



Master Max Gaofei Yan
Jude Brady Smallwood

WHAT IS CHI?



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Publisher



What Is Chi?

by

Master Max Gaofei Yan

Jude Brady Smallwood

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Endless Forest Publisher
West Palm Beach, Florida

2013 by Max Gaofei Yan and Jude Brady Smallwood

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Printed in the United States of America
The complete book of What Is Chi?/ Yan-Smallwood
ISBN 978-0-9890737-0-7

Table of Contents

[About the Authors](#)
[About Gyokukan Morita](#)
[Prologue](#)
[Foreword](#)
[Reading Tips](#)

[Chapter 1 - What Is Chi?](#)

- 1.1 What Is Chi
 - So, Just Exactly What Is Chi?
 - Where Does Chi Come From?
- 1.2 How Can You Sense the Presence of Chi?
 - Three Basic Feelings
 - The Difference Between Strong and Weak Chi Circulation
 - Other Chi Sensations
- 1.3 How to Strengthen Chi Circulation
- 1.4 The Gap Between Eastern and Western Understanding Is Greater Than the Pacific Ocean

[Chapter 2 - Why Wuji Is So Important For Improving Health](#)

- 2.1 The Meaning of Wuji
- 2.2 Reduce Tension to Help Chi Circulation
- 2.3 Strengthen the Kidney System to Produce More Energy
- 2.4 Easy to Enjoy
- 2.5 The Beginning of Internal Exercises
- 2.6 For Your Information

[Chapter 3 - Dan Tian Rotation, Massaging the Kidneys To Increase Jing \(Hormone\) Production](#)

- 3.1 Other Ways to Stimulate the Kidney/Reproduction Systems
- 3.2 Even Within Internal Exercises, There's "Internal-Internal" and "External-Internal"
- 3.3 Two Important Concepts of Xin Shen Pai
 - The Concept of "Water on Top, Fire Below"
 - The Concept of "Fire From Ming Men"
- 3.4 Dan Tian Rotation

General Definition of Dan Tian Rotation

How to Rotate the Dan Tian with Footwork

How to Rotate the Dan Tian with the Upper Body

Conclusion

3.5 The Benefit of Dan Tian Rotation

How Dan Tian Rotation Benefits Our Health

How Dan Tian Rotation Effects Combat

Chapter 4 - Dao Yin (With Ba Duan Jin)

4.1 Dao Yin Is One of the Oldest Calisthenics

How It Started

Not Just the Chinese Did This in Ancient Times

In China Dao Yin Became a Profound and Extensive Exercise System

Influence on Chinese Martial Arts

4.2 Different Goals of Dao Yin

4.3 Different Types of Dao Yin

Analogy of Five Different Exercise Types

4.4 Choose the Right Exercise

4.5 Eight Piece Brocade

Chapter 5 - Tai Chi Compared To Dao Yin

5.1 Almost All Chinese Martial Arts Are Dao Yin

5.2 The Wonderful Health Benefits of Silk Reeling Movement

Open the Joints in All Directions

A Unique Way to Stretch Ligaments and Tendons

A Better Way to Maintain Physical Balance and

Avoid Injury

5.3 Relaxing the Body to Open the Chi Channel

5.4 Sinking Chi Helps to Pump Circulation

Good Circulation But Not at the Expense of the Heart

Tai Chi Is a Perfect Exercise

Chapter 6 - Tu Na

6.1 What Is Tu Na

6.2 Counting-Breaths Exercise

6.3 Guan Xiang

6.4 Nei Dan

Nei Dan and Wai Dan

A Very Significant Term from Wai Dan - Dan Tian

How Breathing Can Give You New Feelings in Your Body

More Sensations to Feel

Why This Helps

Even More

What a Magnificent and Precise System

Something to Be Careful Of

Nei Dan Is the Root of Many Internal Training Programs

6.5 Hard Style Chi Gung

What Makes People Really Notice Chi

How Do They Do That?

How to Train

Common Mistakes

The Limits of Hard Style Chi Gung

6.6 Zhang Mi, Secret Tibetan Buddhist Branch

A Secret Style

The Three Criteria That Determine This Style as Secret

6.7 Chanting

How Chanting Works

Three Elemental Sounds

Chinese Sound Therapy

6.8 Six Sacred Sounds

6.9 Six Healing Sounds

Chapter 7 - Tai Chi Compared To Tu Na

7.1 Breathing Techniques in Martial Arts

Everybody Experiences Some Breathing Technique

Five Basic Breathing Techniques in Chinese Martial Arts

7.2 The Difference Between External and Internal Styles 121

7.3 The Benefit of Tai Chi Style of Breathing 125

7.4 A Physical Vehicle to Bring the Mind to a Joyful State. 128

Enjoying Good Chi Circulation

A Joyful State of Mind

Chapter 8 - Important Acupuncture Points For Proper Body Alignment

8.1 What Makes a Style Internal

8.2 Human Architecture at Point Accuracy Level

Point by Point

Point to Point

Conclusion

8.3 Correct Body Alignment to Allow Free Flowing Chi

Point Accuracy Level to Sink the Chi

The Feeling of an Opened Heavenly Circle

Health Benefits from Proper State of These

Acupuncture Points

8.4 Some Important Issues in Internal Martial Arts

The Difference Between External Power and Internal Power

The Problem with “Raising the Back”

The Relationship Between a Straight Body and Relaxation

Three Sections Opening and Three External Harmonies

When Your Chi Is Sunk, Your Real Force Comes Up

How to Study Forming This Kind of Proper Internal Alignment

The Importance of Practicing More Wuji Meditation

Even P.A.L. Is Not the End of Body Mechanics Study

8.5 Testing for Proper Alignment

The Student’s Test for Alignment

The Easy Way for a “Master” to Demonstrate

The Real Way to Demonstrate Internal Alignment

Chapter 9 - Internal Energy Classic

9.1 What Secret Does This Classic Hold?

9.2 How All Four Classics Were Found

9.3 The Core Substance of This Classic

How to Drive Chi

Structure and Alignment
Breathing
The Key to Internal Force
Conclusion

Chapter 10 - Tai Chi Chi-Gung Exercises

10.1 General Information About Tai Chi-Chi Gung Exercises

10.2 How To Do and What To Feel

Wuji
Holding Balloon
Dan Tian Rotation on a Horizontal Plane
Dan Tian Rotation on a Vertical Plane
Horizontal Chi-Pull
Vertical Chi-Pull
Exchanging Chi
Return to Wuji

10.3 Review of Tai Chi-Chi Gung Benefits

Chapter 11 - Progress Analysis Of Different Types Of Chi Gong

11.1 All Roads Lead to Rome

11.2 Five Major Phases

How Nine Different Types of Chi Gung Progress
Mental Capacity or Other Special Ability

11.3 One Might Be Better for You Than Another

11.4 Necessary Criteria for Internal Progression

You Cannot Bypass Any Steps in the Program
Using the Five Phases Charts
When You Finish a Phase, Proceed to the Next One
Health Care Choices
The Limits of Medical Care
The Limits of Exercising
Sexual Energy and the Basic Drive
Design Your Own Program Based on the Exercises in This Book

Chapter 12 - Ten Level Tai Chi Curriculum

- 12.1 We Need a Program for This Profound Study
- 12.2 Ten Level Curriculum in Tai Chi
- 12.3 Three Level Theory

Chapter 13 - The Most Common Mistakes Made In Chi Gung Practice

- 13.1 Wrong Goals
- 13.2 Misinterpretation of Style
- 13.3 Losing Direction in the Process
- 13.4 Forced Breathing
- 13.5 Illusion Confusion
- 13.6 Applying External Concepts to Understand Internal Theories
- 13.7 Wasting Precious Chi Due to Over Enthusiasm
- 13.8 Lack of Practice
- 13.9 Inability to Apply Chi Gung to Life
- 13.10 False Chi Strengtheners
- 13.11 Escapism Instead of Realism
- 13.12 Regarding Chi Gung as a Religion

Chapter 14 - Personal Experiences

- 14.1 Interview of Grandmaster Chen Quanzhong
- 14.2 Practice Journal of Mr. James Dees
- 14.3 Recovery Journal of Mr. Thomas Mullen

Postscript

Chinese Word Usage

Master Max Gaofei Yan



Master Max Gaofei Yan

At a famous Taoist temple In Wu Han China called Chang Chun Guan (the "Long Spring Temple" 1994)

A native of Guangzhou (Canton), China, Master Max Gaofei Yan graduated with a B.A. in engineering from Xi'an Jiaotong University, in Xi'an city in Shaanxi Province. As a child he suffered from juvenile rheumatoid arthritis (JRA) and in his teen years sought ways to deal with his affliction. He tried various forms of exercise and martial training under several masters until he found traditional *Heavenly Chi Circle* practice, which eventually eliminated his childhood affliction. Since then he has expanded his studies to other martial arts styles.

Based on his own personal JRA recovery, Master Yan deeply understands the benefits of Tao exercises and other ancient systems. He has traveled to many places in China researching different styles of exercises like Tai Chi, Fu Gui Wuji, Yi Jin Jing, Ba Duan Jin, Red Palm Qigong, Baguazhang, One Finger Chan, Xin Yi and Huan Yuan to name a few. More importantly, his training as an engineer and his deep understanding of the philosophy of the Tao Te Ching (the most important book in the Taoist canon) allow him to understand and interpret myriad Taoist exercises in a clear, comprehensive, fundamental fashion.

Master Yan is a contributing Editor of *Internal Martial Arts Research* as well as a contributor to *Tai Chi Magazine* and other literary media. Today he is a career engineer in the aviation industry and holder of many U.S. and international engineering patents in the field of fluid dynamics.

Master Yan commutes globally for engineering business and to conduct seminars on traditional Taoist practice for the benefit of his many students in Europe, the Americas and Asia.



About the Authors
Jude Brady Smallwood



Jude began studying Tai Chi in New York City in 1971 and in her search to learn more about the true nature of Tai Chi, she studied with many instructors and Masters. She continued her studies when she moved to South Florida to attend college and where she also met Master Yan. Currently she teaches Tai Chi/ Chi Gung in South Florida. She also attends her Master's Tai Chi classes in Hollywood, Florida, to continue her ongoing study of Tai Chi.

Her extensive career in various businesses, mechanics, computer programming, digital graphics/video and writing has enabled her to document and illustrate this book for clarity and interest. Her primary goal was to ensure that Master Yan's wonderful lessons and material were comprehensive, informative, enjoyable and helpful to *all readers* of this book no matter what their experiences or level of education is.

Today Jude resides in West Palm Beach, Florida with her husband, Cliff, and beloved "zoo." In her youth, her own teacher in New York City, Lee Chung Tai-Tsu (Victor), often quelled her impatience and incessant questions by reciting the adage "when the student is *ready*, the teacher will appear." So be *ready* for the remarkable journey this book is eager to take the reader on.



Gyokukan Morita



Tamaki Morita was born in Ibaraki Prefecture, Japan. In 1969, at the young age of 8, she attended her first calligraphy class as Shogeiin to the teacher Seiu Yamamura. At 24 she qualified as a Master in Calligraphy and was given the honored Calligrapher title/name Gyokukan whose Chinese characters are the same as an historic Chinese princess. Today Gyokukan Morita is the councilor under Chief Director Kodo Hoshi at Nihon Shosakuin, the largest calligraphy faction in the Kanto area as well as the manager of Yomiuri Shohou-kai, a renowned calligraphy group in Japan. In 2012 she was awarded the *Prize for Encouragement* at the Yomiuri Shohou Exhibition. In 2013 Gyokukan won the Judge's *Special Prize* at the Nihon Shosakuin Exhibition and also facilitated the first exhibition for Japan Calligraphic Art Academy.

Currently she resides with her husband and two daughters in the historical Japanese city of Kamakura.

Thank you, Gyokukan, for honoring our book with your beautiful calligraphy on our title page, Prologue page, at the beginning of all 14 chapters and on our Postscript page.



Prologue

In February 1996 I invited my teacher, Grandmaster Chen Quanzhong, 19th generation of Chen Family and President of the China Xian Chen Style Tai Chi Association, to America. At one of his seminars, someone asked, “What is Chi?” Master Chen didn’t answer him directly but asked him how long he was practicing, to which he answered, “five years.” Master Chen said, “Then you should know what Chi is.”

After five years of hard work and sweat, he really should have known what Chi is. However, in the West, many people practice ten or even twenty years and still never feel Chi. So it would be futile to try and explain how to do Chi exercises when we don’t feel it or even know about it. On many occasions at my seminars, I was asked again and again this very basic question about traditional Chinese Martial Arts and fitness exercises: “What is Chi?” For this reason, I was highly motivated to write this book.

Every effort was made to format this book so that it is easily understood and therefore very beneficial to the readers. Please refer to the *Internal Journey Map* and note how this outline clearly illustrates how all the chapters relate to each other.

Most people practice Chi exercises out of pure faith, interest or curiosity only. I want them to understand the reasoning of those exercises so that they can practice with complete understanding and full confidence.

Today there are a variety of Chi exercise programs available and perhaps you already practice some form of these exercises. Basically all Chi exercises can be divided into two categories, “building Chi” (Yang Qi) and “driving Chi” (Lian Qi), and within these categories there are different levels of practice routines. *What Is Chi?* offers a comprehensive view of Chi Gung (Qi Gong) so that you can recognize what kind of Chi Gung you are practicing and be able to identify the level of Chi Gung you are at. Without this knowledge, you cannot focus

on the key points, which is like trying to sail a ship in total darkness without guide markers or the proper navigational instruments.

Eastern concepts seem difficult to Western people. Through this book and its numerous illustrations, analogies and pictures, you can discover that those theories actually are simple, clear and interesting.

After each theory, there are related Chi Gung exercises, which help to contribute a deeper and more thorough understanding. There are a total of five different types of exercises covered in this book. Every movement or exercise is explained and you are told what it is, how it operates and why it benefits our health.

Internal energy exercises (Chi Gung) have provided the Asian people with successful health maintenance, longevity and improved mental focus for thousands of years. Now it is time for people in the West to also experience the wonderful benefits of Chi.

Foreword

Chinese Chi Gung has a long history that can be traced back more than five thousand years. Many varieties are practiced today, but, generally speaking, Chi Gung can be classified into four categories: religious, medical, martial and health enhancing. Regardless of the goal, the foundation of all Chi Gung is the existence of *Chi*. Some Chi Gung practitioners experience mysterious states of consciousness that are beyond our perception and imagination. I was introduced to Chi Gung at a young age when I began studying Tai Chi and Buddhist philosophy. Even after more than 20 years of study and research in science and engineering, today I am still amazed and bewildered by the profundity and depth of *Chi*.

Even though humankind can now describe our physical world down to the atomic level and successfully map DNA sequences, our understanding of *Chi* is limited and our knowledge base is very sparse. A simple explanation of *Chi* is absent and the question remains: *What is Chi?* Perhaps *Chi* is too illusive for contemporary physicists and scientists, and we might have to wait a long time before advanced physical theory can remove the veil of mysticism that shrouds it.

The lack of a comprehensive scientific interpretation of Chi has made it difficult for practitioners to even know how to systematically approach it. Consequently, many long-time Tai Chi/Chi Gung practitioners are frustrated trying to access clear guidelines and proper information. Some Chi Gung “teachers” even exploit their followers and use them to achieve their own personal goals, fortune and power. So, you see how important it is to have the correct understanding of *Chi* with regards to any type of Chi Gung practice. I believe that ***What Is Chi?*** is probably one of the best books available for helping anyone understand *Chi* until that time comes when the scientific community can make a breakthrough and fill in the entire picture.

The following reasons are why I believe that ***What Is Chi?*** stands out above any other literature on the subject of *Chi*.

1. Integrated and Systematic Approach

In this book traditional Chinese Tai Chi/Chi Gung arts, which have numerous forms and styles, are first classified into only two main categories: (1) Building Chi and (2) Driving Chi, followed by sub-categories. The principles and methodology of each style are clearly discussed and systematically analyzed. As a result, almost all styles are included in this book.

2. New Interpretation

What Is Chi? embraces many new interpretations of Chi Gung that have never been attempted before. Some of the theories, methods and detailed descriptions are too subtle to be easily observed in the external forms and yet this powerful information has been opened up to the public, *something that has never been done before*.

3. Emphasis on Nature

Master Yan emphasizes following the natural way and avoiding strong mind-control and forceful breathing, which, when done incorrectly, could actually be quite dangerous. Correct posture and body alignment are key to the effortless natural flow of *Chi*. After mastering any type of Chi Gung, one realizes that these methods, which appear simple in form and yet profound in theory, are in fact the most effective. According to Lao Tzu in Chapter 53 of Tao Te Ching: *"The great ways are naturally smooth and easy, but people greatly delight in tortuous paths."*

4. Suitable for All Levels

The book contains descriptions of a variety of forms and different levels of Tai Chi/Chi Gung to benefit both beginners and advanced enthusiasts. Readers can quickly gain the proper knowledge and the correct principles to help their practice progress rapidly and safely in their practice.

5. Clear Illustrations

There are many examples and scientific illustrations that accurately describe the principles of *Chi* and enable the reader to effectively grasp this mysterious art form.

Master Yan has been instructing Tai Chi/ Chi Gung for years. He has gained tremendous insight on these arts and has demonstrated the wonders of Chi on several occasions. On one such occasion, several men simultaneously pushed him and yet he was able to easily remain still and maintain his balance throughout the demonstration. As a result of his extreme relaxation, Master Yan was then able to throw all of them out of balance with a very subtle movement. Most of us have only read about such marvels Master Yan demonstrates.

Under his guidance, even a beginner can quickly get the feeling of *Chi* as well as receive the enhanced health benefits. Furthermore, Master Yan's philosophy aligns with the mainstream Eastern philosophy as discussed in the Diamond Sutra, the Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch, the Heart Sutra, Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching, etc. In its unique way, this book helps the reader truly enjoy the efficacy of *Chi* practices, the health benefits and the realization of the state of "*Shen returns to empty and merges with Wuji.*"

I am delighted to have had this opportunity to introduce ***What Is Chi?*** to people who truly seek insight on *Chi* and its art styles. It is my fervent hope that, through this book, more people can benefit from traditional Chinese arts like Chi Gung and Tai Chi.

Kuanghsi Wu, Professor
Department of Mechanical Engineering
Florida International University, Miami Florida

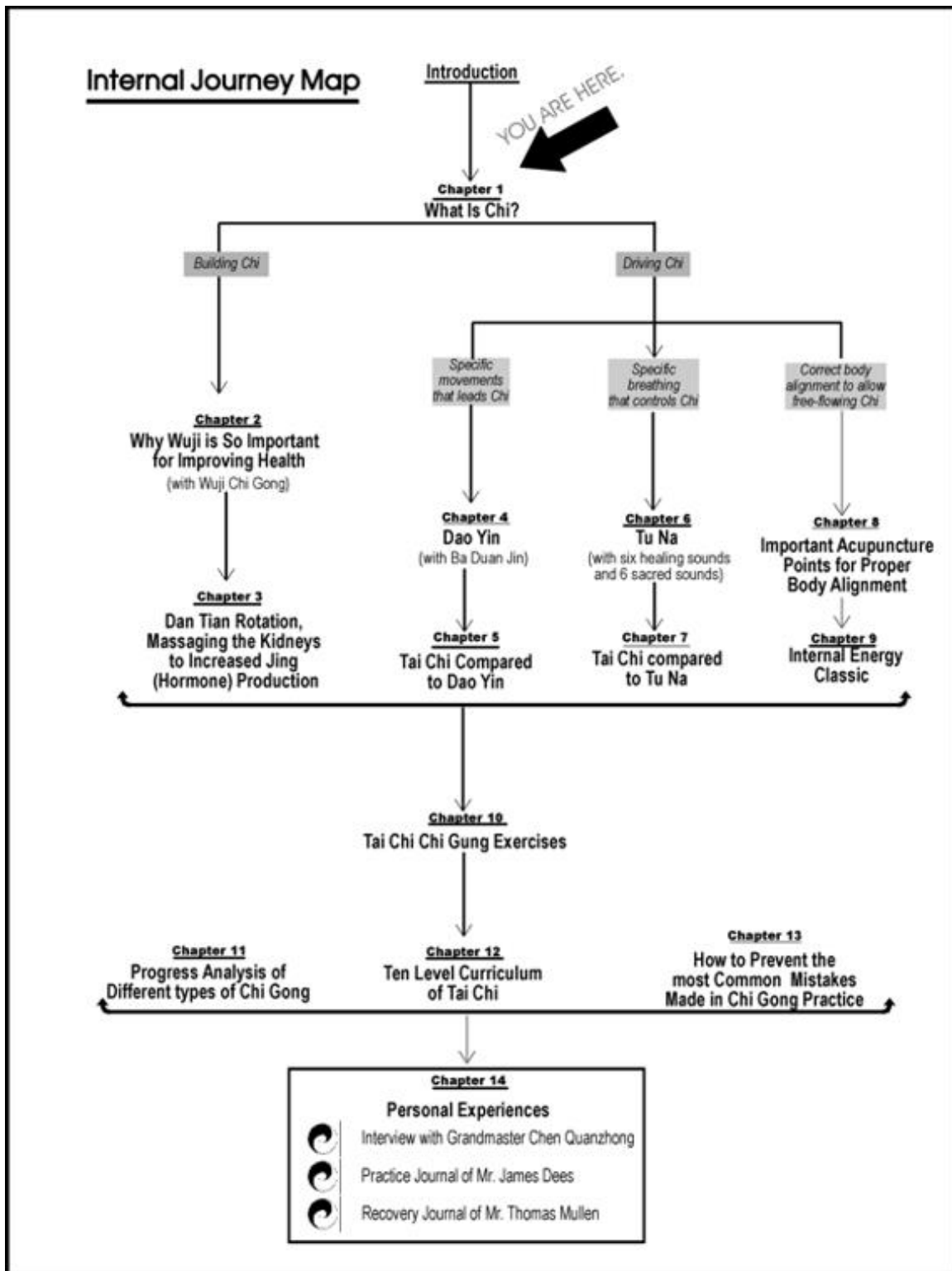
Reading Tips

1. Quite often, throughout this book, we refer to the “Kidney System” based on the definition from Traditional Chinese Medical Theory not the Western Medical definition. You see, many concepts of Traditional Chinese Medical Theory differ from those of Western Medical Theory. Translating Chinese theorems literally makes their meaning illusive and therefore misunderstood. The Chinese Kidney System, for example, includes both the Urinary System and the Reproductive System because they share the same organs, whereas Western Medicine classifies the Urinary System (kidneys), the Reproductive System and some of the endocrine system as two separate and distinct systems. It is important for the reader to understand this difference so that he can fully comprehend what is being taught whenever the terms “Kidney System” are included in the discussion.
2. In this book, the term “Dan Tian” refers to the lower abdomen region unless otherwise indicated.
3. The intention of the summary map at the beginning of each chapter is to help the reader understand the role that the information discussed within that chapter plays in relationship to the entire study of this book.
4. Before attempting any of the exercises explained in the book, please read the book carefully and in its entirety.
5. Reading definitions: Full, empty, drop, sit, sink
6. Full - When the leg, for instance, is “full,” it means that most or all of the body’s weight is carried on that leg and the leg feels heavy.
7. Empty - When the leg, on the other hand, is “empty,” it means that little or no weight is carried on that leg, the opposite of “full.”

8. Drop - By sinking to relieve and transfer as much upper tension as possible, you lower or “drop” your “Chi” down to your base or ground, sometimes all the way down to the feet.
9. Drop - By sinking to relieve and transfer as much upper tension as possible, you lower or “drop” your “Chi” down to your base or ground, sometimes all the way down to the feet. 10. Sink - When we sink, the upper body “tension relief” physically moves all the way down to the lower abdominal area where it can pass down from the top of the torso to the bottom of the torso. Therefore, when we exhale, we sink, and the Chi goes down in the front of the body. This kind of physical pressure or tension relief would then continue to transfer down the outside of the legs, past the knees all the way to the bottom of the feet. Remember that sinking Chi has nothing to do with lowering the gravity.
10. Sit - When you “sit” properly, the appearance of your body structure will look like you are sitting on an invisible chair (or a high chair for beginners). To do this, the back, torso and upper body areas are relaxed and minimal muscle use maintains this “sitting position” while the bulk of the body mass weight is resting on the hips and carried by the legs and not by the knees and lower back.
11. Many of the exercises discussed in What Is Chi? are from Buddhist and Taoist exercises. The author takes a purely physical and logical approach to the information written and has no intention of Influencing the reader’s spiritual belief, practice or religion.
12. Take advantage of the Journey Map at the beginning of each chapter. It provides an overall view of how the data in each chapter interrelates and will help the reader navigate the book for a more thorough comprehension of the profound subject of Chi.



Chapter 1
What Is Chi?



Chi!

1.1 *What Is Chi?*

The term “Chi” is becoming so common in the West that it is already a household word and is familiar to doctors, therapists, martial arts experts and grade school children. Chi has been credited with everything from the therapeutic to the supernatural. Yet, if you ask any one of them what Chi is, at most, all you would get is a vague explanation.

So, Just Exactly What Is Chi?

The ancient Chinese related Chi to fire, it being the only known form of energy that they could associate Chi with. Today, however, a more appropriate translation of Chi compares it to electrical current. Chi is **not** a material substance but a kind of energy. Chi can have different purposes or different sources and can be called by several names like Central Chi, True Chi, good Chi, Original Natal Chi, Post Natal Chi, Major Chi or Minor Chi. This energy follows a pathway along meridians the Chinese refer to as *Jing Luo*.[\[1\]](#) For your interest, we are including copies of 14 pictures from an old Chinese book on the Jing Lou (pathways) in the body at the end of this chapter.

Chinese physicians frequently refer to these meridians to diagnose a patient's ailment since they believe that the circulation of Chi directly affects blood circulation. The Classics say Chi is the “leader of the blood.” If the Chi flows smoothly and is unobstructed, the body will be nourished by Chi and blood and then we can maintain continued good health. Likewise, the reverse applies. Any blockage of Chi in any of the meridians (*Jing Luo*) will precede poor health.

Where Does Chi Come From?

Chi is produced from male and female hormones (testosterone and estrogen) in what the Chinese call the Ming Men or Gate of Life, the area located between the kidneys. Chi is stored and driven from the Dan Tian, which is located in the vicinity of the lower abdomen.[\[2\]](#) Chi is continually circulating throughout our bodies even though we are often insensitive to its flow. For example, to illustrate how Chi circulates throughout the human body, imagine a simple battery and light bulb hookup (circuit.) The battery acid acts as the source (or catalyst) of electrical energy and is equivalent to hormones as the source (synergist or reactor) of Chi. The

wires connecting positive and negative receptors of the battery are channels through which electrical energy travels. Likewise, the meridians or Jing Luo are channels through which Chi (energy) flows. If the wires (or Jing Luo) are not broken or obstructed then the circuit will be complete. The battery, like the Dan Tian, is where energy is stored and the illuminated light bulb might be interpreted as the mind or Shen (see figure 1-1).

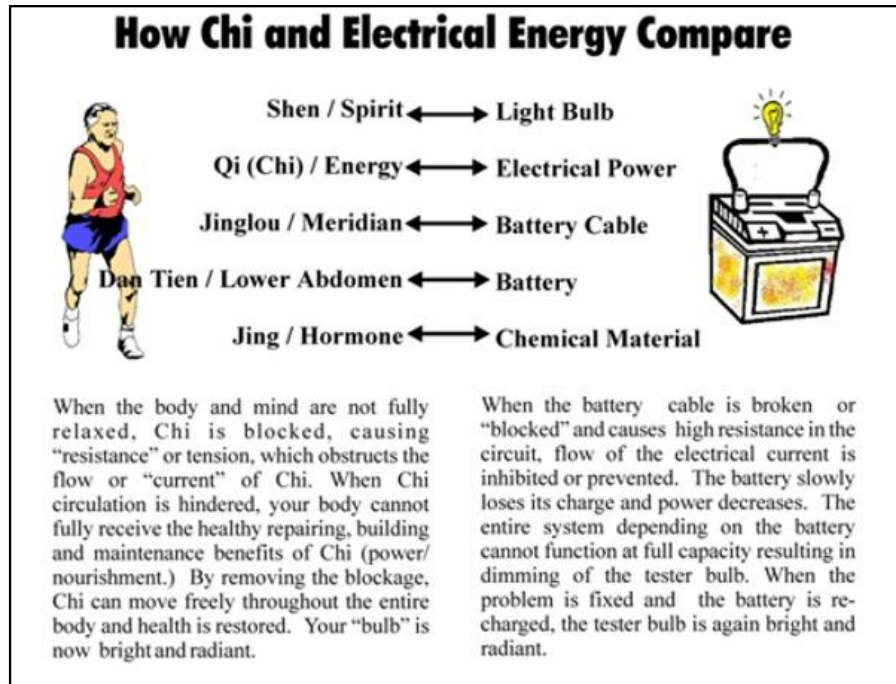


Figure 1-1 Chi and Electrical Energy Comparison

1.2 How Can You Sense the Presence of Chi?

Three Basic Feelings

Chi flows continuously in our body but usually it is not strong enough to actually be felt. Chi is present when you experience the following sensations:

1. A feeling of numbness or tingling on the outer layer or surface of the skin (epidermis)
2. An unusual sensation of heat throughout the body
3. A feeling of expansion or fullness (somewhat like an inflated balloon)

Numbness and **tingling** happen because of the *natural* electromagnetic response within the body cells when blood circulation increases. **Heat** is a byproduct of the heightened chemical reactions within the body cells.

Expansion is felt when the capillaries “inflate” due to increased activity. These sensations are normal responses of our body and indicate that the body has been activated and blood circulation has been improved.

The Difference Between Strong and Weak Chi Circulation

These feelings or sensations begin with the hands and arms then spread out to other parts of the body. When the feeling of Chi is located in the torso (upper body), it is known as **“Passing Though the Small Heavenly Circle.”** When it is felt in whole body it is known as **“Passing Though the Large Heavenly Circle.”** [\[3\]](#)

When one has strong Chi circulation, the benefits listed below will follow:

- Sleeping and eating become positively regulated
- The skin becomes smooth and you feel alert and refreshed
- The ability to adapt to extremes in temperature and environment (hot/cold, wet/dry, high/low altitude)
- The ability to recuperate quickly from an injury
- Strong resistance to disease
- Explosive power when moving

There are numerous real-life stories about the wondrous results of strong Chi like the story of Mr. Jiang below:

In January of 1983, Mr. Jiang Jialun was a researcher working with some Australian scientists at the South Pole. One day the boat Mr. Jiang and another scientist were in capsized in the freezing cold waters. The two scientists did their best and were able to swim to dry land. However, the helicopter that was supposed to

pick them up was not scheduled to arrive for another four and half hours. Since they both wore special electric-thermal clothing, they would be safe from the cold except that Mr. Jiang had lost a glove in the accident. The temperature was 50°C below zero and he was so cold that he truly believed he was going to die. All he could do was get into a Chi Gung sitting meditation posture and focus on the Dan Tian hoping to keep his body temperature from fatally dropping. He held this posture for about four and half hours until he finally saw the helicopter returning to pick them up. Right then he passed out. When he was rescued, his body temperature was 30°C! Not only did he survive but he also didn't need any amputation surgery, which is usually performed on survivors of this situation because usually they get frost bite-induced gangrene. The doctors viewed this as a miracle of some sort.

On the other hand, blocked or obstructed Chi can produce negative results like:

- Less sensitivity or feeling on the skin surface
- A feeling of coldness
- A feeling of emptiness

When Chi is weak, you can expect the following:

- Sleeping and eating disorders
- Depression and a gloomy outlook
- Low resistance to sickness and injury

Other Chi Sensations

With increased circulation of Chi you might experience sensations other than those described. Sometimes you could experience a sense of vibration, heaviness or lightness, or the feeling of “big” or “small”, and more. You may also experience a condition of “ultra-sensitivity.”

Once while doing Original Chen Style Tai Chi Lao Jia (Old Form) Grandmaster Chen Quanzhong experienced a very strong surge of Chi. He was practicing “Clouds Hands” when this unusual feeling overcame him. The sensation was so strong that he continued “Clouds Hands” for over two hours. He said that it felt as though his body had vanished and that his “spirit” hovered over him in mid-air. He described it as a wonderful experience.

1.3 How to Strengthen Chi Circulation

Proper body alignment, a wholesome diet, correct breathing, and good mental hygiene will help to insure good Chi circulation. Some exercises to stimulate and intensify Chi circulation are:

- Dao Yin - physical exercise
- Tu Na - breathing exercises

Let's review the comparison as previously explained in figure 1-1 so that we can fully understand the progression from Jing to Shen as shown in the analogy in figure 1-2. Pay attention to this analogy Chart because you will be referring to it throughout the book.

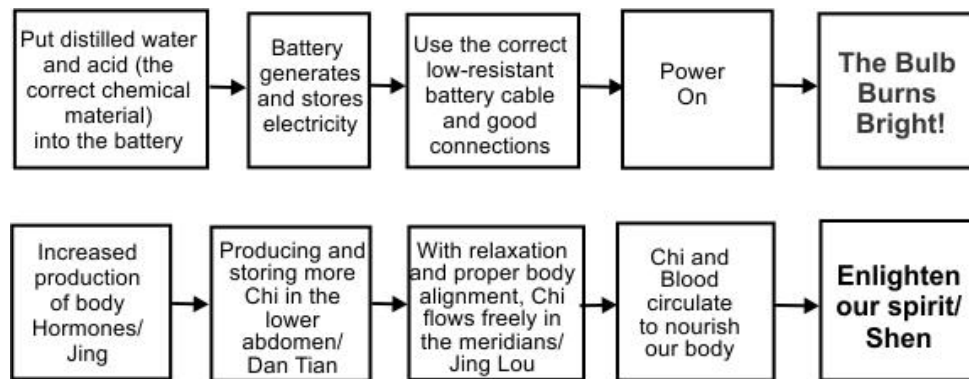


Figure 1-2 Progression for Jing to Shen

If you do not understand how to do these steps or if you pursue the *wrong* goal, you could be improperly training and this could result in serious consequences. Investigate which Chi exercise provides a safe way for you to gather and replenish Chi in a short while, then when you practice diligently at your own pace you will enjoy the health benefits of good Chi circulation.

There is nothing mystical or supernatural about Chi. Simply put, there is a definite relationship between good Chi circulation and good health, whereas poor Chi circulation could have negative results. There are over a hundred different kind of Chi exercises we call Chi Gung but the goal is the same: to step by step produce, save, grow, drive and utilize Chi.

1.4 The Gap Between Eastern and Western Understanding Is Greater Than the Pacific Ocean

It took years for the Western Medical community to pay attention to Traditional Chinese Medicine. During that time Western Medicine did not acknowledge the Chi meridians (Jing Lou) because they do not contain any nerves, blood vessels or other physical material. It wasn't until President Nixon's visit to China that Western people first saw a demonstration of working with Chi when they witnessed open-heart surgery at Shanghai Hospital. This procedure was performed without anesthesia, and there was no sensation of pain. In fact, what also impressed so many people was that the patient was awake and coherent throughout the operation.



Figure 1-4

This open-heart surgery at Shanghai Hospital was performed without anesthesia. There was no sensation of pain and the patient was awake and conversing during the surgery.

Dr. Isadore Rosenfeld visited a hospital at the University of Shanghai in China where he witnessed this operation first hand. When Dr. Rosenfeld asked the Chinese doctors for scientific proof of the Jing Lou and Chi feeling, they laughed and replied: "Why should we spend time, money and resources just to convince Western doctors of something we've used successfully for thousands of years? What better proof do you need than that woman lying wide awake on the table with her chest open?"

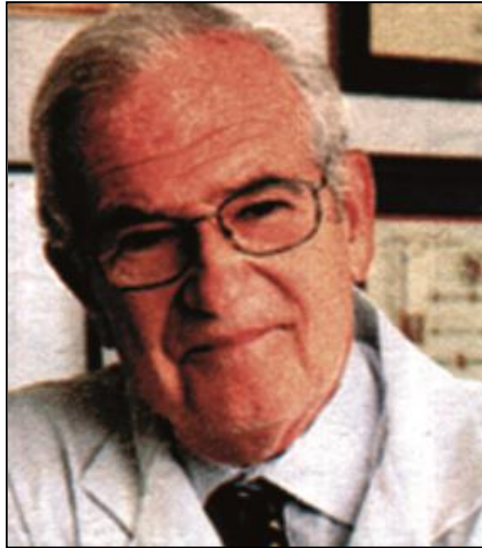


Figure 1-3 Dr. Isadore Rosenfeld

He enthusiastically tried to share this valuable experience when he returned to the states but he was stunned by the reaction of colleagues and associates. Many of them actually claimed that he must have been totally brainwashed by the Chinese government into believing this hoax. So, in spite of such clear hard evidence from this impressive demonstration, Western people and doctors still were not ready to accept the concepts of Chi and the Jing Lou.

However, many scientists are already conducting serious studies to get the facts about Chi, which cannot be explained by Western medical knowledge. So far, there are many theories about what Chi is, but as yet, none of them can explain the entire the concept of the Jing Lou System. Below is a list of some of these theories:

- Chi is a Bio-electromagnetic phenomenon.
- External Chi (Wai Chi) is a far infrared wave.
- Stimulating an acupuncture point “triggers” activity in the brain precisely in the area relating to that point’s associated organ.
- The brain responds to acupuncture by sending chemical signals that affect the body.

This book provides knowledge about Chi in the Chinese way [4] with many actual people's real experiences. It is hoped that this book will also help further scientific study in the future.

The following pages show some of the Old Chinese diagrams of the *Jing Lou* pathways.



Figure 1-5 Lung Arm, Tai Yin Meridian



Figure 1-6 Pericardium – Heart, Jue Yin Meridian



Figure 1-7 Heart-Arm, Shao Yin Meridian

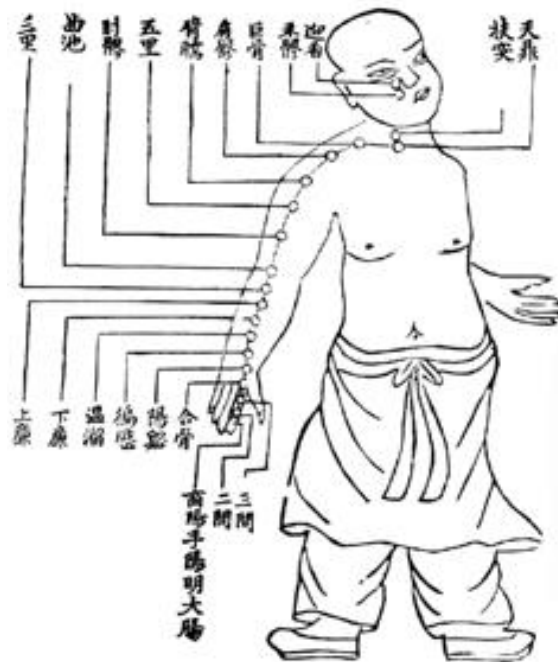
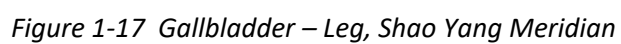


Figure 1-8 Large Intestine – Arm, Yang Ming Meridian



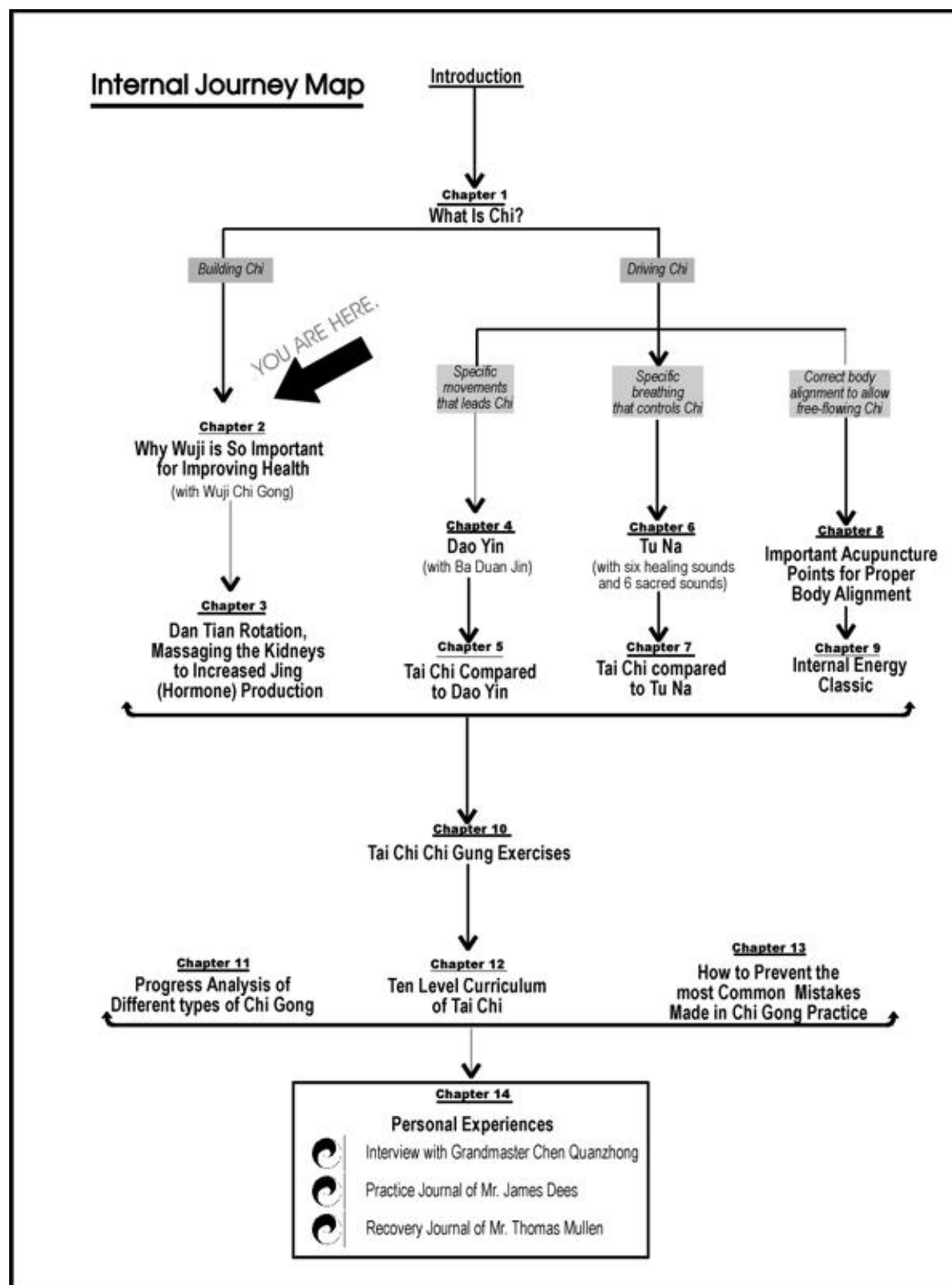
Chapter 1 Footnotes

1. *Chinese people not only describe the energy of the human body by this concept of Chi but also the energy, which completely saturates nature as well. Study notes that Chi/energy is hidden and yet permeates throughout our natural environment and is usually referred to as “Feng Shui.” Feng translates as wind, and Shui means water. Chi is often equated to air and our blood is the liquid. You can see the comparison between “feng Shui” and “Chi and blood.”*
2. *In this book, the term “Dan Tian” refers to the lower abdomen region unless otherwise indicated. There are more details in Chapter 6.*
3. *For more details see Chapter 6.*
4. *Many concepts of Traditional Chinese Medical Theory differ from those of Western Medical Theory. Translating Chinese theorems literally makes their meaning illusive and therefore misunderstood. For example, throughout this book, we refer to the “Kidney System” based on the definition from Traditional Chinese Medical Theory not the Western Medical definition. The Chinese Kidney System includes the Urinary System, the Reproductive System and the Endocrine System. It is important for the reader to understand this difference so that he can fully comprehend what is being discussed whenever the terms “Kidney System” are used.*



Chapter 2

Why Wuji Is So Important For Improving Health



A Journey Begins Here.

2.1 The Meaning of Wuji

In Chinese philosophy, *Wuji* means absolute quiet, to be devoid of any movement, thought or activity - complete *nothingness*! *Wuji* is the *quiet* before the very beginning and after the very end. *Tai Chi comes from Wuji* and *returns to Wuji* and is represented by the center circle within the large circle of the Tai Chi symbol. The exercise discussed here is based on this philosophy

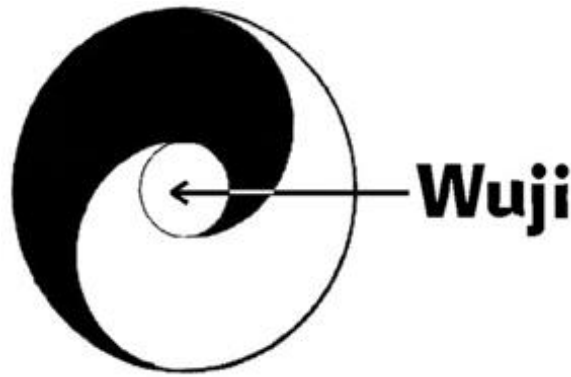


Figure 2-1
Tai Chi begins and ends with Wuji; the quiet in the center

2.2 Reduce Tension to Help Chi Circulation

The *Wuji* exercise immediately reduces tension, even deep and unconscious body tension, which usually goes undetected. Often we are unaware of these “background” tensions and by the time we discover their unhealthy effect on us, it may be too late. By then, they have contributed to minor discomforts like headaches, indigestion, high blood pressure and other ailments common in our high stress society. When these deep tensions continue unchecked, eventually they can result in serious illness, disease or injury.

Chinese Medicine teaches that tension (stress) will block the continuous smooth flow of *Chi*. Because *Chi is the leader of the blood*, poor *Chi* circulation will negatively influence the blood circulation, causing the body to grow improperly. Without the nourishment provided by a strong *Chi*/blood movement, our body becomes *dry* and stiff, unable to optimize organic performance. Good *Chi* and blood flow enable the body’s systems to be *fluid* and soft in order to be successfully functional. Without good *Chi*/blood circulation the total body, its organs and its systems (nervous, circulatory, digestive, etc.) fall out of natural harmony. This results in sickness, weakness, systemic breakdowns, and stress-related illnesses and disorders. *Chi* flow stimulates blood flow, which is vital for a good interchange of the internal energy necessary for good health.

The Domino Effect of Stress on our Health

- Step 1 Mind is out of harmony**
- Step 2 Kidneys become weak**
- Step 3 Hormone production decreases**
- Step 4 Less energy (Chi) is stimulated**
- Step 5 Entire organic body does not receive enough nourishment from Chi and blood**
- Step 6 We weaken our body and become sick**

Figures 2-2 and 2-3 The Domino Effect Figure 2-2

The Best and Natural Way to Improve our Health

- Step 1 Mind is quiet and in harmony**
- Step 2 Kidneys become strong**
- Step 3 Hormone production increases**
- Step 4 More energy (Chi) is stimulated**
- Step 5 Entire organic body is nourished and feasts on Chi and blood**
- Step 6 We become stronger from the inside out**

When you develop the ability to relax completely and go into a deep “quiet” or “void” in time, you will reduce and eventually reverse the damage produced by pressure and emotional or physical strain. Initially it may appear that nothing has changed outwardly, but in fact, much has changed internally. After practicing Wuji, many people discover that their face and hands become warm and red, and the flesh (as in the hands) appears more “puffy” and softer to the touch than usual. These traits are evidence of good (Chi) circulation.

2.3 Strengthen the Kidney System to Produce More Energy

Today, we are more aware of how unhealthy emotions like anger, worry, fear, sadness and insecurity affect our physical well being. Modern medicine emphasizes that stress and tension are the largest contributing factors to the alarming increase in heart disease, nervous disorders, weakness, mental failure, and general health breakdowns. The greatest killer in this country is stress and related illnesses or conditions.

According to the theory of Chinese Medicine, each emotion is directly related to a specific bodily function or organ, and “quiet” or harmony helps the kidneys to heighten the hormonal system. The kidneys are considered the most important organs of the body and directly connected to the hormone system. When the mind is quiet and relaxed, the kidneys become stronger and more stable, and stimulate hormone production. Due to this increased hormonal surge, more energy/Chi is generated. Then, all bodily systems and organic material like bones, organs and skin, *in their turn*, feast on the Chi and blood (*refer to Figure 2- 3.*) If the kidney is denied quiet and stillness, energy decreases, producing ill side effects such as loss of strength. As a result, each organ and system, like the “domino effect” is adversely affected, one after the other (*refer to Figure 2-2*).

According to popular and professional opinions, a nutritious diet, proper exercise, fresh air and correct sleeping habits are necessary to preserve good health. Physical exercises like bodybuilding, aerobics and yoga can draw Chi to specific areas and also increase circulation. However, this represents a short-term solution for long-term health. This concept is better explained by the analogy of the ordinary battery.

When the battery’s circuit is properly connected and the voltage is increased, the tester bulb brightens. However, if the battery is not recharged or changed to a stronger one (represented by steps 1 through 4 from Figure 2-3), the bulb stays lit for a shorter period of time because the battery will be drained of power more quickly. Likewise, you can generate Chi with exercise but if you do not include these steps, you are attempting to light the bulb without improving your battery. Based on this theory, even people who make absolutely no effort to maintain a long healthful life and are just easygoing can actually out live the proverbial health fanatic. This is because the efforts of these health conscious people start after Step 5 and although

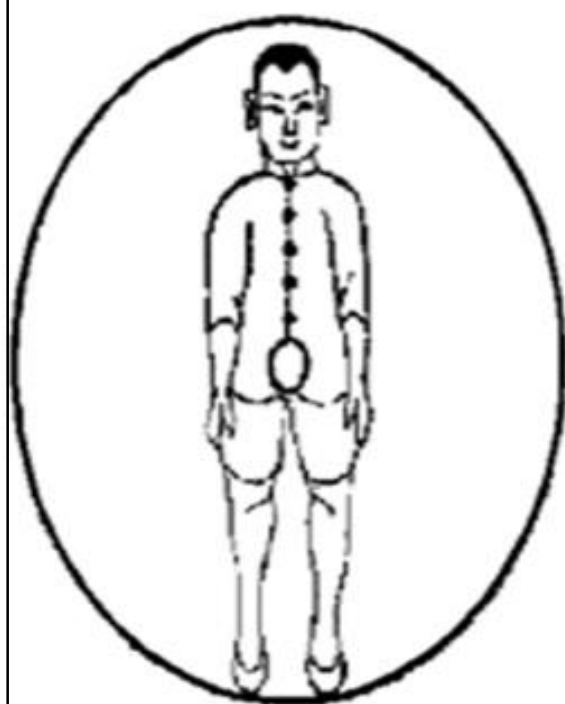
they will burn their bulb brighter, it will burn for a shorter time with the same battery. An easygoing person burns his bulb at a consistently lower voltage for a longer period of time using the same battery (long life).

Every day we witness many situations which define the critical role harmony plays in maintaining good health. We often hear of a person who, in spite of making all the right choices to maintain good health, unexpectedly suffers a severe injury or crippling disease, or even dies prematurely. And yet, we observe the opposite where people survive to old age even though they have abused their bodies with physical habits that would normally guarantee an early disease or even death. But somehow they live a long time with little or no suffering, despite their poor lifestyle. Why? It is simple. Quite often those people, for one reason or another, give minimal attention to their stress and emotional challenges. Therefore, without realizing it, they were able to reduce or eliminate their worry and anxiety, tremendously benefiting mental and physical health.

People who can relax therefore do not empower their daily tensions and are better able to nourish the *internal* body and physically resist the potential bad effects from such negative pressure. They automatically enjoy better health.

There is an old Chinese saying with a very sound physiological basis: “kind people have a long life.” By understanding the important role peace and quiet have on our health, we can see why people in harmony (kind people) have a long life. They obviously, and perhaps unknowingly, took good care of their peace of mind and were able to let go of internal obstructions. They experienced “quiet.”

無極象圖



無極者一物未有也太動以上渾渾
 穆穆混混沌沌所謂大混沌者即此
 時也學者上場打拳端然恭立合目
 息氣引手下垂身棲巖正兩足並齊
 心中一物無所著一念無所思穆穆
 皇皇渾然如大混沌無極象故其
 形無可名名之曰無極象形也



Figure 2-5 Wuji



*Figure 2-6
Visualize a calm place and focus on peace*

2.4 Easy to Enjoy

Wuji really is a simple exercise; you just have to do the following steps listed below:

1. Stand naturally with the feet placed apart to the width of the shoulders. Place your hands to your side with the palms facing inwardly (see Figure 2-5).

2. Close your eyes and smile a little. Your tongue should naturally touch the roof of your mouth. Make certain that your body is straight with minimal or no muscle tension (see Figure 2-5).
3. Imagine taking a shower inside your body, meaning that warm water at the top of the head would slowly trickle down while cleansing the whole body and exiting from the bottom of your feet. Repeat this mental exercise three times.
4. At the same time, gently focus your mind on the lower abdomen (Dan Tian) but do not force the attention.
3. Imagine taking a shower inside your body, meaning that warm water at the top of the head would slowly trickle down while cleansing the whole body and exiting from the bottom of your feet. Repeat this mental exercise three times.
4. At the same time, gently focus your mind on the lower abdomen (Dan Tian) but do not force the attention.
5. Visualize a calm, peaceful place like the middle of the ocean, top of a mountain or deep within a forest. Keep that focus as long as you can (see Figure 2-6).
7. Walk around for one or two minutes.



Figure 2-7 Wuji Closing

This exercise is a wonderful exercise! The goal is to reach a state of nothingness, a calmness encountered only when you completely relax and release all tension and internal stress. The correct Wuji standing posture can be learned easily and with minimal daily exercise, Wuji will soon benefit you mentally and physically. Good Wuji does not require any strict scheduling or special timing. You can start with three or five minutes at a time and do it as often as you can. Gradually increase your practice time at your own pace. There is no rush to excel; the main objective is quiet.

Successful meditation can help you gain tranquility but some styles of meditation do not really produce serenity as intended. They can consist of a series of complicated movements, imagination activity, visualization exercises, breath control technique and various other aversions. Most people need to relax deeply but are unable to, so they tend to pursue these meditations and exercises to help them. However, it is possible to be misled by technique and this can defeat the main purpose, which is the attainment of peace and quiet. In addition, the extra expense might even *contribute* to one's stress load.

2.5 The Beginning of Internal Exercises

Chinese Medicine has taught for thousands of years that, for all intents and purposes, proper exercise and nutrition are good but the **most** significant factor in good health is to first have peace and quiet, internal harmony. This is the key point emphasized by Chen Xin, 16th generation Chen Family in his great works, Illustration of Chen Style Tai Chi:

"The mind is the director and control center of the body; the kidney is the source of life (the building and rejuvenating energy of the body). We must clear our mind of all desires and distractions in order to build, protect and maintain a well-developed foundation. When our foundation or root (mind and kidney) is stable and strong, our body is also stable and strong like a well-rooted tree, which produces flourishing leaves and healthy limbs. With a strong foundation, our body will perform well at anything we choose. This is the most important principle.

No matter how many theories and concepts are practiced, there is none more important than clearing our minds of all distractions in order to build a good foundation. A good foundation increases Original Natal Chi and is the source of our body's life force. As your body becomes stronger, your practice will develop better than someone who doesn't understand and apply this primary principle."

When your mind is calm, you will experience conscious and unconscious changes. As you let go, you release muscle tension and distractions like pain and mental "chatter." You then begin to enjoy the benefits of Wuji. Try it. See how deep into this quiet state you can go and what sensations you can experience.

