight to the left foot and turn in the right toe.

Torso and Arms:

1) Turning the waist to the right, bring the left arm over to the right side of the shoulder, turn the right palm upward and bring it down to the waist on the right and then up by the front of the right shoulder as you step to the left. The nose points to the right knee.

2) As you shift the weight and turn the waist to the left, the left palm brushes the left knee while the right palm strikes forward. At the end of the movement, the right palm covers the right center of the chest, the left palm faces down to the left of the left knee, and the nose points to the left knee.

Focus:

- 1) Energy in the left forearm to neutralize incoming energy to the right.
- 2) Energy first in the left forearm or hand as it presses the opponent's arm down to open up his center, then into the right palm for the strike or push.

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#13 Right Brush Knee

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Basic:

This movement and the following brush knee deal with punches to your face. In this one, we neutralize the opponent's left hand strike to our left with our right arm in order to close him up, then step to the side or behind the opponent with our right foot to seal his retreat, and finally press his left arm down and attack his center with a left palm strike.

Feet:

- 1) Shift the weight to the rear foot.
- 2) Turn out the front foot to 45* angle.
- 3) Shift weight to front foot.
- 4) Step forward with right foot to 30* angle right of west.
- 5) Shift weight to forward foot.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) Left palm turns palm upward as you shift back.
- 2) Right forearm moves with the body as it turns to the left, starting a circle in front of the body. Left arm starts to come up the left side.
- 3) As you shift forward onto the left foot, the left hand ends up by left shoulder, and the right forearm continues to circle down in front of the body with the palm facing slightly downward.
- 4) By the time the right foot is planted, the right forearm brushes the right knee ending just to the right side and slightly in front with the palm facing slightly outward.
- 5) As you shift the weight to the front foot, the left palm strikes forward, ending up in the left center of the chest. The right palm faces downward.

Focus:

- 1) Energy moves to center as you shift back.
- 2) Concentrate on right forearm.
- 3) Continue focus on right arm.
- 4) Be careful where you step. You are stepping to the out side of your opponent's foot.
- 5) Concentrate on left palm strike, balanced by right hand pulling toward body.

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#14 Left Brush Knee

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Focus:

This is a block of a head strike. This time opponent strikes with right hand. Reverse of preceding movement.

Feet:

- 1) Shift the weight straight back.
- 2) Turn out the right foot to a 45* angle.
- 3) Shift the weight to the right foot.
- 4) Step forward with the left foot to 30* angle left of west.
- 5) Shift the weight to the front foot.

Torso and Arms:

This is the same movement as the preceding one, only done with the other side of the body. The most important part is to have the brush of the knee timed with the step of the forward foot, so just as the forward foot heel touches down, the left arm is straight and in front of the left knee.

Focus:

This and the preceding movement have the same application and focus.

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#15 Play The Fiddle

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Basic:

The opponent grabs your right hand with his right hand from the top. You circle your right hand around in a clockwise circle in order to have his wrist on the inside of your palm. At the same time, your left palm comes up to trap his elbow.

Feet:

- 1) Replace your right foot in the same spot but turn out the right toe to a 45* angle.
- 2) Shift your weight back to your right foot, and kick downward (Ding Bow on Heel) with your left foot. Body has turned to face west.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) As you replace the right foot, the right hand makes a clockwise circle staying in the right center of the chest level. The left hand relaxes.
- 2) As you shift the weight back, the right hand remains basically the same (attached to the wrist of the opponent), while the left hand circles up to end up in front of the body, palm facing inward (as if on the elbow of the opponent's arm).

Focus:

- 1) Attention in the right hand as it curls around the wrist of opponent.
- 2) Energy moves mostly into left palm for strike with some energy in right for counter balance.

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#16 Left Brush Knee

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Basic:

This is the same movement as Left Brush Knee # 12.

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#17 Step Up, Parry, and Punch

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Basic:

Opponent attacks you with his left hand. You lead it down and to your left with your right forearm. You step behind him with your right foot to seal his retreat, attack him with a right back fist, then a left palm. You then step with your left foot and continue the attack with your right fist.

Feet:

- 1) Shift weight back to right foot sit stance.
- 2) Turn out left toe and then shift weight to left foot.
- 3) Step forward with right foot to 30* right of west.
- 4) Shift weight to right foot.
- 5) Using weighted foot trun, turn out right toe slightly by pivoting on the heel.
- 6) Step forward with left foot to west and then shift weight to left foot.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) Body moves straight back.
- 2) First the left hand turns palm upward, then as you turn out toe and shift weight, you lead opponent's arm down and to the left using the inside of your right forearm. The right arm ends up hanging down in front of body. The left hand has come up by the left shoulder to guard the top part of body.
- 3) Don't shift any weight to the right until your right foot is well rooted. Body still points to the left knee.
- 4) As the weight shifts, you use a whipping down motion with the back of the right fist. The right fist ends up, palm upward, at the waist level on the right side. Right after the right backfist, you follow with a left palm strike. The nose ends up pointing to the right knee.
- 5) As you step with the left foot, the nose continues to point to the right knee. The back of the left hand joins with the incoming energy at the center of the body.
- 6) As you shift the weight to the left foot, the left hand continues to neutralize the energy to the left and the right fist punches to the opponent's center. You end up facing straight west with nose pointing to the left knee. The left hand ends up by the right elbow.

Focus:

- 1) Energy returns to the center.
- 2) Most of the focus is on the right forearm.
- 3) Pay attention to the right foot so as to step behind the opponent.
- 4) Energy in the back of the right fist, followed by the left palm.
- 5) Energy in the back of the left hand.
- 6) Some energy stays in the left hand to keep contact, most goes to the right fist.

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#18 Withdraw and Push

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Basic:

Opponent grabs your right fist with his left hand. You escape his grip by opening your fist and jurking your arm to the left, grap his left arm with your left hand, pull first to uproot, then close him up with a two hand push.

Feet:

- 1) Move from left foot bow to right foot sit stance.
- 2) Shift weight back to left foot bow stance.

Torso and Arms:

1) Keeping the weight on the forward foot, turn the body slightly to the left. As you are doing this, the right fist opens facing downward, and moves with the body to the left. As you shift the weight to the right foot, the left hand comes up across the front of the body, as if to grab opponent's left wrist. The right hand moves back to end up in front of the right side of the chest. You are now in a push position.

- 2) Both palms face forward and you push forward using your legs.

Focus:

- 1) Focus on the left hand first for the escape, then on the left hand coming up to grab opponent's wrist.
- 2) Energy into the two palms for the push.

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#19 Cross Hands

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Basic:

A transitional movement. The only one in which we stand up during the form. With this movement we can capture incoming energy by coiling around it with either or both arms and lift it up to break the root.

Feet:

- 1) Shift the weight straight back to right foot sit stance.
- 2) Turning the waist, turn in the left foot to 90*north.
- 3) Shift weight to the left foot and turn the right foot face north, shoulder width and parallel to the left foot.
- 4) Weight shifts to almost center with slightly more weight on left foot.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) As you shift back, the arms lengthen parallel to the floor, palms face down.
- 2) The arms move as a unit slightly upward as the body turns to face front. Palms face the front (north).
- 3) The arms make a circle in front of the body as if sliding over the outside of a large ball. At the end of this part, the hands are hanging almost straight down with palms facing inward and wrists just crossing in front of the crotch.
- 4) Arms rise to the center of the chest level, about one hands distance from the body. The palms face the chest with the wrists still crossed.

Focus:

- 1) Energy to finger tips.
- 2) Glancing to the right, energy follows the eyes.
- 3) Energy moves into the outside edges of both forearms, then into the thumb edge.
- 4) Energy stays in the thumb edges of both forearms.

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#32 Turn and Chop Opponent With Fist

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Basic:

You are approached from the rear. You turn and neutralize the strike with your two palms, then follow it with a right backfist and a left palm strike.

Feet:

- 1) Shift weight to rear foot.
- 2) Keeping the weight on the right foot, turn in the left foot to face north.
- 3) Shift weight to left foot.
- 4) Open hip, moving right foot to the right till it just clears the left heel with toe facing to the east.
- 5) Step with right foot to 30*angle right of east.
- 6) Shift weight to the right foot.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) Left arm lengthens slightly as you shift back.
- 2) Arms move with the body and hands raise in an arcing motion as the body turns.
- 3) As you shift, the hands continue circling down until they end up at the level of your center, with the right hand slightly extended as if joining with opponent's arm at wrist and elbow.
- 4) As you open the hip, the right hand forms a fist and circles up in front of the body, while the left hand remains around the center.
- 5) The right fist continues the circle ending up at your nose level at the same time the right heel touches the ground. Left hand remains at left shoulder level.
- 6) As you shift forward, the right fist ends up by the right hip, fingers on top. At the same time, the left palm strikes forward, ending up on the left center of your chest level.

Focus:

- 1) Energy moves to center as you start to glance to the right.
- 2) Attention in palms to guard head as you turn.
- 3) Energy in both palms as you join with the incoming arm at wrist and elbow, leading it to your left.
- 4) Left palm remains on top of opponent's arm as right fist starts to strike with a backfist.
- 5) Right backfist strikes opponent's nose.
- 6) Concentration on left palm strike.

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#33 Step Up, Deflect Downward, Punch

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Basic:

The opponent strikes with his right arm. You neutralize this strike first to your left by joining his forearm with your right forearm, then spiral this over to the right side of your body by pivoting your arm to the right and down. Next, press down with your left palm on his elbow to open him up, then step up and strike with your right fist.

Feet:

- 1) Shift weight to left foot.
- 2) Replace right foot to face south, being careful not to block left foot.
- 3) Step forward with left foot to east.
- 4) Shift weight to left foot.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) As you shift back, body turns to the left until the nose points to left knee. At the same time, the left palm turns upward and the right forearm (hand still in fist) crosses in front of the body heading to the left side of the body.
- 2) As you replace, the right fist circles in front of the body as if pressing down with the back of the forearm, ending up by the right hip. The left arm comes up to the left side of the chest.
- 3) As you step, the left arm presses down to lower chest level.
- 4) As you shift, strike with right fist to center. Left hand is by right elbow.

Focus:

- 1) Concentrate on right forearm as it neutralizes to the left side.
- 2) Energy in outside of right forearm for deflecting downward.
- 3) Attention in left hand/forearm for pressing down.
- 4) Energy into right fist for strike.

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#34 Ward Off Left

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Basic:

The opponent grabs your right fist. Open it, withdraw it, and neutralize his hand down with your left palm. Follow up with an attack with your left forearm.

Feet:

- 1) Shift the weight back.
- 2) Shift the weight forward.

Torso and Arms:

1) As you shift back, the waist turns to the right. At the same time, the right fist opens, turns downward and is withdrawn to the front of the right shoulder. At the same time, the left hand slaps forward and then downward, ending in front of your groin. Hands are in center position.

- 2) As you shift forward, the hands do Ward Off. Body ends up facing east.

Focus:

- 1) Energy into left forearm for neutralization.
- 2) Energy stays in left forearm for Ward Off.

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#35 Grasp Bird's Tail

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Basic:

This is a repeat of #21, except that right Push Upward is added at the beginning.

Feet:

1) The transition from Ward Off to Right Push Upward is done with weighted foot turn out. This is the first time it is done in the form. Don't forget to keep the knee in line with the toe, and turn out the left foot from the hip, keeping a good solid root with the heel. Make sure the whole body turns to the left, not just the knee. Toe turns out to 45* left of east. Roll up on the right toe as you do the turn out.

2) Step forward with the right foot to 30* right of east.

3) Shift to the right foot.

You have just done Right Push Upward. The remaining movements are the same as #4,5,6.

Torso and Arms:

1) From Ward Off Left, keep the left arm in Ward Off position, letting the elbow sink some and the palm turn to face forward (into center position), and bring the right arm down in front of the groin (center position) as you turn to the left.