2.6 For Your Information

- Thanks to Bruce Lee, Wing Chun has already become very popular in the West. Many Wing Chun artists are quite proficient in the form and practice drills. However, do you know that there is an “internal exercise” in the original old Wing Chun? A long time ago in the early days, this “very special” exercise was only passed onto the next generation’s “lineage holder,” Zhang Men Ren [\[5\]](#). Today, most people hardly ever hear about this style developed, which distinguished the “lineage holder” from the rest of the descendants. internal exercise called Shen Qi Gui Yuan or “Kidney Qi goes back to Original Place.” You can probably guess from the name what this exercise is for and see how it was largely responsible for the superiority of
- In the Shaolin Temple, the very first exercises given to beginners are “sitting quietly,” and reading and memorizing some of Buddha’s Books. Some people think that this was a test of patience but that’s just not true. These exercises are very important! Without cleansing the mind, there is no peace and quiet and, later on, when practicing, a martial artist can actually get hurt. If you refer back to the lesson of the battery circuit comparison, you will now understand even more the value of “sitting quietly.”
- Today the term Zen (*Chan*) is very well known. The *Chan* branch of Buddhism originated in the Shaolin Temple more than 1,300 years ago. Do you know that the meaning of *Chan* is “THINKING QUIETLY?” It should now become quite clear to you why the Shaolin martial arts are so good.
- *Professor Cheng Men Ch’ing was not only a good Tai Chi Master, but also a very good Doctor of Chinese Medicine who specialized in lung diseases. Because he cured the wife of Grandmaster Yang Cheng Fu of lung disease, he was able to learn T’ai Chi from him. Therefore, in his book [\[6\]](#), there is one treatise which is totally dedicated to the lungs. Here he discusses the importance of the kidneys:*

“Kidney energy deficiency is the cause of sixty to seventy percent of the cases of tuberculosis. It is also said that the lungs are like the branches of a tree and the kidneys are like the trunk. When the trunk decays, the leaves dry first and fall. The lungs are the weakest organ and will no doubt become diseased before the kidneys. The sinking of the Chi to the tan tien in Tai Chi Chuan is the function of the fire under water as in the hexagram, “After Completion.” This is the only way to strengthen the kidneys. If the kidney Chi is strong, the lung Chi will recover. This is a special result of Tai Chi Chuan, and no one can dispute it.” [\[7\]](#)

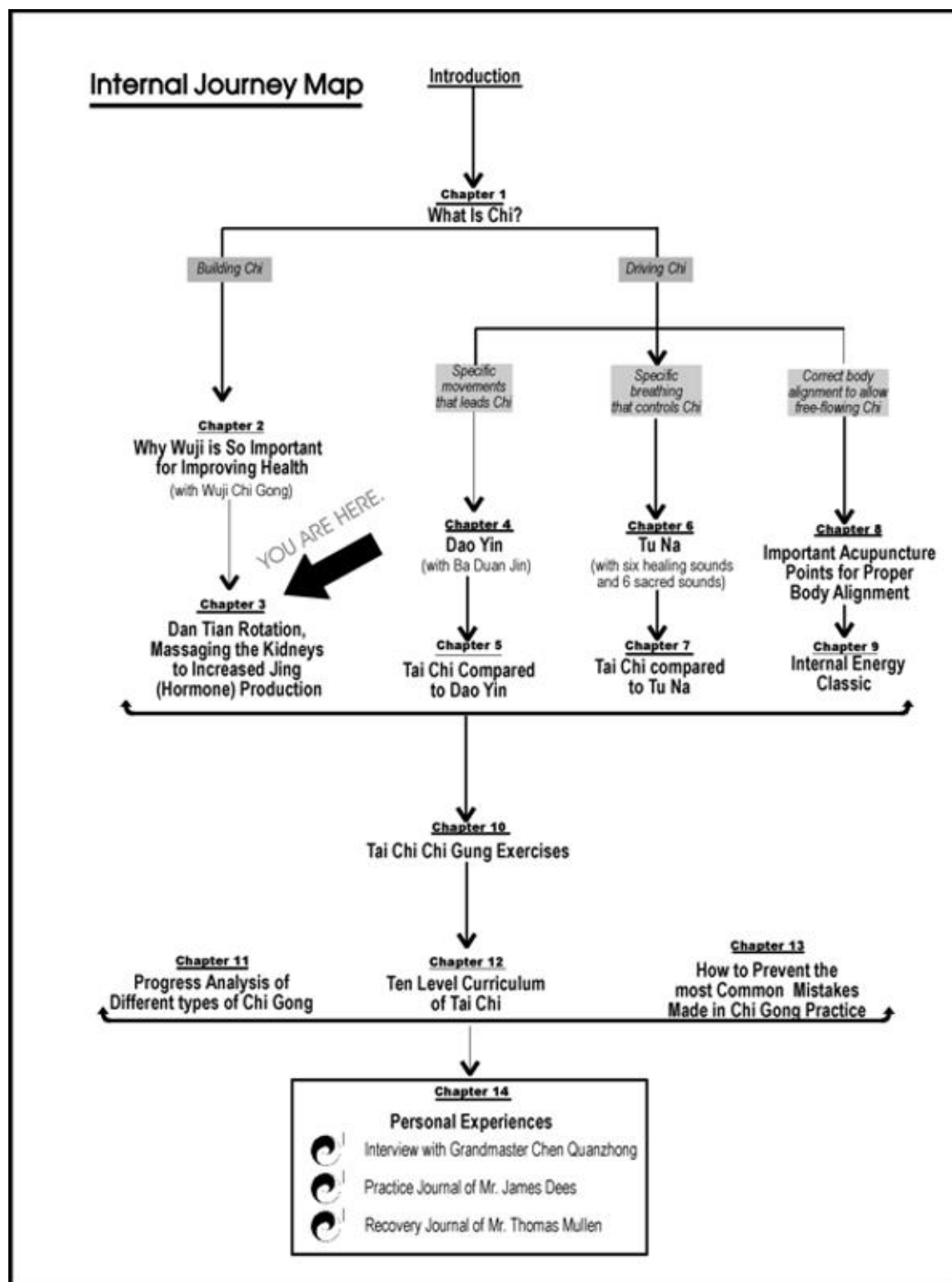
Chapter 2 Footnotes

5. *In every discipline there is one person out of all the descendants who is designated to eventually lead the other descendants.*
6. *Cheng Tzu's Thirteen Treatises on T'ai Chi Ch'uan by Professor Cheng Man Ch'ing translate by Benjamin Pang Jeng Lo and Martin Inn; North Atlantic Books, Berkeley, California.*
7. *Pages 72-73, Cheng Tzu's Thirteen Treatises on T'ai Chi Ch'uan.*



Chapter 3

Dan Tian Rotation,
Massaging the Kidneys to
Increase Jing (Hormone) Production



More Hormones Mean More Energy.

3.1 Other ways to Stimulate the Kidney/ Reproduction System

Wuji is a wonderful way to help relax the body and quiet the mind in order to invigorate and fortify the Kidney System, which includes the Urinary System, the Reproductive System and the Endocrine System. Besides this basic method, there are numerous other methods and exercises you can also do to strengthen the kidney system. For example, here is a brief list of some of the many ways to stimulate and maintain a strong kidney system:

- Exercises that work directly with the area where the kidney meridians pass, see Figure 1-13/Chapter 1.
- Breathing exercises like Nei Dan and the Six Healing Sounds. [8]
- Massages for the Kidney System organs. For example, there are specific massage techniques for the male testes, which maintain and strengthen the male reproductive organs
- Exercises that contract and expand the kidney area (internal massage), like exercise #6 in the Eight Piece Brocade, Figure 4-9. [9]
- Specific exercises done by sexually active male and female partners, which include different postures, procedures, physical surroundings and so on.
- Special diets and herbs to maintain and increase the capabilities of the kidney system.

In Tai Chi form practice, there is a special method for boosting health through the kidney system called *Dan Tian rotation*. Rotating the Dan Tian is a very effective and safe way to massage the kidney system, which allows people to secrete more hormones.

3.2 Even Within Internal Exercises, There's "Internal-Internal" and "External-Internal"

Chinese Medicine Theory can be certified into two major schools called *Xin Shen Pai* or Heart-Kidney School and *Pi Wei Pai* or Spleen-Stomach School. They both deal with internal issues, but much like the Kung Fu system, each system is further divided into two categories; one is for “internal” issues and the other is for “external” issues. Because of this, each system has an “Internal-Internal” category and “External-Internal” category.

The basic concept of the *Pi Wei Pai* is that weakness is caused by energy depletion and that the shortest way to build energy is externally, through the assimilation of food, water and air. Improving the function of the spleen and stomach will enable these organs to assimilate the ingested nutrients better and provide strength.

The concept of *Xin Shen Pai* style is that the basic drive for all activity is due to the functionality of the kidney system. If we produce enough hormones, then we will always have enough energy. The Chinese call this basic energy or basic sexual drive *Original Natal Chi*. Whereas the Chinese call energy derived externally, from food and water, for example, *Postnatal Chi*.

When *Pi Wei Pai* theory is applied, people generally gain weight, become stronger and get well. The treatment often used in this “stomach-spleen” system is to help a person’s digestion. If there are no complications, the person’s strength is restored and he gets better in reasonable time. When *Xin Shen Pai* theory is applied, people gradually become more energized, more aware and bring more order in their life. The treatment often used in this “heart-kidney” system is to increase hormone production.

Usually from the outer appearance, the *Pi Wei Pai* system seems to work faster than the *Xin Shen Pai*, but for long-term health and preventive maintenance, the *Xin Shen Pai* theory applies. In this analogy, a gardener sprays a special treatment on the leaves of a tree to make it look more beautiful. The tree’s appearance improves quickly (short-term result), but, if the gardener does not also add nutrients to the soil to feed the roots (long-term result), eventually the beautiful tree will slowly wither away. Changing the tree internally through the natural root system is a much better way to sustain health, beauty and longevity. So strengthening the kidney system should be the root of health maintenance procedures.

Based on these two different schools of thought on health maintenance, internal energy exercise (Chi Gong) could also be divided into two schools, Internal-Internal and External-Internal. Usually strong, forceful breathing ends up as External-Internal but natural gentle breathing is Internal-Internal. If you have practiced

any Chi Gong before, try this. First inhale forcibly and then hold it. You will feel the lungs fill as the stomach gets squeezed on. You can feel how this activates the *upper* abdominal area, where the stomach and spleen are located. Now, breathe naturally, deep, slow and gently and you can feel how this activates the *lower* abdominal area, where the reproductive system is located. Remember that breathing is only one aspect of internal exercises (Chi Gung). There are many other ways to affect our inner organs and systems.

Tai Chi is based on Xin Shen Pai theory and deals with *Original Natal Chi/ Prenatal Chi*. All the exercises in Tai Chi, whether they are physical, breathing or mental exercises, begin with activating the kidney system.

3.3 Two Important Concepts of Xin Shen Pai

The Concept of “Water on Top, Fire Below”

Chinese Medicine Theory believes that today over 90% of our regular [\[10\]](#) health problems are caused by chest tension and lack of activity in the organs of lower body. Physical tension in any specific area will cause the body to bring more blood and energy to that area. Prolonged periods of chest tension will make the energy remain in the upper body region. Therefore, the heart beats too fast, the blood pressure rises, breathing becomes too shallow and rapid, and more pressure is exerted on the eyes, sinuses and other upper body areas. Prolonged imbalance in the upper body or torso can result in heart and blood circulation problems, breathing disorders like asthma, headaches, neck and back pain, and more.

Meanwhile, reduced activity in the lower body causes the digestive and elimination systems to slow down and the kidney and liver and many other organs in the abdominal and pelvic area are less productive. Because of this there is less blood manufactured, less purification, and more toxins in the system. Prolonged imbalance in the lower body or abdominal and pelvic area can result in an overweight belly, diabetes, indigestion, radical eating regimens, whimsical diets and reduced hormone production causing a person to become lethargic. This lower body imbalance can also result in reduced vital secretions like the hormones and enzymes produced by many other organs including bile from the liver or insulin from the pancreas. Such an imbalance, if not corrected, can ultimately result in all kinds of chemical imbalances causing a breakdown or weakening of the entire immune system.

You probably don't realize that unnatural tightness of your chest can cause so much trouble. Let's try this experiment to further understand:

Calm down and relax as much as you can; then think of the following things:

- 1) You just happen to buy a winning lottery ticket.
- 2) Your favorite team just lost the championship match because of a bad call.
- 3) You waited a little too long to unload your stock and it plunged 200 points just as you were ready to sell.

Feel that? Your chest immediately tensed and your blood pressure went up. This is the body's natural reaction. The problem is that in modern times, we have too much "emotional overload"; "we want this," "we want that," "we hate this," "we like that." Every time we experience such negative disturbances, our chest muscles automatically tense! After years of this emotional roller coaster, the chest area becomes increasingly tense and then the problems begin from there.

These early Chinese researchers recognized that lower body inactivity combined with chest tension could adversely affect people physically including back and shoulder problems. Most of us have heard "lift heavy weight with the legs" to avoid back injury, but many of us unconsciously use the upper (tense) body to lift heavy things anyway, disregarding this wise preventive maintenance rule.

They discovered a simple effective way to deal with these health threats: releasing chest tension! They realized that when upper body tension was released and the chest was empty, the mind became clear, and the lower abdominal and back areas became active and warm. They also discovered that whoever utilizes the lower abdomen to take force or impact usually reduces the risk of injury in any physical movement.

Today, people agree that stress is related to health disorders. Many researchers are already discovering this through statistical analysis but they are still trying to understand this concept by studying isolated areas rather than the body as a whole. Other research recently revealed that prayer and meditation could be very beneficial for our health. Some cases have proven to be quite amazing. We don't believe that this is a divine intervention or some super metaphysical power. It is simple. When people pray they are quiet, relaxed and their minds are *usually* not motivated by desire. Besides, a quiet mind will help the kidney system function well, which was discussed in Chapter 2; the chest also relaxes and the body starts to balance itself. Most of us

are not ready to become a monk or a nun yet. We are average people. Of course, we have our desires, but if we can do some correct exercising, we can still relax the upper body.

It was a common practice in the old days long before the inception of modern medicine for the Chinese to use symbolism to define terms and conditions. For example, **water** symbolized the *passive state* and **fire** symbolized the *active state*. Back then the Chinese maintained the belief that theoretically *water on top* (upper torso/chest) and *fire below* (lower torso/abdomen) is good but in reverse this state becomes destructive to health. These are really not new ideas in Traditional Chinese Medicine, but are based on a long history of intense research and experimentation. For thousands of years the Chinese have done all kinds of exercises to help energy circulate. These ancient internal exercises have always emphasized that the upper body should be “light” or empty (Yin) and the lower body should be “heavy” or full (Yang.)

In the I-Ching, a famous philosophy book written about 3,000 years ago, there are two hexagrams called Tai and Pi which illustrate the two opposite extremes of stability. In Tai, notice that the upper half of the hexagram has all broken lines (empty) and is entirely supported by all solid lines (full) of the bottom half. Therefore, Tai is all *yin* on top and all *yang* on the bottom, which translates as very stable and peaceful. Pi, as you can see, is just the opposite, meaning unstable and out of balance.

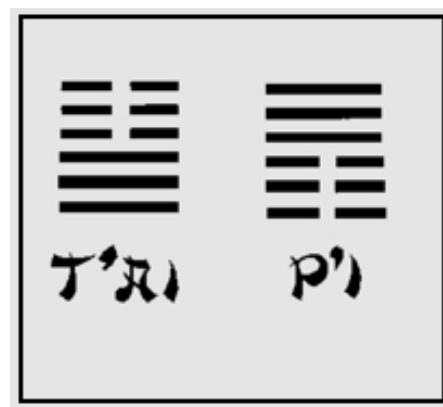


Figure 3-1 Tai and Pi Hexagram

These hexagrams are symbolic language used in the ancient days of China. All through history, man has created many methods of symbolism and coding, like cuneiform, the “dot-or-dash” Morse code method, or the “zero-one” binary language to communicate or record information. The solid-broken lines or *Yin-Yang* formulated hexagrams developed by the ancient Chinese is just another type of coding.

Another historic reference can be found in the famous philosophy book called Tao Te Ching (Dao De Jing). This book was written about 2,300 years ago and recommends that “the way for a sage to control is to empty his heart and fill his belly. [\[11\]](#) Good internal practitioners have a clear mind, no pressure on the chest, breathe slowly and deeply, and feel warmth in the kidney and pelvic regions, which means that the lower body is active.”

The Concept of “Fire From Ming Men”

Ming Men or “Gate of Life” is the area located between the kidneys in the back behind the navel area. When we talk about the fire below, that fire is from Ming Men. When someone’s fire is strong, he is energetic, and when it is out, he’s dead. The main reason why the Chinese think this way is that the Ming Men controls the kidney system functionality, which is the basic drive of all activity. Stimulating the Ming Men makes the kidneys function better, and then hormone production increases, which maintains good health at our “roots.”

Once the lower part of the body is more active and the upper is passive, the Chinese say that the “water is on top and the fire is below” or that water and fire cooperate. This means that the water on the top will absorb and utilize the energy from below, like fire heating water and as long as there is always enough water on top, the fire cannot get out of control, no matter how much fire is generated. When the fire and water cooperate the internal organs are in balance and your body functions within a healthy positive energy cycle.

The natural tendency of the body as it ages is to become passive in the lower part of the body and active in the upper part, like the hexagram Pi. Finally, the fire in the lower body/Ming Men goes completely out, no energy is produced, and in the meantime there is nothing left to balance the upper body fire and all the energy burns away. For long-term health care strategy, the Chinese people try to slow down or even reverse this aging process. They call this a “reversal procedure.” The key to this strategy is to activate the Ming Men.

The Ming Men theory is the core of the Xin Shen Pai system, which is a continuation of the “fire and water” concept. Many styles use certain methods and exercises to stimulate and massage this area. In Tai Chi, the way to activate the lower body and stimulate the Ming Men area more is by Dan Tian rotation.

3.4 *Dan Tian Rotation*

General Definition of Dan Tian Rotation

In Tai Chi movements, everything starts with and ends at the Ming Men, the source or center of all movement. And it doesn't matter whether you are doing footwork, hand movements or body postures because every movement in Tai Chi stimulates the Ming Men to release more hormones.

In order to make the Ming Men area the source of all movement, you must release any pressure there first. When this area gets stuck, the entire body moves like a robot and appears to have little or no torso mobility. Throughout this book there will be more in-depth and detailed discussions on body requirements. Listed below is a condensed version of the body requirements for Dan Tian Rotation [\[12\]](#).

- Suspend the head
- Relax the shoulders
- Drop the elbows
- Hollow the chest
- Sink lower back
- Relax the Intercostal areas (both sides of the rib cage)
- Open the hip joints
- Shape the inner thighs like an arch
- Place both feet flat and evenly weighted on the ground
- Point the tailbone downwardly to keep the back/spine straight, especially when turning

When you fulfill all these body requirements, you are ready to learn Dan Tian rotation.

First the back muscles that cover the kidneys on both the left and right sides flex and contract in an up and down direction like a seesaw. The Ming Men is the fulcrum or leverage support for these “seesaw”-acting muscles, which means that the back musculature is responsible for the physical movement but it is the Ming Men that *controls* it. Second, the waist turns left or right. Third, the hips open and rotate in their sockets. So

when the Ming Men area activity works in conjunction with the hips and waist to cause the lower abdominal area to rotate, this is called *Dan Tian rotation*.

Let's see how Dan Tian rotation is done with footwork and arm work in order to stimulate the Ming Men. For easier reading, the "lower back area to the right of the Ming Men" from here on will be called the *right* Ming Men area and vice versa for the *left* Ming Men area. (Just remember, the Ming Men is an acupuncture point, not an area.)

How to Rotate the Dan Tian with Footwork

The following illustrations on the next four pages demonstrate the step-by-step process of Dan Tian rotation in one sample movement.

Lifting The Foot

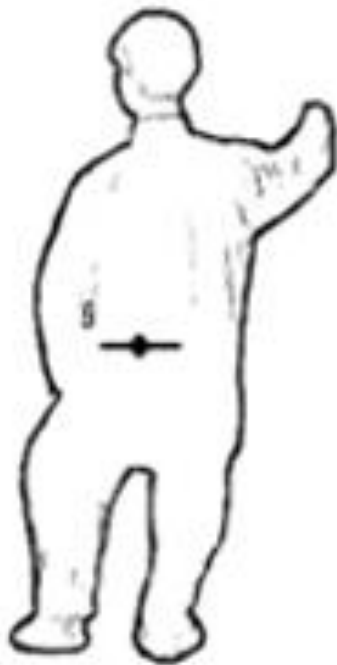


Figure 3-2
Ming Men location, Back View

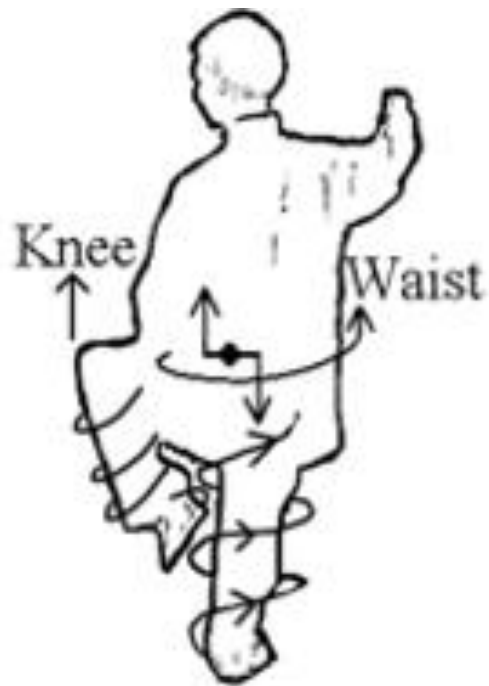


Figure 3-3
Lifting the foot

When lifting the left leg, the lower portion of the right Ming Men area sinks down while the portion the left Ming Men area rises slightly. Now the right leg is full or carrying 100 of the body weight. The leg spirals inwardly down to the ground and at the same time, the toes, especially the big toe, gently grab the ground as the heel slightly pushes out. This is opening the (right) hip joint. The full right leg supports the body, while the left leg carries no weight or is empty, and lifts upward. As the left knee continues to rise, the left leg naturally spirals upward as the toes slightly rotate outward. By relaxing the left inguinal crease, the body turns to the left. You can understand how the Ming Men serves as a fulcrum between the up and down motions of the right and left portions of the lower body.

Extending the leg

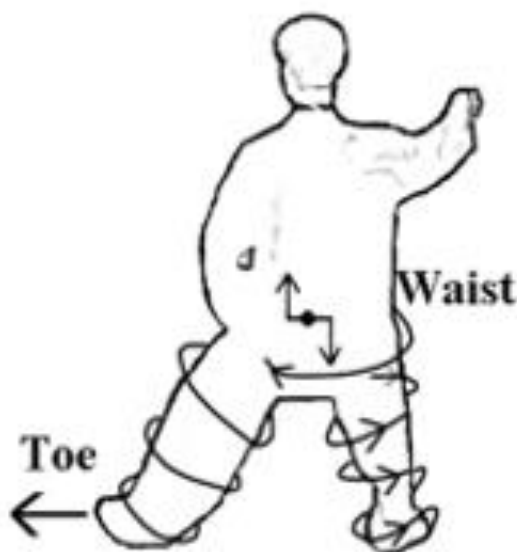


Figure 3-4 Extending the leg

The left leg extends as the left Ming Men area rises while right Ming Men area continues to lower. These movements also cause the right leg to spiral downward to the ground but outwardly, and as you relax the right inguinal crease, the body turns to the right. The left leg spirals inwardly when extending. All these “corkscrewing” actions are governed by the up and down movement of the two side areas of the Ming Men and are accelerated by relaxing the right inguinal crease and both hips rotate. The combination of all these movements in the lower back, hip joints and inguinal creases is what produces Dan Tian / lower abdomen

rotation. The left leg extends and stretches out and the heel is very gently placed down onto the ground. The left leg is still empty and carries no weight.

Placing the foot down



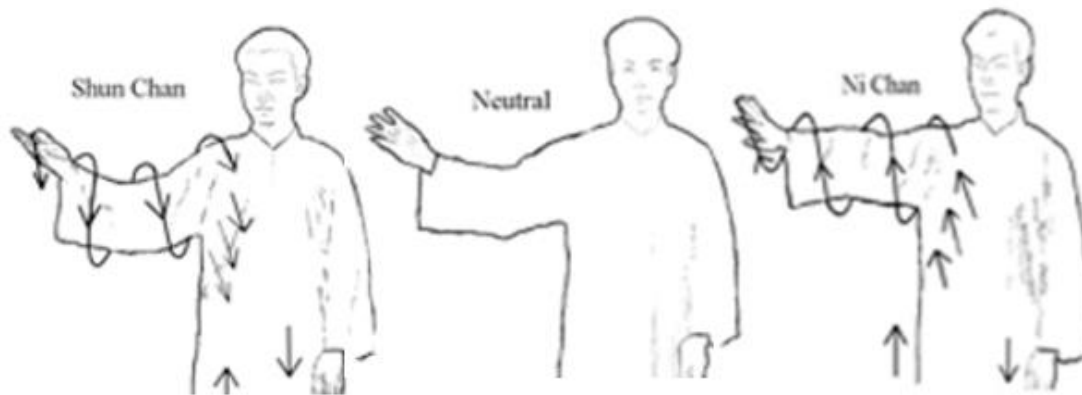
Figure 3-5 Placing the foot down

As the left heel touches the ground, the left Ming Men area drops and the right Ming Men area rises followed by hip rotation. The head of the left hipbone turns downward towards the back and continues on a circular path and starts to rise towards the front. At the same time, the right hip rises up towards the front and settles down towards the back. The left leg begins spiraling when the left foot grabs the ground beginning at the side of the little toe, ending at the big toe. This torques the left leg downwardly to the ground as the weight shifts onto it. These “corkscrewing” actions are still governed by the up and down movement of the two sides of the Ming Men area and are also accelerated by relaxing the right inguinal crease and both hips rotate at the same time. At this moment, the body keeps turning to the right. Again, the Ming Men still serves as a fulcrum, but the movement now is the left going up and the right going down.

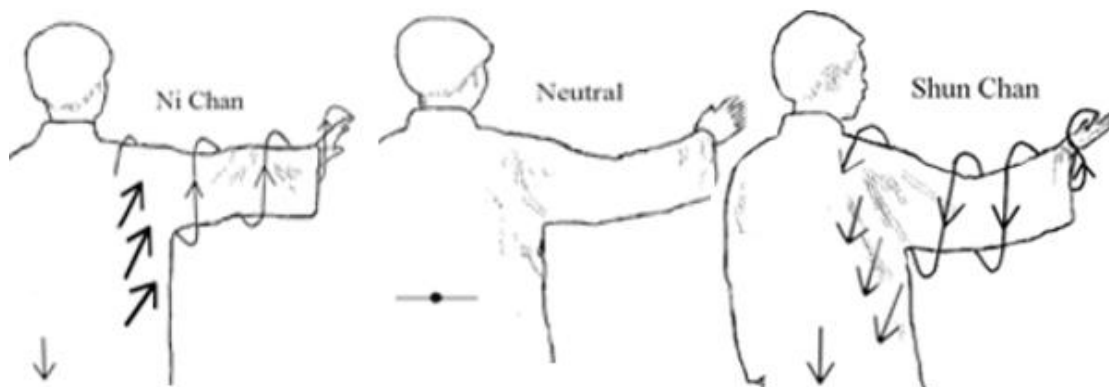
Through a closer examination of this sample movement, you can see how the Ming Men is stimulated through lower body movement by acting as a fulcrum. There are many other ways to do this simply by altering the

weight distribution over the two legs. But this is only one example of stimulating the Ming Men. The entire Tai Chi form accomplishes this in every movement. The key is to make empty and full clear, which means that the seesaw movement in the two kidney areas is clear.

How to Rotate the Dan Tian with the Upper Body



*Figures 3-6
Front view of Ni Chan - Shun Chan movements*



*Figures 3-7
Back view of Ni Chan - Shun Chan movements*

In Tai Chi, every movement of every part of the body is circular. There are two terms that categorize different movements, *Ni Chan* and *Shun Chan*. *Ni Chan* refers to the outward rotation done when the thumb rotates toward to little finger, which creates centrifugal force or opening and expanding. *Shun Chan* refers to the

inward rotation done when the little finger rotates toward the thumb, which creates centripetal force, or closing; collapsing. Inward and outward rotation movement is relative to the center of the body or “centerline.”

Figures 3-6 and 3-7 give front and back views of an example of Ni Chan - Shun Chan movements. Ni Chan shows that rotating and extending the right hand away from the centerline makes the arm spiral outwardly, which causes the right Ming Men area to open and expand. Shun Chan shows that rotating and extending the left hand towards the centerline, causing the arm to spiral inwardly, which helps close or collapse the lower back area to the left of the Ming Men through relaxation. Keeping the small “hollow” area in the armpit open and maintaining structure allow the arm movement in the torso to massage the Ming Men.

Now you can see how rotating the arm stimulates the Ming Men by opening and closing the torso.

Just like we spoke about above, the key to lower body movement is the condition of *empty* and *full*. The key to upper body movement is *opening* and *closing*. The upper and lower parts of the body work together to massage the kidneys.

Conclusion

Due to Dan Tian rotation and Ming Men control, the body can move in numerous ways and directions. The key points are proper body movement directed by the Ming Men. When the lower back areas on each side of the Ming Men move up and down like a seesaw, they set the hip joints into motion. How well a person can achieve this depends on how relaxed and open his hip joints are. [\[13\]](#)

The vertical circular movement of the hipbones within their sockets works in a similar fashion to the connecting rods on the wheels of a steam locomotive, and it is this movement that induces the hip area to separate the left and right sides of the body. That is to say, one half goes up and the other down as the Ming Men generates motion in the hip socket. The resulting movement is not only straight up and down but also circular within a vertical plane. Then, the inguinal crease is relaxed by folding into the centerline.

It is important to remember that the tailbone should remain straight. Now, these movement combinations rotate the Dan Tian in three-dimensional directions, which allow every movement to be conducted in every direction like a sphere. Because the two hipbones turn like wheels, and also because the torso turns left and right, this makes the hip movement look similar to an infinity symbol (∞). The more relaxed a person is, the greater his range of rotation will be.

Wave Hands like Clouds



Figure 3 –8 Cloud Hands

A very common movement in Tai Chi is *Wave Hands Like Clouds* (*Wave Hands in Clouds, Cloudy Hands*), which is a perfect example for the previous discussion on the roles of *Ni Chan* and *Shun Chan*. In this movement, one hand uses *Ni Chan* while simultaneously the other hand uses *Shun Chan*, and at the same time the lower body moves to fill and empty the lower extremities (legs). The rhythmical motion of *Wave Hands Like Clouds* is an excellent way to stimulate the Ming Men to produce hormones.

Dan Tian rotation is not easy to learn. Before you can even begin, you have to first learn how to align the body. If you are interested, refer to the section on proper body alignment in Chapter 8 and refer to Chapter 12 to find out at what level you can start training. People who just learned Dan Tian rotation use four limbs to move the Dan Tian but people at high level use the Dan Tian to move the four limbs.

A high level Master can do Dan Tian rotation without any outer movement. The most common mistake made by beginners is doing movement without the circular hip motion, and so all of their movements become two-dimensional or flat within the confines of a horizontal plane. An even worse mistake is turning the waist without the seesaw, up-and-down motion of the lower back, which does nothing to stimulate the Ming Men. Almost all exercises emphasize turning the waist, which can benefit health in general. However, only those exercises with the seesaw-like muscle motion of the lower back can stimulate the Ming Men to produce more hormones for even better health.

3.5 The Benefit of Dan Tian Rotation

How Dan Tian Rotation Benefits Our Health

If you can do Dan Tian rotation well, you can feel the abdominal area turn like a ball. When you touch the stomach area of someone with good Dan Tian rotation, you will feel a spherical motion around the navel area and you will feel warmth and energy in the lower abdomen and kidneys.

The major benefit of the Dan Tian rotation, once that area is activated, is that it helps make the “fire” and keeps it burning. The benefits of Dan Tian rotation are that it:

- Activates the reproductive system and the production of more hormones
- Releases other beneficial “good” chemicals or enzymes, hormones and glandular secretions like growth hormones, THF from the thymus, liver bile and pancreatic insulin, for example.
- Flushes out impurities from the liver and kidneys so that they can be more effective in purifying your body.
- Improves the digestion and elimination systems. Then the body not only assimilates nourishment better but it also eliminates toxins and waste more proficiently and maintains scheduled healthy bowel movements.

- Prevents pain, tension or stress by the habit of using the lower abdominal area in the torso to hold force instead of using the back, shoulders and chest. This practice also lessens or eliminates the risk of damage and injury.
- Improves balance and reduces the risk of injury from falls by opening the hip joints to increase mobility.

KEY

- A Surrounding Torso musculature, front and back,
expand and contract*
- B Waist (spine) turns left and right*
- C Coccyx (tailbone) always points down*
- D Head of femur rotates forward or backward*
- E Thighs twist inwardly or outwardly*

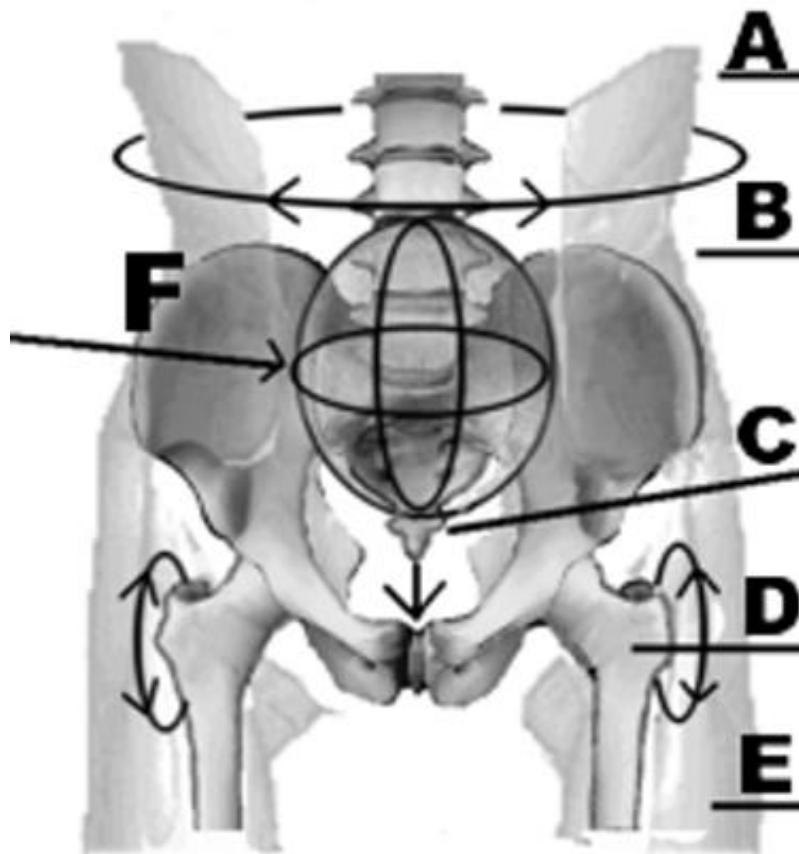


Figure 3 –9 Dan Tian Rotation

How Dan Tian Rotation Effects Combat

Dan Tian rotation makes your body behave like a ball so that you can go in any direction and force from any angle can be neutralized. For example, if your body had no Dan Tian rotation, your movements would only be two-dimensional, most likely on a horizontal plane, instead of spherical or multi-directional. Then force would only be directed left and right and could not be neutralized up and down, which causes force against force in an up and down direction. Dan Tian rotation also allows you to combine more muscle in movements and gives you more options for using different parts to do certain moves.

All original Tai Chi, Xing Yi and Bagua includes Dan Tian rotation in their form. Old Bagua always emphasizes sinking one side of the lower back down. And Xin Yi (the root of Xing Yi) has all kinds of exercises for the Dan Tian, such as *press, pull, shoot, open, separate, close and turn Dan Tian*. When these arts were diluted, Dan Tian rotation was the first thing to go. Once in a while, when requirement is better than method, some people revive this method. There is a well known story in the Chinese Internal Martial Arts community about this.

At the turn of the twentieth century, a young man in Beijing, named Shang Yunxiang, became very good at Xing Yi. One day an old man came in his home and asked if he was in Shang Yunxiang's house. When he found out that he was, he said, "Show me your Xing Yi." Shang Yunxiang already guessed from his accent that he was the famous Grandmaster Guo Yunshen, who is the Kung Fu brother of Shang Yunxiang's grandteacher. After showing respect, Shang Yunxiang invited the Grandmaster to wash up after his long trek from his home over a hundred miles away. But Guo Yunshen said, "Show me your form first" and Shang Yunxiang gave him a demonstration of his form. After that Guo said, "Very good. No wonder you became so famous in Beijing at such a young age. But, you missed the key! Let me show you." Then the Grandmaster showed him Dan Tian rotation in Xing Yi form!

After four months of the lessons, Grandmaster Guo told Shang Yunxiang, "If your teacher asks why you changed the form, just tell him that I taught you." After that Shang Yunxiang became even better and developed many similar fighting abilities and skills like Grandmaster Guo Yunshen did. He is one of the few top Xing Yi masters of his time.

If you understand how the body gets out of shape, then it should be easy to see how these exercises directly help our body by dealing with the cause (*fire and water don't cooperate*) rather than

the symptoms. Chi Gung exercises like Tai Chi are more about internal structure, balance, the entire body, and cause of its problems. After you practice cultivating more hormones/Jing through internal exercises, then your body is active enough to produce sufficient hormones for daily living and for your practice. Now, just like the battery in the Chapter1 analogy, you have enough chemical material or hormone/Jing in your body and are fully charged, as indicated by the energy in the lower abdomen. You are more able to utilize this energy and to make progress at improving your health by connecting the battery wires or opening the Chi channels to “light the bulb,” which we will discuss in the next six chapters.



Figure -3-10 Alignment.

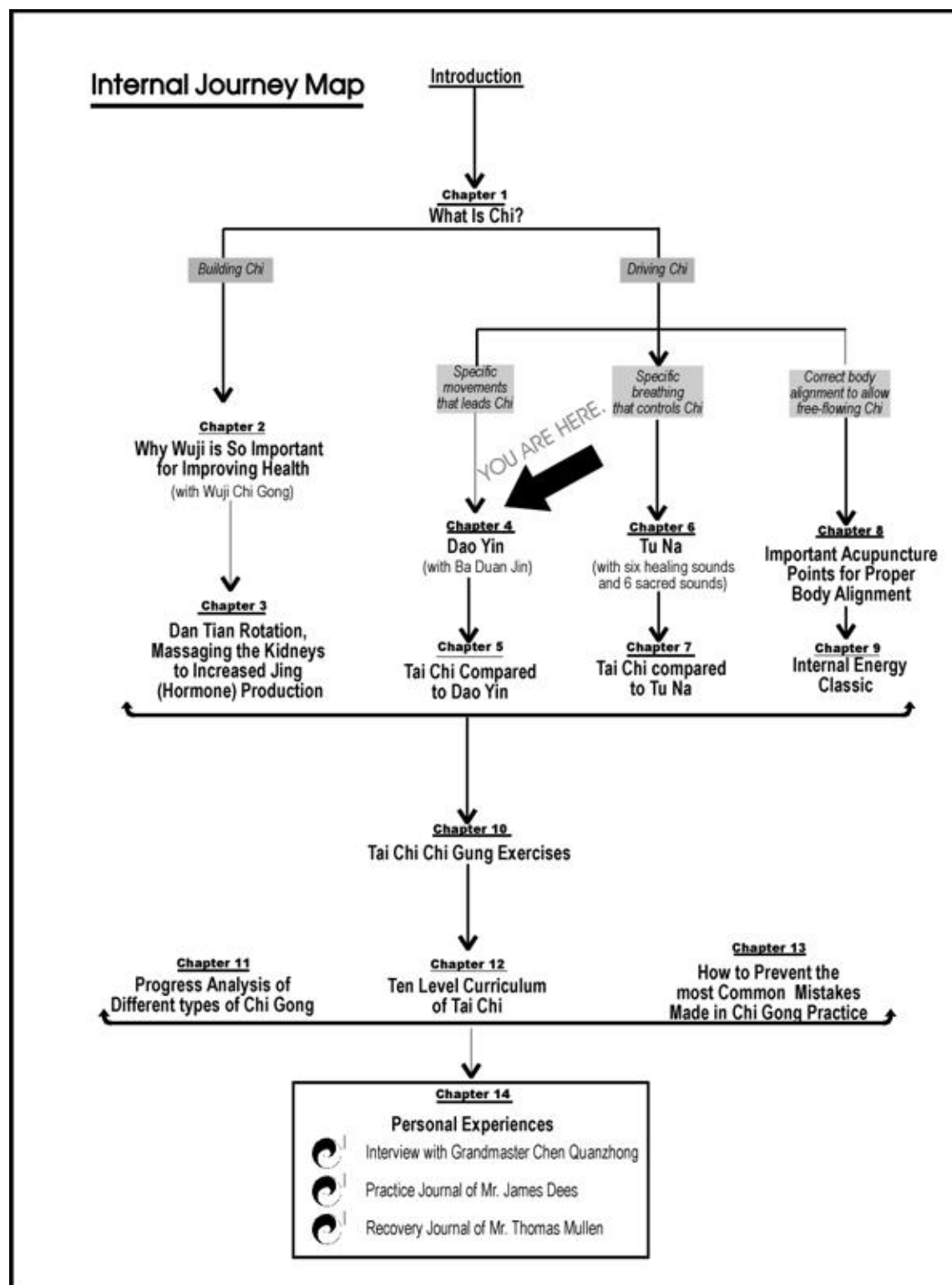
Chapter 3 Footnotes

8. *See Chapter 6, Tu Na.*
9. *Chapter 4, Dao Yin With Ba Duan Jin.*
10. *The term “regular” is used here to refer to conditions not caused by accidents, genetics or poisoning.*
11. *Dao Te Ching book, chapter 3.*
12. *Chapter 8 includes a discussion on point accuracy level (P.A.L.) ideal body condition.*
13. *In Chinese Internal Martial Arts, they call this opening the kua (hips).*

導引

Chapter 4

Dao Yin (With Ba Duan Jin)



It's not just stretching!

4.1 Dao Yin Is One of the Oldest Calisthenics

The Chinese character for Dao Yin translates as “leading and guiding” (energy/Chi). Each day you can observe the simple basic movement of Dao Yin in many ways and through many people. For example, it is natural to yawn or stretch when you are sleepy or when you first wake up. The Chinese would say that this is sort of like Dao Yin.

How It Started

According to official historic records, Dao Yin originated 5,000 to 6,000 years ago as a regular exercise intended for health. These records go on to tell how the weather in parts of China at that time was so wet and dreary that quite often the people got sick. Back then there was no unified government and so one very clever tribal chief, for the sake of his people’s health, instructed them to move about, to exercise so to speak.

The tribal movements became a type of dance accompanied by music and singing. These dances or primitive exercises would help them open the joints of the body, open the chest area and, in essence, “*lead and move energy.*”

Not Just the Chinese Did This in Ancient Times

This kind of enthusiasm to move around, sing and dance to a beat was not just a Chinese idea. Back then every culture on the planet engaged in some dance or ritual activity. Since written historic records only reflect back so far, there is no way of knowing just how long these exercise-dances have been going on. All we know is that the reason for this kind of activity in China was primarily for health, and so Dao Yin probably became the first documented health care program in written history.

Today, you can still recognize these movements in tribes, communities and all sorts of groups of people everywhere. Look at the evolution of spiritualists and church groups who sing praise and sway and move in worship. A variety of ethnic groups combined tribal movements with Christian beliefs, for example, and developed new religious expressions. Many times such tribal singing and dancing were reshaped by religious or cultural influences and were transmuted into religious rituals or were adopted and mixed with religion. In

this early stage of human development most people of all races had similar dances that were first intended for exercise but eventually changed into religious expression or simple entertainment.

In China Dao Yin Became a Profound and Extensive Exercise System

On the other hand, the Chinese people retained their original purpose for exercising. They firmly believed that as long as they maintained a strong Chi flow in the body, they would have good health. They took their exercise movements even further and developed a primitive health care system. As time moved on the Chinese further advanced Dao Yin and combined it with the study of Chinese Medicine Theory to develop an entire health care system, which was more complex and enhanced than the early Dao Yin.

Most of the earlier exercises were based on animal movements mimicked by the Chinese people. In the very beginning there were two basic categories of movements: the bear and the bird, but later they included more animal movements. Around 200A.D. Hua Tou was a famous doctor in China who developed the Wu Qin Xi, the “Five Animals Play.” [\[14\]](#) (*Figures of 4-1 & 4-2*) The five animals are Tiger, Deer, Bear, Ape and Bird. One of Hua Tou’s students, Wu Pu, lived well past ninety. Even at such an advanced age, he still had all of his teeth and his skin was as soft as a baby’s. When asked how he could be so healthy at his age, he explained that he had practiced (“played”) these animal movements all of his life to keep his energy flowing. [\[15\]](#)



Figure 4-1 5 animal exercises

In the 1970s a tomb dating back to 168B.C. called Ma Wang Dui was discovered at Changsha, China. On the wall of this huge old tomb there are pictures depicting many old Dao Yin exercises with a description and health application for each exercise. The writings and pictures on the wall of this tomb show how each exercise should be done in order to treat a specified purpose or ailment. This tomb supports Dao Yin as an ancient Chinese version of physical therapy and clearly depicts just how evolved and advanced the study of this physical therapy was for that time.



Figure 4.2

Reproduction of Daiyin Tu (guiding and pulling exercises) from the Silk scroll found in the tomb at Mawangdui "King Ma's Mound") from an archaeological site in Changsha, China. Pictures on its walls depict many old Dao Yin exercises and describe their health applications.

Influence on Chinese Martial Arts

If you are familiar with Chinese Martial Arts, you know that many systems are named after animals, such as Monkey Style, Crane Style, Tiger Claw, Eagle Claw, Dragon Style, Snake Style, Dog Style and Duck Style. You can also notice that many forms and postures from other styles are named after animals, like the twelve animal forms of Xing Yi and the Tai Chi movements called “snake creeps down,” “golden cock stands on one leg” and “white horse parts mane.” You can trace this nomenclature all the way back to the early days of Dao Yin.

4.2 Different Goals of Dao Yin

Today Dao Yin covers many areas of achievement, which are summarized as follows:

Open the body joints and ligaments - To Western people, most Dao Yin exercises probably look similar to regular stretching but Dao Yin exercises can help open joints and ligaments. Every joint is a gate for Chi circulation. If a joint is locked, and the surrounding muscles, ligaments and tendons tighten, the blood circulation will be poor. In other words a locked joint blocks Chi circulation or the Chi is stuck. Most people have a tight chest and locked shoulders, and so their Chi stagnates in the upper torso. We have a detailed discussion on this in Chapter 3.

This is a very important point for martial artists to pay attention to. For example, Chi can get stuck in the arm in three different places during every single move, which disables a Martial Artist’s ability to release his power. These three places are the shoulder, elbow and wrist. Sometimes a person can be well built and muscular but have a weak punch, while other times, we might see a thin person who can generate tremendous power in his punch. There could be many different reasons for this disparity. With regard to the arm specifically, most of the time bulky people are weak because their joints are still not open, whereas some smaller people with loose joints can release their energy all the way to the tip of the finger. There is an old saying in Chinese Martial Arts: “They would rather have their ligaments and tendons one inch longer than have a muscle three inches bigger.” That is why almost every Chinese martial style trains its beginning students to stretch first.

Tone the body and develop muscle - There are many exercises in Dao Yin that can help develop muscles but they are quite different from the Western concept of bodybuilding or body sculpting. The basic idea is to drive the Chi into a desired area, let the Chi fertilize those muscles and bring enough nutrition to develop that area. So when a person is going to hold weight or do strong movements, first he drives Chi there. Chinese Medical Theory doesn't support the idea that you can develop muscle without internal strengthening because you should build the body from the inside out. Trying to build the body without internal strengthening is like trying to make a professional race car out of a standard car without modifying the engine, suspension or transmission.

Massage and activate inner organs - Most regular calisthenics cannot help develop the inner organs directly. However, Dao Yin exercises can help develop the inner organs in two ways:

(1) Physically moving the torso area especially, the lower torso area, to massage and squeeze the inner organs.

(2) Based on the Chinese Chi meridian concept, there are exercises that activate specific organ meridians in the body which helps these organs maintain good functionality as well as maintain proper balance with other interacting organs. Most of the time, Dao Yin deals with special acupuncture points in the four limbs because all the organ meridians pass through them. [\[16\]](#) The exercises depend on how a specific organ is related to other organs and how it balances with them. In Chinese Medicine Theory, it must be determined whether to infuse (Bu Chi) more Chi into the organ or whether to release Chi (Xie Chi) from the organ.

Clear and Sharper Mind - Let's simply put it this way. Referring to the battery analogy in Chapter 1, the way to brighten the light bulb and to increase the electrical current is by reducing the resistance in the cable. Dao Yin exercises help release Chi blockages in the body just like reduced resistance helps electricity flow better through the cable. When Chi travels in the body like a strong electrical current, your mind becomes clear, your senses sharpen and you are more tuned into your environment. These positive results are likened to the light bulb burning brighter. Sometimes a person's sense can become so sharp that he might even develop a "Sixth Sense."

Developing special capabilities in our body - Dao Yin can help us learn many different ways to drive Chi in our body. For example, driving the Chi makes it go up and down, open and close, and in and out. Being able to control the energy flow inside the body this way, gives a person much greater overall control of the body's physical movements. Furthermore, some people reach such a high level that they can control their Chi not only within the body but also exchange it outside the body with something else, such as a tree, sun, flower or human. This kind of special ability is called "sharing Chi"; Chi going out is "emitting" or "emanating" and Chi coming in is "receiving" or "absorbing." [\[17\]](#)

Author's Note: This special ability, like many other phenomena in Chi Gung, still lacks a scientific explanation. It gives many fake Masters the opportunity to show off using this type of demonstration, which is nothing more than deception. Here is how the author shares Chi with another person: First he expands his Chi outside the body to cover another person, which makes him feel like he is one with that person. After becoming one, the author can sense other people's Chi circulation in their body. Then, the author starts to run his Chi in a special way to put his body into a certain condition, such as hot, cold, directing Chi through a particular channel, or many other states. At this time the person he is sharing Chi with will experience the same condition.

By using various postures and techniques, Chi could be expanded through the Lao Gong acupuncture point in the center of the palm, or some other points, or even the entire body to different points in other people or different subjects. Please don't try to share Chi with others before you have enough Chi and have the capability to control it. Because, first, it will cost you too much; second, once you become one with others, their condition could affect you if you don't know how to control your Chi. If you would like to share Chi with your surroundings, find a healthy tree or flower, or some other energetic object. Become "one with" them and let their good condition upgrade your state. This is absorbing Chi.

Even though some people know how to expand their Chi outside to open a communication channel, what they don't know is that after the channel opens, they must adjust their own condition by driving Chi in a certain way in order to "become with" with the other. Instead they just keep pouring their Chi into others. This is very unwise, ineffective, and costs too much by expending too much of their valuable energy.

This is the author's hypothesis on this subject: It seems as though the only way one body can affect another body without touch is through "vibration." Somehow a high-level Chi Gung Master can sense and adjust the frequency of his own body vibration to match another body's frequency which creates communication between them. And if

the Chi Gung Master has better control of his body, the other body will be under his control, for better or worse.

When a Martial Artist can match his energy flow with his martial combat movement, the movement becomes more powerful and reduces his chances of injury. This is why Chinese Martial Arts emphasize that Chi and form go together. When the Chi expands, the body opens, and when it contracts the body closes. The mind, intention, Chi, breathing, force and movement all work together. Today many martial arts practitioners do not have the ability to control their inner energy and some have never even felt Chi. In the Chinese way, it would be said that the form is empty inside. It is a good idea for such people to practice some form of Dao Yin like Ba Duan Jin, which is included in this chapter, in order to feel how the internal flow of energy is effected by external movement.

Some Dao Yin can increase the body's capabilities tremendously as demonstrated by some people who can ingest poison, endure extremities in temperatures or absorb severe impact.

4.3 Different Types of Dao Yin

You can attain any of the above stated goals by practicing these exercise types:

Stretch - Open and close various parts of the body to stretch opens the Chi channels to let Chi flow uninterrupted. You use a different stretch for each meridian or channel like in the Eight Piece Brocade, for example.

Flex - Tighten and loosen different parts of our muscles which results in "pumping the Chi." This is clearly demonstrated in Tai Chi where body areas are made "empty" and "full" by exchanging body weight alternately from one leg to the other

Rub Body parts - to release blockages of Chi through the application of a light steady unbroken pressure over a particular area of the body, like rubbing the kidneys, knees, face, and stomach, for example.

Pat and Shake to release of Chi blockages in our body through vibration.

Stillness Postures - uses various “holding-positions” to allow the special flow of Chi. An example of this type of Dao Yin is the Yi Zhi Chan system. This system has 108 “stillness” postures and each posture is related to a different development. (Refer to Chapter 14, Personal Experiences of Mr. Thomas Mullen.)

In many Buddhist exercises, there are numerous kinds of sitting postures. Each posture has its own specialized hand positions and each posture aims towards a very specific result.

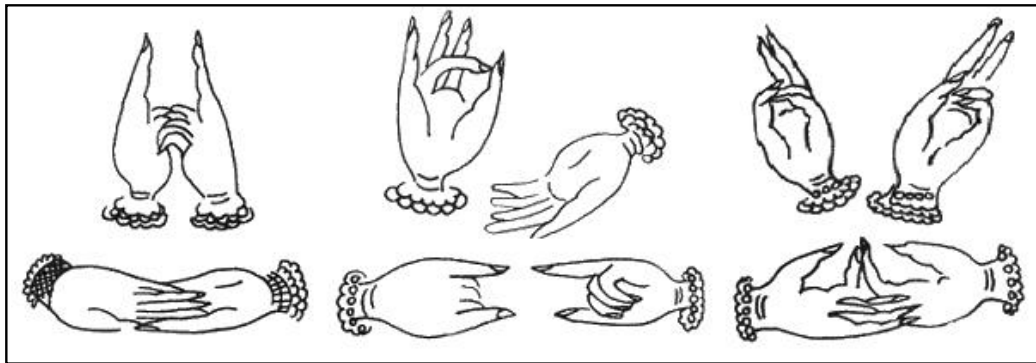


Figure 4-3
Different Buddhist mystic positions of the hands (Mudras)

Analogy of Five Different Exercise Types

To illustrate what occurs within the body’s meridians, or the pathways in which Chi flows, let’s use the five following analogies of a rubber hose or flexible tubing to represent these meridians. Any DaoYin movement affects the flow of Chi in a meridian much like the same type of movement affects the flow of fluid in a hose or tubing.

Stretching - If a hose has a kink or bend in it, simply stretching out the crimped area will immediately improve the flow.

Flexing - When a clog restricts flow in the hose, it can easily be cleared by bending and unbending or flexing the stuck area until the clog is released so the liquid can flow easily again.

Rubbing - By applying continuous stroking pressure to a congested section in the hose, the blockage can be manipulated to gradually move on. Continued pressure on the bad section will eventually loosen and breakup the clog so that proper flow in the hose is restored.

Patting - Merely shaking a hose will jog it and this vibration can shake a blockage loose so that the flow will be restored in the hose.

Stillness - When a hose or tubing is installed, it is laid out in a pre-determined pattern. We can reposition the layout of the tubing or readjust the pattern to deliberately change the (water) pressure that is being exerted on different parts of the tubing. By doing this, you can control the speed and capacity of the water flow in different areas.

4.4 *Choose the Right Exercise*

Here is a chart that covers different goals and different types of exercises to help you relate to your goals and your exercise. These sample exercises within the chart are intended to merely give you a general idea.

One exercise *type* isn't any better than any other type. However, there are levels of difficulty in learning and mastering Dao Yin. For instance, in the order of difficulty, type 2 is harder than type 1; type 3 is harder than type 2, and so on. No *type* of Dao Yin is superior to any of the other *types*. Different types of Dao Yin could be better for you but it depends on your personal goal. A good teacher will be able to guide you to the correct exercise in order to achieve your desired goal more efficiently.

Today in the West most of the Dao Yin exercises fall within the first *type* category (stretching) and the first *goal* category (opening joints and ligaments) as referred to in the chart in Figure 4-4. Although we can still enjoy benefits from Dao Yin, we could benefit more if we study the other exercises in this chart. For example, how you use *stillness stance* to open joints and activate inner organs and even change the mental state is a very interesting study.

As a matter of fact, Dao Yin could be an entire system because it includes: 1) opening joints 2) building muscle with physical exercise 3) building more Jing through exercises like rubbing the kidney 4) transmutation of Jing to Chi 5) stronger Chi developing a better mental condition. However, this chapter is mostly about *driving* Chi, not *building* Chi.

When practicing Dao Yin, you must first understand your goal in order to recognize what type of Dao Yin exercise you should do, and what channel and part of your body you want to work on. After you figure this out, then you can recognize just how this exercise affects your goal. [18] Use the Dao Yin Chart to help you determine your goal and plan your exercise type.

Dao Yin Chart

GOAL TYPE	OPENING <i>Opening Joints and Ligaments</i>	TONE <i>Develop Muscles and Tone the Body</i>	MASSAGE <i>Activate the Inner Organs</i>	CLEAR MIND <i>Heightened Mental Awareness</i>	DEVELOP <i>Derive Special Capabilities</i>
<i>STRETCHING</i>	#1 to 6 Eight Piece Brocade Exercise	#1 to 6 Eight Piece Brocade Exercise	#1 to 6 Eight Piece Brocade Exercise	Red Palm Chi Gung	Red Palm Chi Gung
FLEXING	#7 Eight Piece Brocade Exercise Yi Jin Jing	#7 Eight Piece Brocade Exercise Yi Jin Jing	#7 Eight Piece Brocade Exercise Yi Jin Jing	#7 Eight Piece Brocade Exercise Yi Jin Jing	#7 Eight Piece Brocade Exercise Yi Jin Jing
RUBBING	Hard Style Chi Gung	Hard Style Chi Gung	Hard Style Chi Gung	Hard Style Chi Gung	Hard Style Chi Gung
PATting	Hard Style Chi Gung	Hard Style Chi Gung	#8 Eight Piece Brocade Exercise	#8 Eight Piece Brocade Exercise	Hard Style Chi Gung
STILLNESS	Wuji and Yi Zhi Chan	Wuji and Yi Zhi Chan	Wuji and Yi Zhi Chan	Wuji and Yi Zhi Chan	Wuji and Yi Zhi Chan
✓ Eight Piece Brocade - See section 4.5 ✓ Red Palm - See sections 13.2 and 14.2 ✓ Yi Jin Jing - See section 13.2			✓ Hard Style Chi Gung - See section 6.5 ✓ Yi Zhi Chan - See sections 13.2 and 14.3 ✓ Wuji - See chapter 2		

Figure 4-4 Dao Yin Chart

People should look for an exercise that accommodates their own particular work and social lifestyle. Take people who use computers or watch television and videos a lot, for example. It would be advisable for these people to do something to help their liver system, which in turn helps maintain the condition of their eyes. It is even more important for martial arts practitioners to do the appropriate internal exercise for their style. They should find the right internal exercise to strengthen their particular style or to fix any potential problems that might be caused by practicing that style.

Case in point, Eagle Claw stylists use their fingers and nails a lot. Therefore they should do excises that address the liver system to help build healthy strong hands and nails. Otherwise, when they get older, their hands will become gnarled and deformed. This indicates that they did not practice the internal exercises according to the style. When you know which part of your body is used more in your life or practice, check Figure 6-15, the Five Element Chart in Chapter 6, for the six healing sounds to find out what inner organ system is related. Then practice the internal exercises for that associated organ system more.

Anytime you practice Dao Yin all the channels and pores of the body open. Therefore it is not wise to take a cold shower right after Dao Yin exercising or to practice Dao Yin outside in the fog or rain. This is because “damp” Chi can enter your body through these opened pores and channels. Also, another piece of good advice is to do the Wuji closing exercise after your Dao Yin practice. To do the Wuji closing, raise your arms in a circular motion and then bring them down in front of you and this will allow your Chi to return to the Dan Tian. Lastly stand quietly for a minute or two. (*See Chapter 2, Figure 2-7.*)

4.5 *Eight Piece Brocade*

One of the most popular styles of Dao Yin today is *Ba Duan Jin*, which translates to the Eight Piece Brocade. By analyzing the eight different movements of this style, you can learn how each movement “leads and guides” your Chi.

Ba Duan Jin originated in the Shaolin Temple and is probably one of the first *physical* lessons novice monks receive after they learned sitting meditation, *Zou Chan*. Now there are many versions or developing versions of the Eight Piece Brocade. This set of eight exercises practiced daily can increase physical flexibility and improve internal health because each movement opens specific Chi pathways and massages associated internal organs.

In order to benefit internally, it is important to learn these exercises correctly. The key issue here is not how the movement physically appears but rather what sensation you should expect when you practice these basic movements and accompany them with the proper breathing pattern.

Each exercise (piece) is explained below and should be repeated as many times as indicated. Do not be discouraged if at first you are not flexible enough or cannot perform these exercises precisely. As time goes by, and you continue to practice the Eight Piece Brocade, you will gradually loosen up and more energy will surge forward throughout your Chi network. Just give them a little time and concentrate on the expected sensation or feeling noted for each exercise.

Supporting Heaven



Figure 4-5 #1 Supporting Heaven

Exercise:

From the Wuji stance position, relax your shoulders and clear your mind. Slowly inhale, raising your hands with the palms facing up along your centerline up over your head and keeping your body straight. When your hands reach up to about the chin area, start to gradually rotate them so that your palms face outwards towards the ceiling. *(Note: At all times the tips of your middle fingers point at each other and, as your hands rise, your head follows until you are also looking up at them.)* After holding this position for a few seconds, exhale slowly as your hands separate and gradually lower down to rest at your sides. Repeat 8 times.

Sensation:

You should feel areas along your sides from your waist to your armpit stretch and open up.

Benefit:

Improved digestion and absorption of food into your system.

Bow and Arrow



Figure 4-6 #2 Bow and Arrow

Exercise:

Keep your body straight, place yourself in a “horse stance,” and begin with the left side. Place loosely clenched fists in front of your sternum just above the stomach area. As you look to the left, slowly inhale and at the same time gradually open the left arm, extending it past the left shoulder while the right hand draws back into the right shoulder area. This movement simulates the exercise’s namesake, the act of shooting a bow and arrow. After holding the position for a few seconds, exhale and return your hands to the starting position in front of your chest. Now repeat the exercise on the right side. Repeat this alternate left and right cycle 4 times.

Sensation:

You should feel the sternum open or expand above the solar plexus.

Benefit:

Expansion of the lung capacity.

Holding Up One Arm



Figure 4-7 #3 Holding Up One Arm

Exercise:

Facing the front and placing your feet an inch or two apart with your hands at your side forms the opening position. As you slowly inhale, look over your left shoulder while raising the right hand up your center. At the same time, your hand rotates *counterclockwise* as far as it can until it reaches over the head. The body remains erect and the palm faces outwards towards the ceiling. The left hand extends to the rear directly behind the small of the back with the palm faced downwards as it rotates *clockwise*. Turn the body towards the left as far as you can comfortably without any strain while the right hand gently pushes up and the left hand pushes down. (*Note: After a little while, you will be able to do all these steps together, simultaneously.*) Hold this posture for a few seconds before exhaling slowly and returning to the opening position. Now repeat these steps on the opposite or right side, which completes one exercise cycle. Repeat one complete cycle 4 times.

Sensation:

On the raised hand side, you should feel an expansion or opening along the side of the body and in part of the abdominal area.

Benefit:

Improves the spleen and stomach.

Looking Backward



Figure 4-8 #4 Looking Backward

Exercise:

Place your feet together facing forward, your palms at your sides, your body straight, and the feet and hands remaining that way throughout this exercise. While inhaling, rotate your upper body 180 degrees to the left and hold for a few seconds. Exhale as you return to the starting position. Now do this exercise to the right side to complete one exercise cycle. Repeat one complete cycle 4 times.

Sensation:

Massaging and energizing the area between the shoulder blades. Think of this area as the same area where a mother pats her child when burping or calming him.

Benefit:

Calms the body and relieves mood imbalances.

Rotate the Body



Figure 4 –9 #5 Rotate the Body

Exercise:

When doing this exercise, maintain a fairly wide stance with both hands on your hips. Bend slightly forward at the waist and move the torso counterclockwise emphasizing the movement of the hips. Inhale as the head goes back and exhale, as it returns forward. After doing it 4 times, switch to a clockwise torso movement and do this another 4 times. All together you will do eight repetitions.

Sensation:

Massages the lower spine when your head moves forward and massages the sternum when the head moves backwards.

Benefit:

Relieve stress.

Bending the Body



Figure 4 –10 #6 Bending the Body

Exercise:

From the Wuji stance, raise your hands above your head. Breathing naturally, bend over at the waist and try to touch the ground. Pause a few seconds before slowly raising up until your hands are over your head again. Try not to be abrupt and don't strain yourself beyond your limit. Repeat this 8 times.

Sensation:

You should feel the lower back expand and open.

Benefit:

Opens the lower back and massage the kidneys.

Holding the Fist



Figure 4 –11 #7 Holding the Fist

Exercise:

Hold the hip, back and spine straight, maintain a horse stance, and make tight fists. First inhale and use maximum tension during this exercise. At the same time, the right fist executes a “slow motion” straight punch that begins at the right side of the waist and ends at the center front area of your body. Then exhale while slowly drawing the fist back to the side of the waist. Now do the left fist to complete one exercise cycle. Repeat this cycle 4 times.

Sensation:

When executing the “punch,” it should feel like you’re pushing against a tremendous force. When drawing the fist back, it should feel like a great force is opposing you.

Benefit:

Muscle tone.

Standing on the Toes



Figure 4-12 #8 Standing on the Toes

Exercise:

Place yourself in the Wuji stance and breathe naturally. Now lift up onto your toes and then drop all your weight back down onto your heels. Repeat 7 times.

Sensation:

Relaxation and the ability to yield with total confidence to nature's gravitational pull on your entire body weight as it comes back down on the feet.

Benefit:

Lower Chi and resettle it back in its natural circulation.

On the surface the Eight Piece Brocade may appear very simple when, in fact, the meaning and benefits go much deeper.

Chapter 4 Footnotes

This health maintenance system was named "play" because whenever the Chinese people practiced it, they felt like they were playing.

Hua Tou himself was not that fortunate, however. His life came to an abrupt end when a warlord killed him.

Today, massaging special areas in the hands and feet to stimulate and repair different organs is growing more popular. This practice is based on similar concepts.

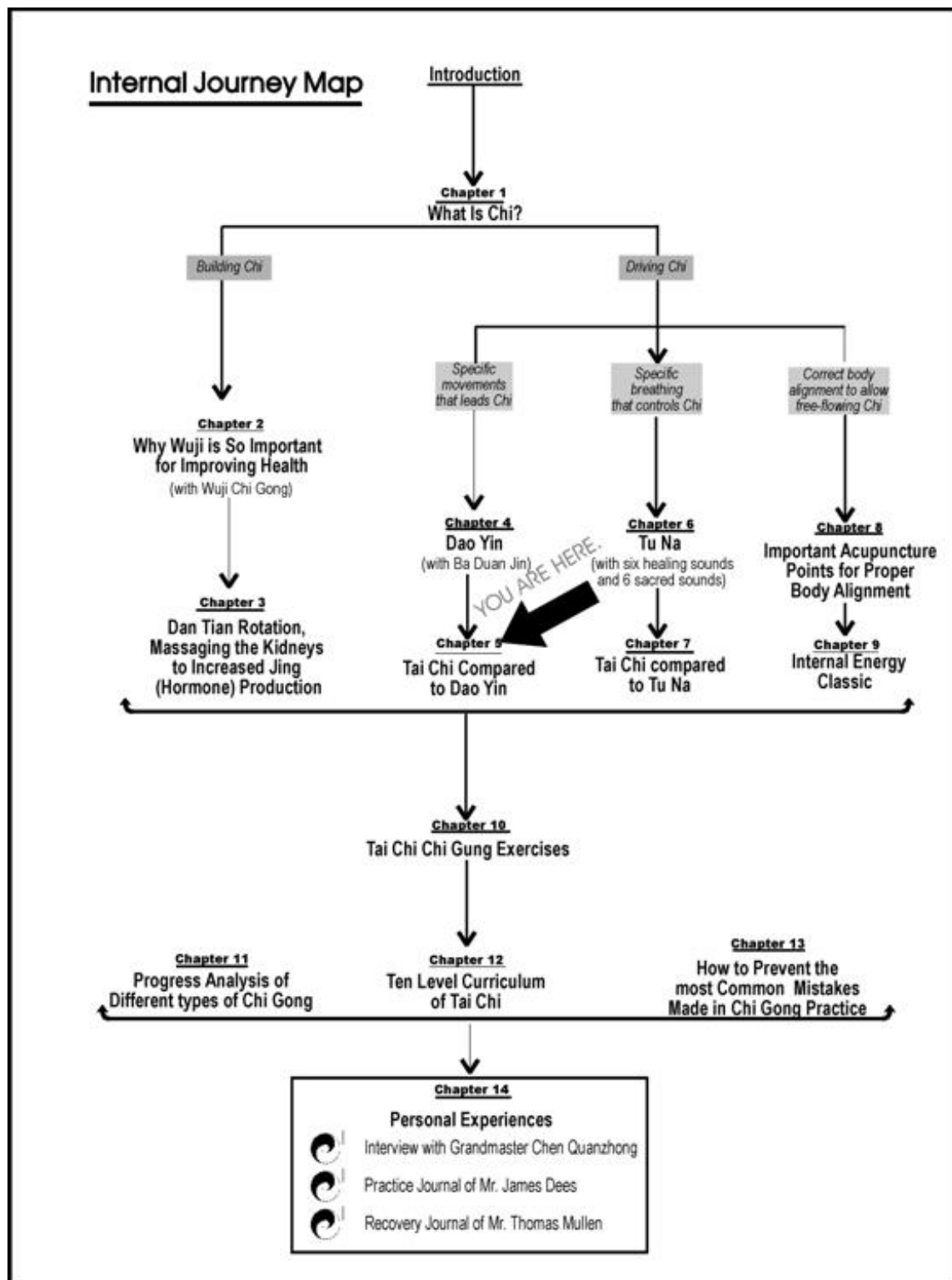
See Chapter 14, Mr. Thomas Mullen's Recovery Journal.

This is where people can easily make a mistake; See Chapter 13, point #2.



Chapter 5

Tai Chi Compared To Dao Yi



Getting Down to Basics

5.1 Almost All Chinese Martial Arts Are Dao Yin

Generally speaking, Chinese Martial Arts movements are Dao Yin movement when viewed from a health aspect. For example Xing Yi is an internal style which has a basic form of five element movements. Each element movement strengthens its relative organ. For instance, the first movement, Pi Quan, “split fist,” is the element which strengthens the lungs, the metal organs. [\[19\]](#)

A genuine Master of a Martial Arts style can always show you the martial application as well as explain how each movement within his style stimulates, nourishes and strengthens the correlating muscles, ligament, tendons, organs and systems. Martial arts movements in actual combat should be direct, using small circles, and staying at close range. Whereas in training for most styles, the artist practices larger movements to extend the body more so that he can feel more Chi and let Chi flow smoother throughout the movement. Every Chinese style has its own interesting method of driving Chi in their form. Here, in this chapter, we will be exploring how Tai Chi helps Chi circulation as compared with regular Dao Yin.

Tai Chi [\[20\]](#) was created based on the concepts of Dao Yin and is one of its most advanced forms. Tai Chi includes both the five types of Dao Yin and the five goals of Dao Yin as illustrated in the chart in Figure 4-4 of Chapter 4. Tai Chi practitioners receive many benefits from Tai Chi training including physical well being, spiritual purification and Martial Arts capability, to name some. In regular Dao Yin exercise we don’t turn the body that much. Also we don’t sink the Chi in every single movement nor do we emphasize relaxation as much as in Tai Chi. For those reasons alone Tai Chi is so much more advanced than regular Dao Yin.

5.2 The Wonderful Health Benefits of Silk Reeling Movement

Open the Joints in All Directions

In Chapter 4, we discussed how every joint in our body is a “gate” for Chi circulation. Without opening these “gates” properly, Chi is held there just like water is held and prevented from flowing when a water pipe valve is closed. Dao Yin is a wonderful exercise for opening the joints to help Chi circulation. However, regular Dao Yin exercises are only single-directional stretching movements for “opening” our body. For example, the first exercise from the *Eight Piece Brocade* opens and closes the space between each rib *vertically* by separating

and contracting the ribs along the side of the body in the intercostal region. Whereas the second exercise “puffs out” and deflates the entire chest area by expanding and contracting the ribs/sternum area *horizontally*.

Many joints of the body, like the fingers, wrist, elbow, shoulder, spine, hip, knee and ankle, are rounded and lay within hallowed sockets and are described as “ball and socket” joints. Such universal-turning joints allow a greater range of movement, unlike a “hinged” apparatus, which can only move back and forth or in and out, like a hinged door. Therefore, single-directional movement in these ball-and-socket joints over a long period of practice will result in the over-development of the ligaments, tendons and muscles surrounding the joint in use for that direction. This will also result in an underdevelopment of the ligaments, tendons and muscles surrounding the joint in all the other directions that are not in use. Given enough time, this unbalanced development will cause even more problems, which could lead to conditions like *Repetitive Stress Syndrome*.

Today, common examples of *Repetitive Stress Syndrome* are the widespread Carpal Tunnel and Metacarpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS/MTS.) More and more typists and computer operators suffer these injuries to the hands and wrist areas because of the repetitive use of the same keystrokes or hand and wrist motions with no countering exercises for the rest of the unused areas of the hands and wrists.

So you might ask: how can we practice multi-directional Dao Yin instead of single-directional movement? One solution is to practice Tai Chi, especially Chen Style Tai Chi. Every single movement of Chen Style Tai Chi makes circles with each part of the body and none of these movements are linear. In China such a circular or corkscrewing method of moving is called *silk reeling movement*. Let’s look at four progressive views of the same Tai Chi movement called “Brush Knee Twist Step” so that we can see step-by-step how to make more joints move with silk reeling.

Figure 5-1

An X-ray of a normal, healthy universal joint, which shows the tendons and their sheaths passing through the carpal tunnel in the wrist.

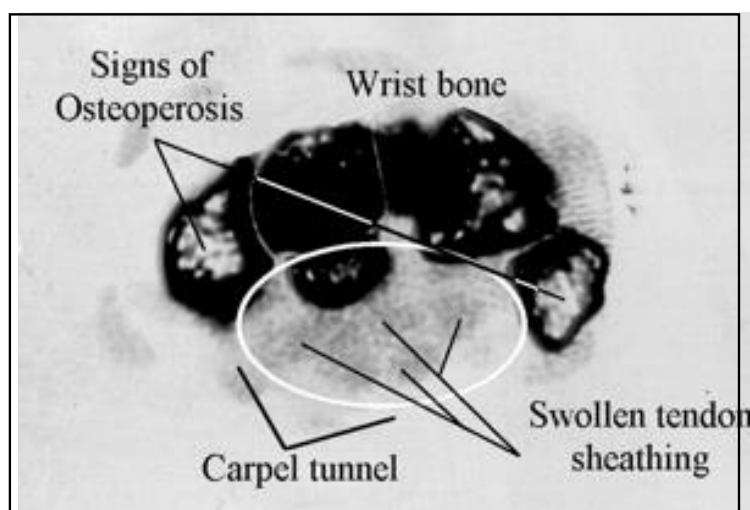
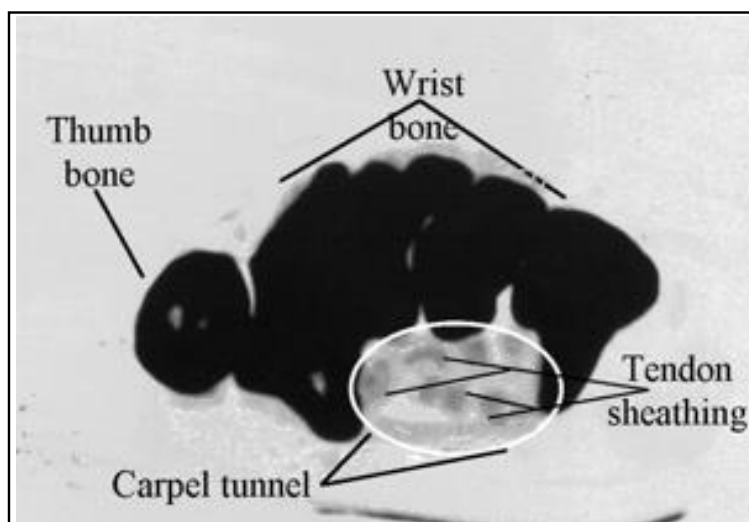


Figure 5-2

An X-ray of a problematic universal joint, which shows the tendons and their swollen sheaths squeezing through the carpal tunnel in the wrist.

So you see, a high-level Tai Chi player's movements include more joint turning in more directions. That is one of the reasons why we say that true Tai Chi is advanced Dao Yin. By practicing Tai Chi, many joints turn multidirectionally. This allows those joints and the area surrounding them to be fully exercised.

A Unique Way to Stretch Ligaments and Tendons

In Tai Chi, due to its multidirectional movement, silk reeling not only stretches the ligaments and tendons in one direction like most other Dao Yin exercises do, but also stretches them by applying a twisting motion.

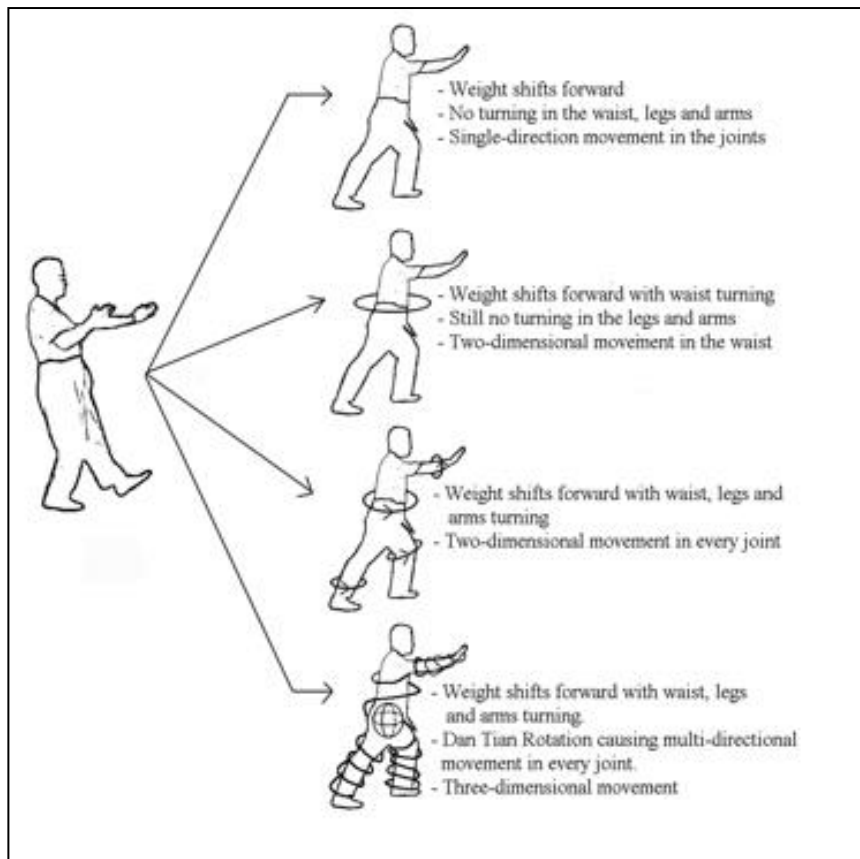


Figure 5-3 Silk Reeling

This is a very effective and safe way to stretch the ligaments and tendons. Let's use this analogy of a rubber band. Hold a common rubber band and stretch it. This demonstrates a standard Dao Yin stretch. Now take the same rubber band and twist it at the same time that you stretch it. This demonstrates the results of Tai Chi movement. You will notice that the capability and durability of the stretched-and-twisted rubber band is greater than when it is simply stretched out. This simple demonstration shows you one of the many ways that Tai Chi compares with Dao Yin.

A Better Way to Maintain Physical Balance and Avoid Injury

Another benefit received from this multidirectional joint movement is that it helps our entire body stabilize and become flexible. When a joint only turns in one direction, any force that pushes or pulls in any direction other than the direction by which it is aligned will cause the whole body to topple over completely or injure the joint.

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Take a look at the Figures 5-4 and 5-5. When force is exerted in a direction NOT allowed by the hinged joint, the impact of this force will get “stuck,” and if great enough, the force could even damage the joint, whereas a universal joint can respond to a force exerted from any direction with continuous movement and therefore prevent the force’s impact from getting “stuck” in the joint area. For obvious reasons, we want our own physical joints to be universal joints. Fortunately they are, but too often they are not used in a multidirectional way in our daily activities or physical training and therapy. For example, when we lose our balance or experience some unwanted force, it is easy for us to forget that our joints can move in many directions other than the limited direction we usually move. This causes the impact of these undesirable forces to get “stuck” in our bodies where it could cause injury. Now take a look again at Figures 5-4 and 5-5 and compare the hinged and universal joints. The Tai Chi form is a very good way to learn how to use our joints in a universal direction.

The ***silk reeling movement*** is what makes our joints move in a universal direction as we have just discussed. In Tai Chi we apply this silk reeling to as many parts of our body as possible. In some (internal) explanations, the entire body is divided into nine separate moving parts, which are referred to as the “Nine Pearls”, and they are: (1) Neck (2) Shoulder (3) Wrist (4) Elbow (5) Chest (6) Waist (7) Hip (8) Knee and (9) Ankle. These nine major moving or jointed areas are interrelated and work together. Think about how these major joints would perform if they were “hinged” joints rather than universal turning joints? As hinged joints, when any force is applied to the body and the part that is affected by the force cannot move in the direction of the force, then the force will impact this joint and transfer to the next part of the body. This force continues through the body until it finally reaches a part that can move in the same direction. This method can severely limit the ability of the body to neutralize any force. However, if these nine major joints operate as universal joints, that particular part of the body where force is exerted will be able to neutralize the force along the direction of the force.



Figure 5.4 Hinged Joints



Figure 5.5 Universal Joint (Ball-and-socket)

Even if this part of the body cannot neutralize the force entirely, another nearby universal joint would assist in neutralizing the force. Just imagine! We have nine universal turning areas inside our bodies to neutralize a force from any direction. As long as we don't let our center of gravity go outside the area between our two feet so that we unbalance ourselves, we cannot easily be set off balance. That is how Tai Chi helps us become stable and flexible.

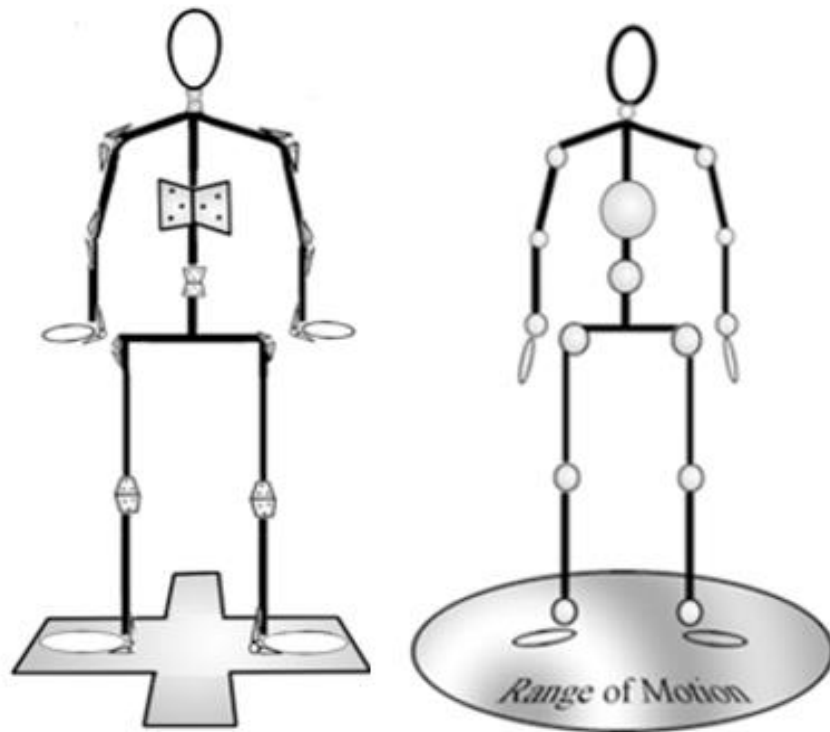


Figure 5.6
Imagine how limited our mobility would be if we had hinged joints instead of universal (ball-and-socket) joints.

There are some terms that may appear to go together or complement each other like: “flexibility and limp” or “stability and rigidity.” Most of the time stability is one condition and flexibility is another and they do not go together or complement each other, but are quite different. However, Tai Chi makes our bodies more stable (more balanced) by becoming flexible (multi-directional movement). [\[21\]](#)

Dr. Tingsen Xu, Ph.D., was a professor from China who taught Tai Chi and conducted Tai Chi research for more than twenty years at his Tai Chi Research Center at Emory University. Dr. Xu was instrumental in adopting Tai Chi forms for senior citizens’ training in the West and was supported by the National Institutes of Health. He had been interviewed numerous times in the media, had many articles and stories published in various popular magazines and newspapers. Dr. Xu did extensive research as a medical scientist in the study of physical therapy and preventive therapy for the elderly. One of many studies involving Dr. Xu, showed a significant decrease in the incidents of falling after the elderly study participants practiced Tai Chi. These Tai Chi practitioners recorded a 25% decrease in falls. In many studies, he concluded through statistical analysis and controlled experiments that practicing Tai Chi reduced health risks, improved balance, eased arthritis and rheumatism suffering, and lowered the risk of injury from accidents. In one such statistical study, which tested and compared Tai Chi with 10 other exercise disciplines like Yoga, aerobics, weight lifting, swimming and jogging Tai Chi surpassed all other exercise styles by 40% or more in improving balance and general health, and in reducing accidents caused by falling.

A properly balanced physical body helps your mind to relax. In other words, when your body is unbalanced, you get a feeling like you’re standing on the edge of a cliff and can never fully relax or feel calm and secure knowing that at any moment you can go over the edge.

5.3 Relaxing the Body to Open the Chi Channel

If an average person with normal health knows how to relax his body so that there is no tension in his muscles and no tightness in the ligaments, tendons, cartilage and other soft connective tissue [\[22\]](#), then usually his Chi channels will open by themselves. There are many stretching exercises and meditations to help you open your Chi channel and once they are opened, you will feel recharged and refreshed. You might even receive some pain relief too. However, most people only have a general idea of how to relax, which cannot help them totally relax in order to fully benefit from Dao Yin and other Internal Exercises.

Tai Chi has its own techniques for relaxing which clearly defines:

- What parts of the body are tense most of the time? The chest and shoulder areas, as discussed in Chapter 3.
- What causes these tensions in our daily life? Emotional stress.
- What are the negatives resulting from these tensions? The upper torso is overactive and the lower torso is inactive.
- What do we concentrate on during relaxation? What the Chinese refer to as the *reversal procedure* or the slowing down or reversing the aging process occurs when the upper torso is inactive and the lower torso is active.

5.4 Sinking Chi Helps to Pump Circulation

Good Circulation But Not at the Expense of the Heart

As stated in Chapter 1, “the circulation of Chi directly affects blood circulation. The classics say Chi is the leader of the blood.’ If the Chi flows smoothly and is unobstructed, the body will be nourished by Chi and blood and then we can maintain continued good health. Likewise, the reverse applies. Any blockage of Chi in any of the meridians (Jing Luo) will precede poor health.”

Let’s take this information one step further and compare the Chi and blood circulation with water flowing through a system of pipes. Pipes that are clear, unobstructed and properly installed can easily transport water. However when a valve is closed indefinitely, the water sits and stagnates. In order to prevent the water from polluting, the water valve is opened so that the water can move freely throughout the system of pipes. However, sometimes the water still flows too slowly and it cannot help move along or flush out any residue. When such residue builds up, it could clog up the pipes and eventually block the water in the pipes.

However, by adding a good working pump, the water flow is improved. Just like water, Chi and blood circulate best when the (energy) valves are open and the blood vessels and channels (pipes) are clear to allow an unobstructed movement (flow) of Chi and blood throughout our body (system). In Section I we discussed how turning and stretching the joints and ligaments **opens the energy gates or valves**. Then in Section II we talked about how relaxation **clears the channels** (pipes) and keeps Chi movement unobstructed. Now in Section III we want to discuss how Tai Chi offers a unique way to increase the flow of Chi in our body through a **“pump-like” action**.

We know that the blood circulation is “pumped” by the heart and cycles throughout our body starting and ending at the heart. Everyone understands how important blood circulation is for the transportation of oxygen and other nutrients, and the elimination of toxins and waste. Whenever someone suggests improving blood circulation, they often recommend increasing the heart rate through aerobics, running and most other types of exercising. However, straining the heart and increasing the blood pressure could cause problems for us. Besides that, exercising itself also produces more toxins and waste, which will cause the lungs, kidneys and liver to work more to remove these toxins. We need good blood circulation especially to extremities like our feet, which are farthest from the heart.

Now the problem here is that we want good circulation but not at the expense of our heart! Most exercises today cannot guarantee both good circulation and a relatively slow heart rate. Can we do something to improve the circulation without overworking the heart? Yes. Besides the heart, there is something else that can help our circulation, namely the squeezing action of constricted muscles. When muscles constrict or squeeze, they create an additional pressure, which assists the flow of the blood back to the heart. Usually, our blood has the most difficult time returning to the heart from the legs. Through simple observation, we know that when people age or lose energy, their legs are the first to weaken. Is there a way to improve the circulation especially in the extremities by using the muscles without increasing the blood pressure or straining the heart? Yes. There are many ways, like walking for example, to tighten muscles just enough to help circulation without overtaxing the heart. On the other hand, running can increase the blood pressure, but not without straining the heart and producing more toxic waste in the body. Now, let’s just squeeze or constrict only those muscles necessary for assisting the blood back to the heart without any excess use of other muscles that might overtax the heart. Which muscles you ask? Our leg muscles! When the oxygen-poor blood returns from the legs through the veins back to the heart, our body must push or “pump” harder.

Therefore, we want to use our muscles to increase the pumping action and use our heart less. This is how we get increased circulation but NOT at the expense of our heart.

Tai Chi Is a Perfect Exercise

When the body is fully relaxed, there is minimal muscle use. This reduced muscle activity or tension diminishes the chance of a heart overload and also causes the heart to work less to gain the same benefits usually obtained from a strenuous workout. Tai Chi is the perfect exercise to meet these needs. The reasons why are explained below:

- By keeping the body straight and by opening and expanding the joints, you reduce resistance in the blood circulation, which is easier on the heart.
- When you place all your body weight onto both legs, the legs, especially the thighs, tighten to support your weight which causes them to behave like “booster pumps” and they assist the blood flow back to the heart. The pressure formed when the leg muscles constrict (squeezing action) causes this “booster pump” capability.
- Furthermore, in Tai Chi the body weight is clearly distributed onto one leg (full), which makes it feel heavier and increases the pressure used for pumping the blood from that weighted leg. Then this full leg has even more pumping capacity and actually “boosts” more blood circulation back to the heart from that leg. Meanwhile, at the same time, the leg that is carrying no weight (empty) is relaxed and is not being used to support the body but is preparing to reverse its role to become the weighted leg. This occurs because Tai Chi is a continuous nonstop rhythmic movement and in Tai Chi the player is constantly shifting the weight from one leg to the other. This kind of gradual change from completely full to completely empty between the two legs amplifies the pumping capacity as compared to the pumping capacity of the legs described in item #3. In item #3, when the body weight is placed on both legs, the pumping capacity lacks the rhythmic tightening and loosening muscle action present in the alternating leg-weight shifting activity of Tai Chi. Again, we would like to stress that “completely empty and completely full” defines an extreme range of movement where one leg is totally relaxed, soft and has absolutely no weight bearing on it while the other leg

is tense, solid and holds all your body weight on it.

- In addition, exhaling when the leg is full causes additional weight to be placed on that full leg and so exhaling synchronizes with the action of placing the entire weight on one leg (“sinking Chi”) and helps you to relax even more. This synchronized action also causes a greater blood flow back to the heart and more carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other waste byproducts to return to the lungs so that even more waste is removed when you exhale. At the very moment you exhale, even more CO₂ is still returning to the lungs to be released on time. However, it is not advisable for you to do the opposite and inhale while the CO₂ is still returning to the lungs because it could cause some problems.

Now you can see why Tai Chi emphasizes coordinating the breathing with the movement. You can also understand that the actual meaning of this coordination is that whenever you relax on one leg, you should exhale and these two activities are done with the exact same rhythm. In Tai Chi practice usually the movement of placing the weight on one leg is slow and the exhaling is deep and long.

There are several conditions you experience after exercising, which indicate that your blood circulation has increased while the heart rate has remained slow. For instance, your body gets warm and you sweat lightly, or your heart beat is calm, or your breathing is slow so that you can speak normally or even more deeply. The symptoms of incorrect Tai Chi after exercising are a racing heart, shortness of breath, or an ashen or pallid face due to poor circulation.

In regular exercising, when the blood circulation increases, the heart, lungs, liver and kidney also get a heavy workout. But Tai Chi is different. When we improve the Chi circulation, the blood circulation improves too. However, our heartbeat is still steady not radical, and our breathing is still even, gentle and long. After doing internal exercises, you will notice that you are sweating profusely but you’re not out of breath and still able to converse or sing without strain. On the other hand, when you are sweating just as profusely after any other general exercises, your heart is beating hard and fast, you’re out of breath and you labor to talk or sing.

Figure 5-7

The pattern of these sample exercises is not important. It really depends on how you do them internally. The exercises could lead you to the best results when done correctly

COMPARISON CHART

GOOD

BETTER



(Good) Exercise helps blood circulation



(Better) You gain the same good circulation but the heart works less



(Good) The heart is not overloaded with the same degree of exercising

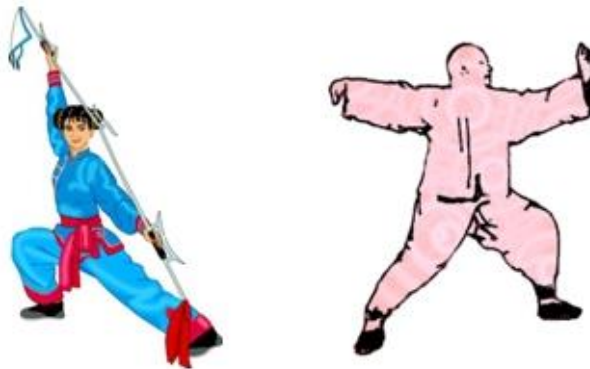


(Better) Your heart works even less and resistance in the blood is reduced because of proper alignment



(Good) You discovered a Way to get good exercise without straining the heart

(Better) You learned how to develop a “booster pump” for assisting the heart



(Good) Your heart gets some assistance with blood circulation

(Better) You learned how to amplify the capacity of your heart’s “booster pump” by displacing the body weight clearly on each leg alternately



Good) Your heart works far less while it receives more help from the same degree of exercising

(Better) Movement and breathing are coordinated to enable the most efficient circulation of oxygen and elimination of carbon dioxide

Feeling the Large Heavenly Circle is an indication that your movement is correct, your breathing is precise and your relaxation (“sinking Chi”) is complete. This enables the blood to circulate so well that it even flows to the farthest “reach” of the networks of the blood vessels (microcirculation). That is the reason why, after Tai Chi people practice correctly, their bodies feel refreshed and recharged. Then after a long time of training properly, their bodies are in such good shape that their skin is very soft, they have healthy hair, their senses are sharpened, their bones are stronger, and more. It’s simply due to the fact that the entire body can assimilate its nutrition better and eliminate waste more efficiently.

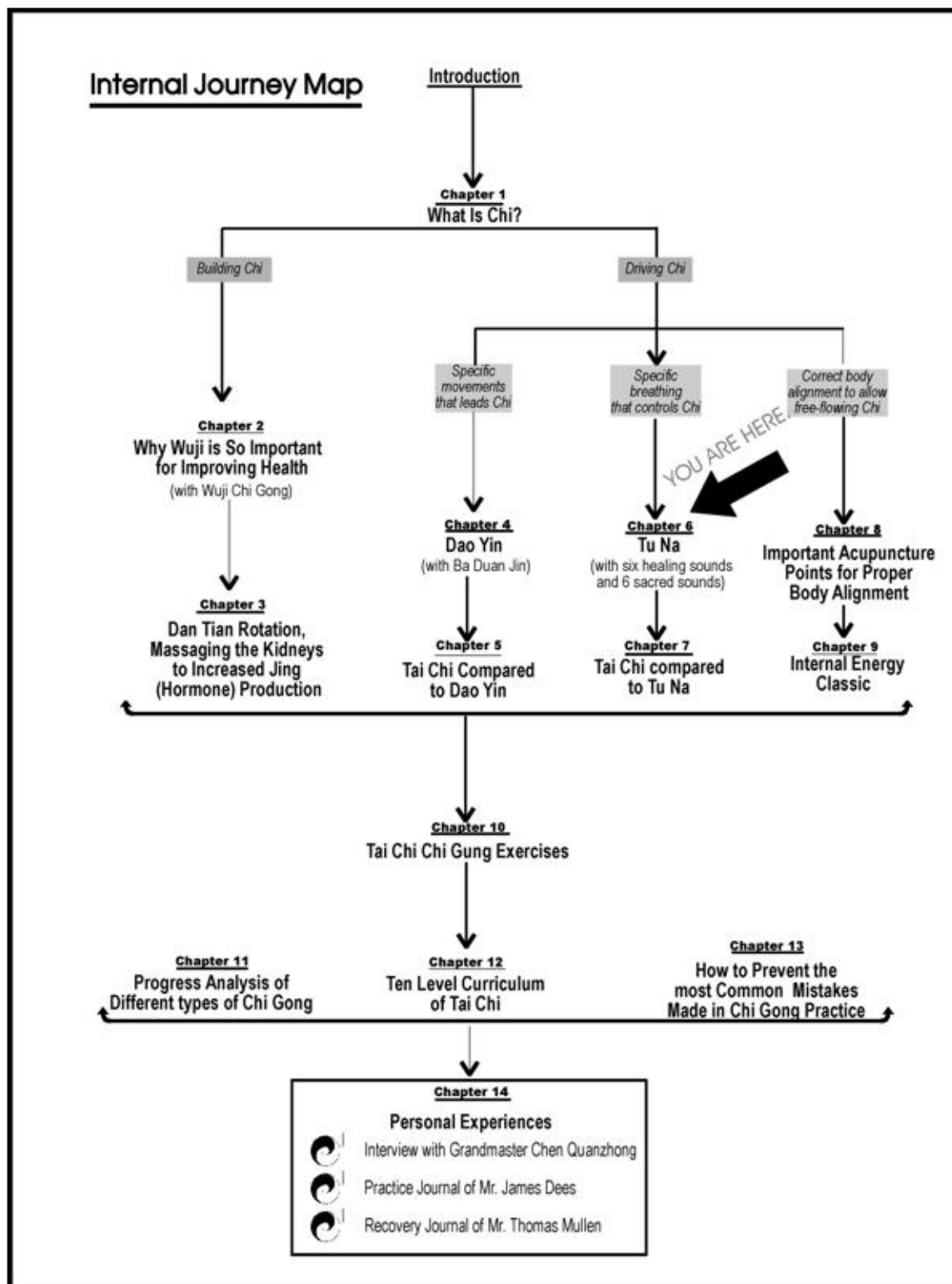
Perhaps now it has become clear to you that just because you slow down an exercise like low-impact aerobics or boxing does not mean that they are like Tai Chi. You cannot transform any exercise into Tai Chi and make it as beneficial simply by slowing it down. Tai Chi movement is very precise and profound and is far more effective than any other kind of slow, soft movement. Mere soft, slow movements do not result in so much health benefit as the universal turning motion of Tai Chi. And Tai Chi is much more than that!

Chapter 5 Footnotes

19. *If you want to see the elements and their relative organs, see the Five Element Chart Figure 6-15 of Chapter 6, Tu Na.*
20. *Actually the full name of Tai Chi that we are most familiar with in the West is Tai Chi Chuan which translates as “Tai Chi Boxing Style.” In China there are many different style names that end with “Chuan” because it means, “boxing style”: XingYi Chuan (“Form & Mind Boxing Style”), Hong Chuan (“Hong Organization Boxing Style”) and Chang Chuan (“Long Range Movement Boxing Style”).*
21. *Tai Chi is full of paradoxes, which brings together many such opposing conditions like flexibility and stability, connect and separate, strong and soft, fast and slow, straight and curved, and light and heavy. When they all happen together the results are amazing because of this unique movement and the philosophy behind it.*
22. *Soft connective tissues refers to that tissue which connects bones and muscle, including ligaments, tendons and cartilage.*

吐納

Chapter 6 Tu Na



You will be amazed how much breathing affects the body.

6.1 What Is Tu Na

In the early days, the term “Chi Gung” only referred to Tu Na. The word “Chi” in Chinese could translate as either “energy” or “air.” If you consider the “energy” translation of Chi, then Chi Gung would cover every kind of internal energy exercise. But if you use the “air” translation of Chi, then it can only refer to Tu Na, which is what this chapter is all about. Even today, there is an ongoing debate in China about whether to use the term “Chi Gung” to represent all internal styles or to represent just Tu Na.

Tu Na uses the breath to help improve and strengthen Chi circulation. The Chinese translation of “Tu” is *exhale* and of “Na” is *inhale*, which accounts for the fact that Tu Na means breathing exercise. Just like Dao Yin, the Chinese people practiced Tu Na for many thousands of years. Eventually they combined and enhanced Tu Na with traditional Chinese Medicine Theory where it became a more sophisticated and complete system. Both of the following examples from about 2,500 years ago clearly show that the Chinese were benefiting from these breathing exercises at that time.

EXAMPLE 1: EXERCISES FROM HUANG DI NEI JING, [\[23\]](#) (THE YELLOW EMPEROR INTERNAL CLASSICS)

If someone has a chronic kidney problem, he can do the following exercise in the early morning around 5a.m. First he begins by facing south to do the following exercise to help him recover. Next he clears his mind of any disturbing thoughts. Then he breathes through the nose and “swallows” his breath and repeats this six more times. Afterwards he swallows the saliva as many times as he can.



Figure 6–1 The Yellow Emperor, Huang Di

EXAMPLE 2: EXERCISE FOR DRIVING CHI WRITTEN ON A JADE WEIGHT

The *Driving Chi Jade Weight Text* is a weighted jade clothing decoration which is about 2,500 years old. What's unique about this piece is that the inscription is an explanation of *the Small Heavenly Circle*.

Early historic archives recorded that these early physical sensations represent Tu Na just as it was when the ancient Chinese people first practiced it

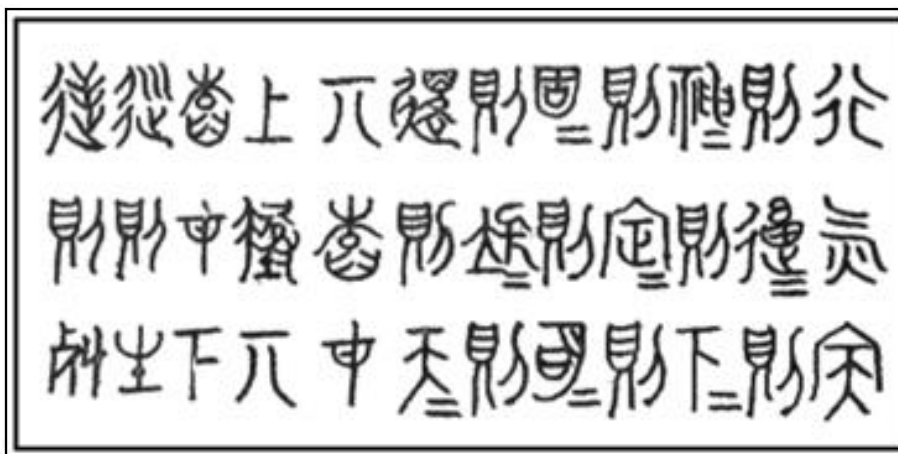


Figure 6-2
Jade belt weight inscribed with Tu Na breathing exercises.

Below is the literal translation of the Driving Chi Jade Weight Text:

"Driving Chi. Deep. Will be stored. Then will be expanded. Will go down. Will stay. Then will become stable. Newly germinated and sprouted. Will grow. Return. Become heaven. The root of heaven is at the top. The root of earth is on the bottom. Go according to text. Then alive. Not according to text will be dead."

Below is an interpretation of this *Driving Chi Jade Weight Text*:

Here are the instructions on how to drive Chi. First one must drive the Chi deeply. The Chi is then stored in the Dan Tian. When enough Chi is stored in the Dan Tian, it will expand. Then the Chi expands downwards to the base of the lower abdomen or the lowest point of the pelvis. After that, the Chi will remain there. If it remains there long enough it will stabilize. Now it is ready to germinate (indicated by sexual arousal). After this sensation occurs, Chi will then travel up the spine, and eventually the Chi will return to the mouth. This is the Heavenly Circle.

The head is the “top” where you experience this “high” or “spiritual” feeling. The lower abdominal base is the “bottom” where the Chi and hormones, or the raw material needed for the transmutation into this “high” or “spiritual” feeling, are generated.

If one follows this method, he will have a long and healthy life. However, without this method, your life will lack energy and long lasting vitality.

After reading section 6.4 of this chapter, you will see that the text inscribed on the *Driving Chi Jade Weight* is actually an early version of Nei Dan.

Below is a list of the six major Tu Na systems covered in this section. Note that many of them combine with Dao Yin exercises, which have been discussed in Chapter 4.

- I Counting Breaths Exercise
- II Guan Xiang
- III Nei Dan
- IV Hard Style Chi Gung
- V Zhang Mi/ Tibet Secret Buddhist Exercise
- VI Chanting

6.2 *Counting-Breaths Exercise*

Using “breath counts” or even just *watching* the breathing helps to focus the mind and to concentrate better. When a person is relaxed and quiet, he can feel only two things in the body: the heartbeat and the breathing. These two things are real and not a figment of the imagination. So by concentrating on what is real like the breathing, he can help his mind become more relaxed and keep himself from being distracted by an overactive imagination. The method of “breath counts” is a simple way of accomplishing a relaxed state of mind.

Begin by sitting quietly with eyes closed and count each breath cycle up to ten. This equals *one* “10-count cycle.” Then start all over again but remember that a breath cycle consists of both an inhale *and* an exhale.

You would be surprised to see how easily you can be distracted from this simple exercise. Many people find that they can't even get to the number 5 without being interrupted by a lot of mental chatter and other distractions. When you are able to count uninterrupted up to 20 "10-count" cycles, you will truly experience and understand what a wonderful quiet sensation you possess inside yourself. This exercise is usually used to prepare for other meditations.

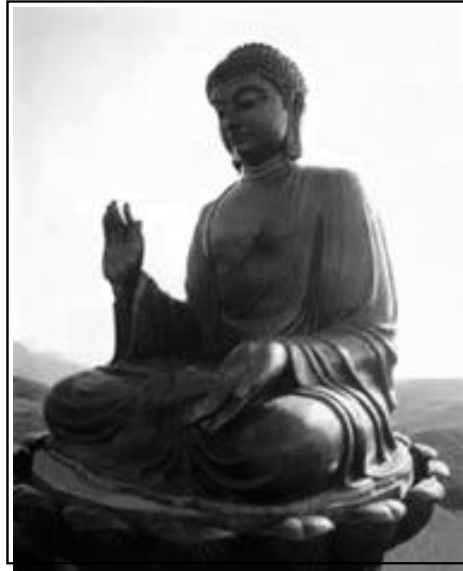


Figure 6-3 Buddha

6.3 Guan Xiang

There is another type of Tu Na called *Guan Xiang*, which means "observation" (Guan) and "contemplation" (Xiang). *Guan Xiang* uses the breath in conjunction with the mind. The training object of this visualization exercise depends on *the intended* purpose. Figure 6-4 gives some examples of *Guan Xiang* showing what to visualize and the purpose of the visualization.

The level at which our mind and body is operating in Guan Xiang is determined by the breathing technique. To the teacher the breath acts as a barometer or indicator of the level of expertise of the student. In the beginning of training, the breathing is inconsistent and uneven but, after practicing for a while, it slows down and becomes softer and gentler. Eventually on a high level, the breathing is not even noticed because it is so light and it is so deep that it can't be felt at all. In fact, on a very high level a person can become so deeply involved in his visualizations that he won't even notice or feel his own *body*. That is why sometimes this exercise is also referred to with the

controversial terms Zi Guan of which Zi means "suspend" (body movement and thinking) and Guan means insight, contemplation, observation. When that happens, the mind becomes very quiet, the "spirit" escapes and is released from carnal restrictions, which allows the mind to venture and explore special experiences.

6.4 Nei Dan

Nei Dan and Wai Dan

The most famous branch of Tu Na today is the **Taoist Nei Dan**, which means “internal elixir” in Chinese. In the early years, the Chinese realized that they could recover from illnesses and injury by taking some remedy or medication. So Chinese alchemists began to believe that perhaps they could discover a special medicine or pill to prevent any illness, increase longevity and become immortal! So they conducted many different experiments and continued this research for thousands of years in pursuit of this elusive “fountain of youth” pill. The Chinese word for a special elixir or pill is “Dan.” Generating “Dan,” like cooking, requires a mixture of selected ingredients, a pot or caldron, regulation of the fire and temperature, a recipe, which indicates the quantities, directions and a timetable of preparation and cooking. Often “Dan” was a mixture, which included numerous special and rare ingredients that were prepared (cooked) in a special type of cauldron. However, no one was able to discover such a pill to ward off all illness and become immortal. On the contrary, many people suffered through these experimental elixirs and became seriously ill or even died from taking these concoctions. After numerous unsuccessful attempts, the Chinese gave up their quest and redirected their research. After the Tang Dynasty (around 800 A.D.) they applied breathing exercises or **Nei Dan** to acquire health maintenance and longevity, which is what will be discussed in this section. The reason the Chinese named this health maintenance system **Nei Dan** is because its *internal exercises* produce “an elixir or pill” within your own body (non-physical). Since that time, the Chinese classified the ancient method of creating an actual *external* elixir or pill as **Wai Dan**. Originally there was only **Dan** but since the inception of **Nei Dan**, it became necessary to distinguish between the external (**Wai**) physical pill or elixir and the internal (**Nei**) “pill or elixir.” Hence **Wai Dan** and **Nei Dan**, with two very distinct and different meanings. Today **Nei Dan** practitioners still use the concepts and terminology of **Wai Dan** in their practice (producing **Dan** *inside the*

body)); such terms as ingredients, caldron, fire, timing and recipe/formula. Those items are just an analogy of what is going on within the body (refer to Figure 6-5.)

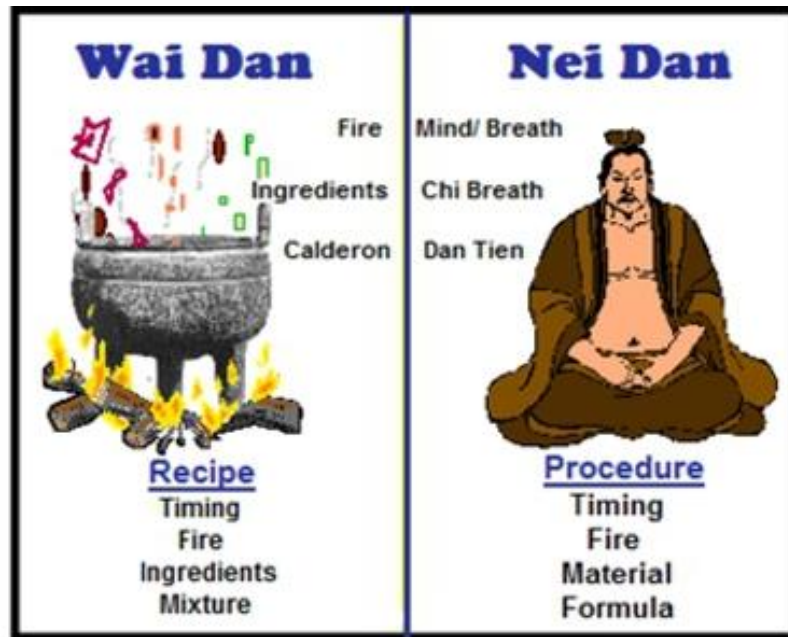


Figure 6-5
Nei Dan Wai Dan Comparison Chart

A Very Significant Term from Wai Dan - Dan Tian

There is a very important and common term in internal exercising, namely “Dan Tian,” which means the area used to make Dan. The translation of Dan is “pill” and Tian is “field” or “location” (caldron.). Different styles of Nei Dan, or even one style with different levels, could produce the “pill” in different locations or *Dan Tians*. So sometimes the location of Dan Tian could vary from style to style and level to level. Just remember: Even though many styles consider an acupuncture point in the lower abdominal area as the Dan Tian, the Dan Tian is NOT an acupuncture point. For the sake of argument, if you focus on your right thumb to produce “Dan,” then your right thumb is, in fact, the Dan Tian for your exercise. [24] Perhaps you learned about the upper Dan Tian, middle Dan Tian, lower Dan Tian, forwards Dan Tian, backwards Dan Tian and so forth. Those are simply different places designated for producing *Dan* depending on the purpose of the style. Some styles, like *One Finger Chan*, for example, even consider the entire body as Dan Tian.