2) The right arm starts to rise as you step.

3) As you complete your shifting to the right foot, the right arm completes the Push Upward movement, just like movement #3.

The body and arms are the same for the rest of this sequence.

Focus:

1) Energy in left forearm for neutralizing incoming force to the left.

2) Energy divided between left palm for control of opponent's wrist and the right forearm for warding upward.

3) Energy in right forearm.

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36 Single Whip

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Basic:

The opponent attacks you with his left hand. Your right hand hook curls around the opponent's left hand and leads it to the right side, opening his chest to an attack with the back of your left hand.

Feet: The same as Single Whip #1.

Note: Be sure to step to the left 90* west with the left foot *at the same time* that the hands move to the right in #3 below.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) Arms lengthen as you shift weight back to the left foot.
- 2) Arms follow as body turns to the left. When all the weight is on the left foot, the right hand forms the hook as if it were wrapping itself over the top of opponent's wrist. At this point the two arms are in front of the body at chest level.
- 3) As you shift the weight back to right foot, the right hook leads the opponent's arm to the right, and ends up slightly behind the body at chest level. At the same time, the left hand moves horizontally to the right ending up by the right elbow.
- 4) As you shift the weight onto the left foot, that has stepped to the west 90*, the left arm moves to the left, as if slapping with the back of the hand. It ends up at shoulder level with the palm facing north.

Focus:

- 1) Energy moves to finger tips.
- 2) Glancing left, energy follows the eyes. Then moves into the right hand hook.
- 3) Energy into the hook (right) hand.
- 4) Energy moves into the back of the left hand. Keep some in the right hook as it would still be attached to opponent's hand.

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#37 Waving Hands Like Clouds

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Basic:

Waving Hands is repeated three times during the form. The first time we use shoulder width stance, the second time we use hip width stance, and the third time we use feet together stance. Other than that, the movement is done the same way for all three.

The opponent attacks from your left side. You neutralize his force to the right with your right hand, step to the left (behind or to his side), and strike him with the back of your left hand. The same movement is repeated three times to the left.

Feet:

- 1) Shift the weight straight back into right foot sit stance.
- 2) Turning the waist, turn in the left toe to 90* north.
- 3) Shift the weight to the left foot and turn the right foot to 90* north also. Bring it back so that it is shoulder width and parallel to the left foot.
- 4) Shift the weight to the right foot.
- 5) Step to the left with the left foot. Keep the foot pointing straight north.
- 6) Shift the weight to the left foot, and after it is planted, bring in the right foot until it is shoulder width and parallel.
- 7) Shift the weight to the right foot.

Repeat 5,6,and 7 two more times.

Torso and Arms:

1) As you shift back, the right hand opens up and makes a circle that comes down by the right leg and then up by the left arm which has extended until it is parallel to the floor. At this point the two arms are parallel to each other and the floor at shoulder height. The right palm faces the left arm.

2) The right hand continues the circle in front of the body, palm facing inward at shoulder level, as the body turns to the right, until the nose points to the right knee. The left arm meanwhile has started its circle by dropping down and moving to the right at the same time and under the right arm. Both hands end up on the right side of the body, right hand on top, as if holding a large ball.

3) As you shift to the left foot, the right hand circles down as the left hand circles up, more or less changing positions. The arms then cross the body with the left on top as if holding a ball. You end up with the left hand on top and both hands on the left side of the body, nose points to the left foot.

This arm movement is then repeated two more times coordinating with the foot steps to the left. The most important thing to remember is to step and root the foot before making the hand movement. When you step to the left, the left arm should start at the lower right side of the body. When you shift the weight to the right, the right arm should start at the lower left side of the body. Make sure you turn the waist to move the arms. The palms face inward as they cross the body on the top, and face the direction they are headed on the bottom.

Focus:

- 1) Energy on the outside of the right hand as it joins with incoming energy.
- 2) Energy rolls around to the right palm as if pulling to the right.
- 3) Energy mostly shifts to the back of the left hand as if striking.

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#38 Single Whip

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Basic:

This variation of Single Whip follows Clouds Hands. Each time we do it we vary the right foot step out. First, with the right foot, step narrow, then medium, finally wide

Following Clouds Hands, the opponent punches with his right hand. You neutralize to the left and slightly downward with your left hand, then step in with your right foot and strike with the right hand hook (whip). You are then attacked from the left by another person. You neutralize this incoming energy to the left with the back of your left hand, and follow up with a strike with the left palm.

Feet:

- 1) Following the last side step of Clouds Hands with the weight on the left foot, turn out the left foot to 45* left of north.
- 2) Step straight forward (90* north) with the right foot.
- 3) Shift the weight to the right foot.
- 4) Turning the body to the left, pull in the left foot, placing it next to the right foot with the toe facing west.
- 5) Step 90* west with the left foot. Be sure to step wide enough to the left side so that you do not end up with an intersecting stance.
- 6) Shift the weight to the left foot.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) Turn the left hand palm down as you turn the body out to the left, as if pulling something down and to the left.
- 2) No body or hand change for the step.
- 3) As the weight shifts to the right foot, the left hand continues moving slightly down to the left side. The right hand makes a hook and comes straight upward, ending up at shoulder level in front of the body.
- 4) As you turn toward the left, the left arm comes up to the left side of the body with the palm facing inward, ending up on the left side of the left shoulder.
- 5) As you step, the left hand turns to face palm forward.
- 6) As you shift, the palm moves forward as if to push or strike. The right hand has kept the hook. Body faces west.

Focus:

- 1) Energy in the left hand.
- 2) Pay attention to the step.
- 3) Energy into the right hook for strike upward. Keep contact with the left hand.
- 4) Pull left foot in toward right foot so it gets out of the way and can be used for kicking. Left hand neutralizes energy to the left so energy on thumb edge of forearm.
- 5) Energy rotates around to left palm.
- 6) Energy in left palm for strike.

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#39 High Pat On Horse

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Basic:

The opponent grabs your left hand with his left hand. You knock his hand off with your right hand. He then strikes you with his right hand. You neutralize this with your right hand to the right, and slap him with your left palm.

Feet:

- 1) Shift the weight to the right foot, pulling in the left foot till you are in Ding Bow on Left Toe
- 2) Step out the left foot to 45* le ft of west. Shift the weight on to it.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) As you shift back, turn the left palm up and pull it down by the left hip. At the same time, the right palm strikes forward ending up on the right center of the chest. This movement looks like Repulse Monkey.
- 2) As you step to the left,turn the body to the right, the right palm continues and makes a horizontal circle to the right, ending at lower chest level. The left palm circles up to slap to the left center at head level and ends up facing to the right.

Focus:

- 1) Most energy to the right palm for knocking off opponent's grip.
- 2) Attention first in right palm for neutralization to the right, then into left palm for slap.

Note on transition into Separation of the Right Foot Kick

High Pat on Horse leads into the foot kick section. In order to get into Right Foot Kick, you just circle up the right arm and slightly withdraw the left palm, (the hands are now in center position), and the rest follows the instructions given for that movement.

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#40 Separation of the Right Foot Kick

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Basic:

This movement uses a snap kick or toe kick to attack opponent's lower body - knee or groin. These low places are quite hard to guard and block. Most of the foot kicks of Tai Chi are toward the lower half of the body. The arms are almost always up and open to balance the energy in the kicks.

In the right foot kick, the right hand blocks an attack to your upper body while the right foot kicks upward with toe.

Feet:

1) Following High Pat, pull in the right foot next to the left foot doing Ding Bow On Toe. Body and toe face 45* right of west.

2) The right knee lifts and then the right toe is snapped out straight. Be sure to make the foot kick with the same slow speed as all the other movements. Bring the toe back in immediately after full extension.

Torso and Arms:

1) As the left foot steps out, the right hand comes up in front of the body as if making a circle from the right hip, up to the left side of the center of the body, ending up on the right side of the shoulder level. It is the body that is doing this so that means that the torso turns first to the left and then to the right.

2) As the foot is kicked out, the left hand is expanded out to the left side to balance the right hand, so the feeling is much like pulling open a very large rubber band. Your body is facing 45* right of west.

Focus:

1) Energy into center to get ready for anything that could happen next.

2) Energy first into right hand for neutralization, then into right toe for kick.

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#41 Separation of the Left Foot Kick

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Basic:

The basic snap or toe kick done with the left foot. The hands are held shoulder high to balance the energy in the foot. The body faces the opponent.

Feet:

- 1) After right foot kick, place the right foot down at a 45* angle right of west.
- 2) Shift weight to right foot.
- 3) Shifting the weight to the left foot and turning the waist to the left, turn in the right toe to west.
- 4) Shifting the weight back to the right foot, pull in the left toe to face 45* angle left of west.
- 5) Lift up the left leg and kick with left toe until the leg is straight, then bring back the lower leg until the left thigh is parallel to the ground.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) As you put the right foot down, the right palm presses down using the elbow as a pivot, ending up in front of the Dan Tien.
- 2) As the weight shifts, the right hand leads the opponent's energy to the right by turning palm upward and moving with the body to the right. The left palm presses forward at shoulder level. Nose points to right knee.
- 3) The body turns to the left and shifts to the left foot. The left palm continues to press, at shoulder level, following the body to the left. It ends up to the left and slightly behind the body. The right hand palm circles up to the right front of the body at face level, palm facing the left. Nose points to the left knee.
- 4) The right arm folds in, palm facing the chest, about a foot from the chest. The left arm circles down and up to end up just in front of the groin. The hands are now in center position.
- 5) The left hand comes up until the wrists are crossed in the front of the chest, then both palms turn facing out, and separate, as you kick, to end up just outside the shoulders. The palms face your opponent.

Focus:

- 1) Energy in the right palm as it presses opponent's arm down.
- 2) Energy moves to the back of the right hand as it leads opponent's energy to the right. The left palm then strikes forward.
- 3) Energy stays in the left palm as it closes opponent up to the left. The energy then shifts to the right palm as it slaps opponent's face.
- 4) Energy moves to your center.
- 5) Energy first in the left hand as it wards off incoming energy, then into the left toe for the kick.

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#42 Turn and Left Foot Kick With Sole

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Basic:

You are kicked from the rear. You turn, blocking with your left leg, then kick downward with left sole.

The sole kick, heel kick, or kick downward is a much stronger kick than the kick upward with toe. It is a slower kick in that you have to lift the leg up first in order to then kick down or to the center, yet it is much more powerful. In the longer forms, the sole kick is used most of the time.

Feet:

1) Keeping the weight on the right foot, pivot the body to the left. The right foot turns to end up facing 90° to the south. The left toe can touch down to face 90° east or the leg can stay raised during and after the turn. The left knee faces east.

2) The left foot kicks down or straight to the east. After the kick, the foot comes back toward the body. Don't put the foot down yet.

Torso and Arms:

1) The arms come into the center as the body pivots toward the left. The hands end up crossed in the center of the chest with the palms facing inward. The right toe faces south, the left leg faces east, and the body faces 45° between the two toes.

2) The two palms turn out and separate as you kick to the east. The left arm is lined up with the left leg, palm facing to the south. The right arm is by the right shoulder, palm facing south.

Focus:

1) Awareness is in the left knee as if to block a kick to the left.

2) Energy then into the left hand as if to block an incoming force, then into the left foot as it kicks down.

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#43 Left Brush Knee

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Basic: Follows Left Foot Kick With Sole

The opponent kicks your left side with his foot. You step in and grab or block the kick with your left hand, then follow with a push or strike with your right palm.

Note: This section (up to Single Whip) uses forward walking that is done with weighted foot turn outs.

Feet:

- 1) Step to 30* angle left of east with your left foot.
- 2) Shift the weight to the left foot and turn in the back toe at end of movement.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) As you place the left foot down, the left hand brushes down in front of the body, ending up by the left knee.
- 2) The left hand continues past the left knee to the front left side and turns palm downward. The right hand pushes forward and ends up at the right center of the chest with palm facing forward.