How Breathing Can Give You New Feelings in Your Body

At this point you may be wondering how a system could develop so many complicated features based on only one breathing technique. Let's try this: Sit comfortable with your feet crossed on the floor. Fold your hands and lightly rest them in your lap. Be sure that both hands are with palms up with one hand underneath the other hand. The tip of the tongue should lightly touch the roof of your mouth. This is a position for most people who meditate. Now continue to maintain a straight body while you relax the shoulders and torso as you "feel" the rhythmic movement of your breathing. You want to feel the stomach area expand when you exhale. This kind of reverse breathing is what we were born doing and is very natural for a baby. Sometimes it is referred to as "lower abdominal breathing" in contrast to "chest breathing" or shallow upper body breathing. If you start to feel the naval area expand, you are beginning to understand Tu Na breathing. This is a very basic Tu Na breathing technique.

When your breathing becomes slower, softer, deeper and even, and you become more focused and calm, you may experience one or more of the following sensations:

- Activity and gurgling-like noises in the intestines and colon (large intestines.)
- Warmth in lower abdomen and naval areas.
- Sexual arousal
- You might experience some special feeling like a small electrical shock or tingling in the rectum area at a point before the anus. t

In Chinese this moment in training is called Hou Zi Shi, which translates to "alive at midnight" (resembling the sexual sensation usually experienced at midnight). This makes sense to the Chinese who believe that most men in general feel sexual arousal at midnight. However, if you want to heighten training, this strong sexual urge should not be used for sex.

More Sensations to Feel

At this point, you can see how breathing not only affects the lungs and heartbeat, but can also induce many other physical sensations. The feeling of heat, tingling, expansion or heaviness indicates that you have cultivated Chi, but they are *just initial* feelings. You can acquire even more feeling and sensation from Tu Na exercises, with Chi as your main "ingredient" for preparing your own "Dan." Based on sensations in the

lower abdomen, providing that you continue practicing Tu Na exercise, you will increase in feeling and improvement more and more. One particular goal you could achieve is the “opening” of the *Small Heavenly Circle* or *micro-orbit*, which the Chinese call “Xiao Zhou Tian.”

Begin by exhaling as explained above. When you inhale and “lift up” the anus, you may start to feel that warm tingling Chi sensation continuing down to the bottom. At first this Chi sensation is felt at the base or lower portion of the pelvic area, but as you improve in this technique you will feel it move up more and more. *However, do not pay too much attention to your inhaling.* Just allow this feeling to come in its own time. Perhaps after weeks of practice this warm tingling will come naturally and start to travel up the spinal column. Eventually it will move naturally in perfect synchrony with your breathing. Your energy could travel the complete circuit (Small Heavenly Circle), beginning at the mouth, down to the Dan Tian and onward to the lowest point of the orbit before climbing up the spine over the crown of the head and returning to the mouth.

Again let me caution you: DO NOT FORCE IT!

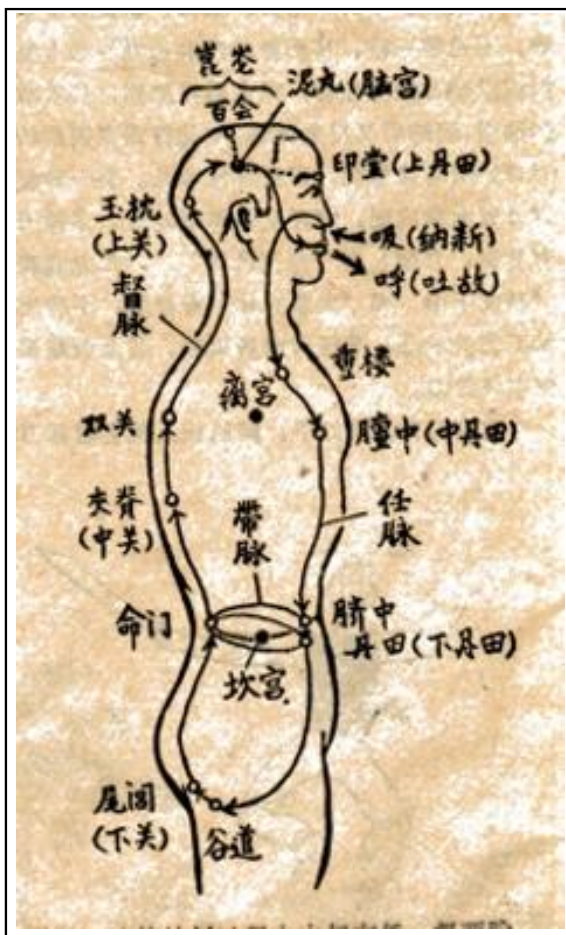


Figure 6-6
The Small Heavenly Circle

Some but not all Daoist internal stylists consider Yu Zhen, Jia Ji and Wei Lu as upper, middle and lower gates in the back because they're the three places where it is difficult for Chi to pass through. Also, they consider Yin Tang, Shan Zhong and Qi Hai as upper, middle and lower Dan Tian in the front because they used these areas to cultivate internal energy for different purposes.

Why This Helps

The purpose for practicing Xiao Zhou Tian is to *drive* the energy from the Chi storage area or Dan Tian on to the brain to “fertilize” it and clear the head. At the same time, this kind of Chi flow helps blood circulation in the torso. There is an old Chinese saying that states, “*When your Small Heavenly Circle is open, you will be immune to disease.*”

The gentle exhaling of Tu Na massages your organs internally. Simply put, practicing the Small Heavenly Circle exercise makes your lower torso more active, clearing and calming your mind so that you become healthier.

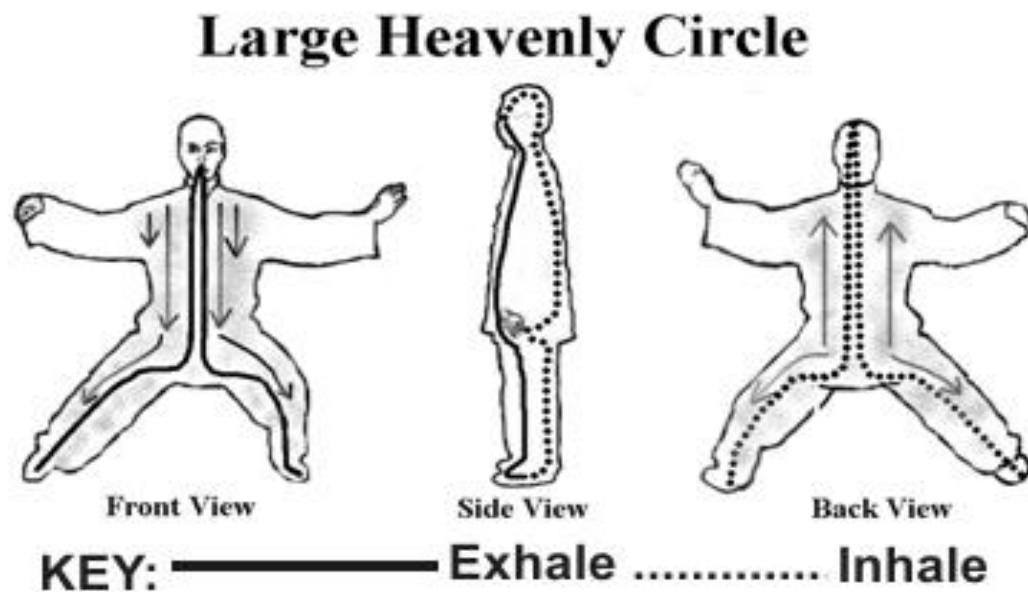


Figure 6-7

Side View and Front View of the Large Heavenly Circle
exercise used to stimulate Chi circulation in the entire body.

Even More . . .

In the Nei Dan System, there is the *Large Heavenly Circle* or *macro-orbit* exercise called “Da Zhou Tian,” which stimulates Chi circulation throughout the entire body (See Figure 6-11). When this Chi circuit or orbit is open, your energy travels **down** as you **inhale**. It travels a path from the mouth to the Dan Tian or lower abdominal area. It continues on down to the lowest part of the torso and descends all the way down both legs. Then, when the energy travels **upwards**, you **exhale** where it continues its voyage up the outside edge of both legs towards the base of the spine. This Chi flow ascends up the spine, over the head and finally

completes the cycle, which begins and ends at the mouth. When you experience this Large Heavenly Circle energy circulating in your body, it means that the entire channel/meridian network is very open and completely fluid. Also, every system of the body is balanced and synchronized, and the body is well nourished. In another old Chinese saying it is written: “When the Large Heavenly Circle is open, you will enjoy longevity.” [\[25\]](#)

What a Magnificent and Precise System

So, after thousands of years of experience, study and experimentation, the Chinese people have built an entire Nei Dan system. The Nei Dan system has very precise guidelines on how to initiate each level of study and on what exact feeling should be experienced for that level. When this milestone is met, you can then advance to the next level of study. Requirements change from level to level. Such determining factors are:

- What kind of feeling exists in which body area
- How strong is the feeling
- What areas are focused on
- How much attention is applied to certain areas
- How much relaxation in which area
- How much force is used to lift up certain areas, for example, the anus
- How strong is the breathing and how to control it
- How long to maintain a certain feeling

In some schools of Nei Dan there are also different *Dao Yin* movements at different levels of training, and each level has a complete set of individualized techniques.

There are hundreds of Nei Dan styles to practice. One of the more popular styles of Nei Dan is the Dragon Gate School (*Long Men Pai style*), which was started around the 12th century by the Taoist Monk Qiu Chu Ji. Each Nei Dan style has a special program with its own individual requirements. However, most Nei Dan styles share these topics:

- 1) How the breathing affects the body, especially the inner organs, and not just the lungs
- 2) How the breathing activates the reproductive system to produce more hormones or Jing
- 3) Based on #2, how the breathing upgrades the condition of the entire body, including mind and spirit.

When practicing Nei Dan, after a while, you should start to feel warmth in the lower abdomen. At the next stage of practice, this feeling continues downward to the base of the torso and one sensation experienced is sexual arousal. At the next stage of progression, a tingling feeling will travel up the spine and eventually you will experience an even higher level, which is marked by a sensation in the head of “brightness” and mental clarity. At the highest and final stage of Nei Dan practice, the experience is of nonbeing or back to your origin, back to Original Wuji, a of Primordial Heaven.

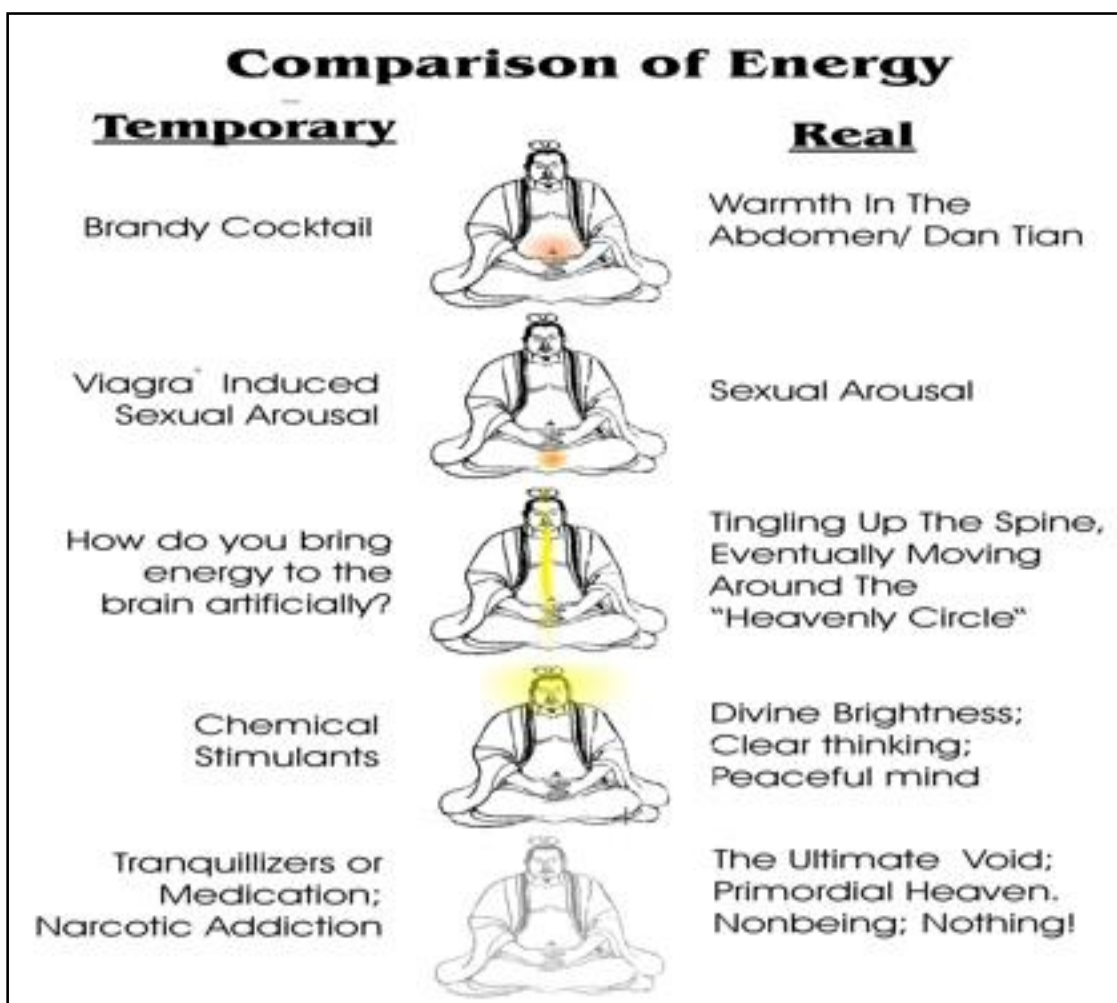


Figure 6-8
A Comparison of Temporary and Real Energy.

Figure 6-8 (continued)

1. *Wai Dan can randomly access any similar sensation immediately through the use of physical materials like medications, drugs, alcohol and a variety of other remedies. Whereas Nei Dan sensations must be acquired step by step and it develops in order according to the training.*
2. *Wai Dan sensation is not real, and in Nei Dan the feeling is very real.*
3. *Wai Dan is temporary, but through Nei Dan, the potential for sensation is always with you and readily available.*

Now you can understand why we say that “Dan” in Nei Dan is not a physical “pill” but rather an *internal healthy and energetic feeling*. Those early Taoist monks combined the mind and breath to generate some simple sensations like the ones previously described. It should be clear to you that **Wai Dan** means **taking a pill** to achieve similar feelings, sensations and physical conditions. **Nei Dan** exercises **produce naturally within your own body** these same feelings, sensations and physical conditions. Below the visual chart given in Figure 6-8 clearly demonstrates this difference. For more details about the progression of **Nei Dan**, see Chapter 11.

Something to Be Careful Of

There is a common problem with Nei Dan practice for those people who attempt to read and interpret the old Nei Dan Classics. The language of these Classics is subtle, loaded with analogies, indirect and confusing. The lack of plain language makes them incomprehensible for students who simply cannot understand what these books are describing. When they try to follow an inaccurate interpretation or literal translation of the book, the results can be very disappointing. Even when students do understand but do not receive the expected sensation, they resort to using the imagination to duplicate the sensation. Sometimes, when that doesn’t work, they try forced “power-breathing.” They forget that when Nei Dan is learned and practiced correctly, the progression of internal growth occurs at its own pace. It is advisable to seek a school or instructor who can guide you away from these common mistakes. Unfortunately, even in China, most styles today have very few people who have truly mastered them and most students learn only a small part of Nei Dan. Try not to be too anxious and, again, I can’t emphasize this enough: **DO NOT FORCE IT!** If you don’t get the feeling right away, don’t worry. As long as your blood pressure is normal, the upper body is soft and loose, breathing is even, and your mind is clear, then you’re on the right track no matter what you experience.

Nei Dan Is the Root of Many Internal Training Programs

Nei Dan is a great program for achieving some awesome feelings and changes to our physical condition using the combination of breathing and the mind. Nei Dan is an in-depth, detailed study of the human chemistry and possesses very valuable information about building internal energy. Internal training is based on Nei Dan for almost every internal Martial Art styles, like Tai Chi, Xing Yi, Xin Yi, Bagua, Tai Yi, Hun Yuan, Xuan Wu and many more. In Chapter 12 we will analyze how the training program of Tai Chi, the most popular internal Martial Art today, is based on Nei Dan.

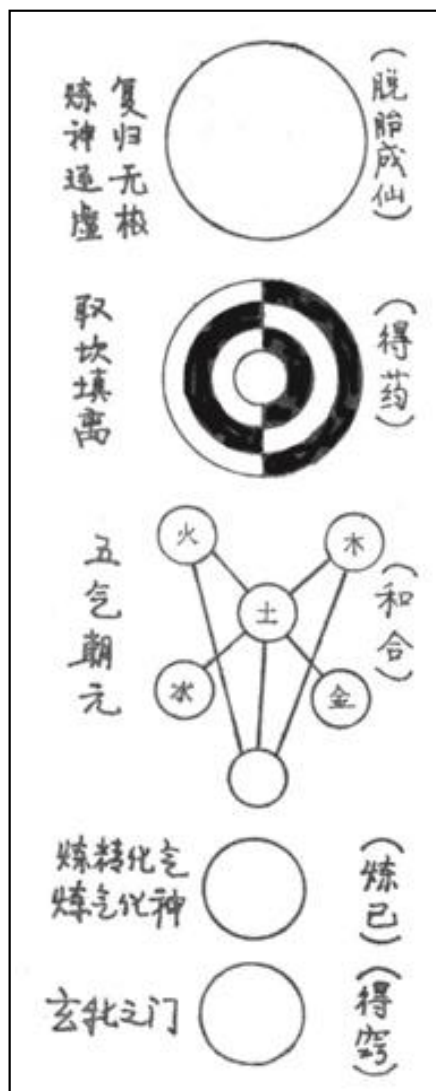


Figure 6-9

Return to Original Wuji was carved on Hua Shan or Flower Mountain by Ch'en T'uan, a Taoist scholar who lived 906-980 A.D.



Figure 6-10
An illustration of energy distribution, from the Ming Dynasty.

6.5 Hard Style Chi Gung

What Makes People Really Notice Chi

Today in Western society, Chi Gung has gained a lot of recognition and interest. More and more people attend exhibitions of Chi Gung Masters performing tremendous feats. The audiences are astonished by the powerful capabilities of these Masters. People have witnessed such Chi Gung with weapons, unbelievable Chi Gung physical endurance, demonstrations of bending iron, receiving harsh blows without a trace of bruising or pain, annihilating stones or wood with the bare hands and many other extraordinary demonstrations. However, almost all of these very impressive and entertaining exhibitions are examples of “hard” style Chi Gung.

How Do They Do That?

One of the features of any hard style Chi Gung Martial Art is the practice of holding the breath to “tie up” a specific part of the body. This practice isolates energy buildup in a specific area for the purpose of strengthening only that area. This can be likened to the way a tourniquet works. When a tourniquet is applied to a leg for example, it increases the pressure inside a certain area. So, holding blood and Chi allows it to gather and build up in that specific area. When this is done, that specific area is tempered like steel to become more powerful when striking and to be able to endure more punishment without damage. Devoted hard style Chi Gung practitioners become so strong that their ability to strike extremely hard and break things is almost inhuman. Taking heavy punches and powerful kicks is quite normal for well-trained artists. Like forged steel, they are very impressive and they illustrate just how much potential energy the body has. The favored areas are the fists, palms, head, groin, shins, back, torso, shoulders, forearms, stomach, sides, thighs and feet, but not the eyes or face.

How to Train

The very first thing in training a Chi Gung student must do is produce *enough* Chi in the body before he can even begin to learn the technique of *holding* Chi. Listed below is an accurate progression of training that the student should follow in order to produce Chi in Chi Gung:

- 1) Dao Yin to open the joints
- 2) Some meditation exercises like Wuji helps increase inner awareness and Jing/hormone production
- 3) Learn proper alignment in the Stillness Stance in order to feel the path of Chi
- 4) Breathing techniques
- 5) Absorbing external Chi from the surroundings

- 6) .Mind and breath combine to “drive” Chi”
- 7) Different postures or movement to hold Chi. That is the key criteria to differentiate between various styles of hard style Chi Gung.
- 8) Receiving and delivering physical blows. For many hours students will train using techniques such as thrusting hands into sand or reaching in and out of hot oil or slamming the head against stone or wood. They punch trees, use a loaded wagon or car to run over the entire body or place heavy boulders on their stomachs. They break wooden boards with their hands, have swords cut them or spears pierce them, and many other ways to build physical endurance.
- 9) Freeing up the “held” Chi and returning it back to the body’s Chi circulation. Usually the Dao Yin exercises for stretching, patting or rubbing are used to do this.

Usually, every time you train in hard style Chi Gung, begin with some form of Dao Yin warmup exercises and end with more Dao Yin exercises to “cool down” and allow the Chi to be returned back into circulation.

Common Mistakes

Many people practice hard style Chi Gung without following any proper program. Therefore, they take and deliver punches and blows far too soon in their training. Some practitioners may break an arm or other bone, and often bruise their muscles. After training, they are very uncomfortable internally, to the point some people actually excrete blood in their urine. Some people might not experience these negative side effects until years later, when they are older. Then they develop many problems as a direct result of this improper training. Such people did not learn how to properly withstand the physical abuse of hard style training or how to protect themselves from injury by using Chi. Chi must be cultivated and built enough to “inflate” and “buffer” the body so that it can withstand such hardstyle punishment. Any car driver knows he cannot drive on a deflated flat tire without tearing up the tire and destroying the rim. Perhaps this will help you understand how more Chi infused into your body protects and increases the body’s endurance. The simple explanation is that Chi “inflates” between the body tissues much in the same way that air is pumped inside the walls of the tire, providing both maintenance and durability. Without enough Chi, like a flat tire, you body is vulnerable on impact.

The Limits of Hard Style Chi Gung

Do not rely too much on hard style Chi Gung in hand-to-hand combat. Simply put, there is not enough time to execute a powerful defense or offense quickly because the preparation time has to include time to *drive* the Chi and time to *hold* and *build* Chi in a desired area before executing any maneuver. Even if you can take a punch, you still won't have time to build a Chi defense. In Chinese Martial Arts there are many other ways to strengthen the body and increase endurance, and they do not involve "holding" Chi. Such exercises can increase Chi production and continue to put more and more Chi into circulation. Therefore, by boosting the Chi circulation, like inflating a tire, you actually protect the body. Tai Chi and Xing Yi, for example, work this way.

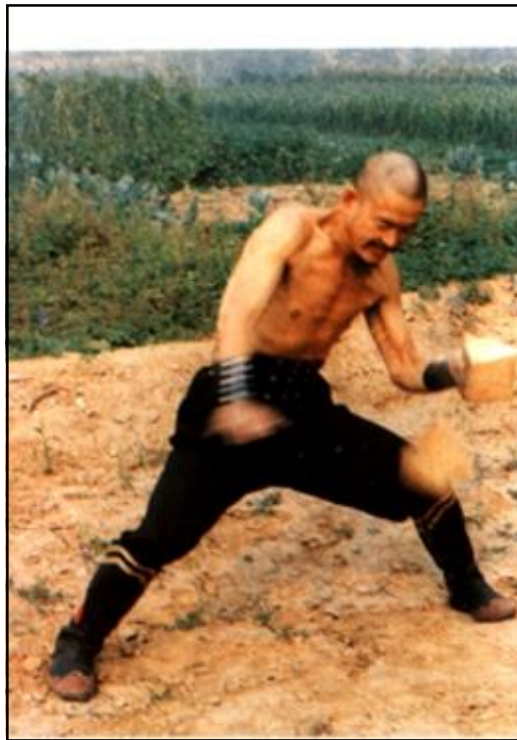


Figure 6-11
This Hard Style Chi Gung expert uses only his fist to split the cement block.

Chi Gung covers a very broad range of endurance and power, but it still has its limits. For example, there are many Chi Gung Masters who demonstrate tremendous feats like being cut by knives and swords, but so far there are none who can withstand any slicing on their skin.



Figure 6-12
Using only his index finger, Hard Style Chi Gung expert easily splits the wood.

6.6 Zhang Mi, Esoteric Tibetan Buddhist Branch

A Secret Style

Zhang Mi represents the mysticism of Tibetan Buddhism. Its original concepts are based on the Buddhist belief of reincarnation, so Buddhists cultivate themselves to prepare for the “next life.” Through these Buddhist exercises they hope to be able to escape from the mortal “life-and-death cycle” and to be elevated to a higher level of existence when they die (in this life). However, since the turn of this century people outside of Tibet, who are not followers of Buddhism, have learned these exercises and have been able to raise their state of consciousness and increase their energy. Such people adapted this religious or spiritual exercise to their health maintenance program. This Tibetan Buddhist practice is not based on traditional Chinese Medicine Theory but rather India’s Ayurvedic Medicine.

In Ayurvedic Medicine Theory, the ancient rooted medicine theory which originated in India and Nepal, it is stated that there are three main vertical energy channels or meridians of the body with seven transverse layers that cross them (Chakras). The exercises from the secret branch of Buddhism usually begin at the lowest Chakra or energy source area, which is located in the body’s outer reproductive organs. These exercises continue to work upward until they reach the highest point or spiritual seat at the top of the head.

Such special Buddhist exercises are called “secret styles” because the practices or patterns are done using three distinct conceptual methods, which are not “open” or available for the public. Hence, the “secret style.”

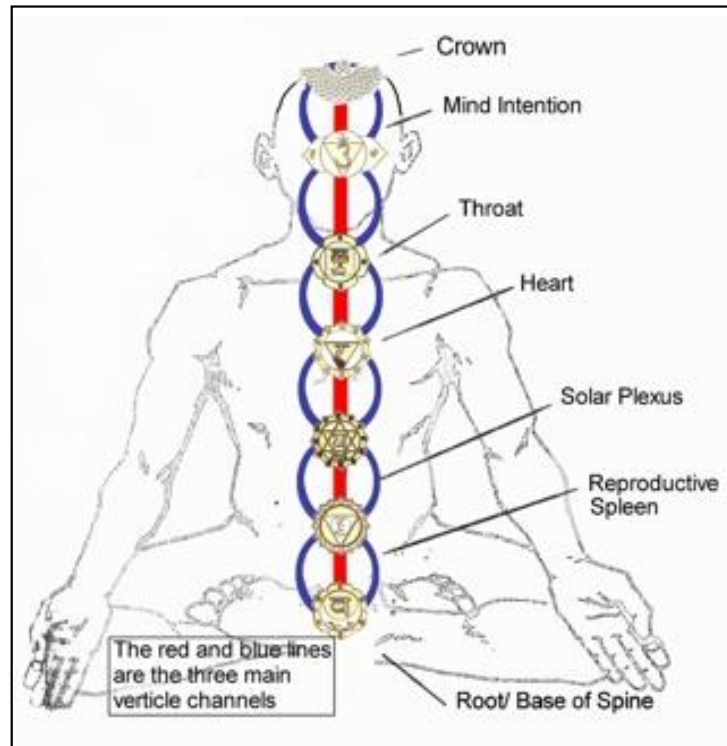


Figure 6-13 The Chakras

Actually this esoteric branch didn't originate in Tibet. Around 300 600 A.D., books containing these practices were introduced to the Han people of China. [26] Then, people from Japan and Tibet came to the Han region to study this branch. However, sometime after 1000 A.D., the Han people abandoned these practices completely because some of them were against their new moral standards. The Japanese and Tibetans continued to practice, which is evident today. The Tibetan people continued to learn even more from India and Nepal until Buddhism was completely overcome by other religious practices. After 1200 A.D. Tibet transmitted these exercises to the Mongolians and hundreds of years later to the Manchurians also. There have been several revolutions in Tibet over the history of this esoteric branch. Now, there are five additional sub-branches under the main branch, which the people named by color; Yellow, Red, White, Black and Multi-colored.

The Three Criteria That Determine This Style as Secret

Buddhist esoteric (“secret style”) exercises are done by applying special techniques based on these three basic criteria:

- I Body position
- II Breathing technique
- III Intention, visualization or focused thinking

I BODY POSITION

There are various body positions and hand placements and finger gestures. Each of them has a separate and different purpose. There are specific postures that can be difficult for some people. Those postures have a special purpose because they direct energy in such a way as to cause a very special effect (*refer to Dao Yin*).

II BREATHING

One of the breath-control exercises that is often spoken about in Zhang Mi is Bao Ping Qi, which means “energy in a treasure bottle.” In Bao Ping Qi, by inhaling through the nose, Chi (energy) is brought to the lower abdominal area, where it is held for a while so that the lower body fills with energy and then exhaling quickly through the nose to open the channel. [\[27\]](#) When there is enough energy and the channel is open, more advanced exercises are possible, such as Jiu Jie Fo Feng, Nine Section Buddha’s Wind, and Chu Huo Ding, Wild Fire Under Control. Most breathing techniques are strong and precise.

Chanting is another breathing method used to energize the body and elevate our spiritual consciousness, which will be discussed in the next section.

III INTENTION

The basic idea in the Tibetan Buddhist intention technique is to imagine something over and over until it becomes you. Think of “mind over matter” when you try to understand the technique of intention. For example, people who meditate on the benevolent peaceful countenance of Buddha are trying to capture that same peaceful presence within. In a way they desire to become one with Buddha and all that he represents. This does not mean that the author is suggesting that you should become a follower of Buddha but to reinforce the power-of-the-mind theory. When you focus as in meditation on something long enough, you become like what you are focusing on. If you are familiar with the Bible, it also talks about the mind intention

in the Book of Proverbs 23:7, “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.” Being in control of your life and drawing off the resources of the mind is not limited to religion or spiritual growth. It is a tool for all kinds of human aspirations. There are numerous techniques to help you step by step to elevate the power of your own mind and master your destiny. For some of them, you can refer to section 6.3 in this chapter.

The secret Tibetan practice is a combination of these three criteria. By holding special positions, breathing a specific way, focusing the mind on different parts of the body or different things, and attending special ceremonies with high-level monks, it is hoped that the student will start to understand the deep meaning of Buddhism. The intention of different level exercises is to help the student understand the various depths of this ideology. This makes the Buddhist practice more practical than other sects. However, if you are just talking about exercising itself, these *physical* exercises are difficult to learn and practice. In fact, if you remove this religious or spiritual aspect from these exercises, in essence these secret exercises are closely related to Yoga in India.

6.7 Chanting

How Chanting Works

Chanting is another way of using the breath to influence our physical body. Each voice or sound is produced by different frequency vibrations and will affect objects of the same frequency. Making different sounds is really about producing different sound waves with our throat. And everything, including our own body and the surrounding environment, has its own vibration. Therefore, every different sound will activate different parts of the body, as well as connect the body to different environments. Different combinations of sounds give different results. That is the basis of how chanting practice (or reciting “mantras”) affect our health and body.

Three Elemental Sounds

There are many chanting systems in Buddhist and perhaps in other religious practices. You can break down all those chants into three basic sounds, which help you activate your body and exchange energy with the universe. These three sounds are:

- I “Wuung,” which is the basic vibration sound of the entire universe
- II “Aaah,” which is the sound for releasing energy.
- III “Hong,” (pronounced with a long “o”) which is the sound for exploding or “popping” energy when all interconnecting parts are aligned.

Based on these three universal sounds, many different chants can be created. For example, using “wuung,” you can chant “hung,” “gung,” “mung,” or “lung” etc. Use “Aaah” to make the syllables “Sa,” “Ma,” “Ha,” “Da,” “Ba,” “Fa,” “Tra,” “La” and so on. For example, there is one popular sect of Buddhism called the “Pure Land” branch, which utilized these three sounds and developed an entire system based on a single chant: “Na Mo Amitabha Buddha” (pronounced Naa Mo Aaah Mee Da Boo Dah). Notice that *Na* is based on “Aaah,” *Mo* uses “wuung,” *Ah* is from “Aaah,” *Mi* is from “Wuung,” *Da* is based on “Aaah,” *Boo* uses “Hong”, and again *Dah* is from “Aaah.” The effect felt by this one chant depends on the level of practice; the higher the level the more it’s effect is experienced.

First, those sounds vibrate within the body and help to open energy channels and activate certain systems. More than that, they help connect the body to the universe for exchanging more energy and information.

When invoking the *Sacred Sounds*, the resonance or vibration is “felt” as it is received in different areas of the body. The result is a noticeable *change* of some sort depending on which *Sacred Sound* system was applied. Now, using a radio to illustrate this concept of vibration, what happens when you change a radio station? You are changing the radio frequency of oscillation (vibration). Even though you really don’t *feel* the actual radio wave, you still enjoy the result of listening to a different station. Like a radio, we don’t actually feel any change in vibrations but we can observe the results. Do not confuse the “shaky-feeling” you get when the sound or music decibels are increased (the volume is turned up). This is not the frequency or vibration but rather increased decibels which is a totally different measurement. Even when you chant very softly, you are still on the same frequency or vibration level and will get the same result.

So you see the body response varies with each different sound or chant depending on the intended goal. The concept in place here is that the chant vibration “connects” with its corresponding vibration in the Universe.

When this happens, the practitioner can attain his intended goals. Often, after periods of sincere chanting, the devotee will associate his chant with some Figure or Deity-like person or some other representation of his intention. Then the invocation of his “Deity” (chant or Mantra) becomes animated in his mind and takes on a life and personality of its own. To illustrate, a Buddhist follower might choose the sacred sound “Aaah” and practice it religiously. One night he receives a very special response to his invocation of “Aaah” and he might say that he had a “visit from Aaah last night” to express his overwhelming excitement.

Since each and every sound has a specific frequency, the body can connect with myriad “vibrations” depending on the sound or combinations of sounds. When creating any chant or Mantra, we can innocently attract some unrecognized or scary universal connection by accident. In the olden days favorite benevolent sounds were given the names of Gods because, when faithfully practiced, they brought very welcomed responses. So it is important to understand that when “Dialing into Universal Frequencies” it is advisable to be guided by a qualified teacher so that you can attain positive and beneficial results. Remember, you don’t really feel the frequency of the chant but, with dedicated practice, you can experience a wonderful change in the body.



Figure 6-14
Tibetan banner with the Six Sacred Sounds.

The practice of invocation or “calling God’s name” is very ancient. This is the concept of calling on the “God” or Mantra that fits your goal, like some of the people who chant for (the God of) Piety, Strength, Courage and Purity, for example. When such followers chant, they chant from the bottom of their heart to worship the deity relating to the chant.

Chinese Sound Therapy

Most Chinese chanting exercises are *not* rooted in religion or in the name of any supernatural power. The Chinese people recited certain sounds or words so that they could feel change in a specific area of the body. Afterwards they explored exactly what sound or chant affected what part of the body in which way. So initially their inquiry was if sound had any effect on the body, but when they concluded that sound did in fact affect the body, then they dug deeper and more intensely. After many years of experimentation and research the Chinese developed a purely health-oriented physical maintenance program which was strictly based on physical awareness rather than religious motivation. Today there are many kinds of these health-care therapies, and, one such therapy is the *Six Healing Sounds*.

Sound therapy is a form of “vibration” medicine and a health practice. The vibration stems from sounds created by various positions of the mouth and tongue. For example, in this *Six Healing Sounds* therapy, each sound interacts with the associated body organs, and systems. Since different parts of the body, organs, and meridians are active or inactive depending what season it is, each exercise is practiced more in its related season. Figure 6-15, the *Five Elements Chart*, gives an overview of these six healing sounds and shows each sound in order with their related organs, systems and seasons. Unlike Buddhist chanting, these healing systems do not require or encourage people to practice continuous constant recitations. They can do such therapies during training or practice and even many times a day. But it is not necessary to do them every moment of the day.

There are numerous systems of chanting, but we will discuss two typical sound systems representing two major styles. One system is the *Six Sacred Sounds* and the other system is the *Six Healing Sounds*.

6.8 Six Sacred Sounds

The most popular chant in Tibet is *Om Mani Padme Hum* (*Om Mani Bey Mi Hung*). This chant is so powerful that the Tibetans put banners with this chant on it everywhere, hanging off temples, homes and wherever they can. This chant is not translated into any language and the Buddhist followers don't even want to translate it because they just want the *sound*. It is said that this chant is from an ancient noble language of India, where the sounds of its words and their meanings "match" each other. When somebody talks in this language, it could even cleanse him inside. This is a very difficult concept for us to grasp since no language like that exists today. There are some words in many languages where the sound of a word matches its meaning but not an entire language. For example, the Chinese word for cat is "meow," or the word in English for a loud noise is "boom." However, if you want a close translation of *Om Mani Padmemi Hum* it would be something like "worship someone whose brightness inside emanates all around him; an enlightened one or highly evolved (bright) person."

You clearly can see how *Om Mani Padme Hum* was derived from the three elemental sounds. Many average and non-religious people in China, Japan and other eastern regions benefit from chanting this sound. It is easy for anyone to practice.

To begin practicing *Om Mani Padme Hum*, sit or stand comfortably until you feel peaceful and "sweet" inside. Then "talk" or chant these sounds repetitively and at the same time imagine that your own brightness is slowly creeping out of your lower abdomen. Remember how we discussed earlier about focusing on a certain object and identifying with it and becoming one with it? This is basically the same idea.

You can chant anywhere, or not chant at all and just move the lips to the sounds. Take advantage of short breaks or any free time to practice, or listen to *Om Mani Padme Hum* chanting tapes while you drive or work when it is inconvenient for you to take time to practice. Every time you chant, you recharge yourself and come closer to your goal. Keep repeating the chant over and over and over. Sometimes, like a favorite song, chanting can get "stuck in your head." Then your mind is chanting on its own and you still can enjoy its benefits even without trying.

If you continue chanting *Om Mani Padme Hum*, one day your body will take on a light or brightness inside and become crystal clear. Then you've reached the level you want and your body has become what you intended, a "light bulb." Usually, when practicing chanting, a person appears calm and yet capable in daily life. His

mind is so strong, pure and focused that he is not easily disturbed. You can recognize such a person because peace and concentration are written in his eyes, his face and his mannerisms.

Some of the benefits of this chanting are:

- Inner peace and mental calm. With serious practice, you have no distractions and the brain starts to cleanse and balance. You can enjoy this particular benefit even by chanting any sound, like “a,” “b,” “c” or “1,” “2” or “3.
- Energized. A focused mind is a calm mind. In addition to a healthy mental state, remember how a quiet and calm mind helps the kidneys function better to produce more life sustaining hormones?
- Open energy channels. The vibration of these six sacred sounds affects our body tremendously.
- More connected to the Universe due to this special chanting.
- Chanting cleanses the body and mind. Your imagined internal brightness can help your body become crystal clear and enable your mind to recognize if you have unfulfilled desires and unrealistic goals enslaving you. Eventually it could heighten or raise your consciousness or what some people refer to as spiritual awareness.

awareness.

Please note, when you benefit from chanting, it is not due to some supernatural power. For example, a hurricane is coming your way. No matter how hard you chant it will not change this fact. But if you practice chanting regularly, you have more mental control and more awareness of your surroundings, and you are better equipped to endure life’s daily challenges and disappointments. So you have a much better chance of surviving. The chanting benefits you through *your own means!* Even though this wonderful exercise is primarily practiced in Buddhism, many regular people the world over practice it just for its benefits.

6.9 Six Healing Sounds These

Six Healing Sounds are “Shhh,” “Huh,” “Whoo,” “Ssss,” “Chewei” and “Sssea.” They are recited to maintain the health of different organs systems. It is the most popular and the oldest healing sound system in the Chinese history. Use the chart in Figure 6-15 to identify the correct sound as it pertains to your individual need.

Here are a few items of interest to help you understand how the following chart (Figure 6-15) works:

- **About an additional Healing Sound** The sound associated with the transition time between seasons is “Sssea,” which helps the digestion system, called the Triple Burner in Chinese Medicine Theory. This sound plus the other five sounds in this chart comprise the Six Healing Sounds and help to maintain all the associated organs/systems in the yin and yang viscera, orifice and anatomy categories.
- **About Color** The color on the chart refers to the face color that is reflected by the related organ when it is ailing. An experienced physician usually can detect what condition a person’s health is in by examining his facial coloration and through this he can also determine what system or organ is dysfunctional. However, we all have all seen a “red face” on a person when he strains his heart, for example, or a pale or ashen appearance on someone with lung or respiration problems.
- **About Emotional Overload** Excessive emotional buildup actually hurts the Yin visceral organs associated with it as shown on the chart. For example, too much anger can cause stress on the liver. Or a sudden shock or strong fear can negatively affect the kidneys, and extreme sorrow impacts the lungs.
- **About Seasons** Each charted season reflects when organs and systems are most vulnerable and therefore more attention should be given to them to maintain their health. For example, winter is when the kidneys are not as strong as normal and, therefore, it is easier for them to be underworked or overloaded. So, you can strengthen them by taking an extra precaution and practice their associated healing sound in the winter.
- **If you experience problems in the yin and yang viscera or orifice or anatomy, avoid the associated taste on the chart.**

- If you experience problems in the yin and yang viscera or orifice or anatomy, avoid the associated activity on the chart.
- If you experience problems in the yin and yang viscera or orifice or anatomy when exercising, you should not face the associated direction on the chart, your back should.

Five Elements Chart

	WOOD	FIRE	EARTH	METAL	WATER
<i>Healing Sounds</i>	“Shhh” <i>Shhh</i>	“Huh”	“Who” <i>Who</i>	“Ssss” <i>Ssss</i>	“Chwei” <i>Chwei</i>
<i>Yin Viscera</i>	Liver	Heart	Spleen	Lungs	Kidneys
<i>Yang Viscera</i>	Gall Bladder	Small Intestine	Stomach	Large Intestine	Bladder
<i>Orifices</i>	Eyes	Tongue	Mouth	Nose	Ears
<i>Anatomy</i>	Tendons & Nails	Blood Vessels	Muscles	Skin & Hair	Bones
<i>Emotional Overload</i>	Anger	Joy	Over Thinking	Sorrow	Fear
<i>Seasons</i>	Spring	Summer	Late Summer	Autumn	Winter
<i>Tastes</i>	Sour	Salty	Sweet	Spicy	Bitter
<i>Colors</i>	Green	Red	Yellow	White	Black
<i>Directions</i>	East	South	Center	West	North
<i>Climate</i>	Wind	Hot	Wet	Dry	Cold
<i>Activity</i>	Looking (eyes)	Walking	Sitting	Sleeping	Standing

Figure 6-15 – Five Elements Chart

These organs interrelate to each other and there are two ways they do this. One way is when an organ supports another to help or gain more strength, and the other way is when one organ counterbalances another organ. Refer to the Creative and Counter-creative Cycle shown in Figure 6-16 and note the relationship of supportive and counterbalancing (organs).

To use this healing system effectively, practice Wuji first, followed by the healing sounds. Begin with the first sound and repeat it six times.

When you finish the first healing sound, go on to the next sound in order and repeat six times. Continue on to each of the remaining sounds in order. For an additional benefit, at the end of each exercise set, repeat the sound that specifically refers to the current season six more times and also repeat the sound that refers to your health need six more times. It is important to follow the exact order of the sounds just as they are listed on the chart, and exhaling the sound should be long, slow, gentle and smooth.

When you are first learning these healing sounds, it will be necessary to whisper them to insure correct mouth-tongue placement. The mouth as formed as if to recite the sound but once the placement is correct, the sounds are created with just the breath and no audible sound is heard. Even though this exercise is so simple and very easy to do, this Tu Na can benefit you immensely. Here is a true story from China that illustrates the benefits of this exercise.

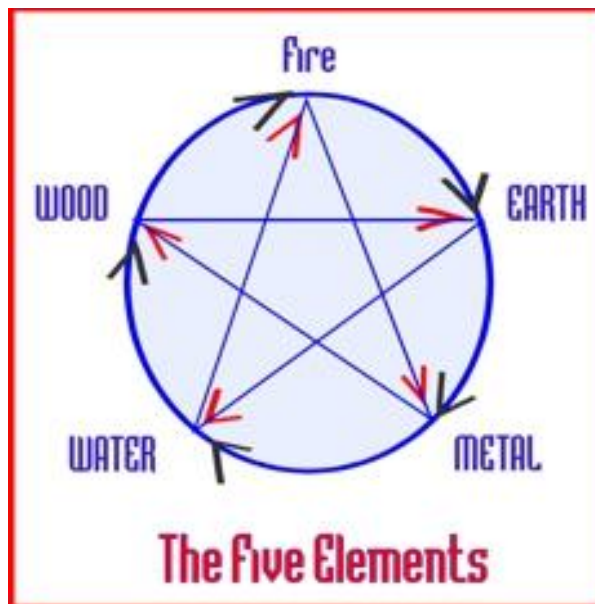


Figure 6-16
Creative and Counter-creative Cycle

For years one gentleman had chronic enuresis (incontinence or “bed wetting”) and none of the medicine prescribed by the doctor helped him. He learned this exercise and every day he practiced the six healing sounds. Since his problem was related to the “kidney, hormones and elimination system” he also repeated the sound “chwee” six more times after each exercise set. After two weeks of diligently practicing the six healing sound exercise, he completely healed the problem without reoccurrence.

Chapter 6 Footnotes

23. *Huang Di Nei Jing, the Yellow Emperor Internal Classics, is considered the foundation for Traditional Chinese Medicine Theory. Huang Di, the Yellow Emperor, was the first tribal leader to unify the tribes in China to form the roots of its first centralized government. The Chinese people consider Huang Di their “Grandfather” or the “Father of the country” and they refer to themselves as his “children.” It is said that Huang Di wrote this book but actually the real author is a mystery.*

24. *Author’s note: So far, I know of no style that uses the right thumb as the Dan Tian.*

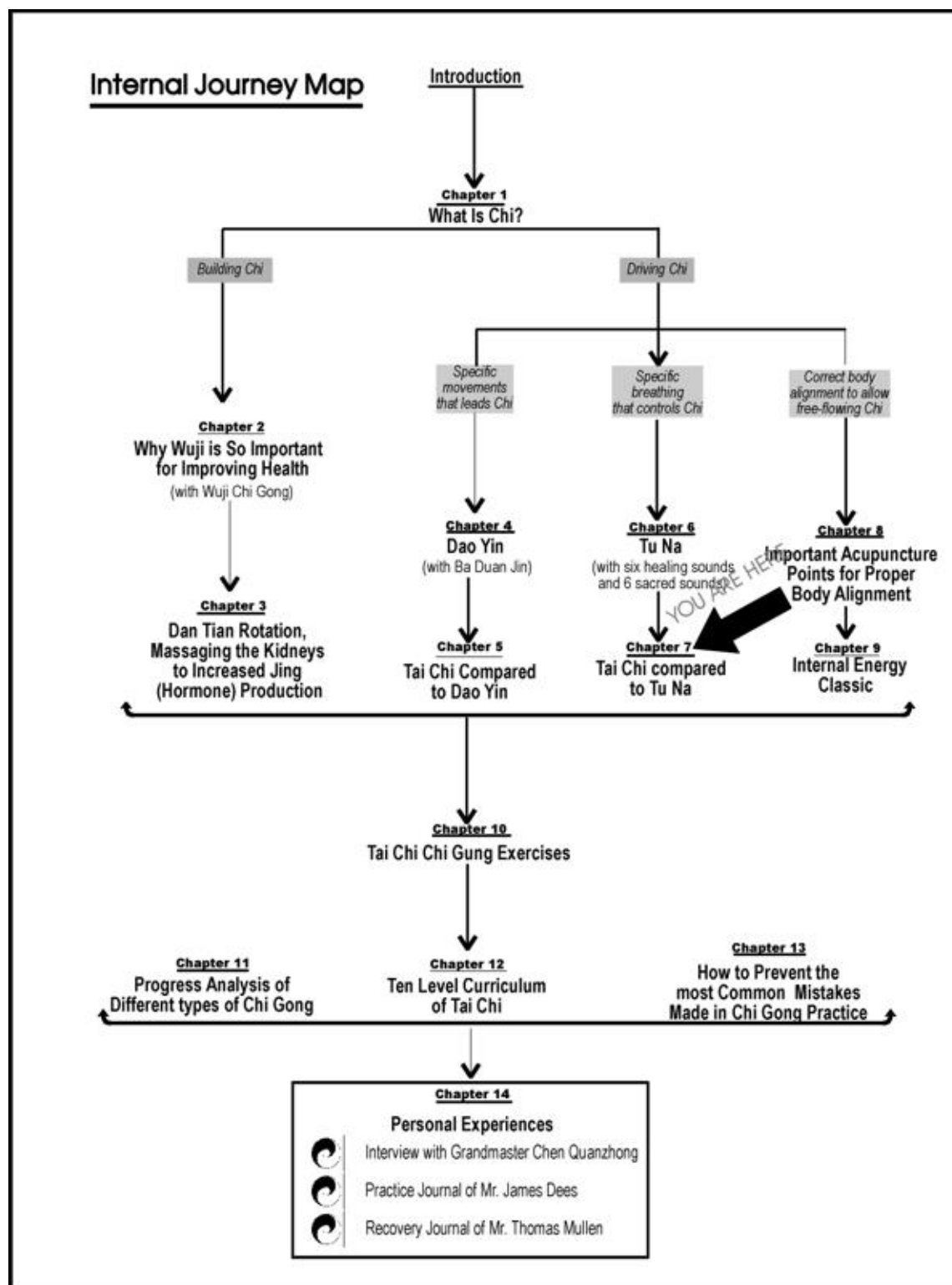
25. *Refer to Chapters 5 and 7 for examples of how to practice this exercise with Tai Chi.*

26. *he Han people are the majority of people in China.*

27. *his is completely the opposite of Taoist breathing techniques, which emphasize a long, deep, even and gentle exhale and pay relatively less attention to inhaling.*



Chapter 7
Tai Chi Compared To Tu Na



A physical vehicle to bring your mind to a joyful state.

Sometimes breathing techniques can be important during physical movements, especially in extreme situations or when you are executing certain moves with precision. In this chapter, we will begin with a general discussion about how breathing is used in Chinese Martial Arts. However, most of this chapter will cover the breathing techniques of Tai Chi, the most popular Chinese Internal Martial Art, and Chi Gung. You will see how breathing techniques combined with physical movement could change your body and mind tremendously.

7.1 Breathing Techniques in Martial Arts

Everybody Experiences Some Breathing Technique

In the beginning breathing was very uncomplicated and natural but later on it evolved into more complex and difficult techniques. There are many times during each day that we observe breathing techniques without realizing it. For example, when a worker wields a sledgehammer, it is quite common for him to exhale with force accompanied by an unintentional sound or grunt when he pounds this heavy tool downward. This is quite natural and done without any forethought, and typifies how breathing and movement work together. In ancient times, the Long Boat or Chinese “Dragon Boat” employed a breathing technique effectively. Oarsmen would systematically row to a drum while maintaining consistent breathing and vocal refrains to the beat.

A very long time ago, Chinese Martial Artists recognized the relationship between breathing and movement. They explored the concepts of Tu Na and Figured out how to make these fighting movements more effective through the application of many different breathing techniques.

Five Basic Breathing Techniques in Chinese Martial Arts

When doing Chinese *Form* training, there are five different breathing techniques:

1. Roaring

When any movement is quick and explosive, as in an attacking mode, the fighter shouts or grunts while exhaling very fast. Many fighting styles have very specific sounds for different movements. The fighting

sound of the Martial Artist should be deep but not necessarily loud, like the roar of a lion or the low resonating toll of a temple bell. This is because it originates from the Dan Tian or lower abdomen rather than from the throat and chest. [28] This breathing technique not only helps the attack but also startles the opponent.

Figure 7-1 Roar



2. Lifting

When practicing jumps in his Form, the Chinese Martial Artist would inhale until he completely filled the lungs expanding the chest area and compressing his stomach. Doing this would make him feel lighter and lift his body's center of gravity higher.

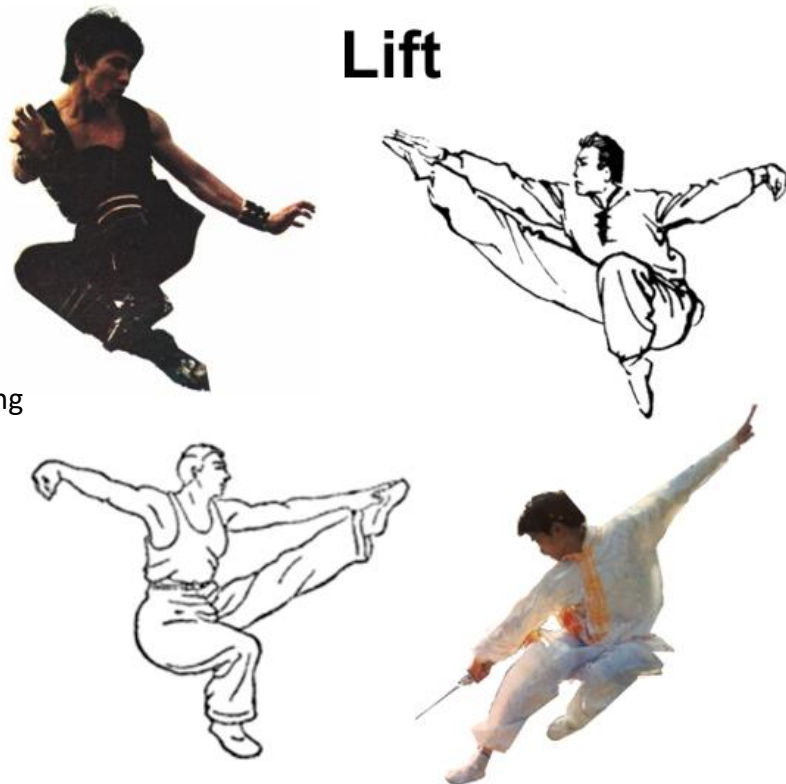


Figure 7-2 Three Examples of Lifting

3. Long Exhale

When a Martial Artist practices low stances or very slow motions, he usually accompanies these movements with a long, exhaled breath and this helps him to stabilize the movement.

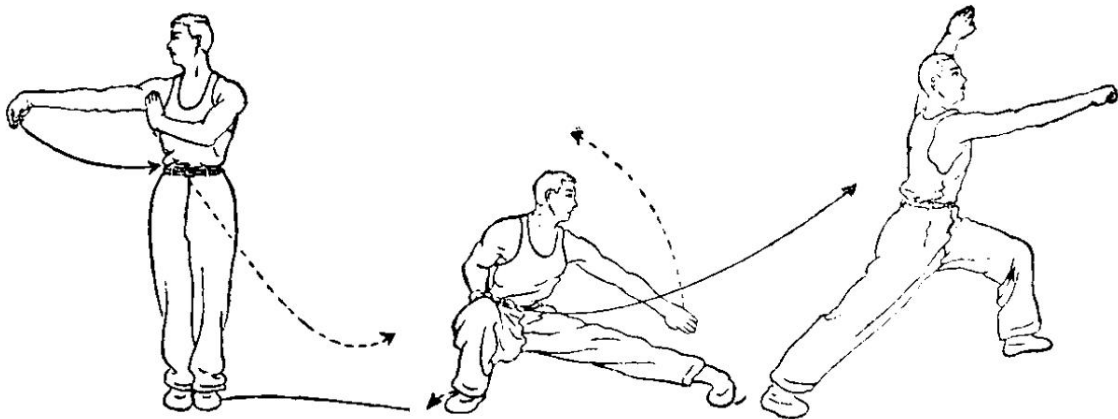


Figure 7-3 Long Exhale

4. Held Breath

Sometimes the Martial Artist will hold his breath to help him with a strategy or technique or when he changes from an extremely fast action to an abrupt halt, or when he suddenly breaks the rhythm of one movement and immediately goes into an entirely different movement. Also the martial artist will hold his breath in order to extend the time he is airborne when jumping and this helps him to stabilize the movement.



Figure 7-4 Held Breath

5. Opening and Closing

The complete breathing cycle of a single movement begins with inhaling when “opening” the body and is followed by exhaling when “closing” it. Usually in a single complete cycle the inhaled breath is long and the exhaled breath is short. The inhalation is for defense whereas exhalation is for offense. Inhaling is “soft” and exhaling is “hard” and helps to stabilize the movement.

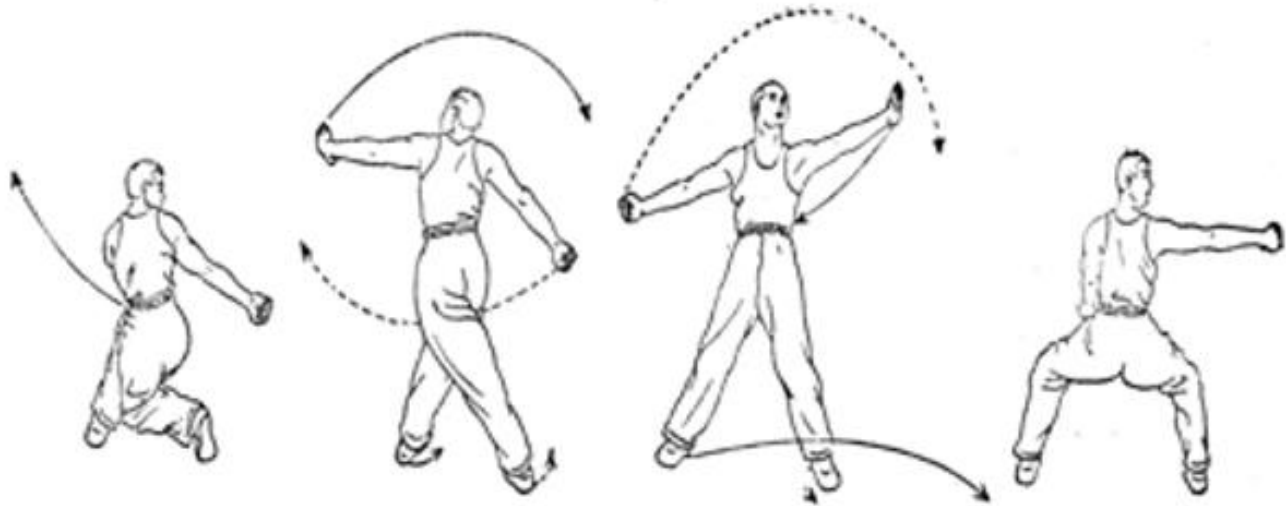


Figure 7-5 Opening and Closing

7.2 The Difference Between External and Internal Styles

Tai Chi was initially a Martial Art, so it also shares breathing techniques with other styles. However, Tai Chi applies its own special breathing techniques to movement. This section of the chapter explores the five techniques listed above as they pertain to Tai Chi.

All styles including internal and external have different intents and purposes for their particular breathing techniques. Usually internal styles like Tai Chi put more emphasis on breathing techniques, which give people the impression that by applying more breathing techniques their style can become internal. This is not true. The real difference between internal and external Martial Artists' breathing is not how much emphasis is put on breathing techniques but the way they breathe. Here, we will use Tai Chi to illustrate how Internal Martial Arts breathing techniques are compared to external styles and how they are combined with physical movement.

1. Roaring

Tai Chi roaring uses the sound hung ha. There is a classic poem that says, “If you hold the Dan Tian to practice internal power, there is an everlasting wonderful in the sound hung ha.” In Tai Chi hung ha has evolved into a sort of chant when issuing Fa Jing (explosive force). During one exhale, the hung is pronounced or “chanted” for most of the duration of the exhalation and the ha is said at the very end in a short abrupt burst that accompanies the explosion of the move. Hung is a soft nasal sound that builds up to ha, which a sound is made more in the throat and louder.

Do you see how hung ha is just another type of “ready-set-GO!” like we use in racing? Hung and ha are really not two words. However, when they are applied, the syllable hung is recited as a long drawn out sound while the stomach expands, as opposed to ha which comes with the sudden short outburst of force that follows hung. When issuing a strike, for example, the Tai Chi player breathes out slowly chanting hung to internally prepare and set up the strike. (“ready. . . set . . .”) Then, at the very last moment, he rapidly strikes while expressing a blunt ha sound (GO!). HUUUNG HA! or “Readyyyyy, Seeeeh-t, GO!”

Although both internal and external styles require that their sounds come from the Dan Tian area, most Shaolin stylists, for example, do not expand the stomach when they exhale. As their force erupts, they tighten or contract the abdominal muscles more to make their special forceful sound. This is similar to when an average person suddenly gets attacked, and his immediate natural reaction is to let out a scream or short sound and to tighten up and contract his body. On the other hand, when the same thing happens to a Tai Chi player or other internal stylists, the reaction is just the opposite because they expand the entire body like a balloon with the Dan Tian at its center. Then the part of the body (balloon) that receives the blow or impact will have more pressure to counter this impact, see Figure 7-6.

This kind of reaction is different from our natural reaction and so we have to train to acquire this ability. You can see if a player is really internal or not by his initial reaction to sudden impact. Is his lower abdomen expanding or contracting?

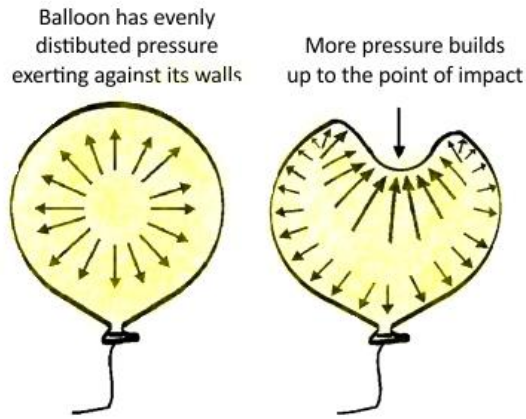


Figure 7-6

The part of the body (balloon) that receives the Blow or impact will have more pressure to counter this impact.

In the eighteenth century, there was a high level Tai Chi Master named Chen Jixia. He was also an expert painter. One day he was painting General Guan's picture in a temple. While he was engrossed in his painting, without warning someone launched an attack at him from behind. This attacker was Master Zhang, a famous Shaolin Zhang-style Master, who wanted to see just how high this famous Tai Chi Master's level really was. However, when he reached Master Chen, he felt a subtle small movement from his body but the force was so strong that it threw him backwards to the ground. And Master Chen never stopped his painting! After he finished working, he turned around and was surprised to find Master Zhang kneeling down waiting for him. Master Chen asked him why he was there. Master Zhang replied, "I attacked you and was thrown out. You are at such a high level; I want to be your student." Master Chen was humbled and offered instead to exchange what it is that they each excelled at. They became good friends after that. Master Zhang learned some internal power concepts from Master Chen who in turn learned some weapons techniques from Master Zhang. This story was recorded in both the Chen and Zhang family books.

Master Chen Jixia reached a high level of Tai Chi. His Chi was so strong that it could automatically counter impact from any direction with almost every part of his body (this time it was the back), even without knowing it. His Grand student is Chen Changxing, who was the teacher of Yang Lu Chan. Yang is the founder of Yang style Tai Chi and the one who contributed to popularizing Tai Chi the most.

The sound used in Shaolin style helps the body to tense more in order to make the body harder for the counterattack. So their sounds could be more like eek! Hung and ha just make the body expand more to accomplish Tai Chi and other internal fighting styles. It's physically impossible to tighten up the body when you exhale hung and ha from the lower abdomen. Try and see for yourself. So although both styles form their sound in the Dan Tian, they differ in procedure. This is what differentiates Tai Chi breathing from other hard style Chi Gung methods.

2. Lifting

Most internal styles prefer to stay close to the ground and even when kicking, they usually use lower kicks. However, there are times when they do double jumps in the air and kick, but often when they are done, the lung and chest area is expanded to prolong the time in the air. In such cases, the Tai Chi player lands with a short exhaled breath to prevent any Chi from remaining stuck in the chest area and to help this excess Chi return back to normal Chi circulation.

3. Long Exhale

This is another big difference between Tai Chi and external Martial Arts. Usually external stylists do long breaths only when they want to use a low stance or slow motion to make their movement go downward. Yes, that happens, but in Tai Chi even when the body is going up, the Tai Chi stylist is still sinking his energy/Chi downward. He always breathes in short breaths and out with long breaths no matter whether his body is going down or going up.[\[29\]](#) This differs from Shaolin style because when they want to go up, for example, they use the shoulder to help and to hold their breath in the upper chest area, which makes their upward movements go even higher. Long exhale helps the Tai Chi player “sink” internally.

4. Held Breath

Tai Chi players usually don't hold their breath in regular movement. In fact, Tai Chi people believe that every time the chest tenses up is a mistake because it is not a good idea to have the upper body active and the lower body inactive, which is a reverse of the ideal water/fire condition explained in Chapter 3. Besides that, this is also dangerous to the balance in combat because chest tension makes the upper body top heavy. Hard style Chi Gung sometimes deliberately holds breathing and uses torso tension to increase the force of impact.[\[30\]](#) But in Tai Chi, even when you get punched, there is no tension whatsoever. [\[31\]](#)

5. Opening and Closing

Tai Chi players have a greater range of internal movement, which in turn increases the range of opening and closing and yet shows smaller outer movements, thanks to the special body requirements of Tai Chi. This is because they try to release as much pressure as possible in the chest so that the lungs are more free to

move, especially when exhaling where the movement of dropping the elbows causes the torso to fold in more and exhaling becomes deeper.

Tightening up the chest area puts more pressure on the lungs and restricts their internal range of movement.

After prolonged periods of inactivity, you risk losing functionality in these parts of the lungs, which can be dangerous to your health.

7.3 The benefit of Tai Chi Style of Breathing

The following aspects of Tai Chi are what produce its health benefits:

1. Vibration to Help Relaxation

In Chapter 6 we learned how chanting makes more vibration and how specific sounds are the root of all sounds. For example, hung is a variation of the three universal sounds and comes from the “Wuung” sound whereas ha is derived from the “Aaah” sound. For instance, when you observe Master Chen Quanzhong doing Fa Jing/power release in a punch or elbow, or shoulder strike, even though he is not overweight, everything including his facial skin outwardly vibrates because he is so relaxed and everything is so loose. Most people prepare for a strike by tensing and twisting the face, which is a minor item compared to the entire body but reflects the difference in their level of relaxation. This is not internal Fa Jing. Fa Jing is actually an instantaneous body expanding and relaxation. The vibration from the hung ha sound technique opens the body deeper, which will increase the Fa Jung power. You could judge a person’s level by simply observing how much vibration occurs when he strikes or powers out while chanting hung ha. Hung ha breathing is a great exercise to help you relax more and “immunize” you against unnecessary or unhealthy upper body tension.

2. Long Exhale to Massage the Inner Organs

Abdominal breathing squeezes the inner organs in the lower body and activates them. As we discussed

Above, unlike external Chi Gung artists, who contract the lower abdomen when exhaling, Tai Chi breathing methods generate more inner pressure in the lower abdominal area by relaxing the chest and expanding the Dan Tian area when exhaling. In this way the lower body moves more internally to help the organs, circulation, digestion and the necessary elimination of waste and toxins. People suffer more today than in the past with disorders and diseases in the abdominal area, which results in poor digestion, toxic buildup in the intestines and irregular bowel movements, to name a few. Today most of us spend more time sitting behind the car wheel, on the couch, at the desk, in the movies, at school or at events than doing physical labor in the fields, in the barns, building homes, constructing towns or just taking long walks as our ancestors did.

When we are not doing Fa Jing/ power release in Tai Chi, what we focus on is the (long) exhaling while allowing inhaling to occur automatically. One Buddhist practice, for example, teaches the “treasure bottle air” exercise where they inhale more air into the lower abdomen. This practice is intended for a specific purpose. In Tai Chi, exhaling is our “specialty.” Tai Chi practitioners exhale all the way down and relax in order to bring the pressure all the way down. Each exhaled breath expands the lower abdominal area and “squeezes” the organs. In fact when doing Tai Chi form, you should not pay attention to matching breathing with movement. If you really want to think about breathing, think about the “exhale,” let inhaling happen on its own.

3. Tai Chi Pumping

Tai Chi breathing method helps the “pumping” action even without any outer motion.[\[32\]](#) You learned how natural breathing travels the Large Heavenly Circle, and how exhaling the Chi goes down automatically. Even though there is no outer movement at all, there is a great, huge circulation movement going on inside. This is evident if, every time you exhale, your hands get a little warm. Just remember that when you practice, your breathing should be slow, gentle and even.

4. Natural Breathing

Tai Chi and most Internal Martial Arts are based on Nei Dan internal development theory. However,

breathing is different from Nei Dan sitting meditation. As we discussed in the last chapter, Nei Dan is a very subtle system that is difficult for the average person to learn and easy to make a mistake with. In Tai Chi, because breathing is natural and without any conscious effort, coordination of Tai Chi movement and breathing happens all by itself and therefore can never cause any problems. Tai Chi requires the Chi circulation to go on its own and should not be interrupted by some imaginary directive.

For physical training in Internal Martial Arts, the Tai Chi method of breathing is easier than regular Nei Dan sitting meditation for developing the ideal state of “fire below, water on top.” This is because the volume of breathing is greater than in Nei Dan sitting meditation and the movement helps Chi sink even more when the practitioner’s alignment is correct.

Furthermore, the legs of those people who only practiced Nei Dan and Chan sitting meditation for years gradually shriveled up and became useless from muscle atrophy due to the lack of enough movement activity. Tai Chi would not cause this type of problem because breathing is combined with physical movement. If you enjoy sitting meditation, please walk around and pat your body afterwards.

For most people there are three different levels of breathing. At the first level, the transmutation of Jing/hormone to Chi, breathing is felt in the mouth and throat and is outwardly visible. At the second level, the transmutation of Chi to Shen/higher mental condition, breathing is felt going in and out of the Dan Tian and barely outwardly visible. At the third level, returning to emptiness, the practitioner is not even consciously aware of his body, including his breathing. All these changes happen naturally at their own pace and in their own time.

7.4 *A Physical Vehicle to Bring the Mind to a Joyful State*

Enjoying Good Chi Circulation

In Chapter 5 you learned what the criteria are for proper movement and posture based on physical body mechanics. Then, when the body posture is correct, you can feel Chi and want to prolong this Chi feeling without forceful breathing and imagination. Then, little by little, as you adjust your posture and movement, they become better so that eventually your breathing matches the movement by itself. Then the Chi feeling

becomes very stable and you feel it all the time. After a while you will experience more and be able to observe the times when certain movements, breathing techniques, intentions and your mind affect this Chi sensation. You could even start to experiment with different things and explore what affects this Chi feeling. Sometimes, when you push, press, turn, move up, move down or make some little change even in a small part of your body, you might notice some positive Chi reaction immediately. As you practice more, you become more sensitized to different Chi responses, and through trial and error you may discover many new things about your own body. A single Tai Chi movement could blossom into many little movements. As time passes and you continue to “play” with your Tai Chi movements, sometimes you may feel that by exerting a little pressure in one area or push a certain part can redirect the Chi flow to another area. At this phase of your training, your “playing” has evolved into a deep study in Chi and Chi circulation. The connection between the movement and Chi circulation will become much clearer to you.

Remember when we talked about Chi expanding when exhaling in Internal Martial Arts? In Internal Martial Arts, the Classics say that the Chi should expand internally to the four extremities which are hair (the end of blood), the tongue (end of the muscle), the teeth (the end of bone) and the nails (the end of soft tissue). This “four extremities” concept is based on Chinese Medicine Theory. If you can even experience this Chi expansion in movement, you pretty much reached this level of energy practice.

When you reach a certain level, your lower body also becomes strong enough to support the upper body and let it completely relax. By then your attention focuses more on those minor, subtle things in body movement, body structure and breathing that also affect Chi circulation because you don’t want to lose that comfortable and soothing Chi feeling. It will automatically help you to avoid out-of-control desires. At that point you are exercising your *Shen* (mind/spirit.) Your lifestyle could be reshaped after that from searching for internal happiness rather than being pressured by discipline.

Pushing Hands is a special two-person energy exchange exercise and an excellent teaching aide. Actually in Chen village it is called *Sticky Hands* or *Rolling Arm* and the idea is not really to “push.” When a student does Push Hands with a good teacher, every time his posture is incorrect, his Chi gets blocked. His teacher can then unbalance him, over and over until the student gets enough “punishment” and his body automatically avoids incorrect alignment and body condition with no forethought at all. This is a type of conditional reflex training and another way to look for the good feeling of Chi circulation. Of course, to enjoy and benefit from Pushing Hands, you need to have a good partner.

In Tai Chi form training, in the beginning your Chi journey began with only physical body training until you felt the warmth of Chi in your hands and they began to tingle. This marks a turning point in your training and you are now ready to include some energy study in your physical training. During this next phase, this Chi feeling gradually expands to your arms, legs, and finally spreads throughout the entire body. Sometimes students can get too anxious, impatient or curious and so they try to take short cuts in training. These students bypass parts of this step-by-step program and go right to the *mind training* aspect in the next level of this program. They have not yet completed the previous level. If their Chi circulation is not strong enough, they cannot attain the joyful sensation, and then their mind is forced to concentrate. So how are they going to naturally do *mind training*?

A Joyful State of Mind

As you progress through your program your Chi gradually gets stronger and stronger and your mind becomes quieter and quieter. Since you have been observing many results from your personal experimentation and are enjoying the Chi feeling more and more, you might reach the next phase. When you feel a small electrical zap at the very tip of the tongue, your mouth starts to salivate and you experience a “sweet” taste in your mouth. Once you have these kinds of sensations, you swallow the saliva very slowly down to the stomach and it feels like it is quenching an enormous internal thirst. It feels like rain on parched land and sends an invigorating gush of relief through you. This inexplicable internal quenching, the happiness and the wonderful “sweet” feeling all indicate how relaxed your nervous system is and that your Chi is in harmony and marks the next turning point in your training where you do mind study (Shen). At this point, you are now not just enjoying strong Chi but also a peaceful state of mind. You can see that these feelings are not just a figment of the imagination. Enjoying Chi is like when a deaf person gets his hearing back and everything is new and exciting to him. Then when strong Chi delivers you to this joyful mental state, it’s as if this deaf person, who only comprehended simple sounds, is now enjoying musical masterpieces.

In physical exercise programs, you can see muscle development and toning, which enables you to measure your progression and helps determine what your next level of training should be. In internal work it is very difficult to measure progress and maintain the right direction in your training program. The special sensations of hand tingling and tongue zapping are good internal indicators for guiding your

practice and evaluating what level you've reached.

Let's refer to the Nei Dan sitting meditation. Its indicators are warmth in the Dan Tian and sexual arousal as compared to warmth in the hands and "sweet" saliva in Tai Chi form training. Now perhaps you can see why it is difficult to identify the indicators in Nei Dan sitting meditation and keep them under control. For example, there could be other reasons for sexual arousal, and that's the easiest way to go astray. In Nei Dan meditation, you need a very good Master to explain the right and wrong sensations to you because there's a very thin line that separates them. And he also must watch you very closely to guide you, and this kind of close observation requires that the Master is able to read your mind.

After a long time of the mind study or practice, your mind is happy and joyful. Your intrinsic nature becomes complete. You even find that you feel sorry for people who can only acquire low level happiness through material gain. Such people seek mental and physical fulfillment in life through external satisfaction, but it is temporary, shallow and fragile. When true complete happiness is achieved step-by-step through a good physical-to-mental training program, it is real and permanent. In Chinese it is called "Xing Ming Shuang Xiu," which means you have accomplished fulfillment both in the physical body and in your intrinsic nature. At this level, training is beyond form practice. Training should now include more quiet meditation, reading more history and Classic philosophy books to understand their true deep meaning, communing with nature to discover the higher being within through examples in nature like high mountains, the vast ocean, the deep forest, peaceful moonlight and a powerful waterfall. Even in form practice, the mind is ahead of the movement and the sensation felt expands beyond the body's physical boundaries.

Many styles talk about a final goal or destination but they have no step-by-step program to take you from the physical body to the energy body and then to the mental body, the final destination. There are people joining the Chi Gung community for the fantasy defined in fiction, movies or fond dreams. There's nothing wrong with that. However, if they eventually don't have a real permanent good feeling within, then such impulsive activity will soon be over. Tai Chi is a scientific method of combining physical and breathing exercises to achieve this high level state of mind. The Tai Chi curriculum previously discussed can help those people who just practice the form and maybe some breathing techniques but don't know the final destination or how to go there. [\[33\]](#)

MASTER YAN 2014



Figure 7-7
Master Yan at Mount Emei (7/4/14)



Figure 7-8
Master Yan at the HUGE Laoze statue in
Guangzhou (2014)

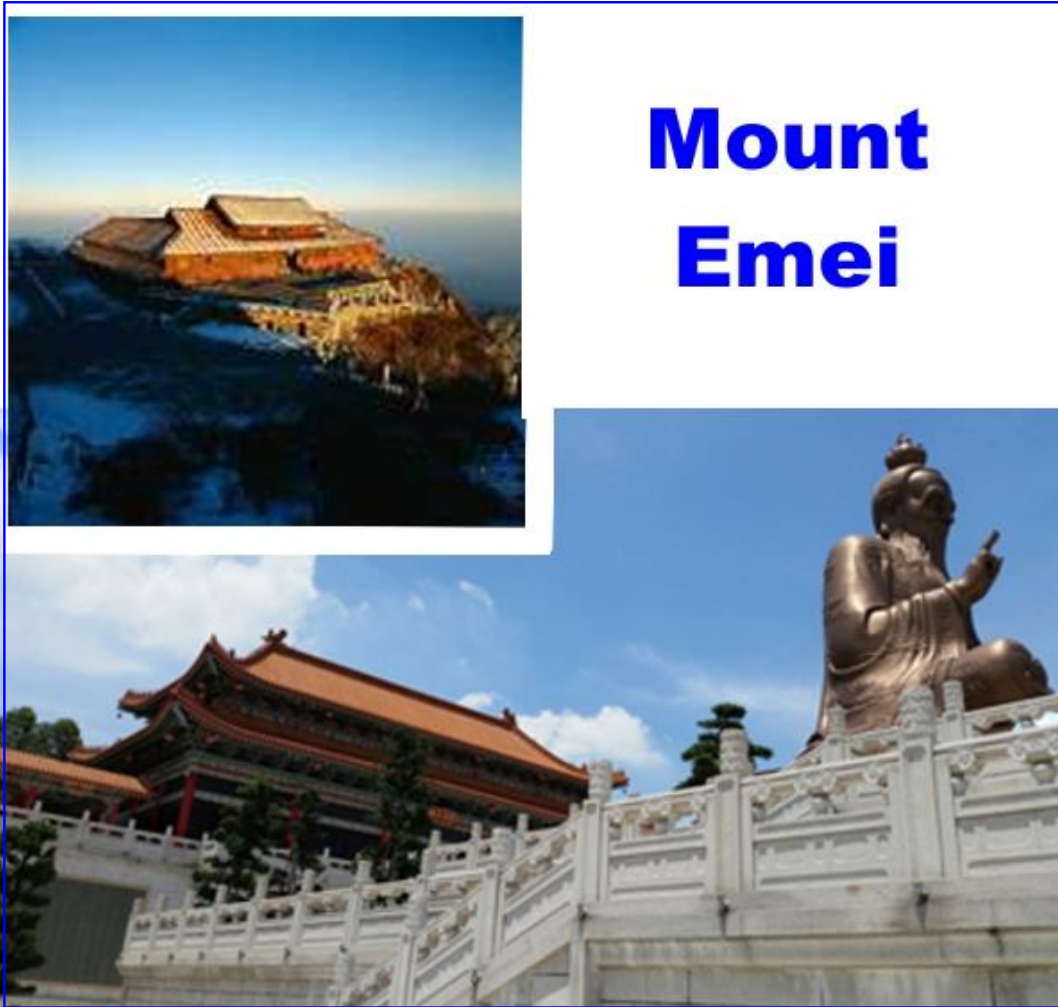


Figure 7-9 - Mount Emei Monestary.

Mount Emei is one of the Four Sacred Buddhist Mountains of China. It is traditionally regarded as the bodhimāṇḍa or place of enlightenment, of the bodhisattva Samantabhadra. The 16th and 17th century sources allude to the practice of martial arts in the monasteries of Mount Emei and made the earliest extant reference to the Shaolin Monastery as Chinese boxing's place of origin.

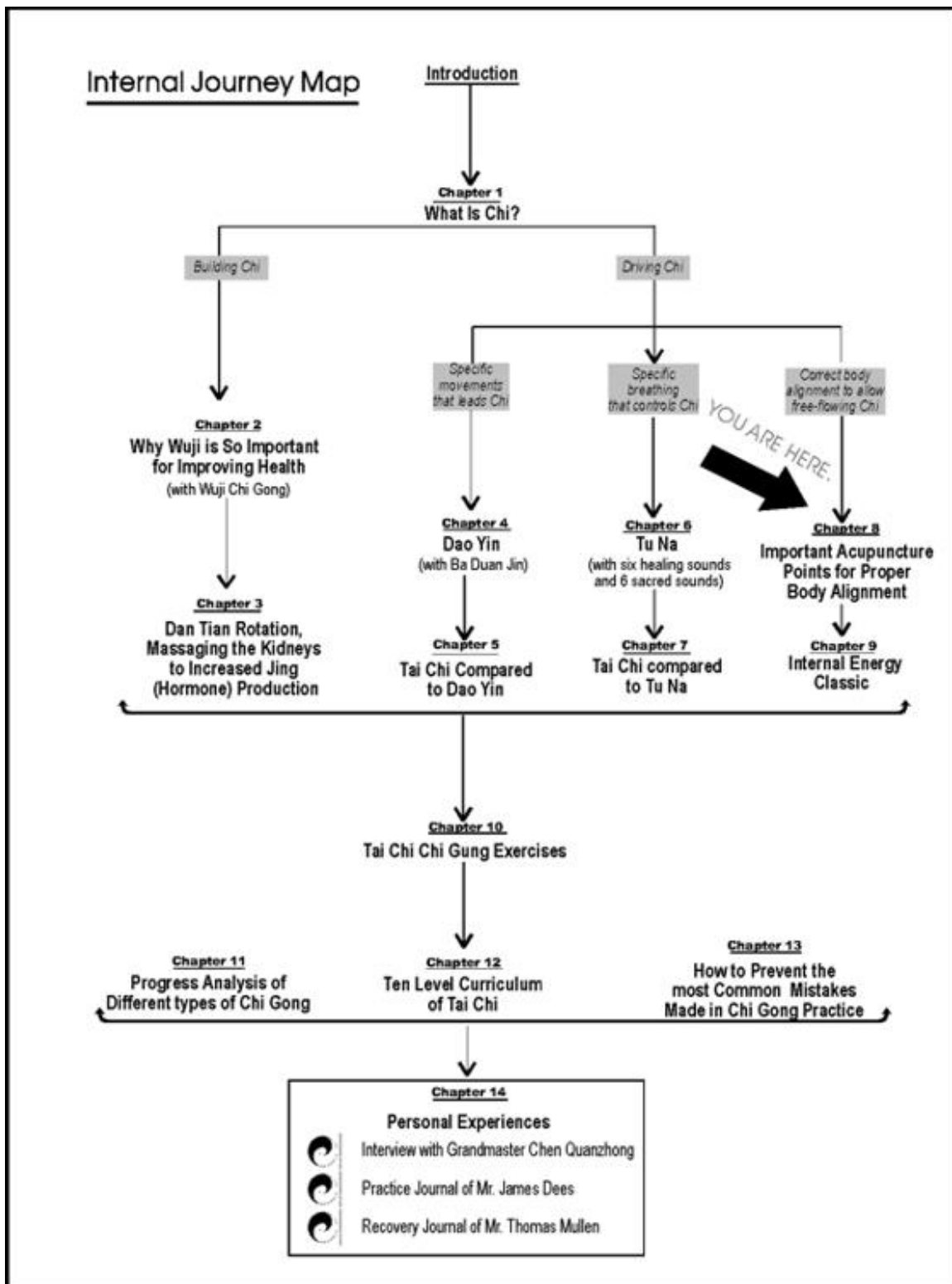
Chapter 7 Footnotes

28. *In some Karate and Kung Fu tournaments, for, where you can observe participants performing, notice how often a competitor moves before or after the accompanying fighting sound. Such an accompanying sound resembles a scream for “show” rather than a roar or deep resounding from the Dan Tian.*
29. *See Chapter 5 for more information.*
30. *See Chapter 6 for information about how hard style Chi Gung uses holding breath techniques in its strikes.*
31. *See Jim Dees real story in Chapter 14 for an example of how relaxing helps to absorb and repulse impact.*
32. *See Chapter 5.*
33. *Please refer to Chapter 12, Tai Chi Curriculum.*



Chapter 8

Important Acupuncture Points For Proper Body Alignment



If there was any secret in Chinese Internal Martial Arts, this is it!

8.1 *What Makes a Style Internal*

Most Internal Martial Artists from Tai Chi, Xing Yi and Bagua, for example, have the following aspects in common:

- Explosive power in the movement.
- In combat, the fighter's movement depends on the opponent's movement, following and returning the force back to the opponent.
- Strong Chi and blood circulation for health and longevity.

People usually classify styles like Tai Chi, Xing Yi and Bagua as an Internal Martial Art because they share the same characteristics. However, if someone believes that they are the same without understanding why they achieve the same results, then he is just fooling himself. The outward appearance and fighting strategy of these three disciplines are obviously different.

So, what key points are hidden within their movements, which make these Internal Martial Arts' styles famous for their ability to deliver tremendous power through a wide variety of movements? Is it special breathing? Is it visualization or the imagination? Is it soft slow movement? Is it circular movement? Or even, is the name or idea of the style related to an old Chinese philosophical term? No. None of those are the reason for a style being internal. It simply is internal structure and alignment no matter what outer appearances these external movements or postures have.

There are three external benefits gained from moving with correct structure and alignment:

1. Your skeletal structure will be able to support greater force.
2. Good alignment allows different muscles of the body to support and/or counterbalance each other rather than work against each other. In an ideal alignment, the muscles actually work more efficiently.
3. An ideal alignment not only stabilizes your position but also makes your movement changeable while continuing to maintain this type of ideal alignment.

You can only achieve true relaxation through proper internal structure and alignment. When your structure is proper, Chi and blood circulation are stronger without using any forced breathing or imagination. This is the quickest, safest, and most effective way to establish good Chi circulation. This “Chi feeling” is real, unlike other feelings, which are intermittent and often based on imagination

Because there are many subtleties in a proper structure, and because the basic idea is so deep, it is easy to lose your way from the correct path. When that happens, most of the techniques of Internal Martial Arts lose its effectiveness, and without good structure, the health benefits also diminish. Then the feats of internal Martial Arts Masters become nothing more than folk tales. To make up for such improper structure, some people include elaborate breathing methods and imagination in their movements, trying to make their art internal. Consequently, they end up with no real skill in combat and gain very little benefit to health. There are some artists who realize the importance of structure, but they still only see a small portion of the structural requirements. So their explanation of the fundamentals of Internal Martial Arts goes no further than *“pushing off the ground, turning the waist/hip, and projecting the strike”* or *“connection from the feet, through the body and the back, to the arms,”* which makes their art no different from any other external style like Shaolin and boxing.

There is much more that can be done to develop a better structure than just connecting the force to or from the ground. If you are not forced to rely strictly on the use of local muscles and using the whole body as a single unit, that could only mean that you’re better than a beginner. Let’s analyze three distinct bridge constructions to see the difference between different structures in order to help you understand how structure affects the level of strength.

Different bridge constructions will determine how much strength and support they have over the waterways they span. For example, Bridge A in Figure 8-1 is a poorly built bridge and is not only very weak but also is not connected to the ground. The slightest extra force against it can cause damage and perhaps even make it collapse. Now look at Bridge B in Figure 8-2. Yes, it is grounded but the acute, tent-like shape of its base physically limits its strength. In physics, such sharp shaped bases cannot support as much weight or be as strong as the rounded style of Bridge C shown in Figure 8-3. If all three bridges were made from the same material, compared to Bridges A and B, the arched structure of Bridge C has a more evenly dispersed support

capability, which makes it stronger and more endurable against heavy weight. Not only that, but Bridge C is much more capable of withstanding the unpredictable and powerful forces of nature.



Figure 8-1 Bridge A



Figure 8-2 Bridge B



Figure 8-3 Bridge C

Figure 8-3 Bridge Structures

Your torso may be in good form, but your body structure may not have any base support at all because you might not be grounded like Bridge A and are therefore weak and ineffectual. However, if you are grounded like Bridge B, you still might need more improvements to your structure. When you are grounded and your internal alignment meets the criteria for proper alignment, it is like having an arch-shape structure somewhere in your body, and your body will be like Bridge C. This chapter will show you how to develop this type of alignment and structure.

There is an abundance of literature available on body structure requirements, which always say relax the shoulders, drop the elbows, suspend the head, hollow the chest, open the hips and keep the body straight. However, if you follow these general requirements, you most likely will not understand the true feeling and complete concept of proper body alignment and structure. The head, shoulders, elbows, chest, torso and hips are made of many different structural materials, like muscles, ligaments, tendons, cartilage and bones. Also, the interpretation of terms like “suspend,” “relax,” “drop,” “hollow,” “open” and “keep straight” can vary. Authentic Internal Martial Arts, which are taught to only a few people in every generation, have precise definitions for these requirements at *Point Accuracy Level (P.A.L.)*. This is why the general public has not mastered Internal Martial Arts even though the internal forms are very popular today.

The points in the Internal Martial Arts study of human architecture at Point Accuracy Level are Traditional Chinese Medicine acupuncture points. [34] We will analyze point by point precisely what state certain acupuncture points should be in and how to achieve this. We will also analyze the relationship of these points to each other, and then show you some positive results you can receive. The intention of this chapter is to help you discover the extensive potential of the ideally aligned *human architecture*.



Figure 8-4

Zhao Zhou Bridge, He Bei province, China. It seems as though the Chinese are always concerned with structure. This long, low arch bridge, built in 610 A.D. and is still standing. One of the first bridges of this type built in Europe

Point by Point

Note 1: The Chinese term Cun is the standard measuring unit of acupuncture and is equal to the distance from the ends of the crease in the middle joint of the middle finger, or the approximate width of your thumb.

Note 2: There is a reason why Chinese Medicine Theory gives names to acupuncture points. In Western study, numbers are used in place of the names. But if you can understand the names, it will be easier for you to understand the purpose or application of the acupuncture points.

The Bai Hui Point (G.V.20/D.U.20)



Figure 8-5 Bai Hui Point

Figure 8-5 Bai Hui Point

This point is positioned midway between the area just above the bridge of the nose and the posterior hairline at the back of the head.

This point is positioned midway between the area just above the bridge of the nose and the posterior hairline at the back of the head.

Bai Hui is called the “Convergence of Hundreds of Meridians” because all Yang meridians converge or meet and intersects here. When this point is positioned correctly you should feel a slight stretch in the back of your head as if it’s being suspended from a string. It isn’t necessary to stretch this area too much. A simple way to help you align your head properly is to look straight ahead at the horizon and listen backwards behind the head. A common mistake people make is to look down to correct themselves, which has already caused them to lose alignment.

The Jian Jing Point (G.B.21)

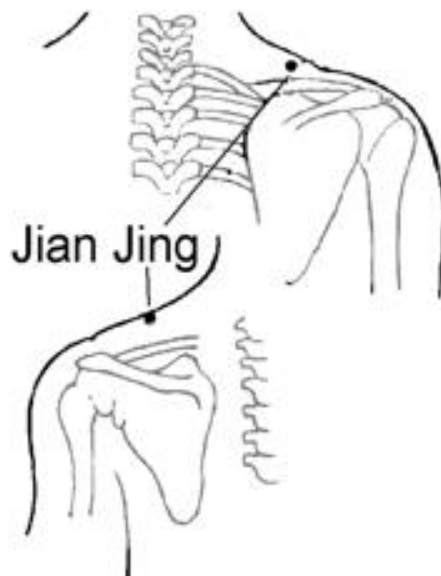


Figure 8-6 JianJing Point

This point is in the middle of the line joining the 7th vertebra and the acromion (summit area of the shoulder).

The Jian Jing or “Shoulder Well” is a “well” where “water” comes to from the “Gushing Spring” or Yong Quan. Relaxing the Jian Jing point releases tension in this area and helps the area around the shoulder socket stretch and extend. Here is a good way to test yourself to see if you know how to relax this point. Hold your arm out straight in front of you and, if this point is relaxed, you should feel a stretch all the way to the fingertips and your arm can extend up to an additional inch or so, without leaning the body at all.

By opening the shoulder joint more, you create additional room inside the body for movement, which increases the range of mobility in the arms and shoulders. Otherwise the impact of force gets stuck in this area.

Unlike other combat styles, internal styles develop all kinds of extra movement space *within the body*, which helps explain why a sudden explosive force can be generated without any obvious *outer* movement. Jian Jing is the specific point for developing internal movement in the shoulder area.

If you only think about relaxing the shoulder by dropping the tip of the shoulder or trying to force the entire shoulder down for example, and without knowing what point to relax, then you will never open this joint.

The Qu Chi Point (L.I.11)



Figure 8-7 Qu Chi Point

This point is located on the lateral or outer side of the transverse crease or where the elbow bends.

The Qu Chi point, or the “Curved Pond,” is just like the “shoulder well” because it is where “water” comes to from the “Gushing Spring.” This point and the “shoulder well” must be relaxed and sunk at all times. Here is a little test to help you understand how it feels when this area is relaxed properly: Ask someone to hold your arm up by the fingertips. Then “let go” completely to relieve all tension in your arm so that it feels limp. If you “pass” the test, your partner should be holding up or supporting the entire weight of your arm so that when he lets go of the fingers, it instantly flops down. This is relaxed. People find it surprisingly hard to pass this test (see Figure 8-8).



Figure 8-8 Loose Arm Test

It doesn't even matter what position the arm is in, whether the arm is raised above the head or whether the elbow is sticking outwardly. You can still drop the Qu Chi point down, without it facing downward. The main reason why you need to drop this point, which keeps the elbows “sunk,” is to make sure that the arm muscles are always in the right position and direction for strength. [\[35\]](#) Try this: Raise your hand like school kids do in class and ask a friend to prevent you from lowering it by holding a hand or even just a finger on the inner 165 biceps. You both will soon discover how easy it is for him to prevent you from lowering your arm with even just one finger.

The anatomy has many areas and muscles that, by nature, are weak in one direction and strong in another. Along these lines, when an alligator's mouth is already closed, a ten-year old boy can easily hold it shut with his fingers. However, grown men cannot hold the mouth open for a second because the natural development of the alligator's mouth muscles is very strong for closing or snapping and weak for opening. Chinese Internal Arts are based on thousands of years of accumulated experiences, and they figured out how to keep the body in optimum alignment for strength

The Zhong Fu Point (L.U.1)



Figure 8-9 Zhong Fu Point

The Zhong Fu point or “Central Mansion” sits in the first intercostal space at the third rib above the nipple and 6 Cun from the centerline.

This point must relax to release the pressure in the chest area, help you free up the collarbone, and avoid sticking the chest out. If you don’t know how to relax this point, try making the Zhong Fu area go in a little so that you feel your chest start to “hollow in” on its own. Many people try to force the chest to “tuck in” in order to hollow it in but this can be dangerous. Such forced efforts actually *increase* the pressure in the chest area. You don’t need to force the chest to turn inward because it does so naturally when the Zhong Fu point is relaxed.

The Qi Men Point (L.V.14)

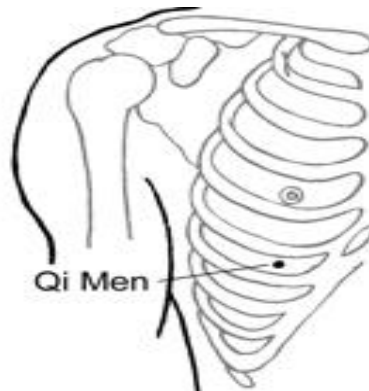


Figure 8-10 Qi Men Point

It is in the 6th intercostal space, two ribs inferior to the nipple and 6 Cun up from navel and 4 Cun out from the centerline. When the Qi Men or “Cyclic Door” is relaxed, it helps to further release the chest tension and it feels as though the chest is emptying out while this tension relief continues to move downwards. When the Qi Men points are relaxed, both coastal regions expand, which in turn makes the rib cage also expand so that more breathing room opens up in the lungs.

The Zhang Men Point (L.V.13)



Figure 8-10 Qi Men Point

The Zhang Men point is just below the free end of the 11th or floating rib. When the elbow is flexed and the arm abducted, the location of this point is where the tip of the elbow touches your side.

The Zhang Men point is called the “Bright Door” and is the key area that connects the upper torso from the lower torso. When these points are relaxed, they help to open up and “fill” the Ming Men area located at the natural spinal curve area in the lower back. To see how this feels, gently push your palm into the Zhang Men points and, as you press in, you should feel the lower back relax, easing the spinal curve, and filling the Ming Men area. Let’s give you another simple way to help you understand this idea. Simply arch your back and you will instantly feel the lower back muscles tense up. Then you end up supporting yourself with your lower back instead of your legs.

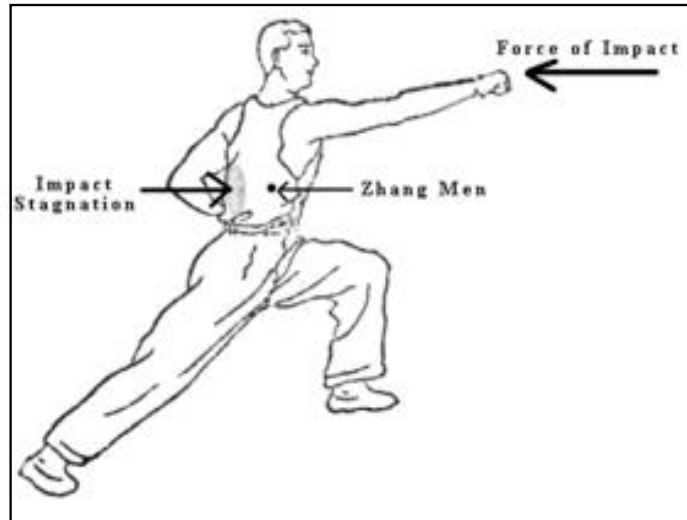


Figure 8-12

Without relaxing the Zhang Men, impact stagnates in the lower back.

The key reason why some Martial Artists experience chronic lower back pain after many years of practicing is that they do not relax the Zhang Men point. Because they don't relax this point, such enthusiasts absorb a lot of impact from strikes, which stagnate in the lower back, spine and muscles. However, if they are careful and relax the Zhang Men area when striking and blocking, they can reduce the risk of injury to the lower back.

The Ming Men Point (D.U.4/G.V.4)

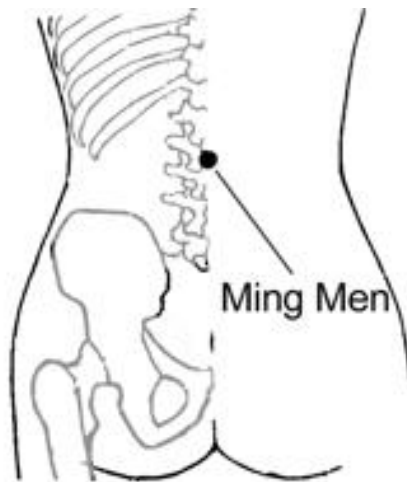


Figure 8-13 Ming Men Point

This point is inferior to the 2nd lumbar vertebra and is on a direct line across from the navel.

The Ming Men or “Gate of Life” is the most critical and important point in Internal Martial Arts and is the source and commander of all movement.[36] In order to make this area the source of all movement, you must release any pressure in there mostly by relaxing Zhang Men, the previous point discussed. When this area gets stuck, the entire body moves like a robot and appears to have little or no torso mobility. If that happens, the lower back muscles are forced to work like “front line soldiers” instead of the top commanders that they are.

The Qi Hai Point (C.V.6)

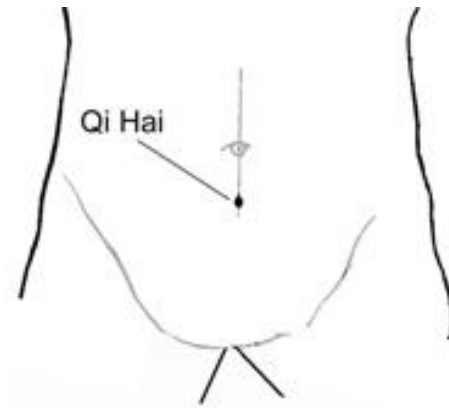


Figure 8-14 Qi Hai Point

The location of this point is 1 Cun below the navel.

Qi Hai or the “Energy Sea” should be the area where any impact to the upper body is taken and supported. Tension is continually released from the shoulders, chest, stomach and lower back areas until it is moved all the way down. Then, whenever forceful contact is made on any part of the upper body, including the arms, the gravitational pull on the upper body is applied so that the Qi Hai area will then hold the force and address it. No other area of the upper body should take the impact or be used against the force. The only area in the torso that should absorb the force of impact is the Dan Tian.

There are many stories about the strong Dan Tian power of the great Internal Martial Masters. If you talk to any proficient Internal Martial Artists they will always say the power comes from the lower abdomen, the Dan Tian. Actually, they are referring to the Qi Hai point area to take or release the force.

Most movements that our body is capable of can be done with different muscles, although usually some combinations work better than others in specific situations. Most people have a habit of using the chest and shoulders to keep their balance when practicing the form or when receiving other people's force. Changing this habit takes a lot of reprogramming and it takes a long time with proper training. Using the shoulder and chest to hold your balance makes you top heavy and unstable rather than bottom heavy and rooted.

The Qi Chong Point (S.T.30)

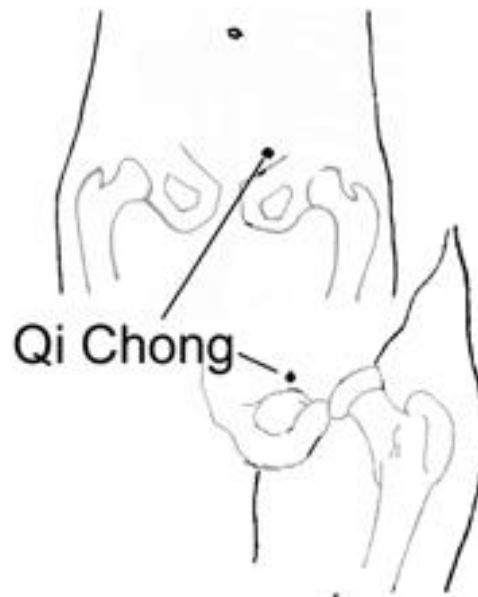


Figure 8-15 Qi Chong Point

The Qi Chong point is referred to as “Qi Pouring” and is 5 Cun below the navel and 2 Cun from the middle line.

When tension is released here, you feel like there is a tremendous weight on your legs, unlike anything you have experienced before. To accomplish this, the Qi Chong points go in towards the middle, and the inguinal creases tuck in and relax. After you relax the Zhong Fu, Qi Men and Zhang Men points, the front of the torso will easily fold inwardly. This indicates that you are correctly placing your weight on the legs and they will feel extremely heavy, and also that you are (correctly) not using your upper body to hold your balance anymore.

Here are two true stories demonstrating *Qi pouring* (down):

Mr. Joseph Cozza was a record-breaking Florida state champion power lifter who squats eight hundred pounds. The author put him into a correctly aligned posture and Mr. Coza said that the weight on his legs felt heavier than when he competed even though he was not lifting weights at all when he was in this stance.

When Mr. Li, an Internal Martial Arts Master, placed the captain of a Chinese national hockey team, into an internal stance, the weight he felt on his legs was so heavy that he could not hold this stance more than thirty seconds and fell. He kept repeating “too strong, too strong.” This astonished the hockey player because, at that time, he was used to squatting at least two hundred pounds for a hundred repetitions or more.

The Chang Qiang Point (G.V.1)

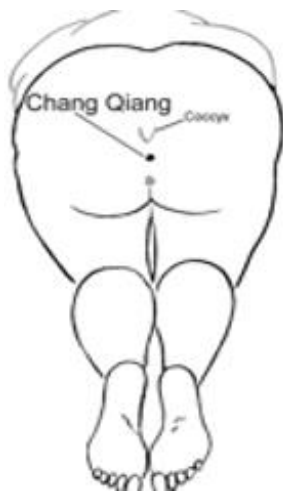


Figure 8-16 Chang Qiang Point

This point is located midway between the coccyx and the anus when in a prone position.

The Chang Qiang point or the “Long Strong” must always be pointing downward. To do this, pull or drop the lower back and direct the buttocks downward, not outward. Then it should feel like a heavy weight was tied to it. When this point is relaxed, it feels like you are sitting on a high stool. The Chang Qiang point is considered a rudder that guides the body in a straight line. When the Chang Quang points backwards as when the buttocks stick out, the body will lean forward and when it points forward like when you roll the hips forward, the body then leans back.

The Hui Yin Point (C.V.1)

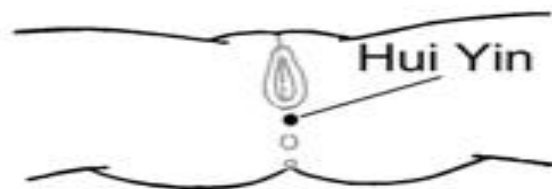


Figure 8-17 Hui Yin Point

It is located between the anus and the genitalia.

Hui means to converge and “Yin” refers to the anus and genitalia. The Hui Yin point is called the “Merging Perineum.” Hui Yin and Bai Hui are the only points in our trunk and head that should be “lifted up” but, like the Bai Hui point, don’t lift it too hard.

The Huan Tiao Point (G.B.30)

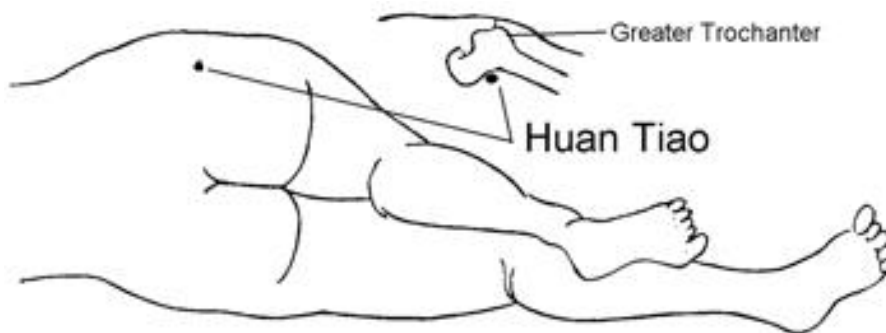


Figure 8-18 Huan Tiao Point

The Huan Tiao point is located distance from the greater trochanter of the femur to the hiatus of the sacrum.

The Huan Tiao or the “Circling Jump” point will automatically stick out when the lower body is held correctly. First the Zhong Fu, Qi Men, Zhang Men and Qi Chong must be relaxed before you drop the Chang Qiang point and, then in turn, lift the Hui Yin. Doing this sequence and correctly reaching point accuracy in the torso, force the Huan Tiao points to protrude *automatically*. At this point, when a leg turns inward, it will make this point stick out even more. If you try to force the Huan Tiao out, you will make the Chang Qiang area stick out backwards, or the Hui Yin will be loose and not lifted. This area is very difficult to open. Often people say “open the hips” or “open the Kua” but the meaning actually is loosening the ligaments and tendons in Huan Tiao points’ areas. The looser this area becomes, the easier it is to form the arch-shaped “Dang.” [\[37\]](#) Otherwise the joint between the leg and torso will not have enough room for extended movements, torso turning would be limited, and the hips could only turn left and right without the “bicycle peddle” type circular motion.

Any good internal practitioner can always open this area even with his feet close together. There are not many other exercises like Internal Martial Arts that can open up this area. Even when people are extremely flexible and can stretch their legs to the maximum, this does not necessarily mean that the hips are open.

If you want to identify whether a person's internal arts are superior, check to see if the crotch area or Kua is open. Many external Martial Artists, especially contemporary form exhibitionists, can do any form beautifully on the outside. However, if you practice Internal Martial Arts for years or if you have seen many authentic Internal Martial Artists' demonstrations, you will feel like something is missing in those external performers' internal form. What's missing? The open Kua!

The Weizhong Point (U.B.40)

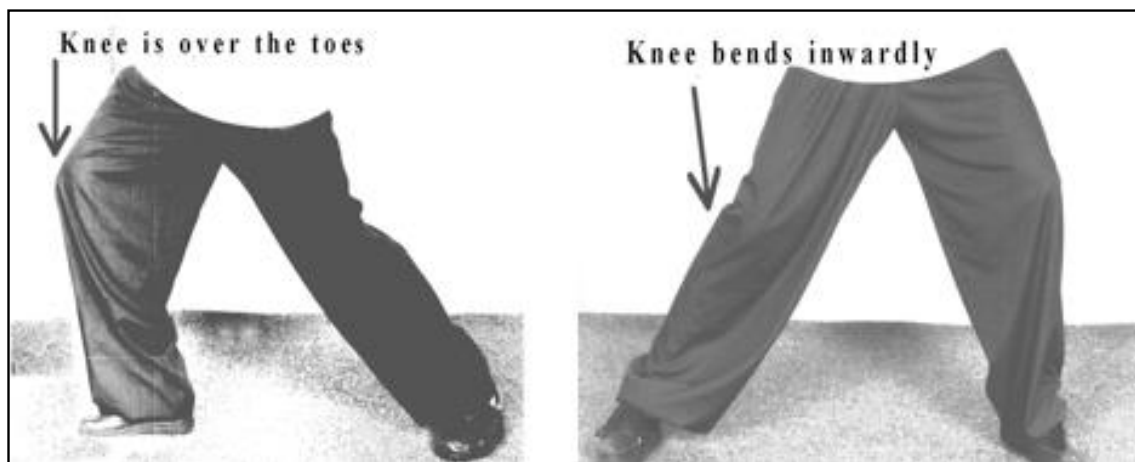


Figure 8-19 Weizhong Point

This point is located at the knee crease, the depression in the posterior region of the knee known as the popliteal fossa. To find it, flex the knee as if to extend it. This causes a slight depression to appear, where this point is centrally located.

The Weizhong point or the "Popliteal Center" should never be allowed to weaken structurally no matter what position the leg/ knee is in. When both of these points are strong they help form the desired arch formation of the legs, which causes the force to then travel around the outside of this arch formation and pass down to the ground.

Common Mistakes with Weizhong Posture



*Figure 8-20 and Figure 8-21
The knee extends past the Toe. The knee bends inwardly.*

The Yong Quan Point (K.1)



Figure 8-22 Yong Quan Point

This point is located in the depression of the plantar surface of the foot and is $\frac{1}{3}$ of the distance from the base of the 2nd and 3rd toes and the edge of the heel.

The Yong Quan point is the “Bubbling or Gushing Well” or the “Gushing Spring.” The toes, especially the big toe, should slightly “grab” the ground and the feet should be placed evenly and relaxed. When our feet are flat on the ground, they create an even bigger arch in the Yong Quan area. At this point all the body weight is directly above the Yong Quan point.