Focus:

- 1) Energy in the left hand to block to the left.
- 2) Energy to the right palm to push or strike.

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#44 Right Brush Knee

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Basic: Follows Left Brush Knee after foot kicks .

The opponent kicks you with his right foot. You step in, brush off the foot or grab it, then push or strike with the left palm.

Feet:

- 1) Turn out the left toe to 45* angle left of east while keeping the weight on the foot. Be sure to use the waist to make the movement happen. Be careful of your knee.
- 2) Step with your right foot to 30* angle to the right of east.
- 3) Shift the weight to the right foot. Don't forget to turn in the back toe.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) The left hand comes up the left side to end up in front of the left shoulder. The right palm turns to face the left as the body turns to the left.
- 2) As you step, the right arm drops down to block and brush the right knee. The left arm stays by the left shoulder. The weight stays on the left foot.
- 3) The body turns to the right as the weight shifts to the right foot. The right hand continues past the right knee and turns palm downward. The left palm pushes forward, ending up on the left center of the chest with the palm facing forward. Nose points to the right knee.

Focus:

- 1) Energy mostly in the center as the body comes to ready position.
- 2) Energy into the right palm to brush off kick.
- 3) Energy into the left palm to push or strike.

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#45 Step Up and Punch Downward

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Basic:

The opponent kicks your left knee. You step in, block the foot or leg to the left, and punch his groin.

Feet:

- 1) Turn out the right foot to 45* angle left of east with the weight on the foot.
- 2) Step with the left foot to 90* angle east.
- 3) Shift the weight to the left foot.

Torso and Arms:

1) As the body turns to the right, the right hand makes a fist and comes up to the right side of the waist. The left arm moves to the right with the body, staying in the left center of the chest level.

2) The left palm brushes off the left knee as you step. The body starts to lean forward as if reaching forward and downward. Nose points to center.

3) The right fist punches forward ending up in the right center of the body at groin level. The left palm, facing downward, comes to rest on the left side of the knee. The body, bending at the waist, is inclined 45* down with all the weight on the left leg. Don't round the back. Nose points to left knee.

Focus:

- 1) Energy in center as body turns out.
- 2) Awareness in the left palm for brush.
- 3) Energy into right fist for punch.

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#46 Turn and Chop Opponent With Fist

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Basic:

Opponent approaches from the rear. You turn and strike with elbow. Opponent pushes elbow down and you follow with a reverse backfist, then a left palm strike.

Feet:

- 1) Shift weight to right foot. As you do that, turn in the left toe to face south.
- 2) Shift to left and open right hip to face west, doing Ding Bow on Toe.
- 3) Step right foot to face 30* angle right of west.
- 5) Shift to right foot.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) As you shift weight to rear, turn body to the right and strike back and up with right elbow. Left palm supports right fist.
- 2) As you turn and open, right delivers backfist. Left hand stays up to guard.
- 3) As you step with the right foot, the right arm continues circling downward.
- 4) As you shift, the right arm continues to arc and ends up by right hip, still in fist. The left palm strikes forward.

Focus:

- 1) Energy to right elbow.
- 2) Energy to right backfist.
- 3) Concentrate on right back fist.
- 4) Energy into left palm for strike.

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#47 Step Up, Deflect Downward, Punch

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Basic: Follows Turn and Chop Opponent

Opponent grabs your left hand with his left hand. You knock it off to the left with your right forearm. He strikes your center with his right fist. You deflect down and to the right with the right backfist and left palm edge, step in and strike with your right fist.

Feet:

- 1) Shift weight to left foot.
- 2) Replace right foot to face north, putting weight directly on it.
- 3) Step forward left foot to face west.
- 4) Shift weight to left foot.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) As you shift back, turn waist to face left. The right arm circles up and down to the left hip. Left palm turns up and comes down to left hip.
- 2) As you replace, right circles down to right hip, fingers of fist face up. Left palm circles up to center of chest.
- 3) As you step, left arm parries to left side of chest.
- 4) As you shift, right punches forward to center, left pulls in to guard elbow.

Focus:

- 1) Attention to right forearm to knock down.
- 2) Energy to back of right forearm to deflect down.
- 3) Energy to left forearm to parry to the left.
- 4) Energy to right fist for punch.

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#48 Right Foot Kick With Sole

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Basic:

The opponent grabs your right hand. You withdraw it to the right, at the same time you strike his upper body with your left hand. Follow this with a kick to his center.

Feet:

- 1) Shift the weight to the right foot.
- 2) Shifting back to the left foot, turn in the right toe and then , using weighted foot, turn out the left foot to 45* left of west.
- 3) Kick downward with right sole or heel to the west.

Torso and Arms:

1) Hands separate outward and slightly upward, ending by the sides of the shoulders, as the weight shifts back and the body turns to the right until the nose points to the right knee.

2) The body starts back to the left and the hands start to circle down in front of the body with the palms facing inward. By the time the weight is on the left foot, the body has completed its turn to face west, and the hands have completed a circle to end up in the center of the chest with the arms crossed at the wrist, the right hand in front of the left.

4) As the right leg is raised, the palms turn to face outward. Then the arms separate and the foot kicks straight ahead using the sole of the foot.

Focus:

- 1) Concentrate on the right hand to withdraw, the the left palm edge to strike.
- 2) Energy to center.
- 4) Energy in two arms to separate opponent's arms, then into right foot for kick.

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#49 Hit a Tiger At Left

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Basic:

Opponent strikes with his right hand. You neutralize to the right by circling around his arm, then as he withdraws, circle your left hand behind his head to seal his retreat and deliver a punch to his center with your right fist.

Feet:

- 1) Step down your right foot to 30* angle right of west.
- 2) Shift your weight to the right foot.
- 3) Turn out the right foot to 45* angle right of west.
- 4) Step ahead with the left foot to 30* angle left of west.
- 5) Shift the weight to the left foot.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) As you put the right foot down, the right arm start a circle by coming down toward the center in a clockwise direction. Body faces west.
- 2) As you shift to the right foot, the right arm continues the circle ending up palm down on the right side of the shoulder. Left arm drops to the lower belly level. Center position. Nose points to right knee.
- 3) No body or hand changes as you turn out.
- 4) As you step with the left foot, the left hand makes a fist and circles up to the left to end up by the left side of your head. Fist faces inward.
- 5) As you shift and turn to the left, the right forms a fist and moves with the body to the left and ends up in the center of the body, knuckles facing to the left.

Focus:

- 1) Energy into right arm to join and neutralize.
- 2) Energy into right palm, pressing downward.
- 3) Concentrate on your right palm for pull.
- 4) Energy in left arm and fist.
- 5) Energy into right fist for strike. Be sure to feel the strong relationship between the two fists.

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#50 Hit a Tiger At Right

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Basic:

The opponent strikes your center with his right hand. You block it to the right with the left palm, and follow up with a strike to his temple with your right fist.

Feet:

- 1) Turn out left foot with weight still on it.
- 2) Step forward with right foot to 45* right of west.
- 3) Shift weight to right foot.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) As you turn out foot, hands drop into center position.
- 2) As you step, the left hand moves with the body (as the body moves right) across the lower chest until it reaches just right of center. Right hand stays low.
- 3) The left hand makes a fist in front of center as the right hand circles up (making a fist) to end up in front of right temple area with back of fist facing inward.

Focus:

- 1) Energy in center
- 2) Energy in left palm
- 3) Energy into right fist

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#51 Right Foot Kick with Sole

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Basic:

The opponent kicks toward your center. You slap down the kick with your right hand, then follow up with a kick to his center.

Feet:

- 1) Shift straight back and pull in the right foot to Ding Bow on Toe. Body faces 45* right of west.
- 2) Kick with the right foot heel or sole. Body still faces 45* right of west.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) As you withdraw on to the left foot, the right hand slaps downward, ending up in front of your groin. The left hand comes up to the left side of the upper chest. Hands are in center position.
- 2) Hands separate to the sides of the shoulders as you kick.

Focus:

- 1) Focus on right hand to slap foot.
- 2) Focus first on arms to separate, then right foot to kick.

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#52 Strike Opponent's Ears With Both Fists

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Basic:

Opponent pushes your center with both hands. You neutralize downward with both arms, then strike his ears with both your fists.

Feet:

- 1) Following the kick, step down the right foot to 30* left of north.
- 2) Shift the weight forward.

Torso and Arms:

1) As you turn right and put the foot down, the two arms drop down to the waist level as if blocking something down.

2) As you shift forward, the hands make fists and strike upward to end up facing inward as if striking opponent's ears.

Focus:

- 1) Energy in both forearms.
- 2) Energy in both fists.

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#53 Left Foot Kick With Sole

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Basic:

Opponent strikes your left side. You block the attack with your left hand and kick to his center with your left foot.

Feet:

- 1) Shift the weight to the left foot.
- 2) Shift back to right foot.
- 3) Kick with left foot 90* west.

Torso and Arms:

1) As you shift the weight to the left foot, turn the waist to the left till the nose points to the left knee. As you do this, the arms circle down and cross in front of the center. The hands open as you do this.

- 2) As you move forward the arms, still crossed, raise to chest level.
- 3) The arms separate as you kick.

Focus:

- 1) Focus on left hand to block.
- 2) Energy in center.
- 3) Energy in left foot for kick.

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#54 Turn Around And Right Foot Kick With Sole

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Basic:

The opponent blocks your previous kick to the right. You spin around to the right and kick him with your right foot.

Feet:

- 1) Keeping your left leg up, spin around to the right on your right foot and place down your left foot 90* south. Put your weight on it.
- 2) Kick 90* west with your right heel or sole.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) The arms cross at the center of the chest, right in front of left, as you turn to the right. Keep your weight down and back straight as you turn. Body ends up facing 45* left of west.
- 2) Arms separate as you kick.

Focus:

- 1) Focus on left foot to place it in the correct spot.
- 2) Energy in right hand to open , then on right foot to kick.

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#55 Step Up, Parry, And Punch

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Basic: Following Right Foot Kick

The opponent strikes toward your center with his right fist. You neutralize the arm to the right with your right fist on his wrist and your left palm on his elbow, then parry his elbow down with your left palm and strike his center with your right fist.

Feet:

- 1) Step down 90* north with the right foot and and step forward to 90* west with the left foot. Nose points to the right.
- 2) Shift the weight to the left foot. Nose points straight ahead.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) As you step down with the right foot, the left palm sweeps to the right at waist level while the right hand makes a fist and circles to end up at waist level on the right.
- 2) As you shift forward, the left hand parries a bit downward, then pulls inward as the right fist punches to the center. The left palm faces the right elbow.

Focus:

- 1) Energy into left palm and right fist for block.
- 2) Focus on left palm for parry then right fist for punch.

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#56 Withdraw and Push

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Basic:

The opponent grabs your right fist with his left hand. You shift back and apply an elbow lock with your right wrist on his wrist and your left forearm on his elbow. You then close him up and push him away.

Feet:

- 1) Shift the weight back into right foot sit stance.
- 2) Shift forward into left foot bow stance.

Torso and Arms:

1) As you shift back, the body turns slightly to the right and then to the left. The left hand brushes along the bottom of the right forearm, palm inward, until it clears the left hand. It then turns to face palm outward. The right hand opens up and comes into the center right, ready for a push.

- 2) The body moves straight ahead as you push with both hands.

Focus:

- 1) Concentrate on the right wrist and the left forearm for the arm lock.
- 2) Focus on both palms for the push. Don't forget that the push really happens with the legs.

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#57 Cross Hands (The end of the second section).

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Basic:

This movement is mostly used as a transition, to come back to the front and stand up. As an application, the feeling is of lifting the opponent off balance by grabbing him around the center and lifting.

Feet:

- 1) Shift the weight straight back.
- 2) Turn in the left toe to face north.
- 3) Shift the weight to the left foot and turn the right toe to face north, shoulder width and parallel to the left foot.
- 4) Center weight (keep just a bit more weight on right foot) and stand up.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) As you shift back the arms lengthen, palms facing down.
- 2) Arms come with the body, raising to head level, as it turns to face north.
- 3) As you shift to the left foot, the arms circle down and cross in front of the groin.
- 4) As you stand, arms rise, staying crossed with right hand in front of left, until they are in the center of the chest, palms facing inward. Keep them about a foot away from the body.

Focus:

- 1) Energy to the center.
- 2) Mostly in the center, but a bit in the right forearm for blocking to the right side.
- 3) Still mostly in the center, also some in inside of forearms for possible guard of groin.
- 4) Focus still mostly in center, possible focus in arms for lifting.

Note: Since Cross Hands is used as a transition between sections, it lends itself to renewing the breathing and getting it coordinated with the movements. Here is how.

- 1) As you shift back, exhale.
- 2) As you turn, inhale.
- 3) As you shift to the left, exhale.
- 4) As you rise, inhale.

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#58 Carry Tiger To The Mountain

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Basic:

The opponent strikes your center with his right hand. You lead it to the right with your right hand and push him with your left.

Feet:

- 1) Weight stays on right foot as you sink. At the same time turn in the left foot to 45* right of north.
- 2) Step out the right foot to 30* right of east.
- 3) Shift onto the right foot.

Torso and Arms:

1) As you drop the weight, the arms open downward in front of the waist, the right palm as if it was catching incoming fist. Body starts turning to the right.

2) As you step, the left palm circles up to the left side of the shoulder. Right leads to the right as in brush knee.

3) The rest looks like brush knee with the right palm facing downward on the right side of the right knee, and the left palm in the center of the chest, palm outward. Nose points to right knee.

Focus:

- 1) Energy into right palm for neutralizing.
- 2) Energy still in right palm to lead to the right.
- 3) Energy into left palm for strike or push.

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#59 Grasp Bird's Tail

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Basic:

This is a repeat of movement #21.

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#60 Horizontal Single Whip

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Basic:

Opponent attacks your left side with his left hand. Use your hook hand to neutralize to the right, then slap him with your left hand. This is basically a repeat of Single Whip before Clouds Hands. The only difference is that the left hand comes down to waist level as the right hook neutralizes, and slaps from that level upwards.

Feet:

- 1) Shift the weight straight back.
- 2) Turning left with the weight still on the left foot, turn in the right toe to 45* right of north.
- 3) Shift to right foot. Left pulls into Ding Bow on Toe and opens to the left.
- 4) Step out with the left foot to 45* left of north.
- 5) Shift to left foot.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) Arms lengthen as you shift back.
- 2) Arms follow turn to left. Right hand makes hook at end.
- 3) Hook leads to the right, center of chest level. Left hand comes down to groin level as you shift the weight to the right foot.
- 4) No change as you step.
- 5) Left hand slaps upward to end up in the usual position, palm faces to the right.

Focus:

- 1) Focus on center.
- 2) Energy into right hook to join with opponent.
- 3) Energy still in right for neutralization to the right.
- 4) Most attention still in right hook.
- 5) Energy moves into the back of the left hand for slap.

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#61 Partition of the Wild Horse's Mane - Right

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Basic:

This movement is repeated three times. It is very similar to Slanting Flying in application. The energy is called Split, meaning that the two hands move in opposite directions with the same speed and force, like pulling a rubber band apart. In this case, one hand neutralizes the incoming energy to the side while the other forearm attacks under the arm of the opponent.

Feet:

- 1) Shift the weight back to the right foot, turning the waist to the right, and turn in the left foot to 30* right of north.
- 2) Shift to the left foot and open the right to Ding Bow Toe facing east.
- 3) Step out the right foot to 30* right of east.
- 4) Shift to right foot.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) As you shift back, the right arm moves into a ward off position in front of the chest and the left arm moves down in front of the groin. The body is turning to the right.
- 2) As you shift to the left, the arms complete a wave hands type movement with the right ending up under the left in center position. The side of the body faces east.
- 3) There is is change as you step out.
- 4) As you shift the weight, the hands separate diagonally with the right palm ending up in front of the right shoulder, palm upward, and the left palm by the left hip, palm downward.

Focus:

- 1) Focus on right forearm for possible ward off.
- 2) Focus on center.
- 3) Focus on center.
- 4) Energy into left hand to neutralize, then right forearm for strike.

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#62 Partition of the Wild Horse's Mane - Left

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Note:

The transitions between Partition Right, Left, and Right as well as the Ward Off and Grasp Bird's Tail that follow all use the Replace Step. This will be explained in the Feet section that follows.

Basic:

The opponent attacks your center with his right hand. You neutralize it in a circular fashion with the right forearm to your right side, then follow with a left forearm attack under his arm.

Feet:

The Replace Step is very similar to the Retreat Step. The weight is shifted back first then the front foot is picked up and replaced at the new angle with the weight immediately placed upon it. The rear foot is stepped forward at almost the same time, so the whole process feels like a hop. It is a very quick way to change the forward foot and is very effective for bringing up the energy from the floor by a quick compression with this hop like step.

- 1) Shift weight back to left foot.
- 2) Lift up right foot and replace it out to face south. Place the weight immediately upon it. The left foot rolls up on the toe.
- 3) Step forward with the left foot to 30* left of east.
- 4) Shift the weight forward.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) As you shift back, the right palm turns inward and drops to the front of the center as the body turns to the left.
- 2) As you replace the right foot, the right forearm continues to circle clockwise in front of the body ending up in front of the right shoulder. the left arm moves to cover the groin area. You are now in center position. the body has turned to the right with the nose pointing to the right side.
- 3) Basically no change as you step forward.
- 4) The body turns to the left as you shift forward, ending with the nose to point to the left foot. The arms separate in a diagonal split movement with the left palm facing upward and the right palm facing downward.

Focus:

- 1) Energy into the right forearm to neutralize to the left.
- 2) Energy stays in forearm to continue neutralizing around to the right side, then into right palm to control.
- 3) Stays in right palm.
- 4) Energy moves mostly into left forearm for strike.

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#63 Partition of the Wild Horse's Mane - Right

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Basic:

The opponent attacks your center with his left hand. You neutralize with your left forearm around to your left side, then attack back with the right forearm under his arm.

Feet:

- 1) Shift weight back to right foot.
- 2) Replace left foot to face north, rolling up onto right toe.
- 3) Step forward right foot to 30* right of east.
- 4) Shift forward.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) As you shift back and turn to the right, the left palm turns inward and circles down in front of the groin.
- 2) As you replace, the left continues to circle counterclockwise, ending up by the left shoulder. The right arm moves to cover the groin. Body faces to the left.
- 3) No change as you step.
- 4) The arms split diagonally as you shift to the right foot.

Focus:

- 1) Energy in left forearm for neutralization to the right.
- 2) Energy stays in left forearm to continue circle to the left.
- 3) Focus on left palm for control.
- 4) Energy mostly in right forearm for strike.

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#64 Ward Off Left

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Basic:

Opponent attacks your center with his right hand. You neutralize around to your right side with your right arm (closing him up) and bump him away using ward off energy.

Feet:

This movement and the Right Push Upward that follow use the replacing step or hip-hop step.

- 1) Shift the weight back to the left foot.
- 2) Replace the right foot to face south and at the same time step forward the left foot to 30* left of east.
- 3) Shift the weight forward.

Torso and Arms:

1) As you shift back, the right arm comes down to the center of the body with the back of the forearm facing to the left. The body turns to the left. the left arm relaxes.

2) As you replace the step, the body turns to the right. The right arm circles around clockwise ending by the right shoulder. The left arm guards the lower center. You are now in center position.

3) As you shift forward, do ward off with the back of the left arm.

Focus:

- 1) Energy into the back of the right forearm to neutralize to the left.
- 2) Energy stays in the right arm and moves into the right palm to control.
- 3) Energy into left forearm for ward off.

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#65 Grasp Bird's Tail

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Basic:

This is a repeat of movement #21, except that replace step is used in stepping forward.

The opponent attacks your center with his left hand. You neutralize it around and to the left, then step in and apply ward off upward energy to bounce him away. You then repeat Roll Back, Press Forward, Push.

Feet:

- 1) Shift the weight back.
- 2) Replace the left foot to face north. The right foot is placed down facing 30*right of east.
- 3) Shift the weight forward.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) As you shift back, the body turns to the right. At the same time the left arm comes down in front of the body with the back of the forearm facing right. The right arm relaxes.
- 2) As you replace the left foot, the left arm makes a counterclockwise circle in front and ends up in front of the left shoulder. The right arms covers the lower center. Your arms are in center position.
- 3) As you shift forward, the arms do right Push Upward.

Focus:

- 1) Energy in the back of the left forearm to neutralize to the right.
- 2) Energy stays in left forearm to neutralize to the left and then into left palm to control.
- 3) Energy into right forearm for ward off.

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#66 Single Whip

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Basic:

The opponent strikes at you with his right fist. Using your right hook hand, you neutralize the strike to your right side at about chest level. You then immediately release and strike him with the back of the right wrist. This is followed with an uppercut to a second opponent with the back of the left hand, followed with a palm strike.

Feet:

1) The same foot movements as the other Single Whips, except the one that follows Clouds Hands.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) Body moves straight back, the arms lengthen.
- 2) As you turn to the left, the hands follow at chest level.
- 3) As you shift the weight to the right foot, the right hand makes a hook and pulls the opponent's energy to the right side of the chest. It ends up just in front of the right arm pit. The left arm has dropped down in front of the groin. Nose points to the right knee.
- 4) As you turn the body to the left, the right arm lengthens, and ends up pointing straight to the north. The left arm stays down in front of the groin. Nose points to the right knee.
- 5) As you step with the left foot to the west, the hands stay basically in the same place.
- 6) As you shift to the left foot, the right hook stays where it is. The left hand sweeps up to the left shoulder with the palm facing down. The left wrist then straightens which turns the palm outward. Nose points to the left knee.

Focus:

- 1) Energy moves to the center.
- 2) Awareness moves to the right wrist as it contacts the opponent's hand.
- 3) Energy stays in the right hand as it makes a hook and neutralizes to the right.
- 4) Energy moves to the right wrist for the strike forward.
- 5) Awareness mostly to the center as you glance to the left.
- 6) Energy to the back of the back of the left hand for slap or block, then into the left palm for strike.

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#67 Fair Lady Works At Shuttles - Left

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Basic: Following Single Whip

This is a four part movement in which the body ends up facing four different directions. The application of all the movements is the same — blocking or opening with one arm and then attacking with the other palm.

In this opening movement the opponent tries to attack you from the rear. You turn and neutralize his energy to the right, open him up with your left arm, and finally attack him with your right palm.

You want to remember to step and block at the same time, followed by the strike.

Feet:

- 1) Shift the weight straight back to the right foot.
- 2) Turn the waist to the right to face north, turning in the left toe to face north.
- 3) Continue to turn to the right as you shift the weight to the left foot. Release the right foot so it can be ready to kick if need be. You now face 45* left of east in Ding Bow on right toe.
- 4) Continue to turn right, lift the right foot and replace it down at a 45* angle right of east. The weight is immediately placed on the right foot. The left heel is lifted, allowing the weight to shift to the right foot.
- 5) Step with the left foot to 30* left of east.
- 6) Shift the weight to the left foot.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) As the weight shifts straight back, the left arm lengthens. The right elbow bends, the hand opens and turns palm to face the chest. Looks like Ward Off.
- 2) As you turn, the left arm drops down until the hand is in front of the groin. The right arm is in front of the center of the chest, palm facing inward like ward off.
- 3) Continuing the turn, the hands stay in the same relationship.
- 4) The right palm turns palm down as both arms continue to move to the right with the body.
- 5) As you step with the left foot, the left arm lifts upward with the palm facing down until the left palm is slightly overhead. The right palm is in ready position.
- 6) As you shift, the left palm turns to face outward, ending up just in front of the left temple. The right pushes forward to end up on the right center of the chest.