Once your foot is placed on the floor, all the weight must be evenly distributed on it. When more weight is carried on the balls of the foot, for example, or on one side of the foot, or on the heel, it is an indication of weakness in the leg of that foot and also the associated side of the arch structure is out or lost.

Point to Point

Different parts of our body relate to each other. If you do not align one part correctly, then you could damage another part's alignment. When you align one part right, it would help another part of the structure. The human body is so sophisticated and complicated. We are going to use the bridge analogy to make it easier to understand.

The analogy of a suspension bridge is a good way to describe the alignment of the upper body area. The way a suspension bridge works is that its weight and traffic pulls down on the support cables with a tremendous force, which in turn pulls down on the towers and travels into the ground (grounded). (See Figure 8-23) Your "tower" is actually the straight line between the **Bai Hui** and **Hui Yin** points. The weight of the body and other external forces, which can be directed downward, are like the weight and traffic of the Suspension Bridge.

Now you see that the alignment between Bai Hui and Hui Yin should be strong and stable like the bridge tower, and that everything in the upper body should "hang" on that alignment like weight hanging off the bridge cable. As you know the straight down gravitational force from the weight and traffic, which is transferred to the top of the tower, passes down through the tower into the foundation. Any upward force will make the suspension bridge unstable in some way. Our body is the same. Any upward force will cause less force pressing down on the "tower" (the Bai Hui Hui Yin alignment), making it less stable. An even worse scenario is when the body is not as loose and flexible as the cable, but stiff like a shaft. Then any upward force along this shaft could destroy the tower alignment. Through this idea you can understand why the Bai Hui Hui Yin alignment should always be straight while all the other points "drop" downward. You can also understand that not dropping any point other than the Bai Hui and Hui Yin will make it difficult for the head to suspend and the spine to straighten. What you should do with the points discussed above is key to the methods for relaxing the areas surrounding them. So be sure to correct your alignment in this order: Jian Jing (shoulders), Qu Chi (elbows), Zhong Fu (upper chest), Qi Men (lower chest), Zhang Men (upper abdomen), Qi Chong (lower abdomen), Ming Men (lower back) and Chang Qiang (lower back.)

This suspension bridge type of upper body structure is not at all easy to accomplish, but there are numerous ways to help you understand what it feels like. Let's try this: Lift up the shoulders or stick the tailbone out in any direction. You will then discover that your head cannot be suspended anymore. Another thing to try is to put yourself in any posture and at the same time place a high stool under you while you relax the torso and arms. When you are comfortable, ask someone to take the stool out while you remain in posture. Usually, when you do it right, the lower part of your body feels very heavy (full) and the upper body feels light (empty). But our body architecture is far more sophisticated than a bridge's because we can also extend arms out from our body to deal with other kinds of forces. Even force that is going up, to the right, to the left or sideways can still be directed down along our "tower" by the leverage between muscle and bone. Our anatomy is naturally structured to be able to balance and send the force down to our legs, the base or foundation. Such capability is very important in Internal Arts.



Figure 8-23 Suspension Bridge

The analogy of an arch bridge is a good way to describe the alignment of the lower body area. The way an arch bridge works is that its weight and the weight of the traffic on it presses down on the arch with a tremendous force, which moves down around the arch into the ground. At the base, strong abutments are built to prevent the downward force from spreading sideways at the base and to help direct it down into the ground. (See Figure 8-24)

In this part of *Point to Point*, we will show how to structure our lower body to have a strong support capability like an arch bridge. This concept is a little more complicated than the suspension bridge analogy because

once you discover what parts of the body relate to the “tower.” “cables” and (force) weight of this bridge, then you pretty much understand this concept. Forming the arch with the lower part of the body however is more involved.

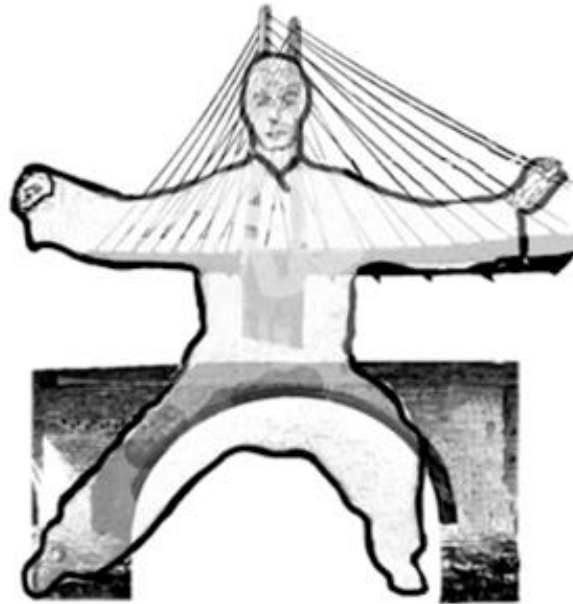


Figure 8-24

For the ideal body structure, the upper part of the body from the hips on up is like the suspension bridge and the lower part of the body from the hips on down is like the arch bridge



Figure 8-25 Arch bridges

When building a stone arch support for the arch bridge, heavy stones are placed on both sides of a wooden arch-shaped frame called a “centering” until the stones meet at the top. When the stones are secure and in place, the centering is removed. A carefully engineered stone arch construction does not need any type of bond or cement to hold the heavy stones together because they are held in place by their own weight. After constructing the bridge arch supports, the spaces between and over the supports are filled in with stone or

cement before placing the roadway over them. In the arch bridge structure, an arch support cannot maintain strength without the pressure from the weight of the clay and stones on top to hold it firmly in place.

In every movement, at least one of the femur bones (thigh bones) rotates inwardly while the thigh itself presses outwardly to help form the arch shaped *Dang* (the site where the two inner thighs and the lowest end of the torso meet). The arched Dang has nothing to do with how wide your stance is or how far apart your legs can stretch. No extensive stretching in the legs, thighs or hips will guarantee that the hips open properly to help develop an arch formation in the Dang area. The hip stretches *internally* when the articular cartilage and connective tissues of the head of the femur, which fits into the acetabulum or hip socket, twists while at the same time pulls slightly out of the socket when the femur is correctly rotated. This type of articulation creates a ball-and-socket joint, which is both strong while allowing a wide degree of articulation. This is what causes the greater trochanter of the femur to stick out (Huan Tiao).[\[38\]](#)

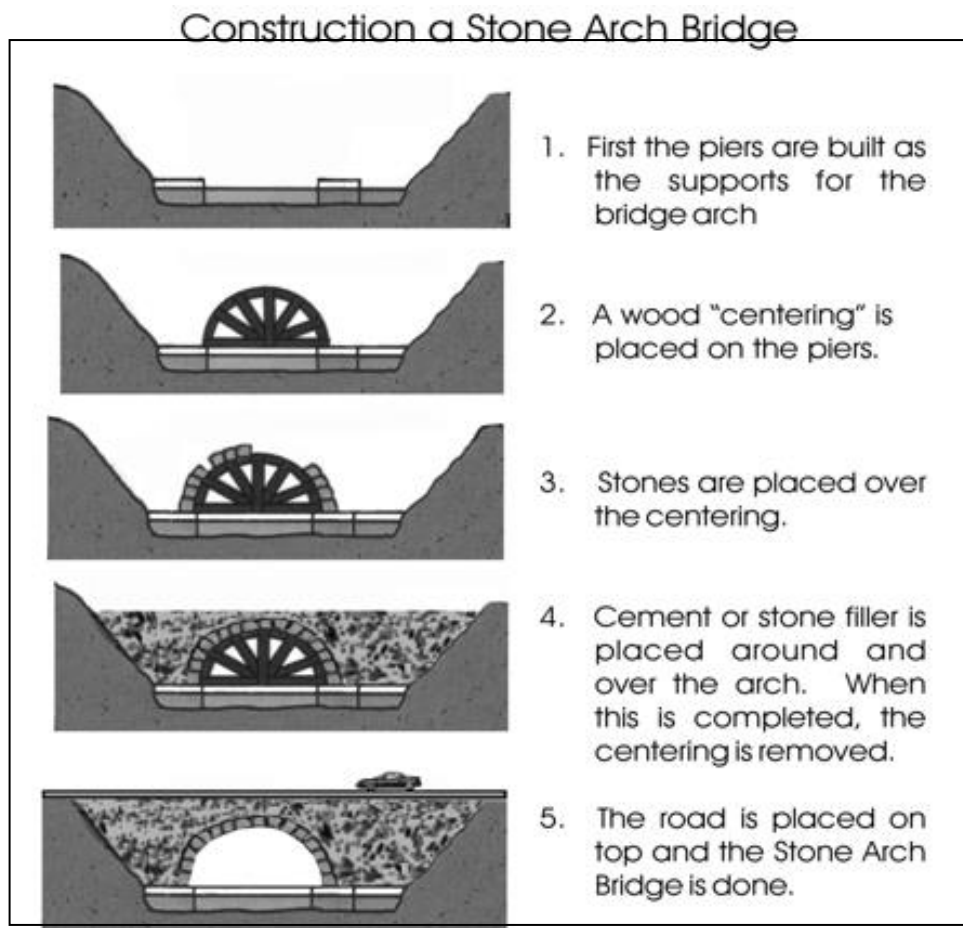


Figure 8-26 Constructing an Arch bridge

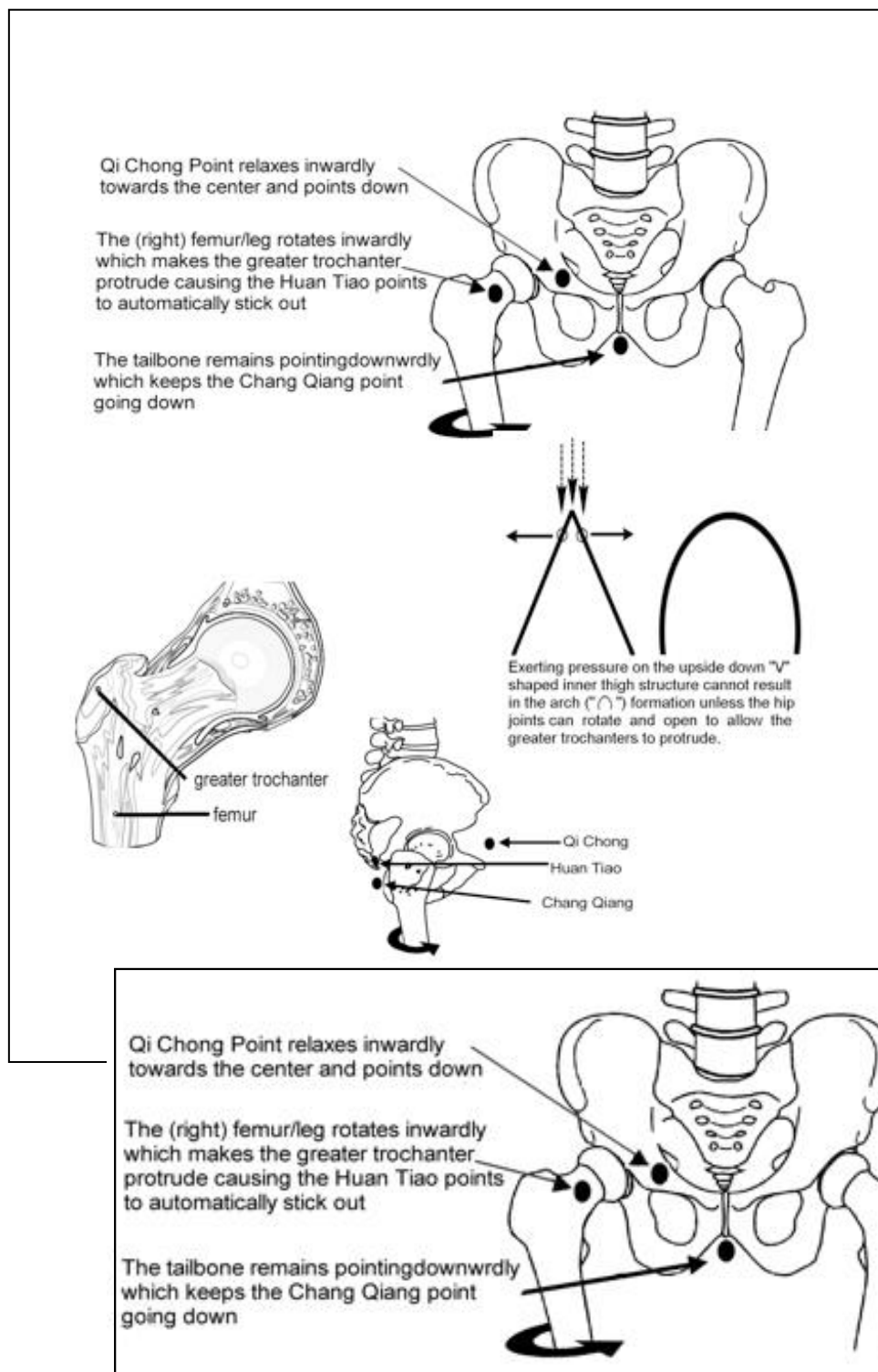


Figure 8-27

Pictures are what "opening the Kua" really means. The head of the femur rotates within the socket in such a way as to open up more space within the socket, which turns this "ball and socket" hip joint into a universal joint and creates a "bicycle peddling" type circular motion with the hips. In the meantime, it also allows the greater trochanters to protrude.

Regular external Martial Arts practitioners can stretch their legs back and forth or side to side but such stretching won't have much effect on the outer upper-thigh areas that are positioned over the hip joints. So it would be difficult for them to do "opening the Kua" movements described above. Therefore, they will not have any three-dimensional movement and no "arch" shape formed with their inner thighs.

Then no matter how low their stance is or far apart their feet are, they still won't have a strong root because of their limited mobility/no three-dimensional movement and their weak structure/ no "arch" shape. Opening the Kua has nothing to do with how wide or low the stance is.

After you form an arch with your inner thigh area, you must have pressure (force) there to secure and strengthen it. The force that travels down your (suspension bridge) "tower" when you correctly relax the upper body creates this pressure. However, if the upper body is not properly aligned, there will be no pressure and the force cannot pass down the legs (arch) to the ground. In addition to this upper body pressure, other people's force on you adds more pressure and helps make the arch-shape leg structure even stronger. When you have a good structure even ten people cannot move you. And sometimes the harder they push, the more comfortable you feel.

As explained before, the foundation of the arch bridge uses abutments to direct the force into the ground and prevent it from spreading sideways. When the feet are flat, the big toe grabs the ground and the heel presses slightly outward. These internal torque action of the legs make our two feet act like the bridge abutments.

The heavy stones which make an arch support have no cement or sealant in between them and yet the arch support can maintain its structure because the weight of the heavy stones pressing against each other forces them to adhere and stay in place. Our body muscles can work together to hold and support each other in this same fashion. As long as the lower body structure is correct like an arch bridge, muscles would be used only to form and maintain the structure without extra tension between them just like there is no cement between the stones.

Conclusion

Every point should go downward except the Bau Hui and Hui Yin points, the “tower” of our upper body structure. The upper body is like a suspension bridge, and the lower body is like an arch bridge. Therefore, the foundation of the upper body (suspension bridge) becomes the lower body (arch bridge). When you relax the upper body more, the lower body becomes heavier and stronger and then your muscles, ligaments, tendons, cartilage and bones all interact to support each other from within. That’s what the Classics mean when they say “Push down the shoulders to practice stepping.” The natural human architecture for internal force requires less muscle and physical strength to utilize force more effectively without injury and excess strain. It all depends on a properly structured human architecture.



Figure 8-28A

A demonstration of how proper structure of a smaller person (the women) can hold the force of an apparently stronger and larger



Figure 8-28B

The co-author tries to maintain her structure under the pressure of a strong opponent.

Now look at Figure 8-29 on the following page and notice the similarity in structure. In Figure 8-29 you can see how the correct rounded shape of the Kua or the thighs-crotch formation, with the body weight evenly displaced on both feet. The force can come directly down when the torso and the Zhong Fu, Qi Men, Zhang Men, Qi Chong and Weizhong points are all properly aligned.

Therefore, this structure, along with the spiraling effects of the legs, produces smooth flowing energy all the way down and physically causes the pressure of structure's strength to move outwardly, making it even more difficult to disrupt or knock down. Whereas the acute "V" shaped structure, shown in Figure 8-29, blocks the downward energy flow and redirects the force sideways. Such a structure can also cause you to misplace weight on the feet so that each foot might end up bearing more weight on the side or back rather than evenly on the whole foot. Also, the physical dynamics of this type of structure creates a pressure pushing outwards from underneath, weakening it considerably and moving towards a collapse.

Use what you've learned and study this posture demonstration. Can you see the differences between the structure of Master and young Yan? Now read the explanation in Figure 8-29 below.



Figure 8-29

In this picture Master Chen Quanzhong demonstrates a Properly opened Kua. Notice the "U" shape of his thighs as compared to the "V" shape of his student's thighs.

Besides maintaining balance and strength through the redirection of force down to the foundation, the human body is able to withstand and adjust to more changes than a bridge, a quality referred to in this book as “changeability.”



Figure 8-30

The most common demonstration for assessing one's structure is to hold one arm up against someone who is pushing with both arms.

Below is a recap of the major benefits of ideal alignment discussed in this section.

1. More space in the joints.
2. The right direction and position for muscles.
3. Using the best combination of muscles for the movement.
4. Good human architecture within.

8.3 Correct Body Alignment to Allow Free Flowing Chi

Point Accuracy Level to Sink the Chi

At his seminars, Grandmaster Chen Quanzhong constantly used the Chinese word “song” (pronounced s-OH-ng), which roughly translated means “relax”. While he breathed out reciting *song*, he would be doing a Tai Chi movement. Anyone there could clearly see the tension relief *physically* move from Master Chen's shoulder-chest area all the way down to the lower abdomen. This kind of tension relief passes down from the top to the bottom of the torso. The pressure would then continue down the outside of the legs, past the

knees all the way to the bottom of the feet. The Chinese refer to this inner tension release transference and the pressure passing down, as a form of Chi *sinking*. Remember that sinking Chi has nothing to do with lowering the gravity. For example, sometimes the physical can go up, which makes the center of gravity higher, but at the same time the tension releases down.

In order to sink the Chi, tremendous control of those *internal* movements is required, but this is challenging. Many people demonstrate exceptional external physical capabilities and yet still cannot release tension and transfer it down. People, in general, do not know how to completely relax because it is so difficult to remove all tensions from the upper torso. Point Accuracy Level (P.A.L.) adjustment is an effective way to feel this inner movement.

This kind of *Chi sinking* movement occurs in every single Internal Martial Art movement. When we exhale, we sink, and the Chi goes down in the front of the body. For the arms, you relax Jian Jing to let Chi pass through the shoulders while at the same time you drop Qu Chi to allow Chi to pass through the hand. To do this correctly, your arm should feel like an invisible force is holding it up by a finger. [\[39\]](#) So then, when you let it go, there is no tension in the arm and wrist, and the entire arm “hangs” off the shoulder. Then Chi will be able to flow all the way to the fingertips. This concludes Chi movement in the arm area.

In Tai Chi, finger relaxation is very important. A soft hand in Tai Chi is described as “soft as a young girl’s hand.” When each hand and its fingers are tense, this will cause tension in an associated area in same side of the torso. The thumb is associated with the upper breast/ torso area. The index finger is associated with the intercostal area. The middle finger is associated with the area just below the armpit on the side. The ring finger is associated with the shoulder blade area. The pinky is associated with the lower back, towards the side. The gap formed between the index and the thumb (“tiger’s mouth”) is associated with the armpit. The Lao Gong point/ center of the palm is associated with the solar plexus area.

Now while Chi is passing through the arm, it is also passing down the torso area. First relax Zhong Fu and then Chi passes through the two “gates” called the Qi Men and the Zhang Men on its way down to the lower abdomen. Chi then continues down to Qi Chong until it reaches Hui Yin, the bottom of torso. If all the torso points are relaxed, the Hui Yin point also lifts up and then travels down the inner thigh of the leg, through the Weizhong area all the way to the Yong Quan, which ends the exhalation cycle. In Grandmaster Chen’s

analogy, each point or gate is like a section of a bamboo pole. As Chi travels down the bamboo pole, each section will “pop” open one after the other, just like each point will open in sequence when sinking the Chi. “Pop. . . pop. . . pop. . . pop!” The body areas open the same way: First the upper chest opens, then the lower chest, then the upper abdomen followed by lower abdomen, hips, knees and finally the bottom of the feet. “Pop. . . pop. . . pop. . . pop!”

So when the body relaxes at P.A.L., tension relief and pressure moves all the way down to the feet. Now when you inhale, the Chi movement continues to go around the Yong Quan area, by way of the foot through the outer edge and a little towards the back and then continues on to the Hui Yin. Just remember that the more you relax the back/Ming Men area or the neck, for example, the easier it is for the Chi to pass through. Now tension relief is moved on to the Bai Hui or the back of the top of head before coming down the nose. At that point, the tongue, touching the roof of the mouth, makes a connection to close the Chi cycle, and the cycle begins all over again. This complete exhale-inhale cycle is called the Large Heavenly Circle.

The Feeling of an Opened Heavenly Circle

The Large Heavenly Circle in Internal Martial Arts is a very important concept. As pointed out before, most people cannot release all the tension from their torso and the pressure cannot pass all the way down to their feet, so they cannot make a Large Heavenly Circle. There could be two reasons why. First, they are still holding their upper body and not resting their weight on their legs. Second, they know how to completely relax but their lower body is not strong enough to support their upper body, which causes tension to be stuck in primarily hip area. In humor Grandmaster Chen Shitong described the second condition by saying “you dare not relax.” So they will not be able to make the Large Heavenly Circle.

However, once your body is properly aligned and conditioned, and Chi sinks all the way down to the feet and returns along the back to the mouth, then every single breath is one complete Large Heavenly Circle cycle. In Internal Martial Arts, every movement starts with an inner sinking action, which will strengthen Chi circulation. At the moment when a student’s posture is corrected by an experienced Internal Martial Arts instructor, he will immediately feel heaviness or pressure in his thighs and at the same time, feel warmth in the hands. This could happen so quickly, that at the precise moment proper alignment is reached it would seem like someone flipped on a switch. After the Large Heavenly Circle is opened, you might experience even

more Chi sensations, which happen by themselves and not by forceful breathing and imagination.

Here are some sensations you might experience:

- Warmth and all the pores in the entire body feel open.
- Some warmth, tingling or a mercury-like heaviness traveling inside the body.
- A burning in the hands, bladder, kidneys and/or knees.
- Your legs feel puffed up or inflated, and the upper body feels light.
- In the upper body, the top of the head at the Bai Hui point sort of “pops” out.
- The Chi in the fingertips gets so strong that you feel you have to emit this energy.
- You feel refreshed, recharged and wonderful.
- Your eyes become bright.

Health Benefits from the Proper State of These Acupuncture Points

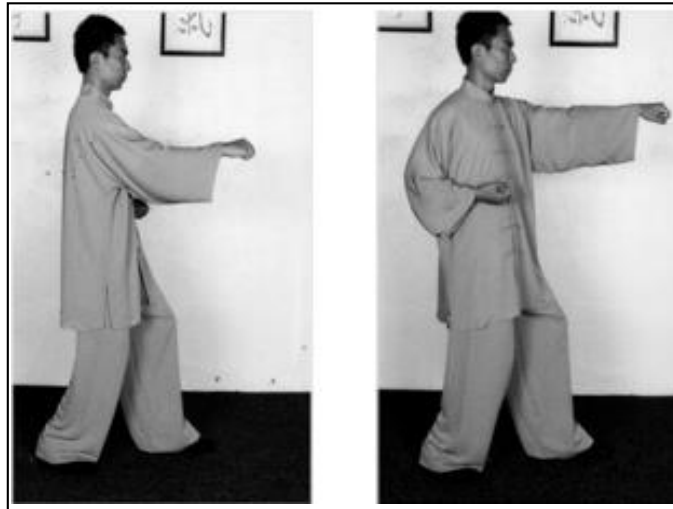
When you drop the Jian Jing, or “Shoulder Well” and Qu Chi or “Curved Pond,” you feel those two pairs of points connect to the Yong Quan or “Gushing Spring.” That will make the shoulders and arms feel energy from the ground, which is “water” in torso and arm directly from the “spring.”

Zhong Fu or “Central Mansion” is the gathering area and the first point to open in the lung meridian. When the Zhong Fu area is open, it is referred to “water rising to the upper body.”

The Qi Men is the “Cyclic Door” and Zhang Men is the “Bright Door.” These points open the liver meridian. Zhang Men is a sort of distribution center for Chi going down to the lower body. Those who want to increase their capability to take strikes always focus on Qi Men and Zhang Men. In Figures 8-31, 8-32, 8-33 and 8-34 are some exercises from Southern Shaolin, Northern Shaolin, Wudang and Tai Chi for strengthening those points in order to make sure that Chi can always pass down. When someone gets hit and is unable to

continue fighting, most of the time it is not because of the pain, but because his Chi circulation got stuck and he cannot breathe or is temporarily paralyzed.

If Chi cannot pass through the Qi Men and Zhang Men, it remains in the torso; you might feel like you are experiencing high blood pressure. When this occurs, often the mind and eyes are not clear and breathing becomes short. But when you pass through them, you immediately feel your eyes become bright, the environment around you becomes crystal clear and you feel a big relief in your chest.



*Figure 8-31 Southern Shaolin Style.
As you pull the right arm back, the wrist edge on the pinky finger side drags
across the Zhang Men or Qi Men areas and vice versa.*



*Figure 8-32 Northern Shaolin Style
As you open and raise the left arm, swing the right arm towards the left side to
pat the left Zhang Men or Qi Men point with the palm and vice versa*

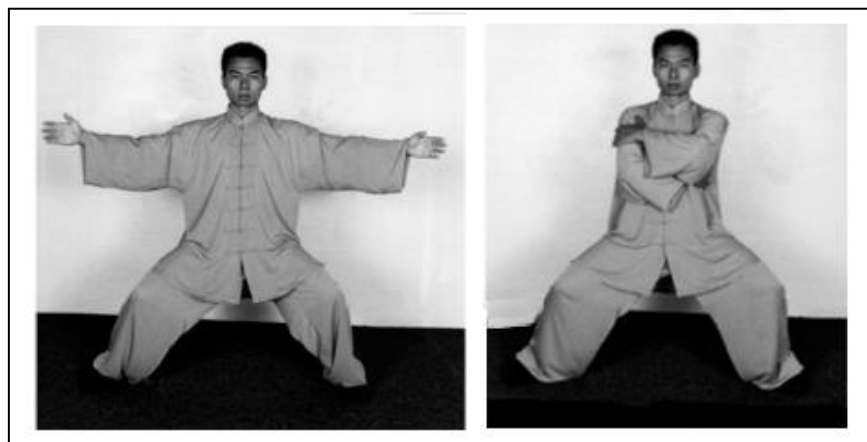


Figure 8-33 Wudang Style.

With a loose, “flapping” type movement, open the arms and as you “flap” closed, the left arm pats the upper right arm while the right palm pats the Zhang Men or Qi Men points. Then reopen the arms and repeat for the opposite side.

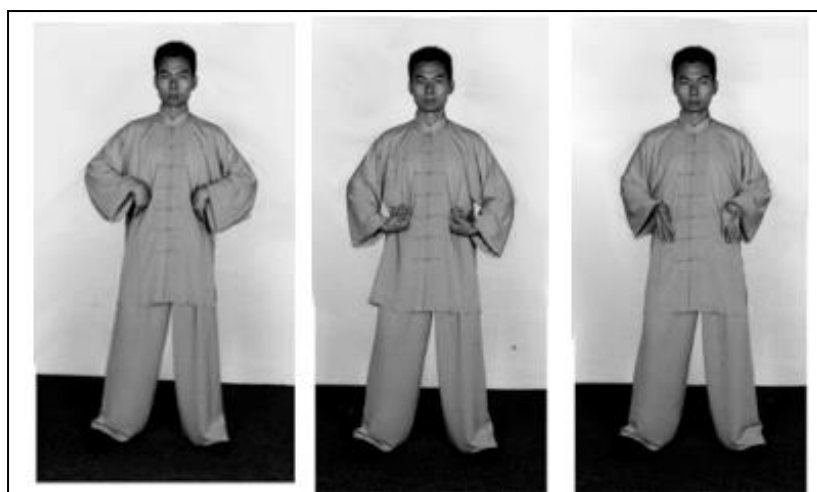


Figure 8-34 Tai Chi.

Rotate the wrists over the Zhang Men and Qi Men areas to massage or rub the Zhang Men or Qi Men points.

Joel Stein had poor eyesight. However, almost every time Master Yan corrected his posture, he felt his eyes open and his eyesight cleared.

Qi Hai or “Energy Sea” (Dan Tian) is a storage area for energy. Here is where Chi is accumulated and can be *driven* when the body needs it. This energy reservoir is amply replenished when the meridians are sufficiently open to allow enough Chi to be stored there. Every time you sink, tension is relieved in that area and it expands there. This expanding pressure internally massages the lower abdominal area and makes the lower torso more active. Sometimes that area is so active that it gets warm (full). If you cannot sink your Chi all the way to the bottom of the feet, then you should at least be able to sink as far as the Qi Hai area in the torso. Your Chi could move in an abbreviated cycle called the *Small Heavenly Circle*. [\[40\]](#) Most people open the Small Heavenly Circle in their form first, and then later on they open the Large Heavenly Circle.

Lifting up the Hui Yin or “Merging Perineum” activates and exercises the muscles in the area between the reproductive organs and the anus. Most exercise disciplines like running, swimming, aerobics or weight lifting, for example, do not have any exercise specifically designed for the muscles in that area. However, exercising the Hui Yin is important for keeping the reproductive organs healthy and functioning well.

When Chi moves up through the Qiang Chang or “Long Strong,” it strengthens the kidney and reproductive systems. The name from Chinese translation suggests the male anatomical appearance due to increased sexual potency, which resulted from activating this area. The Qiang Chang point was probably named back in the olden days when male and female roles were quite different and this information was restricted to men. But activating this area produces the same health benefits for women too.

Massaging and activating the Ming Men or “Gate of Life” increases Chi production because this is where all the Chi or life force energy is produced. When the spine is relaxed and stretched out, Chi will easily flow through the back to the head.

Qi Chong or “Chi Pouring” refers to Chi pouring down the leg. Once the Qi Chong point is opened, Chi will pour all the way down to the lower part of the body if the legs have the arch-like structure.

Proper alignment depends on the “Weizhong or Popliteal Center” being strong and centered. If the Weizhong point is weak, the “arch” formation of the leg is also weak and the moving tension release (Chi) will get stuck there. Then the force will stagnate in the knees and could cause serious damage to them.

Chi passes through Yong Quan or “Gushing Spring” and goes into the ground before returning to move upwards. The gripping action of the big toe, which increases the arch at the Yong Quan, also strengthens the kidney system.

8.4 Some Important Issues in Internal Martial Arts

The Difference Between External Power and Internal Power

The comparison in Figure 8-35 lists some differences between Internal Power and External Power.

Figure 8-35
A Comparison Of Internal And External Power

INTERNAL POWER	EXTERNAL POWER
1) Explosive force at high acceleration.	1) Force at a lower acceleration rate.
2) High frequency vibration or shaking power.	2) Linear or straight power from point to point; singular movement.
3) Tough force with staying power or tenacity; the ability to withstand and change under extreme force. (Think of how the flexible bamboo bends completely over under excess force but bounces right back when the force is removed.)	3) Fragile power whose strength can easily be disrupted or broken. (Think of how a dried tree branch is unyielding and snaps under excess force.)
4) No maneuvering space or outside distance needed.	4) Distance to generate momentum and space for preparation needed.
5) Universal Appeal—Internal power can be emitted from most parts of the body in almost any posture to any direction.	5) External movement is usually good in a single predetermined direction with certain parts of the body like hands, feet, knees and elbow, and severely limiting universal mobility.
6) No external preparation before executing any strike; instantaneous.	6) External preparations like the strong fighting stances before combat.
7) Rapid firing of a variety of moves; nonstop.	7) Blow by blow sequences are a series of “release, pull back, strike, then repeat.”
8) Diversity; In the middle of any movement, you can change direction and strength.	8) Abruptness; Inability to change the movement in “mid stream.”
9) The body feels recharged and energized after issuing internal power.	9) Loss of breath after execution, and energy is drained.

The Problem with “Raising the Back”

Almost all books on Internal Arts such as Tai Chi, Xing Yi and Bagua use the phrase “raise the back” to define one of the Internal Arts’ requirements. This requirement is very confusing and misleading and could actually cause loss of structure and damage to our health by forming a “turtle-like” hunched back. Refer back to the discussion on the

suspension bridge in Section 8.2, and you will be reminded about how upward force on the cables weakens the tower and threatens the entire support structure.

When the chest hollows and the back relaxes, the back will be slightly rounded and expand towards the sides and down. It should never go up. Remember nothing in P.A.L. torso alignment goes up except the Bai Hui and the Hui Yin points.

One major reason why this “raising the back”/*ba bei* (in Chinese) idea got popular is because of the *Ten Important Points* of Yang Cheng Fu, as written by Chen Wei Ming. After some time, Chen Wei Ming recognized the possibility that the term “raising the back” could be misunderstood. He tried to explain the correct idea to people, but because he was not as famous as his teacher, Yang Cheng Fu, they paid little attention to him. What he intended to recommend initially was to maintain the back muscles in their natural position. Some people today even try to say that the word “ba” in *ba bei* means “pulling down” instead of “raise up” in order to correct this misunderstanding. Mr. Lin, Chen Wei Ming’s student, appended an article to Chen Wei Ming’s reprinted book in 1992, which explained how sorry his teacher felt about this misuse of terms in the *Ten Important Points* book and what the correct idea should have been.

Another reason why people try to “raise the back” is that they are trying to use this type of motion to drive Chi up along the spine to the top of the head to conclude the Small Heavenly Circle. Actually, this could be the very reason why their Chi cannot go up to the head. The only way that Chi can flow through the spine is by relaxing the back because any tension there will prevent the Chi from circulating properly.

The Relationship Between a Straight Body and Relaxation

You cannot straighten the body if you don’t know how to relax properly. For example, try to place any straight pole (stiff) at exactly 90° perpendicular to the ground. You might get very close but it’s impossible to do with the help of precision instruments. However, if you hold a string (flexible) weighted on the bottom, it’s impossible NOT to get it exactly 90° perpendicular to the ground. When the body is relaxed it *naturally* straightens. This is done when you relax the shoulders, chest, arms, and especially the lower back, and when the muscles around the spine relax so that the lower back drops like the weight at the end of the string. Then

the spine can straighten itself and this is a much better, gentler, and safer way to open the spine. The flexibility of the string and simple gravity guarantee accuracy.

This is one reason why proper back alignment can cure chronic back pain and problems. Many people suffer such back ailments and disk injury. However, many people after Tai Chi training benefit tremendously in this area.

Dave Spiro was often confined to his bed because of chronic back pain. Sometimes he was bedridden for up to two weeks at a time, totally immobile. Today he never has those problems and has been practicing Tai Chi for about two years. In July 1999 he even was able to compete in a national Tai Chi tournament in Virginia. He contributes his recovery to the proper Tai Chi body alignment.

Three Sections Opening and Three External Harmonies

Every part of our body can be divided into three sections: root, middle and end. For example, for the whole body, the head is the end, the torso is the middle and the legs are the roots. For the arm, the hand is the end, the elbow is the middle and the shoulder is root. Even the finger could be divided into three sections; the tip is the end, the middle section is the middle, and the knuckle is the root. In early stages of training, you need to learn how to open all those sections in the body.

After opening those three sections in the body, you need to learn how to do three harmonies in the physical body, called the *Three External Harmonies*. [\[41\]](#) They are the sets (1) the hip (Kua) and shoulder, (2) the knee and elbow, and (3) foot and hand. This is an important concept in all Internal Martial Arts, but also one widely misinterpreted to mean that during movement the body parts of each set should always move in same time and same direction and be in line as if “pointing at each other.” This makes them look like a marionette. The actual meaning of these *Three External Harmonies* is to build the ideal body alignment. Here is a translation from *Illustration of Xing Yi Five Element Form (Xing Yi Wu Xing Tu Shuo)* published in 1928 when Internal Martial Arts was still fairly pure. The author is Jin Yunting, who is the student of two top Masters, Shang Yunxiang and Sun Lutang. On page thirteen, there is an explanation of the *Three External Harmonies*:

1. Hand to foot The force used to press and hold the hand relates to the force used to twist the leg as if to turn out the heel.
2. Elbow to knee The force used to drop the elbow relates to the force used to twist the legs inwardly.
3. Shoulder to hip The force used to open, relax and stretch the shoulder is related to the force used to tuck in the inguinal creases and fold in the hips.

Refer to the Section 8.2, to understand more about the actual meaning of the *Three External Harmonies*.

When Your Chi Is Sunk, Your Real Force Comes Up.

To the Chinese, real internal force is Chi power and not muscle power. When you reach P.A.L. alignment, your thighs feel heavy and the hands are warm, which indicates that Chi is circulating up and you are generating real power. However, many people without any knowledge of P.A.L. try other ways to generate internal power. For example, many people want to use visualization to drive their Chi to the hands but they have the wrong idea. They are not generating real power and are taking serious health risks like high blood pressure, shortness of breath and muscle tension around the temples. Their power is actually another form of external and limited (see the chart in Figure 8-36, A Comparison Of Internal And External Power).

The truth about real power is that when Chi naturally sinks down first, the real power will come up by itself on the return. You never have to direct Chi with your imagination. When strong Chi correctly circulates up and down, it can immediately collect anywhere, and upon contact, it will immediately become available to utilize. So you can drive Chi instantly to just about any part of the body that is preparing to emit force. When Grandmaster Chen Quanzhong describes this, he always says, “When your Chi is sunk, real force comes up.”

Glenn Harrison is a homeopathic and Oriental Medical Therapist. One night after he practiced some internal exercises with P.A.L. concept, he felt his Lao Gong points on both hands were itching and vibrating. He found that to be interesting because he had been practicing various Chi Gong exercises over the last 15 years and never felt anything like this. He recalled his lesson that if he would relax all his weight onto his thighs correctly, he would feel Chi in his palms. His feeling was that the P.A.L. concept was so simple and yet so powerful.

How to Study Forming This Kind of Proper Internal Alignment

If the internal art you are practicing is Tai Chi, begin by selecting a favorite movement, like perhaps “twist knee, brush step” in your Tai Chi form, and practice it repeatedly, left side and right, over and over again. The object of this repetition is to practice aligning every single movement according to this book. One way to align is drop the arms and torso and completely avoid concentrating on them while using the stool exercise idea to help you judge the accuracy of your practice posture. (*Refer back to the stool exercise in the suspension bridge discussion of section “Point to Point” in Section 8.2 Human Architecture At Point Accuracy Level*). You should practice one movement for a long time, constantly pausing to examine what you feel and imprint the improvements in your mind. Little by little you will be able to detect when this movement has the right feeling and wrong feeling. Through single-posture practicing, you can discover many things that occur internally, which empowers you to be able to understand more about internal movement. Many times the simplest correction produces the most profound results. Eventually, when you excel, your body will become accustomed to the correct feeling so that you actually feel uncomfortable in any wrong alignment. At that point, you can apply what you discovered through your single-posture practice to all your other movements.

Single-posture exercises will help you fix problems that are uncovered when *pushing hands* or on some other occasions. For example, you may not be able to open the shoulder in a certain direction. Then you can ask your teacher to tell you which movement in the form will help you fix that problem. Usually a good Internal Arts instructor can design a program that applies specifically to the student’s level. However, everybody experiences some points which are more difficult than others to open, or that some particular move helps open an area more easily than other moves. If you don’t have any special posture or exercise, go to Chapter 10, Tai Chi Solo Exercises. Under “Tai Chi Chi Gung Exercises,” there are very easy internal exercise programs, which instruct you step-by-step, from simple movements to ones that are a little more complicated.

Bagua style practitioners form their alignment by circular walking exercises, and Xing Yi style people develop it by stillness stances, usually using the “*San Ti*” (translated as “three forms,” heaven, earth, and human) posture.

The Importance of Practicing More Wuji Meditation

Proper P.A.L. alignment opens up a very strong pathway, which causes a very powerful flow of Chi in the body. It is a much more advanced way to accomplish this than regular Dao Yin and Tu Na because when your structure is correct and the channel is wide open, stronger Chi goes by itself.

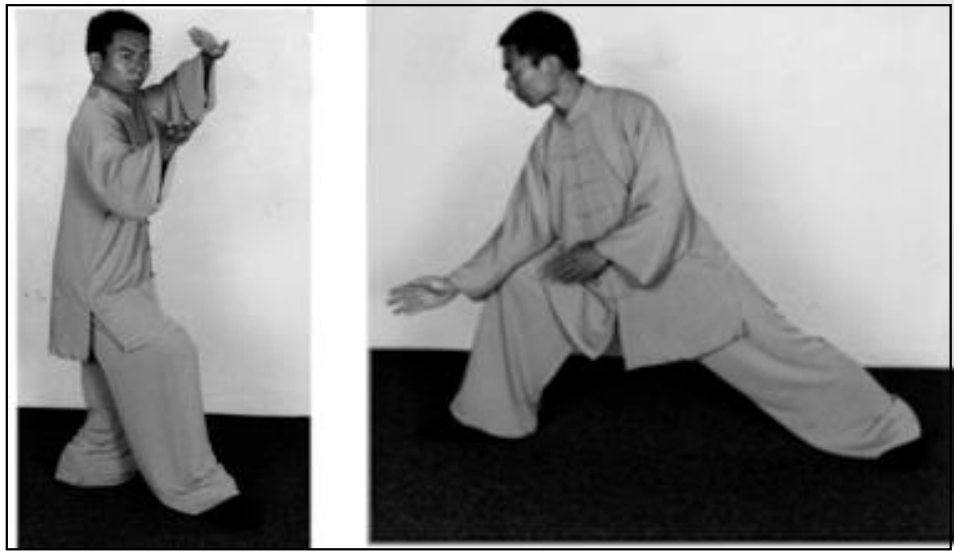
However, when you drive Chi more, you need more Chi to be driven. As you practice more, you will need to do more Wuji to build and replenish your Chi. When you are at the level where you can fix your alignment, you get very excited because your Chi is so strong. Before beginning the Tai Chi form, and after finishing it, you should stand in the Wuji posture for a few minutes. Every single time you do the form, a single-movement practice, push hands, interrupt a practice session or any exercise at all, you should end up with the Wuji finishing motion. (Refer to Chapter 2.) Otherwise, you will have a kind of dried-out feeling after you do the form or other exercises at the P.A.L. way.



Figure 8-36
Tai Chi posture



Figure 8-37
Tai Yi posture



*Figure 8-38
Bagua posture*

*Figure 8-39
Xin Yi posture*

Even P.A.L Is Not the End of Body Mechanics Study

Tai Chi, Xing Yi, Xin Yi, Bagua, Baji, White Crane, Lu He Ba Fa, Tai Yi, Tai Xu, Hun Yuan, Xuan Wu, Tong Bei, Zi Men, Kong Tong and many other Internal styles each have their own strategies. Even though they all share similar P.A.L. proper alignment and structure to make their style internal, you can go even deeper into this subject and there is so much more you can study about how to use the body.

Here are some examples:

- Xin Yi movement is done with an explosive power from the Dan Tian. So every time, right before “exploding,” the Xin Yi form compresses the “bomb”/Dan Tian area.
- In combat Bagua people will circle their body around. The centripetal force of their circling movement should be aiming at the target and could be released to destroy the opponent whenever they need to.
- In combat Tai Chi people will turn their body with a rapid downward sinking movement, which creates centrifugal force. The opponent could be thrown off or injured by this force so long as he is within the circumference of the Tai Chi player’s movement.

P.A.L. is just a prerequisite to the different internal fighting strategies.

Testing for Proper Alignment

Here are some interesting tests for proper body alignment, which you may want to use to check your structure or even use for demonstration:

The Student's Test For Alignment

The student holds his relaxed arm rounded out and in front of his chest and another person presses his hands down on his forearms with some force. Without any signal, the assistant raises his hands up. If the student's alignment is good, his arms will "stick" or remain touching the assistant's hands wherever he moves and automatically float up without any effort or hesitation. If the student responds after a hesitation, this means his movement is not being driven by good circulating Chi but by mentally controlled muscle.

The Easy Way for a "Master" to Demonstrate



Figure 8-40

Locking someone's Shoulders will make his force go up.

Here's an easy way to impress audiences (see Figure 8-40). The Master holds the student's elbows together in front of him to throw the Jian Jing and Qu Chi points out of alignment. This locks the student's shoulders and makes his force go up. Therefore the student's force cannot be used against the Master no matter how strong he is, or how many people are behind him together pushing this Master, or even if the

Master himself is not properly aligned and only uses his arm muscle to lock the student's shoulders. This demonstration really shows how terrible it is when the student loses his alignment and doesn't show how wonderful it is when someone (Master) is in good alignment. This demonstration is a trick, which is easy to learn and effective.

By the way, to put someone out of proper alignment so that he cannot release his force is a good strategy in combat. Experienced Internal Martial Artists find it easy to see the wrong or weak point in an opponent's structure and then can defeat him with very little effort.

The Real Way to Demonstrate Internal Alignment

The following demonstration is not a trick, but reveals a person's ability to maintain proper body alignment.

- Hold one arm in front of the chest and let one person or more push on it with both hands. The Master would be able to remain in structure (see Figure 8-30.)
- A better way to test a Master's alignment is to push him from different directions or stances. For example, push him from either side, not just the front, or push him when he is standing on one leg. The Master would not be pushed over or disrupted.
- Here's another good one: let the Master be pushed and see if he can pick up either foot, the front or back foot at will.



Figure 8-41

With proper alignment (P.A.L.) a person can still maintain his balance as he is being pushed from the side with tremendous force, even in a one-legged stance

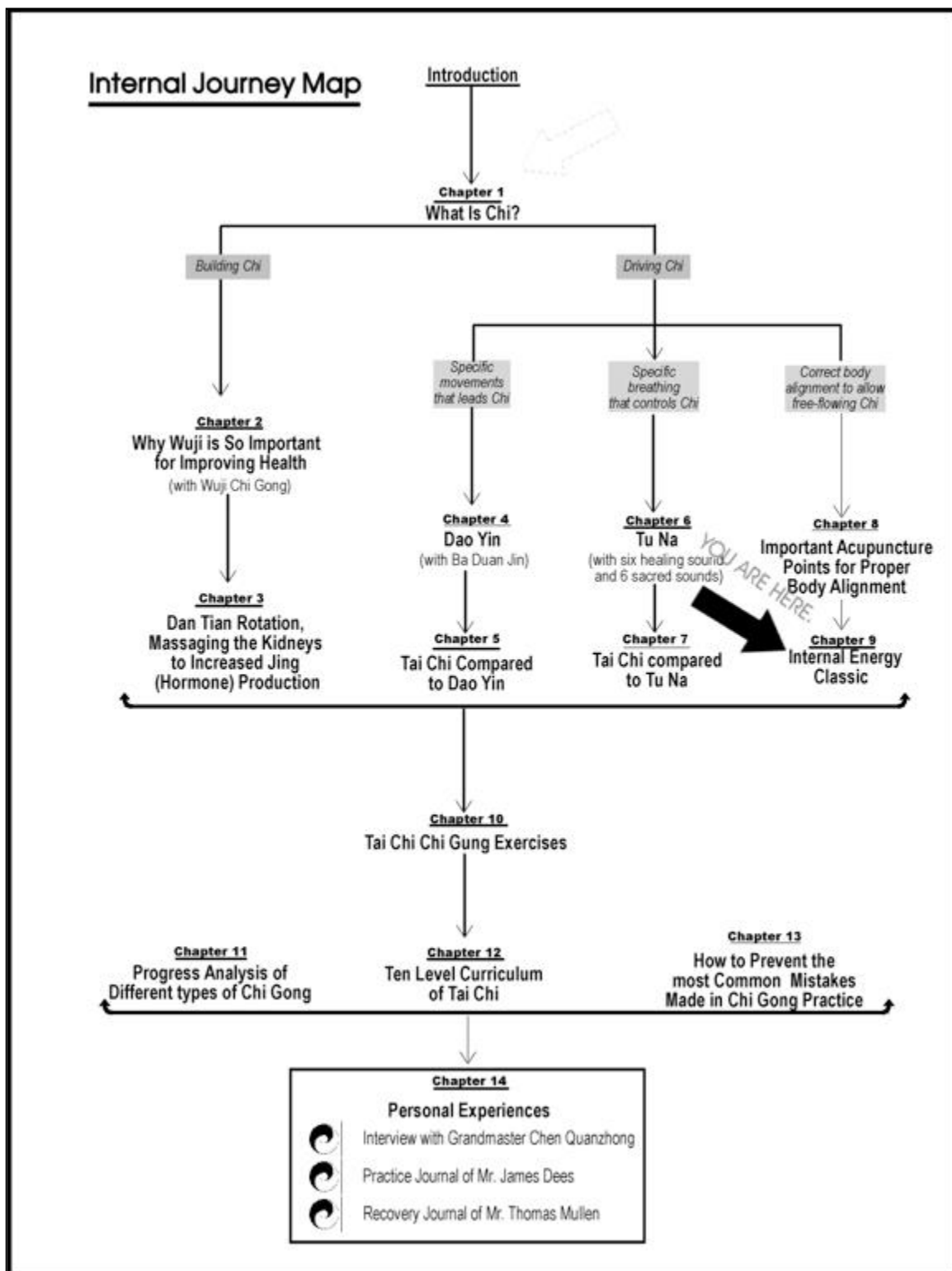
Of course, this pushing test is not combat. However, with this ability in actual combat, as the fighters make contact, the internal Martial Artist could transfer the force exerted on him to the ground and return the counter-force from the ground in any direction he wants.

Chapter 8 Footnotes

34. *There are other systems that use acupuncture points to imagine Chi paths in the hopes that such visualization will guide their movement. That is completely different from how this book discusses using acupuncture points to measure proper alignment. Don't confuse these two methods.*
35. *A another reason to keep elbows dropped is to protect the torso vital areas in combat.*
36. *For more details, see Chapter 3.*
37. *In Chinese, Dang refers to the area in the body where inner thighs meet and is also called the crotch area.*
38. *The upper end of the femur has two prominences which are attachment sites for muscles and ligaments. The larger prominence is called the greater trochanter and projects from the upper side of the femur. The smaller, or lesser, trochanter projects medially from the side, just at the neck of the femur.*
39. *The finger can vary. For example, Chen Style Tai Chi emphasizes the middle finger; Yang and Wu Styles of Tai Chi emphasizes the index finger.*
40. *See Chapter 6.*
41. *There are Three Internal Harmonies in Internal Martial Arts, which vary from style to style, and because this book is not about individual styles, they are not discussed in this book.*



Chapter 9
Internal Energy Classic



Actually the secret was written down a long time ago.

In the last chapter we discussed the point accuracy level of proper body alignment and how it affects Chi circulation. This knowledge has not been well known. However, it was recorded in some *Classics* such as the one we will discuss in this chapter. To study and memorize the *Internal Power Classic* will help you master the method of building a proper body alignment in order to get the maximum Internal Power from your body. Since most acupuncture points mentioned in this chapter are discussed in the last chapter, refer back to them when you need to.

9.1 What Secret Does This Classic Hold?

One of the four books of the *Nei Gong Zen Chuan Classics* is the *Nei Gong Jing Classic*. The *Nei Gong Jing Classic* offers one of the best explanations of Internal Martial Arts structure even though it does not lend itself to any particular style. In 1893 the famous Xing Yi Masters, Song Shide and Song Shirong taught the *Nei Gong Jing Classic* when they moved from Hebei province to Shan Xi province. No one knows exactly where they got the book or who the author was, but it is clear in the prologue that this Classic has been in the Wang family for more than 100 years. The Song family practiced in accordance with this Classic, and their level of skill in Xing Yi advanced considerably. The Song family's reputation in Internal Power grew not only within the Xing Yi community, but throughout the entire Internal Martial Arts community as well. Since that time, several generations of the Song family have become famous for their martial expertise. Compared to their peers, the Song family enjoyed healthier longer lives. Many family members enjoyed healthy lives well into their nineties, which illustrates just how effective the *Nei Gong Jing* really is.

The *Nei Gong Jing Classic* is widely known by name, but little is really known about its true meaning because it was only taught to a very few people from each generation. The actual interpretation of its text is quite obscure, even to those people who have had access to the entire Classic. Such people have failed to figure out the meaning, only to be left with an “educated-guess” that usually falls short of the truth.



Figure 9-1
Song Tie Lin (1895-1978), second generatio

9.2 How All Four Classics Were Found

This Internal Classic book includes two prefaces, one by Mr. Wang Nan Xi, the other by Mr. Zhong Jing Fang.

“These four Internal Power classics were bought by my great-grandfather Wang, who at that time was the Governor of Jiang Xi Province. It was more than 100 years after his death before we discovered what they were. One day I removed them from storage and took the time to read them. Initially I was so confused that I wanted to give up but I ended up spending years studying this Classic. I finally understood that this Classic is about Martial Arts and outlines the path to achieve real Internal Power. I found that if you have real Internal Power, any technique could be effective.

“Such things cannot be rushed. One has to spend years practicing before one can acquire real Internal Power. One must proceed step by step in a manner in accordance with the Classics and one cannot rush the program. People, who perhaps lack talent, will get little from the Classics. Other people may be incapable of intelligently grasping this information. Still others may try to comprehend these lessons too quickly and consequently never do. And then there are people who are simply too poor and lack the spare time to devote to learning and training. There are many people who immediately try to understand the true meaning of Internal Martial Arts at the onset and fail, and they will be very disappointed if they compare their skill to a skilled Internal Martial Artist.

“Now for the Internal Power which can be seen externally, we collected a few compositions about developing whole body power, unitary Internal Power, and other details concerning internal power. The Classics outline the necessary components for analyzing the development of Internal Power and define the key points to follow in order to head you in the right direction for developing real Internal Power. - Wang Nan Xi

The other preface says:

“My friend Wang Nan Xi’s grandfather was the governor of Jiang Yi Province. In the early part of the Qing Dynasty he docked his boat by the bank of the Dan Qing River, where he saw a businessman recover a stone case from the bottom of the river. There were two scrolls inside the case. One was called the Jiang Dan (energy of the sword) and the other was called the Nei Gong Zen Chuan (the real message of Internal Power). There are four Classics which comprise the Nei Gong Zen Chuan: Nei Gong Jing (Internal Power classic), Nan Gua Jing (I-Ching matching classic,) Shen Yun Jing (spirit driving classic) and Di Long Jing (Ground Dragon Classic). Governor Wang paid a high price for these two scrolls and made them available to the public.” - Zhong Jing Fang

9.3 Core Substance of This Classic

How to drive Chi

The Classics say:

“Chi circulates continuously along the Ren meridian at the front of the body to the Du meridian along the back. The rapid fire type of explosive power (Fa Jing) is released along the “Shoulder Well” (Jian Jing) and the “Curved Pond (Qu Chi).” Although there are many variations, they all rely on the same principle. If you can understand these points you will see the infinite possibilities of this Art. Chi rises through the coccyx and you practice bringing your mind (Shen) into the Dan Tian. When Chi sinks down to the lower part of the body, you will have a brighter mind and lifted spirit.”

The Meaning of this Classic Text:

- “Chi circulates continuously along the Ren meridian at the front of the body to the Du meridian along the back.” Here is where the Classics discuss the Small Heavenly Circle. Chi travels from the mouth

- (continued) down to the Dan Tian along the Ren meridian, from the Dan Tian Chi continues onto the lowest point and around the tailbone area and continues on up the spine, over the head and back through the palate. The channel that the Chi travels from the Dan Tian back to the mouth is called the Du meridian.
- “The rapid fire type of explosive power (Fa Jing) is released along the “Shoulder Well” (Jian Jing) and the “Curved Pond (Qu Chi).” Here is where the Classics talk about how to let Chi flow freely in the arms in order to release the explosive power of Fa Jing. The key is to relax and drop the two acupuncture points called the “shoulder well” (Jian Jing) and the “curved pond” (Qu Chi).
- “Although there are many variations, they all rely on the same principle. If you understand these points, you will see the infinite possibilities of this Art.” There are many styles of Internal Martial Arts. They share the same driving-Chi principles even though their outward appearances could be very different. Only by understanding the internal energy principles correctly can you reach the highest level.
- “Chi rises through the coccyx and you practice bringing your mind (Shen) into the Dan Tian.” This sentence is talking about how Chi will ascend along the tailbone if you focus your mind on the Dan Tian.
- “When Chi sinks down to the lower part of the body, you will have a brighter mind and lifted spirit.” If your Chi can sink, there is no Chi blockage in the upper torso and head. Then your mind becomes clear. This section closes by referring again to the Small Heavenly Circle and its health benefits.