Focus:

- 1) Energy moves to the right elbow to protect the right side from attack.
- 2) Energy to the right forearm to ward off incoming energy.
- 3) Awareness stays in right forearm to neutralize energy to the right.
- 4) Energy moves into right palm to pull to right.
- 5) Energy into left forearm in order to lift of opponent's arm to expose his middle.
- 6) Most of the energy moves into the right palm for push or strike. Some energy stays in left palm for control.

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#68 Fair Lady Works At Shuttles - Right

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Basic:

You are being attacked from the rear. You turn to your right, block with your right arm, then attack your opponent with your left palm strike.

Feet:

- 1) Shift the weight straight back to right foot sit stance.
- 2) Turning the waist to the right, turn in the left foot to south.
- 3) Shift the weight to the left foot.
- 4) Turning to the right, open the right toe to face west.
- 5) Step the right foot to 30* right of west.
- 6) Shift the weight to the right foot.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) The right arm lengthens as you shift the weight straight back.
- 2) The arms execute a roll back movement as you turn toward the right. The right hand ends up at waist level with the palm up. The left elbow is bent so that the palm is at shoulder level with the palm facing the right side. Nose points to right knee.
- 3) The arms assume center position with the left hand on top. Nose points to left knee.
- 4) Arms stay in center position as the body opens to the right. Nose points to belly button.
- 5) The right arm raises over head high with the palm facing inward as you step. Nose still points to the belly button.
- 6) The right palm turns over to face outward as the left palm pushes forward to end up on the left center side of the chest. Nose points to the right knee.

Focus:

- 1) Energy into the right finger tips.
- 2) Energy split between the right palm and the left forearm for roll back.
- 3) Energy glances to the right.
- 4) Energy mostly in center as you glance right. Some in right toe for possible kick or block.
- 5) Energy in the right forearm for block.
- 6) Energy moves to right palm for grab and then left palm for strike or push.

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#69 Fair Lady works At Shuttles - Left

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Basic:

The opponent attacks you with his right hand. You neutralize to the right with your right hand, open his body up by lifting his right arm up with your left arm, then step behind him and push him with your right palm.

Feet:

- 1) Shift the weight straight back.
- 2) Turn out the right toe to 45* right of west.
- 3) Shift the weight to the right foot.
- 4) Step with the left foot to 30* left of west.
- 5) Shift the weight to the left foot.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) As you shift straight back, the arms drop down to center position.
- 2) The right hand neutralizes the incoming energy by doing Chen Ssu Jing.
- 3) Pull the opponent's hand to the right as you shift the weight. Hands still basically in center position.
- 4) As you step, the left arm rises up, as if lifting. It ends up at forehead level with the palm facing inward.
- 5) The left palm turns outward and the right palm pushes forward as you shift the weight to the left foot.

Focus:

- 1) Awareness moves to the center.
- 2) Energy into the right hand for neutralization.
- 3) Energy stays in the right hand to pull opponent off balance.
- 4) Energy moves to left forearm to lift opponent's arm to expose his center.
- 5) Energy moves to the right palm for push or strike. Some energy in the left palm to control opponent's arm.

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#70 Fair Lady Works At Shuttles - Right

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Basic:

Opponent attacks from the rear. You spin around to your right, block with your right arm, then push or strike with your left palm.

Feet:

- 1) Shift the weight straight back.
- 2) Turning the waist to the right, turn in the left toe to face north.
- 3) Shift the weight to the left foot.
- 4) Open the body to the right so that the right toe faces east and rests just to the right of the left foot.
- 5) Step with the right foot to 30* right of east.
- 6) Shift the weight to the right foot.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) Right arm lengthens as you shift the weight back.
- 2) As you turn to the right, the arms do a roll back movement with the right hand coming down to the waist and the left hand on top. Nose points to the left knee.
- 3) Body is continuing the turn to the right. Arms stay in the same relative position. Nose points to right knee.
- 4) As the right toe opens to face east, the body opens until nose points to belly button or 45* left of east. Arms still in center position.
- 5) Body stays still as the right foot steps. At the same time, the right arm lifts to end up at forehead level with the palm facing inward. The left hand remains in front of the left shoulder. Nose points east.
- 6) As the body shifts and turns to the right, the left palm strikes out forward to end up at the left center of the chest. The right palm turns to face outward. Nose points to the right knee.

Focus:

- 1) Energy in the right palm and left forearm for roll back.
- 2) Energy stays for completion of roll back
- 3) Energy in center for glancing to the right.
- 4) Awareness stays in center.
- 5) Energy moves to right forearm for block.
- 6) Energy moves to left palm for push or strike. Some in right palm for control.

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#71 Ward Off Left

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Basic:

The opponent strikes your center with his right hand. You neutralize downward and to the right with the left arm, then bounce him away with your left forearm.

Feet:

- 1) Weighted foot turn out right foot to 45* right of east.
- 2) Step forward 30* left of east with the left foot.
- 3) Shift forward.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) As you turn the body to the right, the right toe turns out. The left forearm presses down and to the right side of the body ending at waist level. The right arm drops down in front of the right shoulder. You are in center position.
- 2) Not much change as you step forward.
- 3) The left forearm does ward off as you shift and turn to face the toe direction.

Focus:

- 1) Energy into left forearm for pressing down.
- 2) Energy stays in left forearm for control.
- 3) Energy stays in left forearm for ward off.

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#72 Grasp The Bird's Tail

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Basic:

Same as movement #21.

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#73 Single Whip

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Basic:

Similar to Single Whip #66, except that after first neutralizing with the right hook hand to the right, you deflect a second attack to the left, this time with your left hand, and follow up with an attack with your right hand hook to the opponent's upper body.

Feet:

The same as Single Whip #66.

Torso and Arms:

The same as Single Whip #66, except that as you step to the left with the left foot, the left arm circles up in front of the body and neutralizes the incoming energy with the back of the left hand. As the body turns to the left, the left hand continues and ends up by the left shoulder with the palm turning to face outward. The right hook hand moves to the left also to end up facing just a bit to the left of north.

Focus:

After neutralizing incoming force with the right hand hook to the right, you then focus on the left hand as it leads the second strike to your left side. The awareness then moves to the right hand hook for its attack.

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#74 Clouds Hands

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Basic:

This is basically the same movement as #37, except that instead of stepping shoulder width, we step hip width sideways. Feet are still parallel.

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#75 Single Whip

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Basic:

The opponent attacks our center with his right hand. We neutralize downward with our left hand, and at the same time deliver an upward strike with the back of the hook hand to the opponent's chin. He attempts to neutralize this with his left hand. This we intercept with our left hand and lead to the left side and attack his upper body with the right hand hook.

Feet:

The same as movement #38 except that our intention is to step in between our opponent's feet.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) As we turn left, the left hand presses straight downward and the right hand hook comes straight upward ending up in front of the right shoulder.
- 2) The left hand comes up to center, palm facing inward.
- 3) As you lead the energy to the left with the left hand, the right hand hook strikes straight out to the north.

Focus:

- 1) Energy in left palm to neutralize downward, and into right hook hand to strike upward.
- 2) Attention on left hand to intercept opponent's hand.
- 3) Focus on left hand to lead to the left then on right hand hook for strike.

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#76 Snake Creeps Down

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Basic:

Opponent strikes with right hand. You retreat backward and downward, neutralizing with the back of the left hand. You follow up with a finger thrust to the opponent's crotch with the left hand.

Feet:

- 1) Turn out the right foot to north, or even more.
- 2) Shift the weight to the right foot and squat down.
- 3) Shift the weight to the left foot and turn in the right foot to 45* right of west.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) As you turn out the right foot, the left hand turns palm inward.
- 2) The left hand makes a spiral movement back and down as the weight shifts back. The body opens to the right as you shift back and squat down as far as is comfortable, keeping the back straight. The left hand ends up at knee level.
- 3) As the body turns back to face west, the left hand continues the spiral movement until the hand is chest level with the palm facing to the left.

The right hand has kept the hook the entire time.

Focus:

- 1) Energy into the back of the left hand to lead opponents arm in, down, and to the right.
- 2) Energy stays in the left hand as it circles around to have fingers face opponent's crotch.
- 3) Energy remains in left finger tips.

Some energy remains in the right hook to balance the forward thrust of energy from the left hand.

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#77 Golden Pheasant Stands On One Leg - Right

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Basic:

Opponent strikes your center. You lead the attack down to the left with your left palm, then attack back using the right fingers thrusting upward. The right leg is also used to knee or kick.

Feet:

- 1) Following Snake Creeps Down, turn out the left foot to 45* left of west. The weight stays on the left foot during the turn out.
- 2) Raise the right knee until the upper leg is parallel to the ground.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) The left hand turns palm down. The right hook opens, turns palm to face the body, and comes down by the right side of the waist.
- 2) The left hand moves down and to the left side of the body, ending up by the knee. At the same time the right fingers thrust forward, ending up at shoulder level on the right center of the body with fingers facing the left side. It is very important that both hands move at the same time in coordination with the right knee lift.

Focus:

- 1) Most of the energy is in the left palm as it wraps around opponent's hand or wrist.
- 2) The energy starts out in the left palm, then shifts to the right fingers and the right knee.

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#78 Golden Pheasant Stands On One Leg - Left

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Basic:

The opponent strikes your center. You lead his energy down and to the right with your right hand, the attack him back with a thrust of your left fingers and a left knee kick.

Feet:

- 1) Step back with your right foot to a 45* angle right of west.
- 2) Shift weight to the right foot and turn the left toe to face west.
- 3) Lift the left knee until the upper leg is parallel to the ground.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) The right palm turns down. The left palm relaxes.
- 2) The right palm starts the down movement to the right. The left hand raises to the waist level, palm facing the body.
- 3) The right palm continues pressing downward to the right and ends up by the right knee. The left fingers thrust forward and end up at shoulder level on the left center of the body. At the same time the hands are separating, the left knee rises.

Focus:

- 1) Energy in the right palm as it joins with opponent's energy.
- 2) Energy stays in right palm.
- 3) Energy stays in right palm until hand passes the body to the right, then the energy moves into the left fingers and the left knee.

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#79 Step Back And Repulse Monkey - Right

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Basic:

The opponent grabs your left hand. You step back and knock his hand off with your right hand. This movement is the same as #23.

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#80 Step Back and Repulse Monkey - Left

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Basic:

The opponent kicks to your right side. You block by drawing your right knee and right elbow together. You then grab his leg with your right hand, step back with your right foot, pulling him off balance and possibly striking him with your left palm.

The only difference between this movement and #24 is that in this move you bring your knee up to touch your elbow, and after stepping back with the right foot, the right hand comes down lower as if to grab the opponent's leg.

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#81 Step Back and Repulse Monkey - Right

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Basic:

This movement is the reverse of the previous movement.

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#82 Slanting Flying

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Basic:

The opponent strikes your right side with his right hand. You turn to the right, step behind him with your right leg and deflect downward with your left hand which opens up his upper body to an attack with your right arm and hand.

Feet:

This is the same as movement #26.

Torso and Arms:

This is basically the same as #26 except that the left hand presses down slightly first when making the step with the right foot, and the left arm extends forward instead of moving up diagonally.

Focus:

The focus is first in the left hand for pressing downward and then into the right arm for striking forward.

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#83 Raise Hands

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Basic:

The opponent attacks your center with his right hand. You neutralize to the right with your left hand and slap his face with your right hand.

Feet:

This is the same as #27.

Torso and Arms:

This is the same as #27 except that the movement with the right hand is higher, toward the face, not directed toward the elbow as in #27.

Focus:

Energy first in the left palm for neutralization, then into the right palm for slap.

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#84 Stork Spreads Its Wings

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Basic:

The opponent attacks your center with his left hand. You neutralize to the left with your two arms, take hold of his elbow with your left hand, step behind him with the right foot, and strike him with your right elbow. This is followed with a back hand strike with the right hand.

Feet:

This is the same as #28.

Torso and Arms:

This is the same as #28 except that following the downward neutralization with the two arms to the left, the left hand circles up to the center as if attaching to an elbow. Then after stepping, the right hand makes a fist which is held close to the body on the right side and then strikes out as you shift the weight on to the right foot. The rest is the same as #28.

Focus:

First on the two arms for neutralization, then on the left palm for attaching to the elbow of the opponent, followed by energy in the right elbow for a strike, and finally into the back of the right hand for slap.

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#85 Left Brush Knee

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Basic:

The opponent pushes with both his hands towards our center. The right arm circles counterclockwise which neutralizes both his arms to the right. We then step to the left continuing the circle with our arms which spins him off balance to the left.

All the body movements are the same as #29. The only difference is in the focus in that the energy stays in the right arm the entire time.

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#86 Needle At Sea Bottom

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Basic:

The opponent grabs our right hand with either hand. We draw back and detach his grip with our left arm. We then pull him down with the left arm and attack him with our right hand.

Feet:

The same as #30.

Torso and Arms:

As we shift the weight back, the left arm comes up diagonally across the body to end up by the right shoulder. The right arm withdraws to the right side of the waist. As the body bends, the left arm pulls down to the left side of the left leg and the right fingers poke down to the center.

Focus:

Energy fist into the left forearm , then into the left palm for pull down and finally into the right fingers for poke.

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#87 Fan Through The Back

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Basic:

This is a repeat of movement #31.

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#88 Turn And White Snake Puts Out Tongue

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Basic:

You are being attacked from the rear. Turn around, neutralize with the back of the right hand, then attack with your left palm.

Feet:

- 1) Shift weight straight back to right foot sit stance.
- 2) Turning to the right, turn in left foot to 90* north.
- 3) Shift weight to left foot and pull the right foot in close to the body.
- 4) Open stance to the right and step with right foot 30* right of east.
- 5) Shift to right foot. You should have to turn in the back toe.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) Left hand stays overhead as you shift the weight back while the right hand starts to drop down to the center.
- 2) As you turn, the hands continue until the left hand is in front of the left shoulder and the right hand is in front of the crotch. Hands are in center position.
- 3) The hands don't make any change as the body continues to open to the right.
- 4) As you open and step with the right foot, the right hand circles down to the right side of the waist ending with the palm upward.
- 5) As you shift the weight to the right foot, the left palm strikes forward ending up in the left center of the chest.

Focus:

- 1) Your awareness starts to look behind you to the right.
- 2) Most of your energy is engaged in looking behind you and keeping the body straight as you turn. Some energy in left palm to catch incoming energy.
- 3) Energy still in left palm to control opponent's hand. Get your foot out of the way by withdrawing it.
- 4) The energy is in the back of the right palm for block.
- 5) Energy in the left palm for strike.

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#89 Step Up, Deflect Downward, Parry, and Punch

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Basic:

This is a repeat of movement #33.

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#90 Ward Off Left

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Basic:

This is a repeat of movement #34.

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91 Grasp Bird's Tail

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Basic:

This is a repeat of movement #35.

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#92 Single Whip

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Basic:

The opponent strikes with his left hand toward your center. You neutralize it to your right with your right hook hand. He strikes with his right hand to your face. You neutralize it to the left with your left hand and at the same time strike his head with the right hand hook.

Feet:

Same as all the other Single Whips.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) Shift back and arms relax and straighten.
- 2) Arms follow as you turn left, and as you get to the front, the right hand forms hook.
- 3) As you shift to the right foot, the right hand hook pulls in toward the right arm pit.

The left hand stays up by the left side of the chest.

4) As you step out toward the left with the left foot, the left hand comes over and folds downward as if hooking around something on the left side of your shoulder.

5) As you shift the weight to the left foot, the left hand leads to the left, ending up in line with the left knee with the palm facing outward. At the same time the right hook hand strikes forward, and ends up facing north.

Focus:

- 1) Focus on center.
- 2) Energy into right hand hook to attach to opponent's wrist.
- 3) Energy stays in right hand to neutralize to the right.
- 4) Some energy stays in right hook for control and some into left hand to attach to opponent's right hand.
- 5) Energy first in left hand to lead opponent to the left, then into right hook for strike to face.

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#93 Clouds Hands

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Basic:

This is the third repeat of Clouds Hands. This time as we step to the left, the right foot is brought up right next to the left so that the ankles and knees actually touch. Be sure to keep the toes facing forward and make the turning motions with the waist. The hand motions are the same as before.

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#94 Single Whip

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Basic:

This is basically the same movement as #38, the only difference being in the intention of the right foot step. In #38, our intention was to step in front or to our left of the opponent. This time we are going to step to our right a bit more. In #38 our intention is to strike his center with our hook right hand, and in this movement our intention is to step behind him and push him off balance (still with the right hook hand and arm) over our right foot.

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#95 High Pat On Horse And Plane Cross Hands

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Basic:

The opponent attacks your center or grabs your left hand with his left hand. You withdraw slightly, pressing down and in with your right palm. You then step in with your left foot and thrust toward his throat with your left finger tips.

Feet:

- 1) Withdraw the left foot into Ding Bow On Toe.
- 2) Step 45* right of west with the left foot.
- 3) Shift the weight onto the left foot.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) As you withdraw and turn slightly to the left, the left hand comes down to the left hip with the palm facing upward. At the same time the right hand folds in front of the right shoulder.
- 2) As you step with the left foot, the right palm presses downward in front of the center.
- 3) As you shift and turn to face to the right, the left fingers thrust straight forward ending at center of body, throat high.

Focus:

- 1) Focus on center to withdraw.
- 2) Energy in right palm to deflect down.
- 3) Energy in left fingers for thrust.

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#96 Turn And Cross Foot Kick With Sole

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Basic:

The opponent strikes at you from the rear. You turn, strike him in the crotch with your right hand, and kick him with your right foot.

Feet:

- 1) Shift the weight back onto the right foot and at the same time turn in the left foot to 30* right of north.
- 2) Shift onto left foot. Right foot pulls into Ding Bow Toe facing east.
- 3) Kick downward with right sole to the east.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) As you shift back, you turn the torso to the right and the left hand moves into center position while the right palm slaps down and back to end up by the right thigh.
- 2) As you shift onto the left foot, the body continues opening to the right until the body faces 45* right of north. At the same time the right hand circles up by the right side of the body as if catching a strike to your head.
- 3) Kick to center or knee with your sole. Body faces sideways (45* right of north) to the kick. Arms are in kick separation.

Focus:

- 1) Focus on center to turn. Possible strike with right palm to lower body of opponent as you turn.
- 2) Energy into right palm for intercept.
- 3) Focus on right foot for kick.

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#97 Step Up And Lower Punch

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Basic:

Opponent attempts to brush off your foot kick. You neutralize his left arm to the right with your right hand. He then tries to kick you with his right foot. You step in with your left foot, brush it off with your left hand, and punch his lower body.

Feet:

- 1) Step down the right foot to face south. Roll up on the left toe.
- 2) Step to the east with the left foot.
- 3) Shift to the left foot.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) As you step down, brush off the knee with your right palm. The left arm remains by the left shoulder as your body turns to the right.
- 2) As you step with the left foot, the left arm brushes off the left knee. The right hand makes a fist and remains by the right hip. The body still faces to the right of east.
- 3) As you shift to the left foot, the body leans forward and down to a 45* angle and the right hand punches forward as if to the crotch of the opponent. The left hand is by the left hip.

Focus:

- 1) Energy in the right palm to brush off right knee.
- 2) Energy in left palm to brush off left knee.
- 3) Energy in right fist for punch downward.

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#98 Ward Off Left

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Basic:

This movement is a repeat of #34.

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#99 Grasp Bird's Tail

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Basic:

This movement is a repeat of #35.

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#100 Single Whip

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Basic:

The opponent strikes your center with his right hand. You neutralize down and to the right with your right hand hook done in a sweeping fashion like a large counter clockwise circle. You then reach up and grab his upper body with your left hand, step to the left, and throw him down to the left with the aid of your right arm.

Feet:

The same as all the previous Single Whips.

Torso and Arms:

Basically the same as #92.

Focus:

First focus on the right arm to neutralize down and to the right. Then energy into left hand to grab, and finally into both arms to throw to the left.

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#101 Snake Creeps Down

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Basic:

The opponent kicks horizontally at your head. You squat down and back getting out of the way. Your left hand is held in the front of the body to block and intercept.

Feet:

- 1) The right foot slides back and the toe turns out to face north.
- 2) The weight shifts back and down as you squat down as far as you are comfortable.

Make sure to keep the knees in line with the toes even in the squatting position.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) The left arm lengthens and the right hand remains in the hook. The body opens to the right side as the right toe turns out.
- 2) The right arm stays in the hook while the left hand stays at shoulder level as the body drops. Keep as much length in the left arm as possible without moving the shoulder. The center (belly button) faces 45* right of west.

Focus:

- 1) Most of your awareness is in the opening of the body.
- 2) Energy in maintaining the upright posture in the squatting position. Also in the left hand to join with opponent's foot kick.

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#102 Step Up to Form Seven Stars

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Basic:

After creeping down to avoid a foot kick, you trap the opponent's foot between your crossed wrists, lift up to upset his balance, and kick him with your right foot.

Feet:

- 1) Shift the weight to the left foot.
- 2) Turn in the right foot to 45* right of west, and then turn out the left foot to 45* left of west with the weight on it.
- 3) Step up to Ding Bow Stance on right toe.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) As you shift the weight forward, fold in the right hand making a fist and bring it to the right side of the waist. Nose points to the west.
- 2) As you turn in and out the toes, make a fist with the left hand which is now on the left side of the center of the chest.
- 3) As you do Ding Bow on right toe, the right fist punches forward and turns palm down under the left fist. The fists are crossed at the wrists with the hands in the center of the chest.

Focus:

- 1) Energy in the left hand to catch and join opponent's energy.
- 2) Energy remains in the left hand.
- 3) Energy moves to the crossed fists for block, and then into right toe for kick.

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#103 Retreat to Ride a Tiger

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Basic:

This is a rather simple retreat and block of a foot kick to your left side and or a strike to the right side of your head.

Feet:

- 1) Step back with your right foot to a 45* right of west.
- 2) Shift your weight back to Ding Bow Stance on left toe.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) As you step back, the hands open up and turn palms inward.
- 2) As you shift back, the hands circle down to the waist level, then the right hand continues up to the right side of the forehead with the palm facing out. The left hand, at the same time, circles down to the left side of the thigh with the palm facing slightly to the left and down.

Focus:

- 1) Awareness in both palms.
- 2) Awareness stays in both palms for blocks. Also possible foot kick with left toe.

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#104 Turn Around and Kick Horizontally

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Basic:

The opponent punches with his right hand to your center. You neutralize with your hands to your right side, spin around, grab his right wrist and elbow, and kick horizontally to his back or side with your right foot.

Feet:

1) The body pivots around to the right on the right foot. If possible, the turn around is done on the whole right foot, not just the toe. In any event, do not do the turn on the heel as you can not control the spin. The left toe should be in contact with the ground as you spin so as to have even further control. At the end of the turn your right foot is at a 45* angle to the right of west, your left toe is touching the ground to the left of the right foot.