Structure and Alignment

The Classics say:

Once you recognize the Chi path, the next step towards the development of Internal Power is to examine your body structure and alignment. The head is straight and rises. The shoulders are down and naturally loose to unlock them. The chest is hollow and closing. The lower back is firm and strong. The feet are solid and grounded. The knees are bent and extended. The inner groin is deeply tucked in and hidden. The rib cage is open and expanded.”

The Meaning of the Classic Text:

- "Once you recognize the Chi path, the next step towards the development of Internal Power is to examine your body structure and alignment." The following are eight major areas of adjustment for proper alignment.
- "The head is straight and rises." This assures us that the "tower" is straight, when we consider our upper body as a suspension bridge, which was discussed in the last chapter. The requirements for shoulders, chest and lower back in the next three Classic sentences also make our "tower" more stable.
- "The shoulders are down and naturally loose to unlock them." To flatten the shoulders, relaxing them so that they sit naturally and are slightly rounded down to the sides and forward.
- "The chest is hollow and closing." Relaxed shoulders contribute to a hollow chest, emphasizing a relaxation of the chest (hollow as opposed to protruding).
- "The lower back is firm and stable." This means that you should "sink" or drop the lower back.
- "The feet are solid and grounded." Once you place your foot, you must keep that foot flat on the floor. The weight should not be on the side of the foot but evenly distributed on the entire foot. The toes grab the floor to make the foot more grounded.
- "The knees are bent and extended." Relax and slightly bend the knees to extending them, which refers to the corkscrew type action of the legs into the ground.
- "The inner groin is deeply tucked in and hidden." Relax the inguinal crease area to help the Chi move down the legs from the torso area. If you feel the Qi Chong point relax and the legs align correctly, then the inner groin will tuck in. The previous three requirements about feet, knees and inner groin are telling us to make our lower body like an arch bridge.

- “The rib cage is open and expanded.” By expanding the rib cage, your breathing becomes deeper and more natural. The key is to relax Qi Men and Zhang Men.

Breathing

The Classics say:

“Adjust the breathing to make it even, and relax to develop precision force. First inhale and then exhale. The air goes in and out while the Chi lifts up and goes down. This is how the Chi rises and falls. Inside our body is the Dan Tian, the home of the Chi. In the lower half of the body you should lift the anus. In the upper half of the body you should suspend the head. Standing or sitting, inhale through nose to the throat and use the mind to gradually deliver the breath down to the bottom. There is a way for the Chi to go up, by expanding the ribs. There is a way for the Chi to go down, by going through the Yu Kuo.”

The Meaning of the Classic Text:

- “Adjust the breathing to make it even.” Breathing should be even, which is done by breathing slowly, gently, smoothly, long and deeply.
- “Relax to develop precision force.” If the body is not relaxed, then the brain will not control the muscles, and we cannot do what we want to do, which is why relaxing helps develop precision force.
- “First inhale and then exhale, the air goes in and out while the Chi lifts up and goes down. This is how the Chi rises and falls.” Here the Classic talks about the Small Heavenly Circle. We control our Chi (make it go up or down) through inhaling and exhaling (breathing). Chi going “up and down” refers to this natural path it takes “up” the Ren meridian and “down” the DRu meridian. When you inhale, Chi travels along the Ren meridian from the Dan Tian to the Hui Yin to the Ming Men and on over the head. When you exhale, Chi travels down the Ru meridian and completes the cycle (Small Heavenly Circle). This demonstrates the direct relationship between Chi and breathing.
- “Inside is the Dan Tian, the home of the Chi.” The Dan Tian is the storage center where Chi is

gathered. Chi will circulate in your body, and no matter what paths it travels, eventually the Chi ends up “home” in the DDan Tian.

- “In the lower half of the body you should lift the anus.” This will cause Chi to rise. Actually, lifting the anus refers to Hui Yin, the acupuncture point centrally located between the anus and genitals. Gently lifting this area causes the Ren and Du meridians to connect.
- “In the upper half of the body you should suspend the head.” If you don’t suspend the head, Chi cannot reach all the way up to the head and also cannot go all the way down. The Bai Hui (head) and the Hui Yin (anus) are the two points to lift up. The other points in the torso are relaxed.
- “Standing or sitting, inhale through nose to the throat and use the mind to gradually deliver the breath down to the bottom.” This simply means do not inhale through the mouth. Either from a standing or sitting position, inhale deeply through the nose, all the way down to the Dan Tian, and relax the body so that the lungs can absorb as much air as possible. Do not force breathing, which uses muscle tension, but allow your mind to gradually deliver the breath down to the bottom.
- “There is a way for the Chi to go up, by expanding the ribs.” Inhale and expand the ribs in order to open up the passageway for Chi to travel upwards.
- There is a way for the Chi to go down, by going through the Yu Kuo.” The Yu Kuo, “mouth,” is the passageway through which Chi passes to travel downwards. Exhale through the mouth.

The Key to Internal Force

The Classics say:

“Now that you understand the key points of Chi, we will explain the key points about force. The key points of the force are (Chi) circulation, “passing through,” penetrate, closeness, (body) relaxation, courage, (body) unity, stability. Push down the shoulders to practice stepping. Tuck the inner groin in to stabilize the knee. Keep the inner groin (crotch area) circular or rounded to stabilize the hip. Lift up the chest to sink down the lower back. Lift up the jaw to straighten the neck. Fill the back to circulate Chi back to the front. Relax the shoulder to emit force.

Suspending the spine allows the Chi to go down and viewing the He Gu to line up the posture. Know the strengths of forward and sideward (sideways). Forward movement receives its power from sideways force. Sideways movement receives its power from forward force."

The Meaning of the Classic Text:

- "Now that you understand the key points of the Chi, we will explain the key points about force." At this point of study, you need a sound comprehension of the fundamentals of Chi before you can study internal force. Internal force involves the following key points as recorded in this Classic:

- (Chi) Circulation - Keeping the Chi pathways open.

Passing Through - Your Chi is unobstructed so the force can "pass through" another person's body.

Penetrate - The force can penetrate into another person's body.

- Close - In combat, the Internal Martial Artists' bodies should be close and fighting is done in short distances, whereas the External Martial Artists fight in longer distances. In fact, this proximity of the opponents is one of the identifying aspects of Internal Martial Arts.
- (Body) Relaxation - The state of your body and mind.
- Courage - Keeping calm and being decisive in the face of danger without hesitation.
- (Body) Unity - The body and mind work in unison (interconnected as one).
- Stability - A sound structure, which is securely grounded.
- "Push down the shoulders to practice the stepping." When stepping, many people move the shoulders first to "lead" the body, which make them lose their "root." By relaxing the shoulders, you avoid coming up out of your "root," and keep a strong structure when stepping (moving). The key is to drop the Jian Jing and QQu Chi points and relax them all the way down to the Yong Quan.
- "Collapse the inguinal creases to stabilize the knees." Tucking in the inguinal creases (in the meantime the tailbone should remain pointing down) will increase the corkscrew action in the legs and stabilize the knees. Relax the Qi Chong points, roll out the Huan Tiao points and keep the Chang Qiang point pointing downwards, which will help strengthen the Wei Zhong points.

- “Keep the inner thighs((dang)) as a circle to stabilize the hips ((kua)).” The inner thighs and the groin together form the area called the dang. In order to stabilize the hips, the dang should form the shape of an upside down “U” instead of an (incorrect) upside down “V” and the Huan Tiao acupuncture points should “stick out”. Once the dang forms the arch bridge shape, then the kua, like the deck of the bridge, becomes stable.
- “Lift up the chest to sink down the lower back.” When the shoulders are properly relaxed, the chest naturally “lifts” internally while at the same time the back lowers or goes down. The chest does not “puff up” or stick out. If you don’t sink the lower back so that it drops when you tuck the inner groin in, the tailbone will stick out backwards as the lower back arches with tension. Besides being unhealthy, this is also improper alignment of the spine.
- “Lift up the jaw to straighten the neck.” Lift the jaw (or slightly tuck the chin in). This is a minor adjustment that raises the rear jawbone and contributes to straightening the neck.
- “Fill the back to circulate Chi back to the front.” “Fill the back” means lessening the curved area of the lower back portion of the spine. Reaching this level of alignment is done by relaxing Zhang Men points. However, do not try to curve the upper back and shoulder muscles forward to form a turtle-like appearance. Here again is a direct reference to the Small Heavenly Circle. When you relax as explained above, the back expands and fills with Chi so that it is able to go through the back and continue to flow on to the front.
- “Relax the shoulder to emit force.” To emit force all the way to the fingertips, palm or fist, you must relax the shoulder. If there is tension in the shoulders, then the flow of Chi will stagnate there resulting in a loss of power and possible injury. The key to releasing force is to relax and drop Jian Jing and QQu Chi points.
- “Suspending the spine allows the Chi to go down and viewing the He Gu to line up the posture.” The properly relaxed chest helps the spine suspend or “hang” to allow each vertebra to separate in the right order and align naturally so that Chi can flow through efficiently. Look at the area located

between the index finger and your thumb known as the acupuncture point He Gu (“tiger’s mouth”). Use the He Gu as a point of reference for lining up your whole body in any posture much in the same way a “painter’s thumb” is used by an artist to capture the proper proportions, perspective and angles of his subject. This will help the whole body align and concentrate its force in one direction.

- “Know the strengths of forward and sideward (sideways). Forward movement receives its power from sideways force. Sideways movement receives its power from forward force.” Your structure is so strong in every movement that it can support every directional force. On account of ideal alignment, each directional force can help another force, which means that every muscle in the body will not only perform according to its own design but also will be able to assist other muscle performances as well. For example, one muscle may work strongly in only one direction. However, it still can assist the performance of another muscle, which works in a completely different direction than the assisting muscle. A good Internal Martial Arts Master’s posture and movement is totally impenetrable from any direction. This can happen because of the ideal structure or alignment utilizes leverage.

Conclusion

The Classics say . . .

“Five Chi are going to the original place over and over again. Four limbs and the head collect the Chi wonderfully. Rise and fall, in and out, up and down, Chi goes together harmoniously. Heaven and earth are very stable. The water goes up and the fire goes down. The head and the feet communicate together very well. When you are quiet your mind becomes bright. When you move then you could fly.”

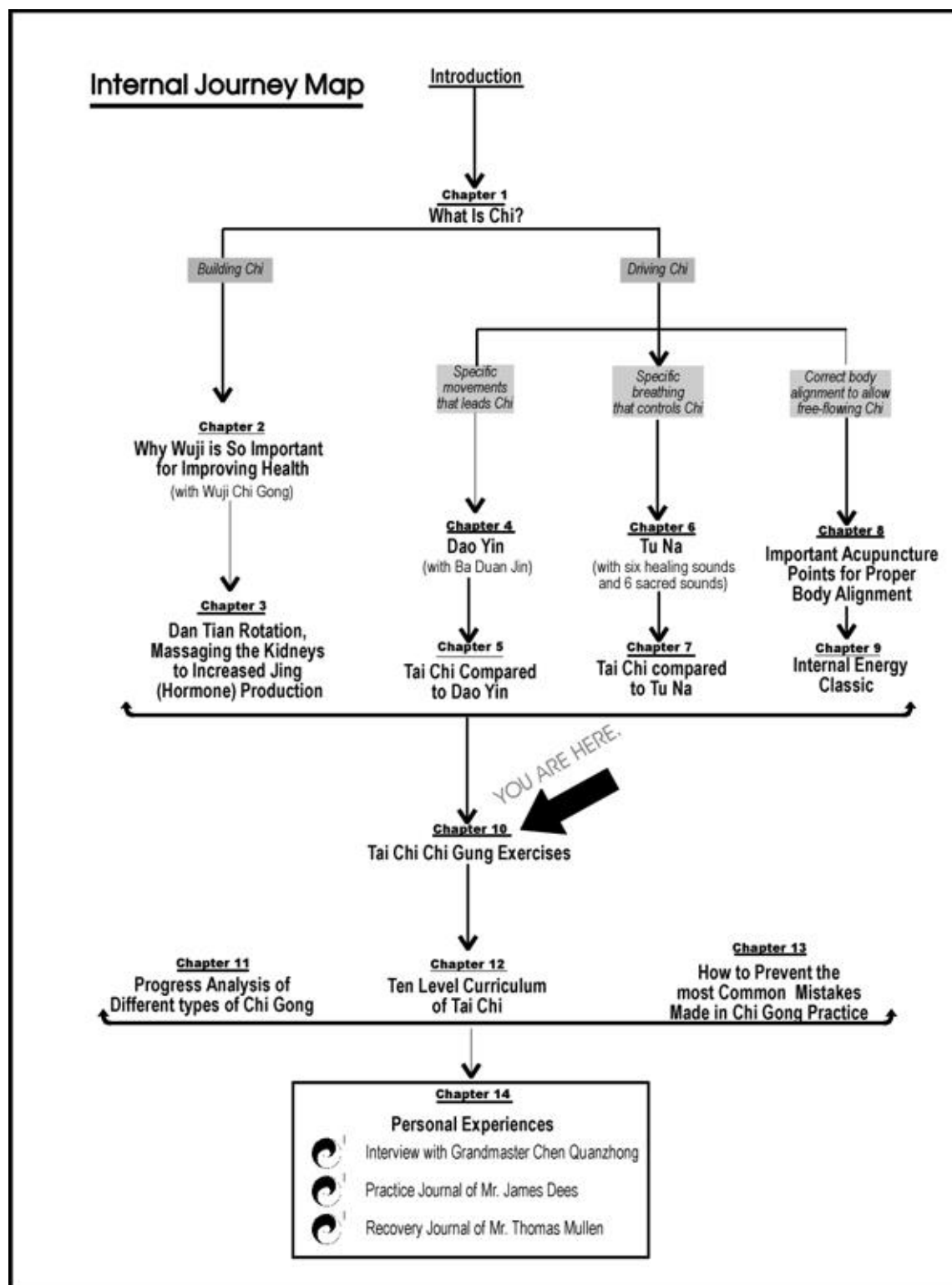
The Meaning of the Classic Text

- “Five Chi are going to the original place over and over again. Four limbs and the head collect the Chi wonderfully.” The Five Chi circulate uninterrupted to the Dan Tian (the home, Original place.) The Five Chi refers to the Chi from the two hands, two feet and the head. It is so wonderful that, when Chi circulates correctly, we can save as much as we can from everywhere in the body and store it in the Dan Tian.

- “Rise and fall, in and out, up and down, Chi goes together harmoniously.” Here the Classics talk about the fluidity and continuity of Chi when it runs properly throughout the Jing Lou, all of the body’s meridians. Again, the Classics are referring to the Small Heavenly Circle.
- “The heaven and earth are very stable.” Because of good Chi circulation, every part of the body remains in the position it is supposed to be and functions as expected. Everything is in its place and functions well. (In Chinese culture, the term “heaven” is actually “atmosphere” and “sky” above the earth, and so when heaven and earth are unstable, it could mean an earthquake, meteor shower, eclipse, Tsunami, volcano or hurricane. These natural disasters indicate that the universe is out of balance.)
- “The water goes up and the fire goes down.” The inactive chest area assumes a water-like state, and the lower body is active and takes on a fire-like state. Good health is a harmonious synchronization between the water going up and the fire going down.
- “The head and the feet connect together very well.” When Chi freely flows smoothly and non-stop through unobstructed meridians, the body is completely connected from head to toe and is “one.”
- “When you are quiet your mind becomes bright.” There is a certain “brightness” that is quite apparent to a person who is calm and has a strong Chi flow. When you are quiet within, you can see more on the “outside” or are more tuned in to what’s around you.
- “When you move then you could fly.” This means that your Chi is very strong. Strong, uninterrupted Chi guarantees that your body’s Chi network is completely connected which can make any move very fast when simply triggered by a thought (“you can fly”). A Chi-nourished, well-balanced body knows no limits!The last two sentences of the passage refer to benefits of strong, uninterrupted Chi.
- This entire Classic really discusses how the breathing and posture work together to release and move Chi. Carefully study this information provided because the more you understand Nei Gong Jing, the more benefits you will receive. Then you will discover the real road to Internal Power.

防偏

Chapter 10 Tai Chi-Chi Gung Exercises



Let's feel some Chi.

10.1 General Information About Tai Chi-Chi Gung Exercises

In the last six chapters we discussed different ways to *drive* Chi. Now you will learn how to apply this information through the **Chi Gung Exercises** included in this chapter. This set of Chi Gung will make it very easy for you to be able to feel Chi. Not only will you receive health benefits but you will also gain some insight into how ancient Chinese health care programs continually developed and advanced into complicated systems through the concepts of **Chi**.

All these exercises were refined and modified from the Chen Style Tai Chi. Before you practice Chi Gung exercises, observe the following recommendations:

8 Chi Gung Exercises:

1. Wuji
2. Holding-Balloon
3. Dan Tian Rotation on a Horizontal Plane
4. Dan Tian Rotation on a Vertical Plane
5. Horizontal Chi Pull
6. Vertical Chi Pull
7. Exchanging Chi
8. Return To Wuji

- Practice each exercise slowly so that you can feel more of what is happening inside your body.
- Each exercise should be practiced for a count of twenty, or more.
- Each exercise is done after the feeling of Chi has occurred from the holding balloon Chi Gung exercise.
- Practice these exercises in the order that they are given for best results.
- All of the Chi Gung exercises except exercise 1 (Wuji) are done from the holding balloon posture.

- Breathe naturally. Eventually your breathing will coordinate with the movement all by itself, which means that you will inhale when opening (beginning) each exercise cycle and exhale when closing (completing) each exercise cycle.
- Pay close attention to your body alignment because it is the key ingredient for helping Chi flow in the body.
- If you want to understand more about body alignment, review Chapter 8.

10.2 How to Do and What to Feel

Wuji



Figure 10-1 Exercise #1 Wuji

Wuji is the first basic Chi Gung Exercise, and to recall how to practice Wuji correctly refer back to Chapter 2. After practicing a few minutes of Wuji, you will feel calmer, your heart will beat slower and your breathing will become steady. Wuji prepares you for practicing the following Chi Gung Exercises.

Holding Balloon



Figure 10-2 Exercise #2 Holding Balloon

Holding balloon begins with the Wuji posture so that your feet are placed to the width of the shoulders. Your body should be straight. Try to “sit” or lower yourself a little. Your eyes are slightly opened and looking forward. Now imagine that you are carrying a big light ball in front of your chest. Your arms are wrapped around the middle of this giant ball, your fingertips almost touch, the middle fingers pointing at each other.

Your hands are positioned directly in front of the chest and are no higher than the nose and no lower than the navel. The best place for the hands is *in between* these nose and naval areas. You want to make sure that you use only enough muscle to hold the position of the arms and to carry as little weight as possible on the arms and hands. Now you are *holding the balloon*.

To understand this better, ask a friend to assist you in this little task. While your friend holds up your wrists you “let go” and loosen your arms to help the shoulders relax and the elbows “drop.” [\[42\]](#) The hands should not be too far from the body, too close or drawn towards the body. They should be at a distance, which is comfortable *to you*.

Keep the body straight and relaxed and settle your torso down onto the legs. The torso-hip-back structure of the *holding balloon* is similar to your body structure when sitting a high bar stool. Ask your friend to gently remove the high stool after you sit on it and then check out your posture. Make sure that you use a high stool to prevent bending your knees too deeply, unnecessarily straining yourself. Keep in mind that the

knees only have to be *slightly* bent. If you're still not sure, instruct your friend to look at your body from a side view to see if the torso is straight.

Many people believe that their body is straight even though they really tend to lean backwards. However, after someone straightens them, they get the feeling that they are falling or leaning forwards. This is probably because they were so used to leaning backwards.

More about how to relax the torso area is explained in Chapter 8, which covers relaxing the four pairs of acupuncture points.

Again it is not necessary to bend the knees very much when doing internal exercises. Any lower stance attained without the proper body alignment will not open the internal energy channels. Therefore such a stance will serve only as a standard *physical* exercise instead of an energy exercise (Chi Gung). Your weight should be evenly centered and you do this by placing the body weight over the area centrally located between the feet as they are positioned when in Wuji (*see Figure 10-2*). The weight on each foot should be evenly distributed.

As you practice the *holding balloon*, remind yourself to keep your body straight and relax your shoulders, and continue telling yourself this over and over. Finally your body will become more relaxed and you will start to feel heavy on the thighs *without* lowering the center of gravity. At this moment, you will start to feel your hands get warm and tingly or your fingers might feel inflated. ***Now you are feeling Chi!***



Figure 10-3
Group practicing Exercise #2 Holding Balloon at Tampa Bay

Hold this position only for as long as you feel comfortable. Five or ten minutes will be fine. If you try to do too much before you are ready, you will increase the tension in your body. And also remember, do not try to visualize or guide your Chi. You are only observing the feeling of Chi, NOT directing it. There are many visualization, imagination and breathing techniques done in the exact same posture which people use to try to enhance Chi circulation. Do not do this in our Tai Chi-Chi Gung exercise. We believe that the natural way is the best way. In Chapter 25 of the Tao Te Ching, Lao Tzu states that “*the Dao goes with what is absolutely natural.*”

Dan Tian Rotation on a Horizontal Plane



Figure 10-4 Chi Gung Exercise #3
Dan Tian Rotation on a Horizontal Plane

In this Chi Gung exercise, from *holding balloon* posture, turn the hip from side to side. There should be no movement at all in the torso, only in the pelvis area. Many people do this incorrectly and turn the torso to move the arms and hands rather than the hips.

In this exercise, you still rest the weight on the legs and try not to use the upper body muscles to hold your torso in position. Also, your weight should be placed on the feet at a 50-50 ratio or even a 60-40 displacement ratio alternating from foot to foot. It doesn't really matter if you turn towards the heavy leg or away from it. The key issue is that your hips turn and you are comfortable. Be sure that, after each *turn*, you relax a little bit more before proceeding to *turn* on the opposite side. Omitting this very important technique is like touring Orlando without going to any tourist attractions like Disney World. What's the point?

Eventually, when you turn in this exercise, your hands might feel like they are being gently pushed apart or perhaps “drawn” into each other. The heat emitting from the hands will build up so much that you might think that you just built a “microwave zone” between the hands.

Dan Tian Rotation on a Vertical Plane



Figures 10-5 A & B
Chi Gung Exercise #4 Dan Tian Rotation on a Vertical Plane

Now that you are feeling Chi in your hands from the *holding balloon*, point the fingers forward and continue to face the palms towards each other. Now move the hands in a bicycle-peddling circular motion so that each hand covers an area about a “hand-width” all around. Practice this exercise in both directions. As you do this exercise, you can feel the heat from one hand circling onto the other hand it passes over it.

Horizontal Chi-Pull



*Figures 10-6
Chi Gung Exercise #5 Horizontal Chi Pull*

Next, after you feel the Chi, with the palms facing each other at all times simply open and close your arms to make the hands appear to softly clap without touching each other.

Sometimes the sensation feels like the hands are repelling each other, as magnets do when they are put together. Other times you feel just the opposite and the hands appear to pull each other together. How far you should open the arms depends on what you are comfortable with. You can open wide or very little; it doesn't matter.



*Figure 10-7
In 1996 Master Chen Quanzhong leads the class in
horizontal Chi-pull exercise at the University of Tennessee; Chattanooga.*

Vertical Chi-Pull



Figure 10-8
Chi Gung Exercise #6 Vertical Chi-Pull

This exercise is the same as the Horizontal Chi Pull, Chi Gung Exercise #5, except that the hands, which are in front of the body, are now positioned so that one hand is over the other with the palms facing each other. The fingers of your left hand point to the right side of the body and vice versa. You open and close your hands vertically instead of horizontally and then repeat the exercise after reversing the hands. You will experience the same kinds of sensations as the Horizontal Chi Pull, Chi Gung Exercise #5.

Exchanging Chi



Figure 10-9
Chi Gung Exercise #7 Exchanging Chi

When standing in position, both the palms are facing down and remain down throughout this exercises. The arms are folded in front of the chest away from the body. The Lao Gong point in the center of the right palm is positioned over the Qu Ci (*Curved Pond*) point at the left elbow. The Lao Gong point of the left palm is positioned under the Qu Ci point at the elbow of the right arm. Slowly move the right hand (Lao Gong point)

down the left arm towards the left wrist and, at the same time, the left hand is moving underneath the right arm to the right wrist. When doing this movement your hands are very close to the arms but not touching. Continue moving until the hands are over each other and then slowly open your arms completely. Now close them in the same direction that you opened them except reverse the hands so that the right hand is now under the left arm and the left hand is over the right arm. Repeat this exercise alternating the hand positions.

As you simultaneously move both Lao Gong points down the arms, the accompanying sensation feels like the resistant force felt in a hand-sized magnet as it passes down an arm-sized magnet.

Return to Wuji



*Figure 10-10
Chi Gung Exercise #8 Wuji Closing*

Repeat the Return to Wuji exercise as described in Chapter 2 and inhale when opening or beginning each exercise cycle and exhale when closing or completing each cycle. Do this exercise as many times as you want and each time you practice, try to do it slower and slower. With enough repetition, you will notice that the breathing becomes deeper and deeper and down to the stomach. Eventually the breathing goes all the way down to the Dan Tian and, by then, you would have minimized your chest tension.

Review of Tai Chi-Chi Gung Benefits

Below is a review of some of the major benefits of practicing these eight Chi Gung exercises. See the chart in Chapter 1 for more information on the three Yin and three Yang arm and leg channels, and the Ren and Du

meridians. Opening those channels/meridians helps energy/Chi flow better in the associated organ systems and keeps them functioning well.

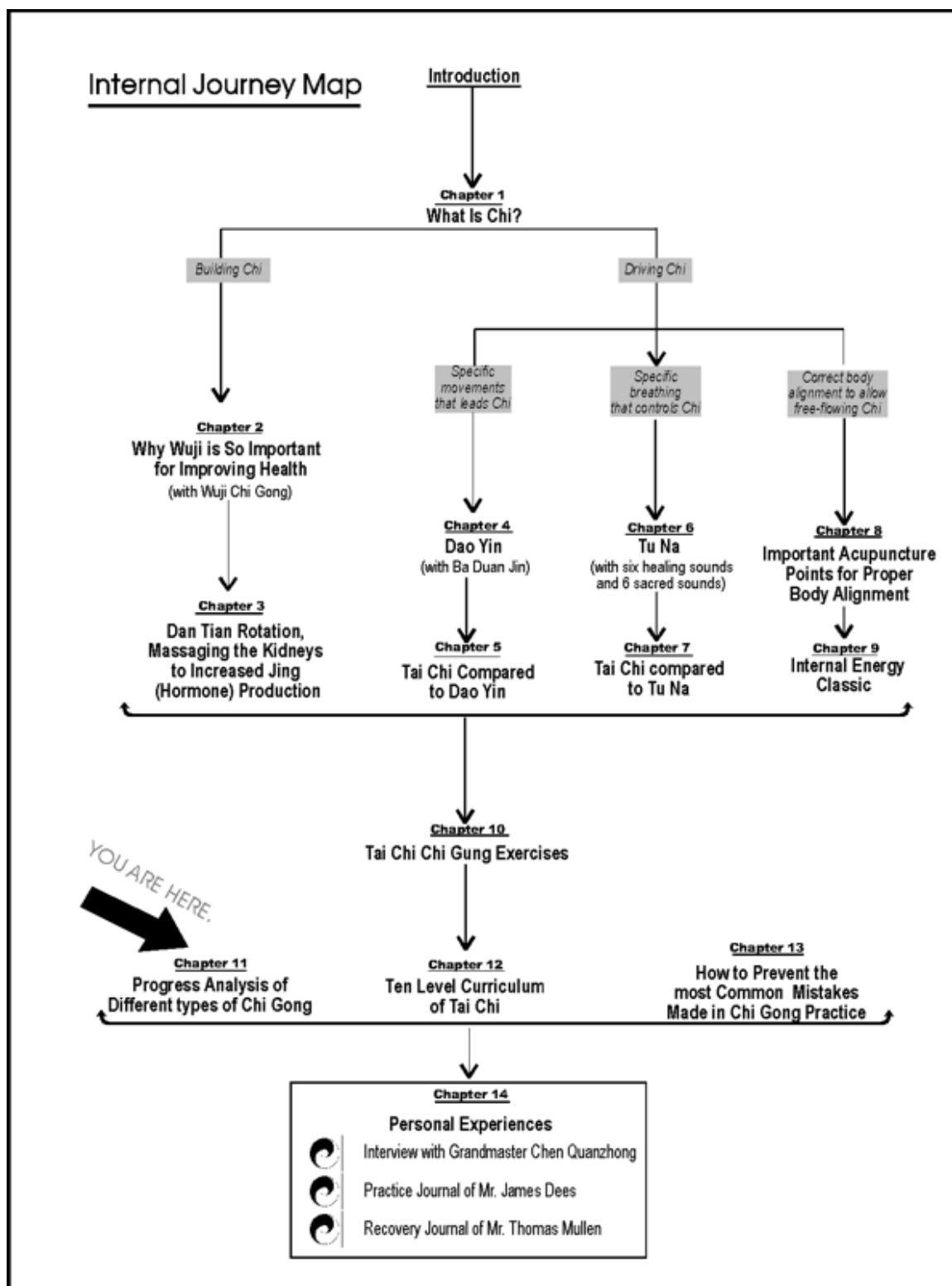
- Because you are relaxed, the lower body feels heavier and you are starting to “pump” energy throughout your body. When this increased energy flows, you can feel it in your hands. Remember the hand is just an indicator for the degree of blood and Chi circulation in the entire body as a result of this pumping action. In Exercise #3, Dan Tian Rotation on a Horizontal Plane, every time you increase the weight on the alternating legs you increase this pumping action more. The more weight exerted on the legs, the greater the range of their pumping capability.
- In Exercises #5, #6 and #7, Horizontal Chi Pull, Vertical Chi Pull and Exchanging Chi, you exchange Chi back and forth between the hands. The arms create an additional Chi circuit which expands and makes Chi circulation even greater. Now you have opened the three yin and three yang channels in your arms even more.
- Once the body’s aligned properly, you feel heavy in the legs and also the legs feel like they are being “torqued down.” Now you have opened the three yin and three yang channels in your legs even more.
- When the body alignment is correct, the Ren and Du meridians in the torso open more every time you breathe. By breathing slow and even, your Chi actually travels the small and large heavenly orbit.
- Doing Exercise #3, Dan Tian Rotation on a Horizontal Plane, will open the “belt” channel that surrounds the waist.
- Exercise #4, Dan Tian Rotation on a Vertical Plane, simultaneously opens the shoulder and hip joints as well as massages the kidneys.
- The last exercise, Return to Wuji, empties your chest more and fills the Dan Tian more. This helps you reach the ideal state of water on top, fire below, as reflected in the Tai Pi hexagram from the I-Ching that we discuss in Chapter 3.

Chapter 10 Footnotes

42. *One common mistake many people make is not “dropping” the elbows so that they point towards the floor and face downwards rather than outwards.*



Chapter 11
Progress Analysis of Different Types Of Chi Gung



All Roads Lead To Rome

11.1 All Roads Lead to Rome

If there was one sentence that covers the content of this book, it would be “how to cultivate sexual energy efficiently and then properly utilize it to develop a better physical condition and reach a higher state of mind.”

Please refer to Figures 1-15 and 1-16 in Chapter 1. These Figures illustrate the basic concept of internal progress. In this chapter, we will compare different types of Chi Gung and analyze how they are based on this concept.

There is a long history of Chi Gung development and you can get a general idea in the timeline given in Figure 11-1. Today there are hundreds, perhaps even thousands of different styles of Chi Gung. Basically they are classified under five *purposes or applications*.

- Martial Arts
- Medical
- Religious or Spiritual
- Health Maintenance
- Special Capability Training

Most Chi Gung styles are based on philosophical approaches like Buddhist exercises, Daoist exercises, Confucian exercises, and others. The Buddhist Chi Gung exercises were derived from ancient Indian Ayurvedic Medicine whereas the Daoist Chi Gung exercises are rooted in the Traditional Chinese Medicine. Confucian Chi Gung, however, does not practice Chi Gung as an energy exercise but rather as a way to positively change the lifestyle, like helping one deal with other people or helping the practitioner learn how to approach his goals in life.

Date	Historic Event
5000 B.C.	Tribal dancing and singing.
4000 B.C.	Early version of breathing and standing exercises were recorded in Huang Di Nei Jing/ Yellow Emperor Internal Classics.
1200 B.C.	I Ching was written and was used as a philosophical and physical guide.
400 B.C.	Tao Te Ching by Lao Tzu is a philosophy study and guideline for the people's health care methods.
	Bird and Bear exercises recorded by Zhau Zi in his book.
	The Jade (belt) weight inscribed with breathing exercises which shows an early version of the Small Heavenly Circle breathing concept.
150 B.C.	The discovery of hard evidence in the 1970's of painting on the walls of the Ma Wang Dui tomb in Changsha, China, showing how popular Dao Yin exercises were at this time.
-0-	
	More monks continue to travel into China to promote Buddhist exercises.
	Five Animal exercises (from Hua Tou).
200 A.D.	Wei Dan is at peak popularity.
400 A.D.	Six Healing Sounds.
500 A.D.	Buddhist meditation becomes popular
600 A.D.	Chan Buddhist branch established in China by Bodhidharma.
600 A.D.	Martial Arts practiced in Shaolin temple.
	Eight Piece Brocade.
800 A.D.	Nei Dan begins to become popular.
	Wei Dan starts to lose popularity.
	Dissemination of Tibetan Buddhism begins
1000 A.D.	Introduction of Internal Martial Arts.
1100 A.D.	Tibetan Buddhism spreads to Mongolia.
1600 A.D.	Beginning of Taiji and Xinyi.
1800 A.D.	Beginning of Bagua. Internal Martial Arts becomes popular.

Figure 11-1
Time Line Approximation

The theory of all authentic Chinese Chi Gung is based on:

- Any energy, power or special ability is acquired by stimulating the kidney system to produce more hormones. The Chinese believe that these hormones fuel our basic drive in all activity.
- The intensity or volume of Chi flow determines just how strong any special ability or power is.

Therefore, even though numerous Chi Gung styles do not apply in the same field, they still share many similar curriculums and techniques. Based on the concepts illustrated in Figures 1-15 and 1-16, Chi Gung curriculum is usually divided into five major phases:

1. Building a Foundation (*Pei Yuan Gu Ben*)
2. Build More Jing / Produce More Hormones (*Liang Jing Hua Qi*)
3. Practicing and Driving Chi (*Liang Qi Hua Shen*)
4. Heightening the Mental Capacity or Other Special Ability (*Liang Shen Huan Xu*)
5. Back to Emptiness/ Wuji (*Fu Gui Wu Ji*)

11.2 Five Major Phases

1. Building a Foundation (Pei Yuan Gu Ben)

There is a lot of stretching during this phase of training. [\[43\]](#) For people who cannot quiet down easily, now is the time for them to learn how. After they learn how to calm down, they become more aware of themselves internally and are then ready for the next phase of the Chi Gung curriculum. (*Refer to Chapter 2 to review how serenity relates to welfare of the kidney which produces Original Life Force Energy.*)

2. Build More Jing / Produce More Hormones (Liang Jing Hua Qi)

Now is the time for you to begin practicing internally. In China they talk about “*Nei Wai Shuan Xiu*” which means practicing internal and external together. With proper practice that calms the mind or activates the kidney system by Dao Yin or Tu Na exercises, the body will feel wholesome, healthy and energetic. By the end of this phase people can feel Chi all the time, not necessarily in the entire body but at least in the hands.

However, it is not necessary for teenagers to practice this because they have not yet lost their original energy. It is not even healthy for younger people to do some of these hard internal exercises because their bodies are still developing and changing daily. Iron Palm is one example of an exercise that is not necessarily good for this young group.

3. Practicing and Driving Chi (Liang Qi Hua Shen)

In Chapters 4 through 9 we discussed in depth many different ways to *drive* Chi. When you practice correctly, your body will feel full of Chi almost all the time and you will have the ability to apply it to improve different functions of the body. You are more perceptive and naturally “tuned-in” both mentally and physically to every aspect of your life. The order of your daily living, your aspirations, your plans and just about everything becomes more clear and achievable for you.

It is very easy for problems to happen when you are *driving* Chi. This is because it is so difficult to synchronize the Chi with the movement and the Chi with the intention. Also, some people are unable to direct the Chi flow to where they intend it to go because their alignment is off and their joints are not properly opened. So their Chi gets stuck or even goes to a wrong place!

4. Heightening the Mental Capacity (Shen) or Other Special Ability (Liang Shen Huan Xu)

This phase of training is talked about in China as “Xing Ming Shuan Xiu.” Xing translates as the “intrinsic natural” (spiritual body) while Ming means “physical and energy body.” Therefore Xing Ming Shuan Xiu covers both physical and spiritual training. Spiritual training refers to the appropriate practice for achieving a “natural mental high” often referred to by some people as a “Spiritual Awareness” or “Higher Consciousness.”

You could train by concentrating on chanting, breathing, Chi effects in the body, your own mental activity or total concentration on what you are doing or working on without any emotional distraction. Once you become totally focused, you could experience this “high.”

There are many ways to achieve this high level “spiritual” experience. There are some people who become so overwhelmed by this *feeling* that they would even take very high risks to experience its “rush,” like a motorcycle racer for example. Many times this racer will ride perilously fast just to capture that special “rush” he gets while risking his life. Another example is the zealous monk who wants to hasten the arrival of this *feeling* or “higher spiritual consciousness.” To accomplish this, he actually performs very unnatural acts

on his body like submergence in deadly cold water. Also, we read about the yogis in India who stand in an awkward posture nonstop for weeks or even years hoping to attain “Enlightenment.” Some would believe that, after the prolonged suffering from such masochistic practices subsides, they then would experience their long-awaited Divination or “Spiritual Enlightenment.” There are many different techniques, methods, and belief practices intended to help people achieve a type of “mental high” even though, quite often, they do so by taking dangerous chances.

Listed below are some of the more familiar ways people use to achieve a temporary natural high or acute mental awareness:

- Special herbs or medicines, especially medications with high metal content.
- Performing very serious ceremonies, like the Japanese Tea Ceremony and the sacred rituals of Tibet to purify the mind. To accomplish such a highly sensitive state, ceremonies can include special enhancers like incense, chants, music and posturing to “spiritually” heighten the surrounding environment and physical atmosphere. These atmospheric alterations are intended to raise or uplift the “vibration level” or “spiritual state of consciousness.”
- Quiet appreciation or meditation in the beautiful surroundings of nature, like mountains, forests, flowing streams or ocean sunsets. Enjoying a relaxing repose while listening to music, visiting art museums, “puttering” in your garden or simply deriving pleasure from a hobby, art or craft.
- Chanting or reciting the same word or phrase. The idea here is that, through the devoted repetition of one word or mantra, in time nothing but that chant will exist in the mind and the seeker can then reach his goal of attaining a complete mental void or the absolute blissful state of nothingness.
- Total uninterrupted concentration and complete focus on a solitary thought or action like reading a book, closely exploring some theory, playing chess, fencing, sports, etc.
- Reading philosophical or religious literature can also deliver a “mental high.”

One day I (Yan/author) was visiting a museum in Xian, China. Just as I turned the corner of the building, I encountered a lifesize, 2,000-year-old stone rhino. The rhino was so beautiful and appeared so suddenly to me that I was shocked. All of a sudden it seemed like time was suspended, everything stood still and the only thing that existed to me was the eye-to-eye contact.

Quite often when people chase after this “special feeling,” they are easily misled and diverted into the wrong direction. Some of their “highs” or “spiritual peaks” are merely illusions and are no different from those experienced by people who get a drug-induced high or “trip.” The only legitimate way to achieve this natural high or spiritual awareness is through a step-by-step program which changes Jing to Chi, Chi to Shen and then this “high” feeling will come on its own. Without a very strong Chi circulation, you won’t have mental acuity and that joyful, peaceful feeling inside. Then the wonderful “high” feeling cannot last long.

When you are in a Shen state, more information is readily available and easily absorbed into your mind. During this Shen state your body functions so well that you can easily and effectively adjust to any environmental changes automatically.

5. Back to Emptiness/ Wuji (Fu Gui Wu Ji)

Therefore, by increasing your positive energy and raising your spiritual consciousness, your state of mind could reach a level that is hard for the average person to imagine. When you have a balanced way of life, you feel peace and joy and are not easily provoked or over-excited. Your views are clear and you experience no extremes in your feelings. Even elevated feelings of happiness or sadness do not overly affect you, so you maintain a consistent calmness within. Colors are more vivid, nature is more beautiful, work is more satisfying and you enjoy so many more things in life than ever before. Nirvana (the state of highest consciousness) is the final goal for practicing Buddhists just like Wuji is the final goal for the Daoist. Likewise the highest feeling for Confucionists is Zuo Wang. This is the state where people no longer sense the physical body. They forget their knowledge and they have no conscious awareness during their moment of mental “high” or spiritual enlightenment. This high level of inner peace is the ultimate goal for most Chinese Internal exercises. In Tai Chi, for example, the highest achievement is when the Master can execute his actions perfectly without any forethought or planning.

How Nine Different Types of Chi Gung Progress

In this section, we analyze the progress of nine different types of Chi Gung in the five phases. Although Chinese calligraphy is a form of art, it is also excellent for health maintenance and longevity, which is why we included it. The type of Stillness Stance Chi Gung used here refers to the Wuji, One Finger Chan and Yi Quan disciplines. The Pure Land chanting system chants the words “Nah Maw Ah Mee Tah Fo” (phonetic). Special health care exercises are usually for people with special needs like certain health problems. Every one of these exercises is different but most of them could bring you to the same destination. So you see how *all roads lead to Rome*.

Below are tables depicting the phases of Chi Gung/Internal Exercises Progression:

Figure 11-2 - Phase One

BUILDING A FOUNDATION

Exercise Type	What to do, What to feel
Daoist Nei Dan sitting meditation	Stretching exercises to ease the sitting positioning for beginners.
Stillness Stance (Zhan Zhuang): (a) Wuji (b) One Finger Chan (c) Yi Quan	Build muscles especially in the legs and internally open the joints.
Red Palm	Learn the pattern and Wuji exercise. Begin physical and breathing exercises.
Chan sitting meditation	Get used to sitting for a long duration.
Chanting exercises from the Pure Land branch of Buddhism	Repeated chanting can be done at any time and in any situation in order to make it a part of life.
Secret, esoteric branch of Buddhist exercises	Learn the outer meditation position and some basic Buddhist philosophy.
Chinese Calligraphy	Learn basic techniques of Chinese Calligraphy.
Hard Style Chi Gung for improving the striking power and the ability to take a strike	Learn some basic Martial Arts form(s) and stretching exercises to open up the body and build muscles.
Specific Health Care – Some Chi Gung which directly applies to different muscles, different organ systems or a different purpose	Learn the basic sequence of movement and/or breathing specially designed for a specific goal and become very familiar with this sequence.

Figure 11-3 Phase Two

BUILDING MORE JING

Exercise Type	What to do, What to feel
Daoist Nei Dan sitting meditation	Due to the quiet, sitting meditation, warmth starts in the Dan Tian resulting in sexual arousal; also the feeling of Chi could occur in other places like the hands
Stillness Stance (Zhan Zhuang): (a) Wuji (b) One Finger Chan (c) Yi Quan	Standing still and focusing on alignment calms down the mind and builds up the kidney system. Also, the legs get stronger and assist the pumping of Chi throughout the body; the body feels energetic and internally warm.
Red Palm	Wuji exercise will help the practitioner build more Jing. The physical pattern combined with special breathing techniques is excellent for activating the kidneys. Start to feel the Chi connection between the Dan Tian and the four limbs.
Chan sitting meditation	Meditation helps the practitioner reach a higher level of quiet, which is excellent for the kidneys.
Chanting exercises from the Pure Land branch of Buddhism	The concentration on the chant calms the mind, which helps the kidneys.
Secret branch of Buddhist exercises	Exercising begins with the lowest two chakras, the reproductive layer.
Chinese Calligraphy	Beginning to enjoy this wonderful art and automatically become more and more focused.
Hard Style Chi Gung for improving the striking power and the ability to take a strike	Stillness stance or sitting exercises to quiet the mind and help the kidney system function better. Also, Dao Yin exercises to activate the kidney channel. Continue to practice Martial Arts form; start light striking and start to feel the Chi flow in the body.
Specific Health Care – Chi Gung which directly applies to different muscles, different organ systems or a different purpose	The right program designed for the intended purpose starts to give results. Usually an experienced teacher also gives the student some additional exercises for the kidney system to build up the Original Natal energy, which speeds up the results and helps prolong them.

Figure 11-4 Phase Three

DRIVING CHI	
Exercise Type	What to do, What to feel
Daoist Nei Dan sitting meditation	Open the Small Heavenly Circle and other channels in the torso.
Stillness Stance (Zhan Zhuang): (a) Wuji (b) One Finger Chan (c) Yi Quan	When Chi circulation gets stronger, the practitioner can experience Chi activity in the body by breathing and through different visualization techniques, even without any apparent outer movement.
Red Palm	The exercise makes the Chi move through all channels, in every area of the body, and in different body postures. Chi goes in and out of the body smoothly.
Chan sitting meditation	The mind is involved deeper in the meditation and there is a better understanding of Chan philosophy. So the body and mind become clean and the Chi channels open more.
Chanting exercises from the Pure Land branch of Buddhism	The vibration from chanting opens the channels more and helps the chanter connect more with the universe.
Secret branch of Buddhist exercises	Open the Three Channels and work on other chakras by bringing energy up from the lowest chakras.
Chinese Calligraphy	The calligrapher at this level can feel his stroke coming from internal movement not just muscle coordination.
Hard Style Chi Gung for improving the striking power and the ability to take a strike	Develop the ability to drive Chi to certain parts of the body and to increase the striking power and the ability to take strikes.
Specific Health Care – Chi Gung which directly applies to different muscles, different organ systems or a different purpose	Attain the desired result from better Chi circulation in a specific channel or method.

Figure 11-5 Phase Four

HEIGHTENING MENTAL CAPACITY OR OTHER SPECIAL ABILITY	
Exercise Type	What to do, What to feel
Daoist Nei Dan sitting meditation	Brightness appears in the mind.
Stillness Stance (Zhan Zhuang): (a) Wuji (b) One Finger Chan (c) Yi Quan	Chi can flow anywhere in the body by will power.
Red Palm	Mind can direct the body to become one with any subject within its surroundings.
Chan sitting meditation	The mind becomes very clear and stable, void of mental conflicts. Possible development of many special abilities like
	sharpened senses, a sixth sense and heightened intuitiveness.
Chanting exercises from the Pure Land branch of Buddhism	You feel like there is nothing left in the body but the echo of the chant.
Secret branch of Buddhist exercises	Energy reaches and then opens the highest or Crown Chakra.
Chinese Calligraphy	What the calligrapher thinks and feels will automatically be expressed through his brush. He just needs to heighten his conception to create his art.
Hard Style Chi Gung for improving the striking power and the ability to take a strike	As soon as the mind thinks of a part of the body, Chi will instantly be there. The body develops extreme sensitivity and super human capabilities.
Specific Health Care – Chi Gung which directly applies to different muscles, different organ systems or purpose	Not applicable.

Figure 11-6 Phase Five

BACK TO EMPTINESS (WUJI)	
Exercise Type	What to do and what to feel
Daoist Nei Dan sitting meditation	<p>The Final Destination:</p> <p>At this level, everything outside the body and within, including the mind, makes perfect sense. The “One” understands all activity and behavior. The concept of human essence/the real being is used here to describe the intangible being beyond mind and body. The essence of “One” at this level is not involved in any emotion or physical reactions to anything that occurs. He has a complete comprehension as to why things happen and is constantly in a complete state of serenity. Listed are some of the many different ways to describe the Final Destination:</p>
Stillness Stance (Zhan Zhuang):	
(a) Wuji	
(b) One Finger Chan	
(c) Yi Quan	
Red Palm	
Chan sitting meditation	<p>Ultimate Void</p> <p>Nonbeing</p> <p>Return to the Original Place (Wuji)</p> <p>Life in the spirit of <i>signlessness</i> and no attachment</p> <p>State of pure emptiness</p> <p>Immersed in tranquility</p> <p>Complete liberation from worldly attachments</p> <p>Total physical and mental detachment</p> <p>Transcendent, complete wisdom</p> <p>Supreme Illumination</p> <p>Buddhist’s version of Nirvana</p> <p>No techniques or methods are needed; this state of being covers all methods.</p>
Chanting exercises from the Pure Land branch of Buddhism	
Secret branch of Buddhist exercises	
Chinese Calligraphy	
<i>Continued</i>	

Figure 11-6 Phase Five *(continued)*

Hard Style Chi Gung for improving the striking power and ability to take a strike	Not applicable.
Specific Health Care – Chi Gung which directly applies to different muscles, different organ systems or a different purpose	Not applicable.

11.3 One Might Be Better For You Than Another

The chart in Figure 11-7 points out the advantages and disadvantages of these various exercise systems. This information is only relative and is not intended to depict any exercise as bad or impractical but rather to offer guidance. It reminds you that if you pay attention to the correct procedure and follow a good instructor, you can get the favorable results you seek. When you weigh the good against the bad, you can make a better decision about what type of exercise best fits your character and lifestyle. This chart can also show you what to prepare for and what pitfalls to avoid so that you can have a better chance at achieving your goals no matter what path you elect to accomplish this. It merely gives you a general idea and points you in the right and safe direction.

Figure 11-7

For the following 3pages is the chart for Advantageous and disadvantageous

Advantages And Disadvantages Of Chi Gung/ Internal Exercise Progress		
Chi Gung/ Internal Exercise	ADVANTAGE	DISADVANTAGE
Daoist Nei Dan sitting meditation <i>Continued</i>	A huge clear, detailed, complete step-by-step system that covers a wide range of exercises.	Difficult program to follow without the proper guidance of a good instructor.

<p>Stillness Stance</p> <p>(Zhan Zhuang):</p> <p>(a) Wuji</p> <p>(b) One Finger Chan</p> <p>(c) Yi Quan</p>	<p>A simple pattern from beginning to end which remains the same throughout the program.</p>	<p>Outward appearance looks simple but internally there are many things to be aware of.</p> <p>Difficult to align the posture; boring; easy to become distracted.</p> <p>Beginners can lose interest quickly.</p>
<p>Red Palm</p>	<p>The “feeling” comes quickly; practice time is not as long as stillness stance or Nei Dan, for example.</p>	<p>After the middle level, it is very difficult to proceed to the Shen level because the practitioners enjoy driving.</p> <p>Chi so much that they stay at that level and in some cases even “burn out.”</p>
<p>Chan sitting meditation</p>	<p>Very few physical requirements.</p> <p>Flexible.</p> <p>Can be practiced anywhere or anytime as long as the mind is in a meditative state.</p>	<p>For the same reason for its advantages, a person can end up being physically abusive to the body by becoming obsessed with attaining the mental/spiritual high. Then the welfare of the physical body gets ignored and neglected.</p> <p>Easy to fall into a state of mental awareness only and become disillusioned.</p>
<p>Chanting exercises from the <i>Pure Land</i> branch of Buddhism</p> <p><i>Continued</i></p>	<p>Since the whole system is based on only one chant, it is the easiest to learn and safest to practice.</p> <p>Results come quickly if you’re dedicated.</p>	<p>Too many distractions that prohibit the constant awareness of the chant at every single possible moment.</p> <p>Boredom prevents complete dedication.</p>

		<p>No level or chant to upgrade to.</p> <p>Its simplicity disguises just how effective this practice actually is.</p>
Secret branch of Buddhist exercises	<p>Step-by-step exercise program that is unique for most other Buddhist branches.</p> <p>Practice begins with the physical body and gradually ends at the mental/spiritual state.</p>	<p>Many exercises that are very difficult to learn because of the very strict physical requirements.</p> <p>Like Nei Dan, these exercises cannot be learned without a qualified instructor.</p>
Chinese Calligraphy	<p>Easy to start by learning the mechanics of using the brush/ink</p> <p>Very safe, enjoyable and interesting.</p> <p>Very effective way to monitor the state of mind through what the brush produces.</p>	<p>Characters are difficult to learn.</p> <p>Very difficult at high levels, working with energy.</p>
Hard Style Chi Gung to improving striking power and ability to take a strike	<p>In a reasonably short time, it can be impressively demonstrated to others.</p> <p>Fun to practice.</p>	<p>Overusage and incorrectly practicing can cause injury and damage.</p> <p><i>Continued</i></p>

Specific Health Care – Chi Gung which directly applies to different muscles, different organ systems or a different purpose	Focus on a specific health intention, prevents one from getting distracted or lost.	After achieving the immediate health goal, there is no effort to progress. Without proper guidance, the practitioner does not know what the next level is or the deeper meaning behind their special health condition and the current health care program applied to it. They simply stop and do not progress anymore. ⁴⁴ Practitioner must continue on and treat the root of the problem and maintain good health.
	<i>End of Chart</i>	

11.4 Necessary Criteria for Internal Progression

*You Cannot Bypass Any Steps in the Program*²³⁹

For every authentic Chinese internal exercise there are clear, strict rules to follow. Therefore, in order to progress safely and appropriately in the curriculum, you must abide by these criteria and should not bypass any steps at all. Of course, first you have to know just what the curriculum is before you can adhere to any step-by-step program. At every level of training, you only deal within the bounds of the level that you are at and avoid any practice or exercise, which is from a higher or lower level program. For example, it is not a good idea for a student who hasn't cultivated enough Chi to "emit Chi to another person," and in fact can be dangerous and he risks "burning out" his energy. In another scenario, a student without enough Jing (fuel) to make more Chi, might decide to prematurely drive Chi to take punches. In the beginning his initial Chi might be able to handle it but after a while he soon discovers that his Chi is limited, and his training progress has slowed down because he is low on "fuel." Take precaution and pay attention to what level you're at and be sure you are ready for this level. Then stick to it and don't be lured away from it.

Using the “Five Phases” Charts

When you don't know what level you're at, use the charts to help you recognize some familiar area in a level that you may be at. The following is one example of how to figure out your level by using the charts. Perhaps you may be comfortable with stretching exercises, which are similar to Dao Yin. You have already been doing these exercises for a while. Now you are feeling flexible and once in a while experience a warm tingling sensation in your hands. According to your physical condition, after checking the charts, you can see that you are at phase two level. The goal of this level is building more Jing/hormone. So that means that from this point on, towards the end of this level, you should focus on the exercise that helps you build more Jing. You can still find such an exercise in the Dao Yin type exercises or you may want to begin practicing stillness stance, sitting meditation or chanting to achieve this level. From the charts, you can also see why these exercises help you with that particular goal. If you understand this, then you will know what exercises to look for at seminars, from your teacher or in books. Also, from the charts, you know what sensation will indicate that you have advanced to the next level and what exercise to look for to replace the exercise of the last level. For every level you could find a variety of exercises to practice. You don't need to practice them all. Try different ones and find the one you favor the most and then stick with it until you complete this level. Use the Chi Gung charts to gauge your progression in training because they give you the requirements and purpose for each level. There are many exercises to accomplish your goal whether it is for health reasons, Martial Arts or for some special capability such as exchanging Chi with nature. However, it is important to be prepared and ready for the next level in order to progress safely.

When You Finish a Phase, Proceed to the Next One!