2) Step forward to 45* left of west with the left foot.

3) Shift the weight to the left foot. The right foot then kicks horizontally from left to right at the highest level you are comfortable with. At the end of the kick, pull the right foot in but don't set it down.

Torso and Arms:

1) The hands move to the right side at center chest level which starts the spin to the right. The hands come in fairly close to the body to keep them protected. Keep the weight down at the usual level during the entire turn. Your body ends up facing straight to west.

2) As your step, the hands come up as if to grab. The right hand would grab the opponent's elbow, while the left hand would grab the wrist. Therefore, the palms are facing each other with the left palm at the right elbow. The arms are at belly level.

3) The weight stays down for the kick. The body faces west. The arms stay in the same position. The right foot touches the right hand as it passes on its way to the right.

Focus:

1) First you focus on the palms as they neutralize the energy to the right. Then pull your awareness into your center for the turn.

2) Energy moves to the palms to grab opponent's arm.

3) Finally, energy moves to the right foot outside edge for kick.

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#105 Shoot a Tiger With Bow

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Basic:

The opponent punches your face with his right hand. You neutralize upward and to the right with your right hand. You then strike with your left fist to his chest.

Feet:

- 1) Step down with your right foot to 45*angle right of west.
- 2) Shift the weight to the right foot.

Torso and Arms:

1) As you step down, the right palm lifts up to forehead level on the right side. Nose stays pointing west.

2) As you shift, the right hand turns over and makes a fist and stays by the right side of the head. The left hand makes a fist that moves with the body to the right and ends up on the left center side of the chest. The fists face each other. Nose points to the right knee.

Focus:

- 1) Energy in the right palm as it leads the opponent's arm up.
- 2) Energy into the right fist as it grabs opponent's wrist. Then into the left fist as it strikes opponent's chest.

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#106 Step Up, Deflect Downward, Punch

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Basic:

The opponent strikes toward your center with his left arm. You neutralize the energy with the right forearm to the left. He then attacks with the right arm to your center. This is neutralized down and to the right with the back of your right forearm. This is followed by a punch to the opponent's center with your right fist.

Feet:

- 1) Pull in the right toe as you shift the weight to the left foot.
- 2) Turning the body to the right side, you open the right hip by replacing the right foot just to the right and in front of the left foot with the right toe facing north. Put your weight immediately on the right foot.
- 3) Place the left foot forward to face west. Be sure not to narrow the stance.
- 4) Shift the weight to the left foot. Turn in the back toe.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) The left hand opens up and turns palm upward. The right hand stays in a fist. You do a roll back type movement to the left side. The left palm ends up by the left waist. The right fist is on the right side of the chest. Nose points to the left knee.
- 2) As you replace the right foot, the body turns to the right so that the body faces north. The right arms circles over to the right side of the waist as if deflecting something down and to the right. The left hand does a chopping down movement and ends up in front of the left side of the chest with the palm facing to the right. Nose points to the right knee.
- 3) The left hand does a parry motion as the body starts to move forward and to the left. Nose points to the belly button.
- 4) The left hand pulls back toward the body as if you have grabbed the opponent's wrist and are pulling it toward you. It ends up right in front of your center. The right fist punches forward and turns from palm up to palm faces left. The fist ends up in the center of the chest. The left palm faces the right elbow. Nose points to the left knee.

Focus:

- 1) Energy in the left hand and right forearm for roll back.
- 2) Energy in the back of the right forearm for deflecting downward and in the left forearm outside edge for chopping down.
- 3) Energy in the back of the left hand for parry.
- 4) Energy in the left hand for pulling in opponent's energy, then into the right fist for punch.

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#107 Withdraw and Push

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Basic:

This movement is very similar to the other Withdraw and Push. The difference is that now the opponent grabs your right fist with his right hand. Brushing off his hand with your left hand still leaves him open, so you have to strike him quickly with your two palms.

Feet:

- 1) Shift back to right foot sit stance.
- 2) Shift forward to left foot bow stance.

Torso and Arms:

1) As you shift back, the right hand opens and lengthens. The left palm brushes along the right forearm with the thumb touching the forearm till the left hand just clears the right hand. There is a slight turn to the right side.

2) Both palms circle to face forward and are in the push position. The body moves forward. Nose points to the left knee.

Focus:

1) Energy in the left hand for brushing off. Then into both forearms for keeping opponent on the outside of your arms.

2) Energy in both palms for push. Don't forget, it is the feet that do the pushing. Let the hands and arms relax.

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#108 Conclusion of Tai Chi Chuan

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Basic:

Returning from Tai Chi to Wu Chi. From activity to rest. From movement to stillness. This movement has many possible applications, yet I think it most important to conclude with the idea of returning energy to the Dan Tien and having a moment of meditation.

Feet:

- 1) Shift the weight straight back to right foot sit stance.
- 2) Turn the waist to the right and turn in the left toe to face north.
- 3) Shift the weight to the left foot and bring the right foot back shoulder width and parallel to the left foot.
- 4) Center the weight and stand up.

Torso and Arms:

- 1) As you shift back, the arms lengthen and palms turn down parallel to the floor.
- 2) As you turn, the palms face outward and follow the body. The fingers turn inward so that they almost face each other creating a circle with the arms. At the end, the nose points to the right knee.
- 3) As you shift to the left foot, the hands separate and come down to the front of the body. It is almost like running your hands along the outside of a large ball. Nose ends up pointing to the left knee.
- 4) The arms continue to circle upward until the wrists cross in the center of the chest, palms face inward. They then open and return to shoulder width with the palms facing down. The palms push down until the palms are at Dan Tien level. The hands then relax as the body stands up.

Focus:

- 1) Energy to the finger tips.
- 2) Energy in the palms as you start to gather the energy into a ball.
- 3) The energy is being pulled into the center of the body.
- 4) The energy is then lifted to the top of the body with the palms, then it is pushed down into the Dan Tien as you stand.

It is very important to take a few moments at the end of the form to feel yourself and allow the energy to relax. Let the breath return to normal. Don't just rush off after having concluded. Take the time to enjoy the fruits of your labors. See if you can get the feeling of Tai Chi or activity returning to Wu Chi or rest.

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Glossary

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These are some of the terms I used in this manual that might not be familiar to everybody. I am assuming that anybody reading this manual has at least some knowledge of Tai Chi Chuan and the terms associated with its study, yet with the many different spellings and translations of Chinese terms, I want you to be clear about what I mean.

- 1. Tai Chi Chuan** — Literally translates as Supreme Ultimate Fist or Exercise. The name of an internal martial art developed in China.
- 2. Chi Kung** — Energy exercises or breathing exercises. There are thousands of general and specific exercises to build energy or chi. Tai Chi Chuan could be considered an elaborate Chi Kung exercise.
- 3. Tao and Taoism** — Tao is all-inclusive everythingness. It is beyond understanding, yet can be experienced. Taoism is the study of Tao and how man can let go of his separate ego and reunite with this universal energy.
- 4. Shen** — The highest and most refined form of energy that man interacts with. When the shen is cultivated and focused, the blocks to mans realization of the Tao can be dissolved. Tai Chi Chuan uses shen to reach the highest skill levels.
- 5. Chi** — Energy. Generally refers to the energy that moves through the universe and also through man. Chi is the battery that drives all life. Shen is the most refined chi and jieng is the grossest in the body.
- 6. Jieng** — Essential Chi. This is the chi or energy that is given to us at birth. It is genetic, potential energy and is limited in quantity for most people. The Taoists have practices for turning chi and jieng into shen.
- 7. Wu Chi** — The state of perfect balance where there is no movement. The state before the forming of the universe, before the appearance of Yin and Yang.
- 8. Yin and Yang** — The complimentary opposites. These are the expressions of how energy is manifesting at the moment to a specific observer. Yin and Yang are each given various qualities that signify opposition or balance. There has to be Yin to have Yang, night to have day, soft to have hard, in to have out, down to have up, cool to have hot, female to have male, etc. We have to be clear that all of these are only relative terms. There is not absolute hot, or up, or in. A tree may be harder than water, yet softer than a rock.
- 9. Bai-Hui** — The opening at the top of the head where Yang Chi or cosmic chi enters and leaves the body. Sometimes referred to as the Crown Chakra.
- 10. Yung-Chuan** — The opening at the bottom of the foot for the Yin Chi or earth energy to enter and leave the body. This is an accupoint, K-1, the start of the kidney meridian.
- 11. Lao Kung** — An opening in the center of each palm for energy to enter and leave the body.
- 12. Hui-Yin** — Gate of life and death. The perineum or floor of the pelvis. The meeting place

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for the yin energy as it rises up the two legs.

13. Ming Men — Door of Life. The storage place for prenatal chi or the energy given to us at birth. Located between the kidneys.

14. Microcosmic Orbit — The circular pathway for the movement of energy in the body. Basically, up the back, over the head, and down the front. There are many blocks or gates along the path that have to be opened so the energy can pass through. Tai Chi, Chi Kung and many other forms of meditative energy work utilize the idea of moving energy around this orbit.

15. Dan Tien — Storage vessel for acquired energy, usually referring to the lower Dan Tien located slightly below the navel. In Tai Chi and many forms of Chi Kung, the mind is centered on the Dan Tien, thereby moving energy that is acquired into that storage site to be used or refined.

16. Yi — The conscious mind. The thinking and reasoning part of our brain.

17. Hsin — Heart mind. The emotional and feeling part of our mind usually thought to reside in the heart.

18. Kua — The inguinal fold or front of the groin. It is important to have flexibility in this area in order to gather energy there for later release. It is an area used to crouch.

19. Jing — The expression of energy. Usually refers to how energy is expressed. There are hundreds of different Jings including Fa Jing which is an explosive burst of energy used in push hands and fighting.

20. Li — Refers to muscular strength. Energy that is rather clumsy, has edges, is hard, and usually doesn't involve the use of the mind.

21. Push Hands — An important training device used in Tai Chi Chuan. It involves two people, usually in fixed position, giving and receiving energy, using Tai Chi movements and principles, with the intention of developing an awareness of the highest levels of Tai Chi. There are competitions in push hands where each person tries to uproot and make the other person lose balance.

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Injuries — Symptom and Treatment

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The chances for injuries while practicing Tai Chi are very small. If you stay in your body, (meaning that your awareness is on the activity you are engaged in at the time), you will almost never suffer accidents. If your mind wanders or is distracted, you can suffer injury.

The first rule of staying healthy in sports is not to overdo. Know yourself, don't try and compare yourself with others, feel what you are doing from the inside, make a little progress daily, are all important to staying accident free. Also, being able to read the signals the body sends is very important. Let's look at the most common.

Sensations

1. Dull Ache.

This is quite common when doing an activity you haven't done before or when doing more than you usually do. The feeling is caused by lactic acid build up as a result of muscles having worked hard and the body not being able to get rid of the waste by-products of energy exertion. Rest is the most common way to deal with this situation. Massage is another. In any case, when the work or exercise is done, there is a dull ache which *persists* for a while and goes away by itself. This is to be expected.

2. Sharp, shooting pain

This is a sure sign that something is wrong. As you are exercising you experience a sharp, shooting pain that stops when you stop. This means that the particular movement could cause damage if you persist. The body is saying "don't do that any more". The remedy for this is to stop and examine what and how you are doing the movement. Try again and if the sensation comes again, **stop**.

3. Pops, Snaps, Cracks

These sounds will always indicate an injury that will need medical care. Fractures, breaks, and torn cartilage are not something to mess around with. Immediately get help.

Strains and Sprains

These are the most common types of injuries that you might receive in martial arts practice. You can usually take care of them yourself. Fractures and breaks must be attended to by trained health care workers. *Strains* are tears in muscles or tendons (attaches muscles to bones). They can be very small and quick to heal or large and slow to heal. *Sprains* are tears in ligaments (attaches bone to bone). Tendons and ligaments don't have a good blood supply so their ability to heal is slowed. Almost any exercise will produce micro-tears in your muscles and connective tissue. This is normal and in the course of daily life, you will get the rest your body needs to repair any normal damage. The more flexible your body is, the less likely tears are, so you must stretch regularly, and more so before any amount of extra load you place on yourself.

Inflammation Response

When you receive a strain or sprain, your body will immediately start to deal with it. This is called the inflammation response and can be recognized by four primary symptoms:

1. Pain

If an area is especially painful when you stretch, but painless when put through passive movement (that is when someone does the movement for you) you will probably be able to treat the strain or sprain yourself.

2. Swelling

Swelling occurs because the sprain or strain tears capillaries, and besides the small amount of blood that is released during the stress, the body sends extra to help heal the site.

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Swelling, Continued

Local hormone-like chemicals are produced that increase the activity of pain receptors so you will be less likely to further injure the site. The fluid also acts to immobilize the site, bringing the feeling of stiffness and inflexibility.

3. Heat

As the body moves to seal the injured site, your metabolism increases and you will feel warmth.

4. Redness

Redness will be visible in the more severe strains and sprains, less so in the minor ones. Redness indicates significant, increased blood flow.

Treatment

Whenever you have a minor injury, remember the word **RICE**. This indicates the best way to treat yourself and speed the healing response of the body. Remember, only nature can heal, but we can be of assistance and make the job easier for our dear Mother Nature. Start your treatment immediately!

R=Rest

As soon as possible, get off and stay off the injury. Your body needs time to heal.

I=Ice

Ice should be used every three to four hours for the first 24 to 48 hours. It chills the affected area so that the tissues constrict and squeeze out swelling like a sponge. When you remove the ice, fresh blood returns to the site with oxygen and other materials for repair. Ice also decreases the nerve impulses to the brain so you do not experience as much pain.

Ice is generally applied for periods of from five minutes to 30 minutes at a time. Wrap an ice source (can be ice or frozen vegetables, or a commercially made cold product) in a towel to keep it from being too cold.

C=Compression

Compression helps to inhibit swelling, and helps to immobilize the area. Wrap with an ace bandage or other compression bandage, being careful not to wrap too tightly or you might restrict the circulation.

E=Elevation

Try to keep the area above your heart, and do not put weight on it for one to four days. This helps drain the fluids out of the injured site, and also helps to limit the internal bleeding from the injury.

Heat

Most physical therapists only use heat during the rehabilitation phase of healing. In the early phases, heat can increase swelling and retard healing. So, be careful and don't be in a rush to apply heat. When you do, use moist heat so as not to increase inflammation.

So, go slow and be patient. Allow the body plenty of time to heal and come back gradually, not going immediately to the level of practice you were doing before the injury. Work up to it. And remember to treat the injury as soon as possible.

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Modifying The Traditional Yang Style

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The study of Tai Chi Chuan is the study of change, of the evolution of an art form. From its earliest beginnings to the present, Tai Chi has molded itself to the needs and desires of the times — from a hard fighting system to a soft, relaxing, meditative exercise. If Tai Chi had not been so adaptable to Man's evolution, it surely would have died out long ago. The beauty of Tai Chi Chuan is that it never gets stuck. It is much like water in that it flows, moves, and still adheres to everything.

I have consciously set about to modify the traditional Yang Style Long Form that I learned from Master Choy Kam-man and have been teaching for the last 25 years. I would like to share with you some of my ideas of why I did this and how I went about changing the form. First, let me briefly summarize some of the major past modifications to Tai Chi Chuan.

Major Modifications

There is much disagreement about the earliest origins of our art, yet man has always needed an advantage in his existence as a hunter and then defender of his territory. Since man is not the largest or strongest creature, he has evolved a cunning and quick mind to overcome the greater strength of his adversaries. Man quickly learned what worked and what didn't, and that which worked was passed on from generation to generation and refinements were added. Just as oral knowledge was passed down in the form of songs and poems, fighting skills were passed as "forms" that could be easily transmitted and learned.

Bodhidharma brought an effective fighting system to the Sholin temple in China around 527 AD. The Buddhist hard style was very useful and was incorporated into the temple life. The native Taoists (possibly Cheng Sang-feng) realized its strengths and, as they learned this system, began to modify it to suit the philosophical ideas of blending with nature and soft overcoming hard. This is the beginnings of what we know today as Tai Chi Chuan.

The earliest substantial figure seems to be Chen Wing-ting who developed the Chen Style in the mid 1600's. His forms are referred to as Lao Lia or "old family" and have been passed directly down from generation to generation until the present.

The "old family" forms were modified by Chen Yu-ben and Chen Yu-heng around 1800 into Xin Jia or "new family" system. From this system evolved the Wu Style (Wu Yu-xiang), Li Style (Li Yi-yu), Hao Style (Hao Wei-zeng) and the Sun Style (Sun Lu-tang).

Yang Lu-chan learned the "old family" form from Chen Chang-xing in the 1800's. His modification became the most popular style, the Yang Style. His son, Yang Jien-hou modified the form into a "Middle Style", and his son, Yang Cheng-fu modified that form into the "Big Style", which is the form most of the Yang teachers of today work with. Some of the most popular are the Dong family, Cheng Man-ching, Fu Zhong-wen, Yang Zhen-duo, and my teacher and his father, Choy Kam-man and Choy Hok-peng.

Wu Chien-chuan studied the "old Family" Chen Style and the form created by Yang Lu-chan. The resulting modification, the Wu Style, is second in popularity to the Yang Style.

Each of these new styles were modifications to an existing form, with things either added or deleted. If they worked, the system or style continued to grow and prosper. If not, the style is now an historical footnote.

The latest modifications are the standardized forms of the Mao era and newer versions for competition.

What I Did

The learning of Tai Chi Chuan usually follows a fairly specific course. First, one must learn the core principles, known as the Tai Chi classics. The body has to learn relaxation, and how to let go of past patterns that might impede natural movement. The focus then shifts to building up flexibility, strength, balance, sensitivity, and chi or energy. The last stages are movement of internal energy and meditation.

At this time, I am most concerned with moving energy internally, and this is the basis for my modification to the form. I wanted to have more paths of energy movement without increasing the length of the form or changing what I already knew and loved.

Master Choy taught the traditional Yang Style system which included the long form of 108 movements. "Conventional wisdom" says that the long form takes too long for the time strapped American to learn and practice, and many find the repeated movements boring. So most people teach shorter forms with less repeats, for example the very popular form of Cheng Man-ching. Lee Ying-arn back in the 1960's came up with a very good modification that had no repeats and all movements were done on both sides.

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The Yang Style has eight basic energies (ward off, roll back, press, push, split, pull down, elbow strike, and shoulder strike). These energies are expressed in various ways in the form. My modification plays with more variations and combinations of these eight energies, while staying true to the energy expressed by a particular movement in the traditional form.

After much thought, I decided to keep the traditional Yang long form sequence. I like it and feel it has much to offer. What I did was to use a different application for each of the repeated movements. For example, there are 10 repeats of Single Whip, so I have 10 different applications that require the body to do slightly different actions while the foot movements remain basically the same.

How the front foot is turned out in moving forward is an area of much disagreement among practitioners. Some say to shift the weight back before turning out the forward foot, while others say to keep the weight on the foot while turning. I can see the logic behind both approaches. The weighted foot turn is faster and more applicable to self defence, while the un-weighted turn is easier on the knee and more meditative. So in my form, I use both. When I face to my right (East) from the starting direction (North), I use weighted turns, and when I face the left (West), I use un-weighted turns. It is fun to do both and be comfortable using either.

Another area of disagreement is the angle of the rear foot in relation to the forward foot and the width between the two feet. Master Choy taught the rear foot was turned out approximately 45 degrees in relation to the direction you are headed, and that there was 6 inches or so between the two feet. This can be measured by drawing back the front foot, in the angle it is headed, until it is next to the rear foot and seeing how much distance is between them. Many teachers say the rear should be nearer to 80 degrees with only an inch or two width..

Again, I can see positives in both approaches. The forward foot is mostly a brake to stop forward movement or a platform to accept the weight of the body for forward movement. The narrow width allows for a longer stance in a straight forward direction where there is little side ways movement (e.g. Fan Through the Back). The wider width is required when there is strong twisting and turning (e.g. Turn and Chop Opponent with Fist). When facing my imaginary partner, I need to decide whether I'm stepping to the left, between, or to the right of his legs. I feel the angle and distance depend on the application, so once I know the application I can easily experiment until I find what works best.

The result is that I now have a form with many more movements (basically no repeats) in the same framework. The modification has achieved the following:

- 1) More movements to practice
- 2) More self defence moves to practice
- 3) More ways to internally move energy
- 4) Improve concentration, as the mind can not wander as easily as when there are repeated movements
- 5) Aid in understanding all aspects of Tai Chi

Let me give you a couple of examples of what I did and how I did it.

Example #1 Play the Fiddle - Repeated Twice in the 108 Form

A. Play the Fiddle - Movement #11 Energy expressed Press (Ghee) in up and down direction.

Following Left Brush Knee the partner grabs my right wrist from underneath with his right hand.

- 1) I start to neutralize his hand by dissolving down (pressing down slightly) with my right palm. At the same time I close the distance by bring up my right foot into empty step with the left toe just touching down.
- 2) The left palm comes up to strike the elbow of my partner while the right palm continues pressing downward. There is a possible foot kick with left heel.

The result can range from controlling partner by locking his arm in an awkward position to breaking his wrist or elbow with a snapping press force up on the elbow and down on the wrist.

Internal Energy Path (All this happens almost simultaneously)

- 1) Energy (attention, intention) moves to right palm to seal partner's hand.
- 2) Attention into right foot to bounce energy upward as you step up, then into left palm as it strikes (press) upward. Also, kick with left heel is possible.

B. Play the Fiddle - Movement # 15 Energy expressed Press (Ghee) in side to side direction.

Following Left Brush Knee partner grabs my right wrist from the top or inside with his right hand.

- 1) I draw backward into empty step, with left toe just touching, by stepping back (replacing) with my right foot and at the same time I circle my right wrist in a clockwise direction with the result that my right palm is now on the outside of partner's wrist with my palm facing inward.

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2) The left palm is brought upward in a clockwise circle to press inward on partner's elbow. The right palm also presses inward but on the wrist.

The result is pretty much the same as #11, only it is much harder to control the arm with this side to side energy, so snapping energy is more appropriate.

Internal Energy Path

- 1) Energy in right hand and wrist as it circles partner's wrist.
- 2) Energy into both palms as they press inward. Possible foot kick with left heel.

Differences between the two variations

- 1) #11 uses a step up rear foot movement (possible hop forward). #15 uses a replace to the rear step (possible jump backward).
- 2) #11 uses an up and down pressing energy. #15 uses a side to side pressing inward energy.
- 3) #11 uses very straight up and down energy. #15 uses more circular (chan ssu jin) energy.

Example #2 Needle at Sea Bottom - Repeated Twice in the 108 Form

A. Movement # 30 Energy expressed - Pull Down (Tsai) and Ward Off (Peng)

Following Left Brush Knee partner grabs my right wrist with his right hand.

1) As I replace rear foot backward to withdraw into empty step, I circle my right wrist clockwise, ending up with my hand on top of partner's wrist, palm facing left, and fingers pointing toward partner. At the same time, my left hand comes up and grabs hold of partner's hand to lock it in place. The tendons and ligaments of his wrist are now stretched as far as they are naturally able to go.

2) With the lock in place, I pull down to upset his root and then use peng energy back toward partner which puts partner's wrist in very painful position.

This is a Chin Na variation so the pressure, down and toward partner, is slow and steady in order to control. Also, since I pulled him down with my right side, his right hand is crossed in front of his body to block his counter attack.

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