There are some people who exercise very well but never try to excel beyond their current level. In such cases, those exercises could cause more harm than good. Grandmaster Chen Quanzhong describes this limitation very clearly in his interview in Chapter 14: “Practicing Martial Arts is like feeding a tiger: If you know how to use him, he can help you; otherwise, he can turn on you.” If you are familiar with the Martial Arts and Chi

Gung community, you may know that many famous masters actually died young , didn't enjoy a healthy life.

When these people discover how to produce more hormones in their bodies and do not know how to use it to transfer to the next level/phase three (*Driving Chi*), it is very easy for them to become enslaved to it (hormones). You should know that there is a limit to your body's ability to produce hormones. If you convert your body into a hormone factory, all your organs will be dedicated to this one purpose. Even when a person's sex interest is his only motivation, once he exceeds his limits, his other organs are unable to support the kidney system anymore. It's unwise because he gained a short-term benefit but in the long run, he will lose more.

In Chi work, the same thing can happen. A person can develop very strong Chi but can't control it and acquire heightened mental state. So he might end up always looking for a fight or some other way to show off, which limits him and could also prove to be dangerous. Instead of having more control of his life, his outstanding ability gives him the wrong attitude, which controls him. He should be aware that there are more interesting worlds waiting for him to venture into within himself.

Health Care Choices

In the West most exercises fall into two categories; one for muscles and the other for ligaments and tendons. In the East people do exercises not only for muscles, ligaments and tendons but also for the organs, internal systems and the mind. For example, in the West if you want to strengthen and improve your hearing you can only use some device or have an operation. In the East, however, there are some exercises that directly deal with the ears and entire audio system as well. In the Five Element Chart, Figure 6-15, you can identify which system hearing belongs to and what associated exercise indicated on the chart is used to improve it.

After thousands of years of observation, the medical community in the East has discovered how internal organs, systems, orifices (eyes, mouth, ears, etc.) anatomy, environment and living conditions are related to each other. Usually any problems in a specific external area can be related to an internal cause. Therefore, if we want to improve any external area, it is first necessary to improve from the inside. Even when a healthy person wants to maintain or improve health, he must still begin on the inside. Additionally, all internal organs

and systems are balanced and depend on each other to keep proper balance, which is why we must work with the entire body to heal or improve any isolated area or function. In the olden days, the creative and counter-creative cycle of the five elements were used to demonstrate this balance of the internal organs and systems in the body. (See Figure 6-16.

The best way to enjoy a long healthy life is through work, active lifestyle, a balanced diet and a calm, happy mind. In modern times, this is not so easy to accomplish. It is very difficult to have a simple healthy lifestyle with the pace and stress of our daily routines. For example, many of us have to sit in front of a television or computer screen four or more hours a day. Consequently we eventually need an exercise to counteract the negative side effects.

If an exercise doesn't help, we then adjust our diet. If that doesn't work, we might try acupuncture, chiropractic therapy or massage. They may not work, so we seek out an acupuncturist or a Moxabustion therapist. [45] If these are ineffective, we might try herbal remedies, and if they don't work, then we may try chemical solutions or Western medicine. As a last resort, we might elect for surgery. We should first try the easiest solution and then continue trying other solutions until we fix our problem. (See Figure 11-8.) However, most of the time, a problem can be treated with a simple exercise, especially if it is not serious and treated early.

The Limits of Medical Care

Medical care can help you strengthen or weaken certain organs or inactivate or activate certain meridians in the Chinese way. However, medical practice cannot provide you with life's "basic drive." Many people don't have any obvious medical problems, like high blood pressure, asthma, or diabetes, and yet they just don't "feel good." They have no spark, no motivation or stimulation in life. Such people often develop many allergies, or they cannot even enjoy a long walk. They catch colds regularly, are fickle eaters and complain constantly about one thing or another. Medical science can prescribe temporary solutions to relieve them, like vitamin B12 shots or anti-depressants. However, continuous use of these temporary solutions results not only in loss of effectiveness when the body adjusts to them but they can also overwork the kidneys and

therefore work against the body. Such people need to find a way to change their body from the inside out. Internal exercise is one solution.



Figure 11-8 - Health Solutions

Around 2,500 years ago, there was a famous Chinese doctor named Bian Que who helped many people recover from serious health problems. Whenever anyone praised him, he always responded by declaring that his brother was a much better doctor. However, people would say that they hardly ever saw his brother cure anyone. But Bian Que would say that his brother helped more people prevent illness and therefore more people were cured before any illness ever occurred.

The Limits of Exercising

There is a limit to exercising and even to internal exercising as well. Exercising cannot always help people who do not have a wholesome lifestyle and, for example, upset easily or have temper fits over little things. Such people need an attitude adjustment and so they should seek out some type of positive input such as a hobby, uplifting philosophical books or different associates. In China, people approach this problem by reading the Taoist and Buddhist philosophy books to open their mind and appreciate life more, and then ready themselves for improvement. Internal exercise can upgrade a person's mental state, but he first must realize that such mental fortification can actually help him live better.

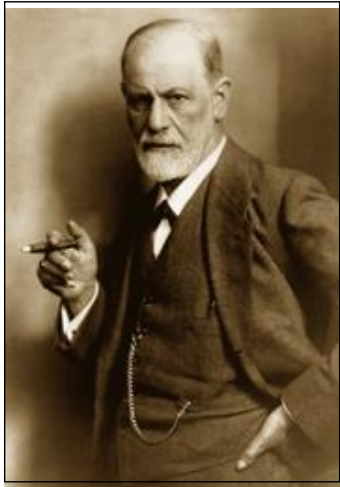


Figure 11-9 Sigmund Freud

Sexual Energy and the Basic Drive

There are many theories besides the Traditional Chinese Medicine Theory that recognize the relationship between sexual energy and the “basic drive.” The Austrian physician Sigmund Freud explored why a person behaves a certain way and this led to his development of psychoanalysis. He based his work on the idea that an unconscious part of the mind governs much of human behavior and that the motives for taking certain actions are hidden in the subconscious. One of his big claims to fame was the idea that much of human behavior was influenced consciously or unconsciously by sexual criteria. He concluded that deviant or unexplained behavior could be traced all the way back in the mind to some sexual impression or social rule and that in many ways sex had a tremendous influence on human activity and mental stability.

Yes, it is true that the hormones of our reproductive system are very influential on our overall behavior and health. Today psychologists consider uncontrollable “sexual motives and urges” as unnatural and possibly dangerous for the public. Sometimes the modern therapists choose to root out any socially unacceptable sexual excitement and, in some cases, categorize the over-aroused patient as a potential sexual deviant or as psychologically imbalanced. Modern medicine can do more for the non-criminal patient who seeks therapy for what he believed was a problem with oversexed ideas or unfulfilled desires. Therapists and doctors can help people more when they understand that this increased hormonal production causing such sexual deviations can be harnessed and exchanged for a higher, healthier and more beneficial energy. Chinese Chi

Gung provides a complete program to convert this “basic drive” into other pleasant energies as well.

Design Your Own Program Based on the Exercises in This Book

If don't have access to a good teacher who can help you put together a complete training program, then you can design your own program based on the exercises given in this book. However, whatever program you design should only cover phases one, two and three because if you are able to reach phase four, you will be quite capable of locating resources and guides as well as be mentally fit to attract the right guidance to your next level of training. Here is a simple, safe and appropriate program to start you out:

Phase 1

Practice the Eight Piece Brocade; see Chapter 4.

Phase 2

Practice Wuji and gradually build up your time to about five or ten minutes daily; see Chapter 2. You might want to include Six Sacred Sounds chanting to help you concentrate; see Chapter 6.

Phase 3

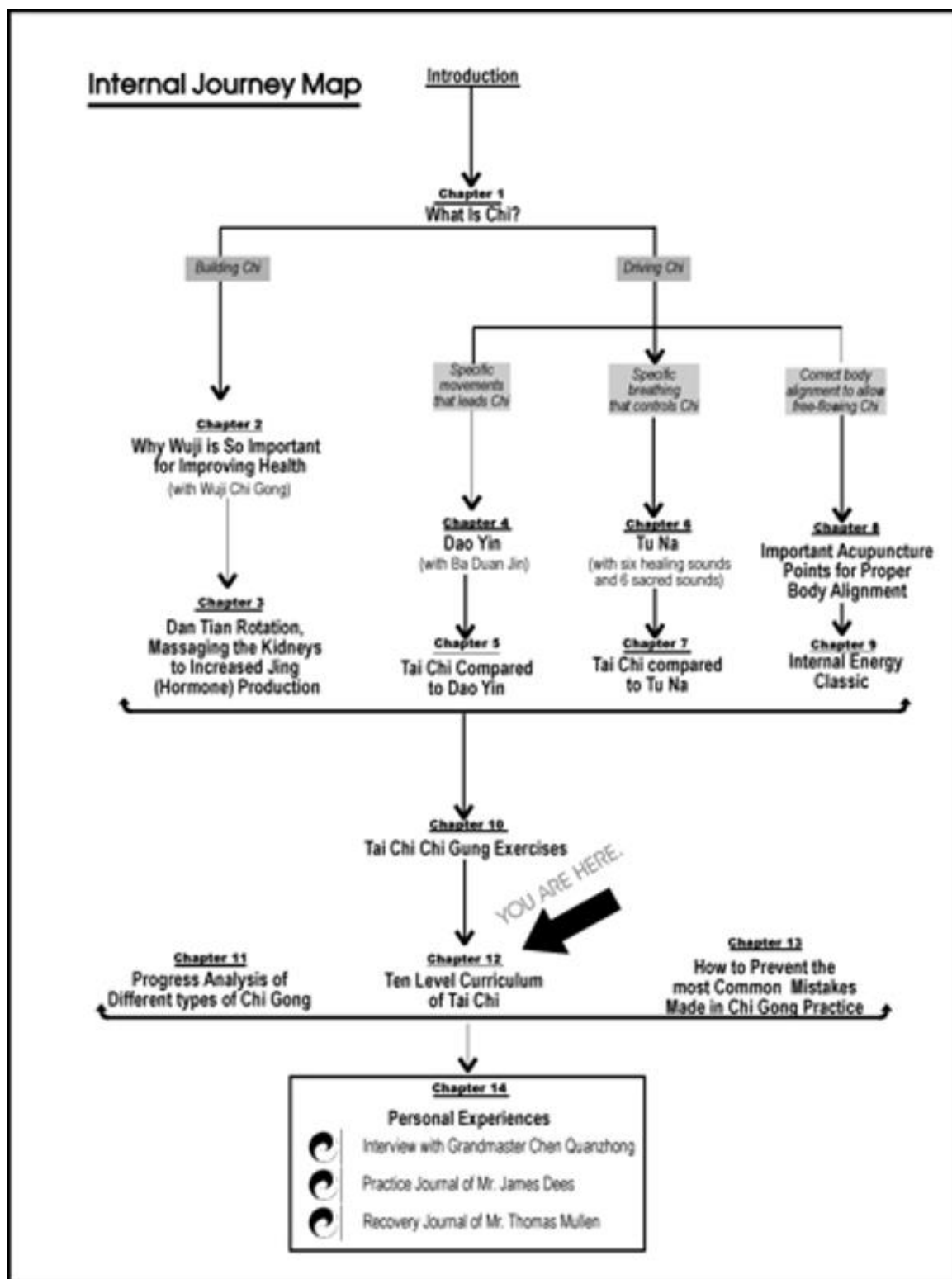
Practice the *Six Healing Sounds* for any specific medical condition or just as a daily maintenance program; see Chapter 6. Continue doing *Wuji* and when you are comfortable with fifteen minutes of *Wuji* a day, then you are ready for *Tai Chi* and *Chi Gung*; see Chapter 12. Remember that you can never do enough *Wuji*.

Chapter 11 Footnotes

43. Refer to Chapter 4, which explains why you need to loosen up the joints in *Internal Exercise*.
44. For example: A person does a special *Chi Gung* exercise to relieve a lung disorder. Then when his lungs improve, he discovers through a little research that *Chen Man Ching* stated that 60-70% of lung problems are associated with kidney malfunction. And so, to continue his lung healing at a deeper level, he would then explore ways to go to the origin of his lung problems (kidneys) and fix the body even more.
45. The application of moxa or mugwort to the skin at acupuncture points.



Chapter 12
Ten Level Tai Chi Curriculum



“A journey of a thousand miles starts under one’s feet.”

12.1 We Need a Program for This Profound Study

In the last chapter, we analyzed different types of Chi Gung programs for different purposes and many of them can bring you to the same destination. In this chapter we will introduce a Ten Level Curriculum for the most popular Chi Gung style, namely Tai Chi. Like many other Chi Gung practitioners, most Tai Chi people do not have any program at all. They just practice or exercise to feel well inside but don't follow any step-by-step curriculum to build internal energy or to help them reach a certain goal and advance to a higher level. Most Tai Chi players don't even know that there's a specific curriculum, especially the player who is learning a form. This player is constantly being instructed to practice more every time he asks why he cannot feel or achieve those Tai Chi capabilities he reads about. He's usually told that if he practices his style seriously for ten years, he will be good at Tai Chi. Unfortunately, most players discovered that after ten years or even twenty years, their Tai Chi was nothing. In China, Tai Chi is a wonderful health exercise as well as a Martial Art. Western People can accept the health aspect but they don't consider it a Martial Art anymore. The worst part is that many people receive negative effects from their Tai Chi training because they long to learn the Martial Arts applications. These people really want to see their internal style to work just like it says in the literature, in the old books by the Masters and Classics on the subject.

People who practiced Tai Chi three hours a week for ten or twenty years spent a lot of energy and money, which probably could have been more wisely invested. That much commitment could have easily been diverted into finishing a master's degree program, enjoying a favorite hobby that was neglected due to lack of time, learning another skill or getting a better home. Can you imagine what ten hours a week into anything could produce? After so many years, these fervent students feel betrayed. It feels too late for them, but of course it's not their fault. People need to know that there is a curriculum based on Chinese Medicine Theory, physical anatomy, scientific understanding of the body, body mechanics and philosophies like the I Ching and Tao Te Ching. Tai Chi has a very specific training program just like any other education discipline. As with any other school, a student begins at the elementary level and progresses, grade by grade, until he graduates and elects to pursue postgraduate courses. Just as in school, the student must learn certain things each semester (level) to prepare him for the next level.

If you are a Tai Chi practitioner, ask yourself, Do you know what level you are at? What goal do you need to aim for at this level? What are the requirements? What are you feeling so you can know what the next training program should be? If you cannot answer these questions, then pay attention to this chapter. If you are not Martial Arts-oriented in Tai Chi training, then just ignore the COMBATIVE CAPABILITY segment in the following curriculum charts for each training level.



The Following Figures 12-1 (A B)
Show co-author Yan Practicing Qin Na with his Master Chen Quanzhong

12.2 Ten Level Curriculum in Tai Chi

FIRST LEVEL	
METHOD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Warm up and stretching exercises. - Learning any Tai Chi form. It doesn't matter what style you choose. - Practice Wuji stillness stance.
REQUIREMENT AT THIS LEVEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First the student must learn the form correctly, so that his body weight is correctly placed on the legs and the hands are in proper position. - The outer physical appearance of the form should be right. The student learns basic stances like "empty stance" "bow-and-arrow stance," "bow-and-pushing stance," "crossing stance," "one leg stance," and "stretching stance," along with basic hand positions like palm, fist, and "hook" hand. - The first level student doesn't need to worry too much about tension, locking the body or his inability to relax because his body is not yet ready. He should only try to use less muscle when doing the form, even though this is not real relaxation.
ACHIEVEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Become used to exercising. - The student starts to be aware of the inside of the body through Wuji exercise. (Wuji is the first posture of every Tai Chi form.)
FEELING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Warm sweat from simple physical exercise.
TIME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learning the steps to the form in about two months if a student practices for one hour a day; practice two hours a week and it could take six months to a year depending. - Some people with a background in other Martial Arts or exercising could take less time to complete this level.

Level 1 continued

COMBAT CAPABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No skill at all. There is too much tension in the beginner's upper body, which makes his body top-heavy in fighting and will only be fighting against the opponent's force.
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SECOND LEVEL	
METHOD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More form practice - Stillness Stance practice to build the physical lower body. - Standing Solo exercises, making movement over and over in order to open up different joints. - Beginning of Push Hands pattern practice. - Sword form using the double edge straight sword (Jian), which is used today as training equipment rather than a weapon as in the olden days. The sword adds more weight and momentum to practice, which will help open the joints up more. Some open feelings are difficult to feel in "empty hand form." - The student should be extending the arms as far as possible, while keeping the elbows dropped and the body straight.
REQUIREMENT AT THIS LEVEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - He should turn the body as much as he can and keep his weight evenly distributed on the feet or foot. - At this level the student must strive for a deeper understanding of body requirements. Later on in this level, he should relax more and start resting the upper body onto his legs.
ACHIEVEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open the shoulders and hips in the Internal Martial Arts way. - Physical body gets stronger. - Physical body is in much better shape.

Phase 2 continued

ACHIEVEMENT <i>(Continued)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- More flexible due to the opening of the four major joints (hips and shoulders).
FEELING	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The first feeling of warmth in the hands is the turning point. That is Chi and the student is ready to do energy exercises with his Tai Chi form. Now his form has changed and the student is ready for the next level.- This warm sensation is accelerated by all the stillness stance practice.
TIME	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Usually within a year a student can achieve this level with about three or four hours a week of practice.
COMBAT CAPABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The student can only deal with beginners, but his technique still exceeds anyone with absolutely no training. With other properly trained people, he will understand that his body is still disconnected.

Figure 12-3
Master Chen Quanzhong Instructs the co-
author Yan in Guan Dao, the long handle
broad sword



THIRD LEVEL	
METHOD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Form training. - More stillness stance practice in Wuji and every other single posture in proper alignment. - Push Hands training or Qin Na (Chinese Joint Locking.)⁴⁶ - Practicing the form without using the hands, only the lower body. - Stepping Solo Exercises like walk forward (Yang and Wu styles call it <i>Brush Knee, Twist Step</i>, walk backwards; Yan and Wu styles call this <i>Repulse Monkey</i>), <i>Wild Horse Parting Mane</i> and <i>Cloud Hands</i> posture. Adjusting the body and analyzing the body mechanics as you apply different form postures and Push Hands techniques. - Broad sword form to help open the body more in a different way.
REQUIREMENT AT THIS LEVEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The student should work at getting a true understanding of the body alignment. - He must be able to open all three sections in the torso and four limbs.⁴⁷ - He should match breathing with the movement.
ACHIEVEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opening the Large Heavenly Circle within the form. - Pure relaxation.
FEELING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the beginning, even though you are feeling Chi from the last level training, your feelings are still very unstable. Chi feelings are radical and intermittent because your body mechanics are not fully under control. You might experience Chi in formwork and sometimes you might not; the instructor may help align you and you feel good but after a while you lose the alignment. Sometimes you may feel heat in only one hand, and many other unstable feelings. By the end of this level, when you do the form, the student's Chi is stable and he can feel it all the time.

Phase 3 continued

FEELING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If the student finishes this level, and even if he doesn't advance any more in training, he will still enjoy good health and longevity.
TIME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At this level, a qualified teacher is critically important to the student because the student needs his posture adjusted over and over in order to feel the lower body get heavy while the Chi feeling reaches his hands. After the student is familiar with this feeling, he may be able to find this feeling on his own when practicing the form. Then he has a chance to complete this level. Otherwise his form will just stay as some sort of soft external form or low impact aerobics.
COMBAT CAPABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - By the end of this level of training, anyone who is physically matched with the student cannot move the student out of the major direction of any posture because he is able to relax and bring the force to the ground. For example, if someone pushes him on the raised right hand (movement direction) while he is holding <i>White Crane Flaps Its Wings</i> in a stillness posture, he cannot move this student. Being able to maintain any posture while someone tries to push the student, even with both hands, is quite an accomplishment. - However, the student's pure relaxation cannot be reached right away. Before each challenge, usually the student needs a little time to adjust his body. - At the end of this level, the student can keep his alignment pretty well in stillness stance, but during movement he could still be disconnected. - Most Tai Chi players are in the middle of this level and that is why they give the impression that Tai Chi is not combative, even though Tai Chi was one of the top Martial Arts for hundreds of years in the old days and that was the reason why it became so popular back then.



Figure 12-2

Master Chen Qanzhong demonstrating Tai Chi Spear Form.
Weapon training is good for upgrading our level in many ways.

FOURTH LEVEL	
METHOD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Form practice. - Dan Tian Rotation Solo exercises in different parts of the body. - Spring and Autumn Broad Sword form (Guan Dao) and Spear practice to help Dan Tian rotation. - Competition level Push Hands practice. - Learning fighting applications in the form. - Learning Cannon Fist form (Pao Cui) in Chen Style - Tai Chi or some kind of Fa Jing form in the other styles of Tai Chi.
REQUIREMENT AT THIS LEVEL <i>Continued</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The fourth level student aims for a total understanding of how to move (for example in footwork, like pick up the foot, extend the foot, shift the weight, form a stance) in different angles and distances, and how the movement comes from relaxation and is empowered by challenger's force.

Phase 4 continued

<p>REQUIREMENT AT THIS LEVEL</p> <p><i>Continued</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - He learns how this force level movement comes from the Ming Men through the Dan Tian and to the whole body. - At the end of this level, movement in every part of the body should be circular with no linear movements. - Master Dan Tian rotation, which helps the student start to do silk reeling movement from the inside naturally.
<p>ACHIEVEMENT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Because of the natural silk reeling movement, the student can do “Peng Lu Ji An” four basic direction force well to return other people’s force. - Also, because Dan Tian rotation movement and the whole body silk reeling movement, Chi circulation becomes greater.
<p>FEELING</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feel more massaging in the torso area so that the inner organs function better and purify, because of the Dan Tian rotation movement. - Body feels “inflated” internally because it’s full of Chi. - The heels of the feet get “squeezed” or pressed into the ground. - The lower abdomen gets heavy and the kidneys feel very warm. - Thanks to the strong Chi circulation, the mind is clearer, the eyes are more open and the senses are sharper.
<p>TIME</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If this student is lucky enough to pass the last level, this level is not too difficult for him. - Many players try to do this level training program, before they finish the third level of pure relaxation. For example, they’re anxious to learn Dan Tian rotation exercise, combat application, competition level Push Hands and heavy weapons’ forms, but they’re going nowhere.

Phase 4 continued

<p>COMBAT CAPABILITY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the third level people physically matched with you cannot move you. In the fourth level they cannot <i>stop you</i> in the major direction in any posture or part of the body. - If an opponent's movement is not too rapid and powerful, the student is able to use his force against him. The opponent will feel like the student's body is a ball and he cannot find any actual point to apply his force.
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FIFTH LEVEL	
<p>METHOD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Practice more Fa Jin (explosive power) Solo Exercises. - Learn the Long Staff form (Da Gan). - Watch or compete in more tournaments, interact with more practitioners and exchange ideas, see more people in general. Seeing various things helps you think about techniques, forms and more. - The Master should go out and teach to help him understand more about the concepts and principles of Tai Chi, because each of his students displays different body movements and asks questions from a different point of view, and needs to be given explanations in words the student understands (not just repeat the <i>Classics</i>). The Master ponders this. - The Master should do the <i>Three External Harmonies</i>^[48] well.
<p>REQUIREMENT AT THIS LEVEL <i>Continued)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - His Chi should move the body from this level on. - His Power should be hidden inside by now so that when the Master moves, he is able to adjust his body inside without an obvious outside indication, in order to release power in different ways and directions.

Phase 5 continued

<p><i>Requirements at this point</i> <i>(continued)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Silk reeling circles should become smaller than the fourth level with more Dan Tian internal control of the body. More inside and lower body movement, less outside and upper body movement.
<p>ACHIEVEMENT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All the movements occur naturally and automatically align and adjust while changing without hesitation or thought. - Chi is always present whether in combat or daily life without conscious effort. - Because his knowledge and experience of Chi is so good, the Master can even feel/see other people's Chi circulation and tell where it's weak or blocked. This is a great advantage for him in fighting because he can just launch an assault on the area where the Chi circulation is weak or block Chi circulation area to control his opponent's energy.
<p>FEELING</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If the student is lucky, this means that he has a good teacher, sees many good demonstrations and tournaments, interacts with many good practitioners, and so he might have a chance of becoming a Master. - Once the student reaches this level, every day and every time he practices, he will make tremendous progress.
<p>TIME</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If everything is right, it usually takes a student around ten years to complete the first five levels and become a Master. For example, it is common for a student to spend nine months on the first level, one or two years on the second level, three to five years on the third level, another one or two years on the fourth level, and another one or two years on this level.

Phase 5 continued

<p>COMBAT CAPABILITY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At the end of this level of training, the student has very strong control. Technique is not that important to the Master in combat because he controls the opponent's energy more than his physical body. - The Master needs no time to adjust his posture in any situation. Maintaining proper alignment is natural and automatic at this level. - Most people cannot move or stop him in any posture whether he is moving or not.
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<p>SIXTH LEVEL</p>	
<p>METHOD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - From this level on, the student is a Master. At this level he refines the form and practices it extremely slowly. - Decides what weapon best suits him; practices it more. - The Master begins to develop his own personal fashion or style based on his physique, his interest, personality and character.
<p>REQUIREMENT AT THIS LEVEL <i>(Continued)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - His body should be more deeply relaxed, even all the way to the fingertips, skin pores and hair. - The Master should feel his breathing go down into and up out of the Dan Tian in conjunction with his Chi going in and out of the Dan Tian. The way he breathes changes at this level. His breathing should not only match his movement but also the energy/Chi flow inside his body. - At this point, his focus should be on Chi behavior rather than physical behavior.

<p>REQUIREMENT AT THIS LEVEL <i>(continued)</i></p>	<p>level. At the second level, he will be able to <i>physically</i> execute these techniques but strictly through muscle power. After the third and fourth levels, the student will then be able to infuse some energy/Chi into his method and combine muscle and Chi to execute any procedure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - By the fifth level, the Master can execute technique with Chi. When the Master reaches the sixth level, technique changes drastically. His Chi circulation is so strong at this level, and his mind is focused more on keeping his circulation strong, rather than on the attacker's technique. The movements used to maintain his <i>ideal</i> Chi circulation inside become the best counter-techniques to the opponent's technique. There's a big difference between the fifth and sixth levels. At the fifth level, Chi circulation empowers the movement. At the sixth level, Chi circulation is the reason for the Tai Chi movement. - His circular movement becomes so small and internal that sometimes his outer movement appears linear to others.
<p>ACHIEVEMENT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At this level, the Master totally understands the principles of Tai Chi and information imparted from the <i>Classics</i> and other resources. <p>He finally figures out that everything in these <i>Classics</i> is actually talking only about one thing, viewed from different perspectives; viewed from different parts of the body, from different body positions, from different combative situations, from different applications, from different physical conditions and from different levels</p>

Phase 6 continued

<p>ACHIEVEMENT</p> <p><i>(Continue)</i></p>	<p>of training. Everything in the Classics matches together without controversy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Master stylizes his Tai Chi⁴⁹. - Automatically Chi is infused throughout the Master's body, and every part of his body can neutralize other people's force.
<p>FEELING</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Master feels a very high level of sensitivity and awareness. - The warm Chi feeling goes deep inside the bone marrow. - Movement becomes lithe and precise.
<p>TIME</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - After the fifth level, the Master has "graduated." At the sixth level he is working his own program and is independent of anyone in his development now. - One day, the Master realizes that his movement, even in combat, comes from maintaining good Chi circulation. Then he will really understand and appreciate the power of the Tao Te Ching's Wu Wei philosophy, like: "Controlling himself, he ends up controlling everything around him" and "he didn't do anything (to others) but got everything done." It is at this point that he is ready for the seventh level. - It is very important that this level Master understands what direction he needs to take. Otherwise his movement can easily end up as a technique only. Because of his strong Chi, good physical condition and experience, he still can handle most people but will not be able to pass this level. This is a common problem in Master training. Don't be too proud even at this level.

Phase 6 continued

<p>COMBAT CAPABILITY</p>	<p>- It doesn't matter how strong or big any opponent is, he is no challenge to a sixth level Tai Chi Master. His circular movement is so small that it is easy to return the opponent's force and energy. This is because, even though the challenger is also an internal practitioner and has circular movement, his level is not that high and, compared to the Master, the challenger's movement behaves like linear movement. Therefore, it is easy for the Master to use it against him.</p>
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Comparison between the **EXTERNAL MARTIAL ARTIST** and the **TAI CHI PLAYER**

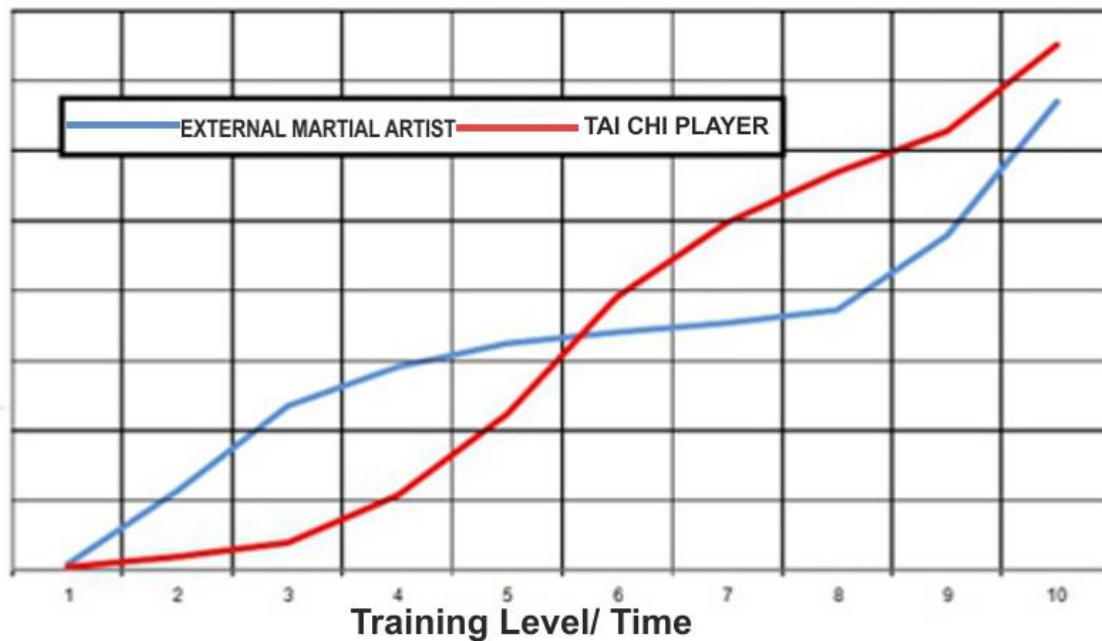


Figure 12-4

The progress of other Martial Artists is usually rapid in the beginning but their development and capabilities taper off. Whereas the Tai Chi student initially progresses slowly until he hits a turning point and then he progresses faster than other Martial Artists.

SEVENTH LEVEL	
METHOD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At this level, the Master's training is focused more on mental practice and philosophical study than during any of the previous levels. The first and second levels are focused on the physical aspects. The third to sixth levels focus on Chi work. From the seventh level and on, the Master trains the "mind and spirit" level or <i>Shen</i>.
REQUIREMENT AT THIS LEVEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Tai Chi circle in his form becomes very, very small and is hardly ever recognized by anyone at the lower levels because his silk reeling movement has internalized so deeply. - By the end of the sixth level, the Master already realized that every movement comes from maintaining ideal Chi circulation. More and more, the Master realizes that his "enemy" is not around him but actually within his mind, which could unbalance him and destroy his ideal Chi circulation more than an actual opponent. So he needs to primarily deal with internal and mental balance.
ACHIEVEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The third level is the end of the physical level. The sixth level is the end of the "Chi" level. The seventh level begins the "mind and spirit" level or <i>Shen</i>. The seventh level is beyond the "Chi" level and beyond what most people can comprehend.
FEELING (Continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Master's physical body feels so light and free now. Buddhist philosophy teaches that your body, brain, eyes, IQ, arms, legs or whatever part you perceive as your essence is not the "real you." Even the Master's Chi is free from his body and instead is an "attachment" to his body and is not "him" anymore.

Phase 7 continued

FEELING <i>(continued)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- By the time the Master thinks about anything, his mind has already begun to execute the appropriate response. He no longer has to “plan” responses to things or activities in combat.
TIME	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Advancement in training at the third and fourth levels depends on the teacher. At the fifth and sixth levels, it depends on the student’s physical body. Therefore, if a student cannot finish the fourth level, it’s the teacher’s fault.- The fifth, sixth and seventh levels depend strictly on character and philosophical comprehension for training advancement. At the seventh level, you are beyond the Chi level.- From this level and on, mind and spirit are invaluable to progress, which is why people with contrary behavior like greed or cruelty, for example, cannot go past the sixth level or progress any further in Tai Chi training.
COMBAT CAPABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- When a seventh level combatant beats any opponent, the opponent doesn’t even know how he lost or what happened because the movement is just too subtle and short. The opponent knows that he lost but sometimes he doesn’t even have a clue how he lost. Any movement from an opponent or any thought from his own mind can cause a sudden explosive reaction much like a simple spark can causes gunpowder to blow instantly.

EIGHTH LEVEL	
METHOD	<p><i>The Master continues his regular form and weapons practice but gives special attention to all his daily activities. Everything the Master sees and does is "matched" with the applicable technique, philosophy, history, concept or Tai Chi principle. Anything encountered in life is instantly understood.</i></p> <p><i>He is socially comfortable with anyone and enjoys life.</i></p> <p><i>The Master is always cognizant of Tai Chi, Tao Te Ching and other concepts, history or philosophies at work every day.</i></p>
REQUIREMENT AT THIS LEVEL	<p><i>True application of Tao Te Ching and Chan philosophies to his Martial Arts training and to his everyday living, unlike many other "famous Masters," who use these Classics to enhance their persona or embellish their style.</i></p>
ACHIEVEMENT	<p><i>The Master can do the form internally without any outer movement and his Chi circulation flows the exact same way it would if he was doing the form outwardly. At the last level (seventh), the Master's outer circular movement is not conspicuous and at this level even his form could be inconspicuous.</i></p>
FEELING	<p><i>Breathing is not like breathing anymore but more or less like a baby in the mother's womb and breath goes directly to and from the naval area automatically.</i></p> <p><i>Master's body feels crystal clear and bright to him.</i></p>
TIME	<p><i>This is very difficult to predict.</i></p> <p><i>An eighth level Master today could go down in history just like most of those famous Masters in the old days who usually were also at this level.</i></p>
COMBAT CAPABILITY	<p><i>An eighth level Master is capable of defeating a prospective attacker even before he realizes that he was under attack and perhaps without knowing that he had just defeated the attacker. A seventh level Master knows when he is being attacked but an eighth level Master doesn't even need to know.</i></p>

NINTH LEVEL	
METHOD	<i>The training is more mental than physical and a Master usually does about 70% mental training and 30% physical/form training at this level. Seeking the higher being within through examples in nature.</i>
REQUIREMENT AT THIS LEVEL	<i>The Master should be totally free from any mental blockages, like anger, anxiety and greed. A highly accomplished person can physically be stable and in control and yet have an emotional imbalance. Any movement he makes becomes Tai Chi and he could make any Tai Chi movement appear like anything he wants it to.</i>
ACHIEVEMENT	<i>Enlightenment. By the end of the eighth level his mind and body become very clean and balanced. At this level he experiences a mental "high" from Tai Chi training. He is not disrupted or affected by any overwhelming emotions or out-of-control desires. He doesn't worry about anything because he clearly understands what occurred and why. He truly embraces the concept that things happen for a reason. He enjoys peace and emotional stability, which dominate his personality and behavior.</i>
FEELING	<i>A very subtle "sweetness" or joy is always resident in the Master's heart and the whole world is crystal clear to him at all times. He experiences no emotional highs and lows but rather his emotional health is consistently even and stable. That is true happiness from within.</i>
TIME	<i>It depends on the Master's personality and spirit.</i>
COMBAT CAPABILITY	<i>The Master cannot be hurt by anyone and actually feels pity and mercy towards his challengers and attackers. He views fighting as stupid and unnecessary, even though no one can beat him.</i>

TENTH LEVEL	
METHOD	<i>Almost nothing! The Master doesn't need to do any training but everything he does in life is a teacher to him. Whatever he does, whether it's eating, riding a horse, moving furniture or showering is his training. He becomes a normal person again.</i>
REQUIREMENT AT THIS LEVEL	<i>Back to total Wuji.</i>
ACHIEVEMENT	<i>Become one with nature and the universe. There is no difference between himself and others, life and death. He has no desires or emotions, no wants or needs. Everything is ONE!</i>
FEELING	<i>There are no feelings or sensation from training, enlightenment sensations or any other conditions resulting from all the other levels. A true nothing. [50]</i>
TIME	<i>We may never reach this level, but it should still be our final destination.</i>
COMBAT CAPABILITY	<i>No combat capability because nobody wants to even deal with him! People see no reason to attack this tenth level Master and most people would never even know that he is a tenth level Master. He goes with the flow of everything around him. He can get things done but people don't even know that he exists.</i>

12.3 Three Level Theory

Most Internal Martial Arts disciplines development program are based on Three Level Theory, which originated from Nei Dan Jing (hormone), Chi (energy) and Shen (mental state) concepts and philosophy. The Tai Chi Ten Level Curriculum discussed above is just a more practical and detailed version of this Three Level Theory. It gives a clearer picture to people of the path of their destination. You can basically consider levels one, two and three as Novice level training; four, five and six level as Intermediate level training; and seven to ten level as High level.

Figure 12-5
Three Level Theory of Internal Martial Arts Development

NOVICE	INTERMEDIATE	HIGH LEVEL MASTER
Transmute Jing to Chi.	Transmute Chi to Shen.	Shen returns back to emptiness/Original Wuji.
Form affects Chi.	Chi actuates or compels the movement.	Mind and body act as one; automatic response without conscious effort.*
The breathing sensation is experienced through the nose and mouth.	The breathing is deep to the lower abdomen, which causes expansion and contraction when exhaling and inhaling.	The breathing is very light.
Warmth within and tingling sensations on the skin.	Warmth goes deep into the muscles and soft tissue.*	Warmth goes into the bone marrow and inner organs.
Joints open and soft tissue stretches.	Strengthen muscles and soft tissue.	Replenish the bone marrow.
Open “three sections” in every part of the body.**	The “three sections” of every part of the body cooperate and work as one.	Beyond the Three Sections Theory. Every single point can be used to neutralize force.
The body becomes soft and has correct posture.	The body is full of internal Chi.	Calm and quiet mental state; peaceful.
Familiarity with movement and technique.	Awareness of energy.	Mental “brightness” and clarity.

(Continued)

Three Level Theory of Internal Martial Arts Development *continued*

Study of body mechanics.	<i>Nervous System Response training.</i>	Spiritual training.
Use of obvious force.	Hidden power, which is power that can be released without notice or in many different directions from the same movement.	Neutralize any energy; nothing can imbalance him.
Movement could be done very softly and gracefully.***	Effective movements that give the appearance of being very simple and easy.****	No movement seen at all, just the end results!
<p>* <i>For example, an experienced typist or pianist works/performs automatically.</i></p> <p>** <i>Soft tissue is used in this chart to refer to the ligaments, tendons and cartilage surrounding joints.</i></p>		<p>*** <i>See Chapter 8 to check out the Three Sections Theory.</i></p> <p>**** <i>Only in Tai Chi</i></p>



Figure 12-6

Liu Hung Chieh Taoist Lineage Master
He was a master at Taoist meditation, calligrapher and a classical Chinese scholar and who had a complete knowledge of traditional Chinese Medical Theory. Although he also was a master of bagua, tai chi and hsing-i, as the head of a Northern Taoist lineage, Liu worked in Beijing primarily for the spiritual benefit of humankind.

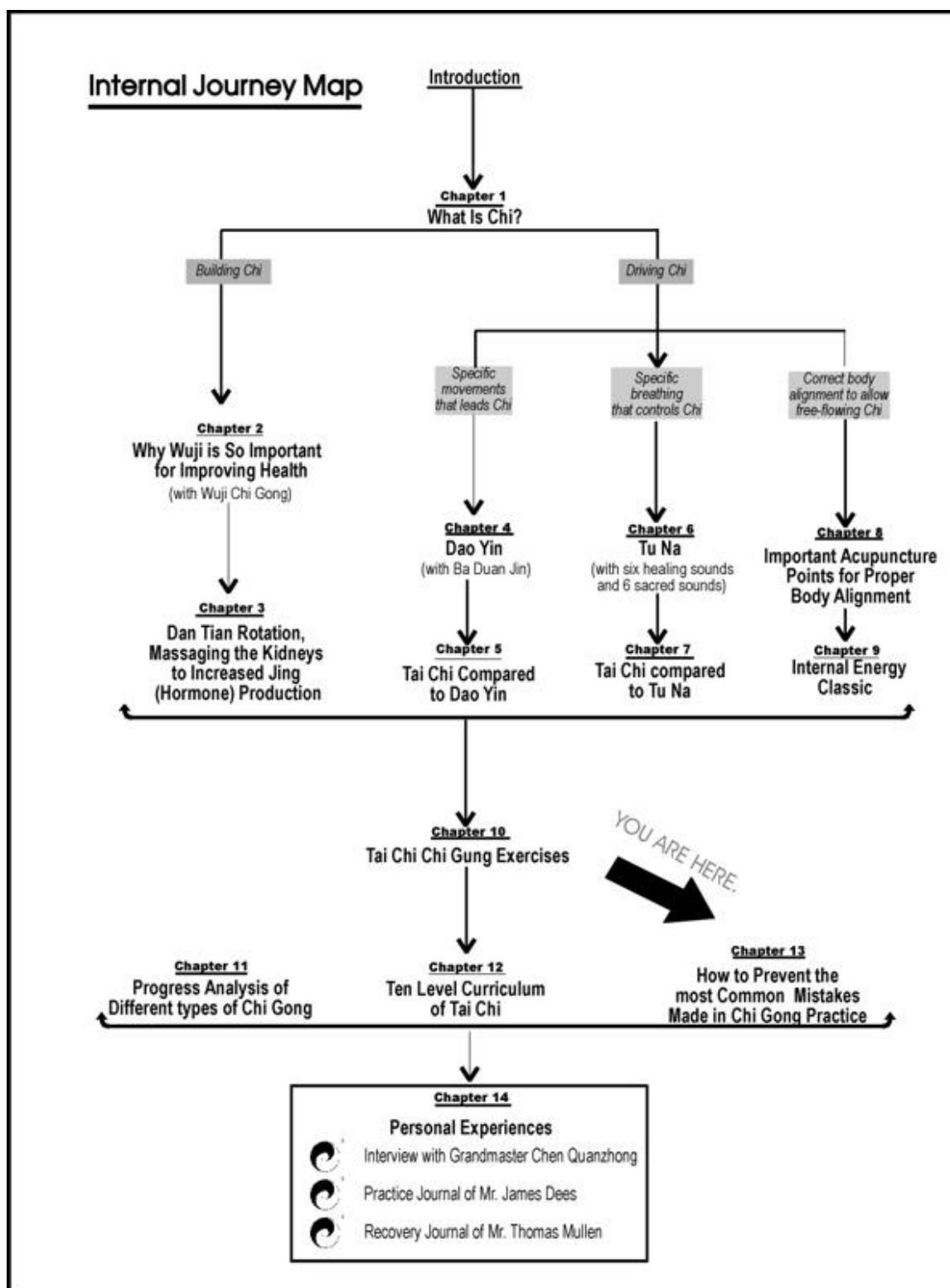
Chapter 12 Footnotes

46. *High level Qin Na is not only about locking joints but also locking energy.*
47. *See Chapter 8 for more details about the three sections in the body.*
48. *See the section on the Three Harmonies in Chapter 8.*
49. *Tai Chi is probably the easiest form to recreate and branch off into other forms because, after a certain level, Tai Chi masters can and should develop their own Tai Chi based on the same principles. The fact is, once you understand internal and focus on the inside, outer form is not important anymore. In the last one hundred and fifty years, five major branches of Tai Chi evolved from Chen Style Tai Chi Lao Jia ("old form" as it is called in Chinese). These five major styles are Chen, Yang, Wu, Hao and Sun. There are many other branches stemming from Yang style, the most popular style, like the different versions of the Chinese Government form and Taoist Tai Chi forms. Of course, this could be a problem because some people really don't achieve a high enough level and yet still make their own style based on commercial or egotistical motivations.*
50. *For more details, check Phase Five in Chapter 11.*

防偏

Chapter 13

The Most Common Mistakes Made in Chi Gung Practice



The slightest error could take you a thousand miles off course.

The benefits of Chi Gung are immeasurable, and the feeling we get from this internal energy exercise is truly wonderful. However, there are many pitfalls that people encounter when first learning. Below is a list of the most common mistakes people make in Chi Gung practice, and in this chapter we will deal with how to prevent them.

13.1 Wrong Goals

Common Mistakes Made In Chi Gung Practice

- Wrong Goals
- Misinterpretation of Style
- Losing Direction in the Process
- Forced Breathing
- Illusion Confusion
- Applying External Concepts to Understand
- Internal Theories
- Over Enthusiasm wastes Precious Chi Due
- Lack of Practice
- Inability to Apply Chi Gung to Life
- False Chi Strengtheners
- Escapism Instead of Realism
- Regarding Chi Gung as a Religion

The expectations of many people who practice Chi Gung are bordering on the edge of fantasy because they are misinformed as to the real intention of Chi Gung through books, periodicals and magazine articles, television, instructors, classes, seminars and through other misinformed people. Some of these “dreamers” seek out Chi Gung hoping to attain a special ability like “flying” or “traveling” to far-off distances outside of the body into different dimensions or time zones. Other people believe that Chi Gung is practiced to elevate their spirit so that they can pass invisibly through doors, walls and other universes. Other practitioners want

to believe they can actually change physical properties like size, color, weight and appearance of objects using a special mental power. Some people are certain that Chi Gung will help them develop the skill to communicate or exchange energy with people, alien entities from the past and future, or even with God-like beings. They expect to mentally control situations and people on a whim through this energy transference. All of these kinds of Chi Gung practitioners are heading in the wrong direction from the very start. Capabilities like astral projection, clairvoyance, telekinesis and other psychic phenomenon are not the goals or purpose of practicing Chi Gung. The real purpose of Chi Gung is simply to improve our lives.

Yes, it is certainly possible for some people to acquire a certain special skill, but any unique capability is only a “byproduct” of authentic Chi Gung practice and nothing like those desired phenomena discussed above. When most people do Chi Gung they become more sensitized and experience a greater control in their life. Sometimes a Chi Gung practitioner will experience sharpened senses like smell and hearing, while other practitioners can hold their breath for a long time or build up a resistance to certain poisons. When people do Chi Gung exercises, after a while they realize that they can endure very difficult environments or long workouts easier. They have a zest for life. The benefits listed below should be the real goal of Chi Gung training:

Some Benefits of Chi Gung Practice

(The real goals for Chi Gung)

- Clear Thinking and a Calm Mind
- Abundance of Energy
- More Cognizant of Your Surroundings (External)
- Keener Awareness Within the Body (Internal)
- Stronger Endurance Under Life's Pressures
- Greater Resiliency in Physical and Mental Trauma
- Easier Adjustment to Personal and Environmental Changes
- Quicker Recovery From Injury or Illness

People who are merely seeking a “byproduct” or some *specialability* with Chi Gung are more interested in showing off or impressing others. The fact of the matter is that there were many demonstrations in China by famous Chi Gung “masters” during the 1980s and 1990s, and it has been revealed that these “masters” were performing simple tricks and illusions like magicians do on stage. So, for your own sake and for the sake of others, please be honest with yourself.

13.2 Misinterpretation of Style

The reason Chi Gung is called an Internal Exercise is that when a person practices Chi Gung, he addresses the condition of his body inside. The outer appearance of many Chinese Internal Exercises may look similar, but their requirements could be totally different, therefore producing a different outcome or product. Check the following internal requirements in your exercises:

- Mind/Intention
- Breathing
- Body alignment
- Tightening and loosening of muscles
- Sinking or lifting up of energy
- Which particular body part is used for the job

If you fail to understand this point, you will not really understand the requirements and goal of the Internal Exercise you are practicing. Today there are numerous Internal Exercise enthusiasts who attend a lot of seminars and read many books to broaden their knowledge on Chi Gung and other Internal styles. However, their efforts will have little significance if they do not understand the fundamental requirements. They will not be able to adopt the right method to their own system.

To further illustrate, we will discuss similar postures taken from five main Internal Exercise styles and show how they differ from each other and how unlike their purposes are from each other. These sample postures are from five famous Internal Exercise systems:

- I Eight Piece Brocade (*Ba Duan Jin*)
- II Red Palm
- III Yi Jin Jing or Muscle Change Classic
- IV One Finger Chan
- V Chen Style Tai Chi

Eight Piece Brocade



Figure 13-1 Eight Piece Brocade

The Eight Pieces of Brocade or Ba Duan Jin originated in the Shaolin Temple and is a typical Dao Yin exercise. (Refer to Chapter 4.

Purpose:

To lead the Chi circulation or energy flow in a very specific way by stretching, contracting and twisting the body.

Exercise:

When doing the second exercise in this group, called the “Bow and Arrow” stance, one should inhale during the first part or “opening” of this exercise while the arm extends to help the chest and lungs expand. Then exhale when the arm returns to the center. This exercise benefits the lungs because the practitioner focuses on stretching and opening the body in the sternum area.

Red Palm



Figure 13-2 Red Palm

Red Palm is a martial art Chi Gung (fighting style) and is widely used by many different internal stylists to increase the power and effectiveness of striking. When people practice this exercise, their hands become red, and their opponents display a rosy hand imprint where they have been struck by a Red Palm fighter.

Purpose:

To open channels between the Dan Tian and the extremities. Red Palm exercises open all twelve major channels or Chinese acupuncture meridians, which go to the hands and feet. By doing this, a surge of energy goes to the Lao Gong point or palm when hitting.

Exercise:

One of the four postures of the first level of Red Palm looks very much like a posture from another Internal Exercise group. Although their characteristics appear to be almost the same, they are quite different. The Red Palm artist pushes out the palm upon exhaling and then relaxes the position upon inhaling. When he exhales, he imagines his Chi traveling from the Dan Tian to the Lao Gong point or palm. When he inhales, he visualizes his Chi moving through the extremities back to the Dan Tian for storage. This exercise is repeated several times as the eyes stare straight ahead and the teeth press together when exhaling. This exercise causes a very hot feeling in the palm.

Yi Jin Jing



Figure13-3 Yi Jin Jing or Muscle Change Classic

Yi Jin Jing or Muscle Change Classic also originated in the Shaolin Temple and is attributed to the famous Buddhist Patriarch Bodhidharma, also called Ta Mo in Chinese.

Purpose:

To strengthen muscles by tightening muscles and tendons. This practice stores Chi and improves Chi circulation, which causes the body to feel warm.

Exercise:

Even though this example posture looks like the example used for Red Palm, it is different. Like the Red Palm exercise, the arms are extended and both palms are out to the side. Then the artist tenses the arm and hand muscles and tendons while pushing outwards. On each exhale he pushes harder. The heels of the palms are pushed outward and the fingers are pulled back. The tightening acts like an engine to “drive” the circulation.

One Finger Chan



Figure 13-4 One Finger Chan

One Finger Chan originated in the Southern Shaolin Temple. It is called One Finger Chan because the practitioner can access one of the major meridians simply by moving any one of the fingers (or toes) since each digit relates to a particular meridian. When the practitioner does these exercises, he quiets his mind so that he can mentally experience Chan meditation.

Purpose:

When we hold a certain body posture for a period of time, Chi flows throughout the entire body. Each precise position of the body will allow the Chi to flow into certain organs depending on the posture.

Exercise:

One of the postures of One Finger Chan looks like the other example postures discussed, and when held for a long time, it produces excellent circulation. This body alignment is most favorable for overall Chi flow. Here the body is straight from the crown point of the head (Bai Hui) running vertically down to the torso intersecting the perineum (Hui Yin point). This straight “marking” line continues running vertically to the ground touching a point that lies on a line running between both feet from the Yong Quan points. The body is very relaxed to let the Chi “drop and circulate.” The fingers, wrist, and elbows are bent precisely in a way to store Chi in the bones.

Chen Style Tai Chi



Figure 13-5 Chen Style Tai Chi

Chen Style Tai Chi is the oldest Tai Chi form you will find today, and all other Tai Chi styles stem directly or indirectly from it.

Purpose:

Whenever a person “sinks” or “drops” Chi while completely relaxing, he opens the Large Heavenly Circle for health in his body, but when this is done for a martial application, he generates power from the ground to any part of his body.

Exercise:

These are some of the purposes of Chen Style Tai Chi exercise. One posture in Chen Style Tai Chi is called “Lazy About Tying Coat.” In this posture, again, you notice that the right palm is pushing outward like the previous Internal Exercise examples. Although the palm becomes warm and the potential to focus out of the palm is present, the focus of the mind is on the other arm/hand. The other side of the body is relaxing, sinking and counter balancing so that the Chi can travel down and come back up from the ground to circulate in the Large Heavenly Circle and out of the right hand.

Internal Exercises pertain to our bodies internally, and we must be very careful with exercises designed to manipulate the interior of our bodies. It is important to understand the what, why and how of each exercise we decide to practice. If we don’t heed this warning, we can harm ourselves by disrupting our balance both physically and mentally, as well as obstruct proper energy circulation, which provides us with a healthy disease-resistant internal body. Internal damage can be far worse for us than external damage to our muscles, tendons or ligaments.

13.3 Losing Direction in the Process

Chi Gung students must follow the procedure step-by-step in a precise order to learn Chi Gung properly. *(Please refer to Chapter 1.* Real Chi Gung practice begins first with **cultivating** or gathering Chi and is then followed by **driving** the Chi to reach a higher level of mental awareness (a healthier “mind-condition.”). There is a definite reason for each and every step of Chi Gung growth, and taking a short cut or ignoring the correct process could result in anything from a mild disappointment to a severe injury. The process of learning sporadically in some irrational order can be very dangerous to both the student and whomever else this information is passed on to. Therefore, if there is not a qualified Chi Gung instructor to guide the student through a complete internal-development program, the author suggests that, before choosing to learn from a book or from a variety of seminars, he should first check out Chapter 11 of this book. The information in Chapter 11 can help a sincere student recognize the level he is at and what exercises favor that particular level. Because the degree of interest and the specific goal varies from person to person, this chapter can help the student decide just what exercise is the best one, which direction to proceed, what comes next and when.

The author wishes to emphasize that each practitioner should have his own individualized training program in Chi Gung practice. Every day we are reminded that each person’s body is different and so reacts differently to the same stimuli or exercise. In gyms for example, one would seek out a personal trainer to guide him towards the appropriate exercises in order to achieve a specific goal without injury! A good personal trainer will design an appropriate program for this person and this person only! In this program the personal trainer identifies exactly what warmup exercises to perform before working out on the equipment detailed in the program. The trainer will instruct him on what exercises to do on this specified equipment, on the proper breathing rhythm, on how much weight to lift, how many repetitions, and exactly how many seconds the break should be in between sets. A good personal trainer will clearly explain how the prescribed exercises will give the trainee the desired results on applicable body parts. A professional trainer will show him the proper sequence for doing each exercise accompanied by a weekly schedule of exactly what days to train.

It is also the trainer who recommends the proper diet to fit the program, and he will define just what the trainee can expect to feel as a result of strict adherence to his personal training program. When the time is

right and the trainee's body is physically prepared, the personal trainer will then upgrade his training to the next level. So you can see how much knowledge and experience is necessary to correctly do even the simplest physical training task like lifting barbells. Therefore, because Internal Exercises are much more complicated than External Exercises, you can imagine how much more you need to understand to practice properly, safely and effectively.

Let's use this hypothetical case: Your friend just learned a new Chi Gung exercise that makes him feel great and "works" for him. Then out of pure generosity he teaches you this wonderful exercise. You diligently practice it during your own training routine, but the exercise just doesn't seem to "work" for you. In fact, you even feel queasy or dizzy after doing it. There can be a number of reasons why you reacted differently than your friend to the same exercise. Some of the reasons why another person's exercise might not be suitable for you are:

- Your body is not the same
- You are at a different level of training
- How you exercise is different
- The intensity with which you practice is greater or less than your friend's

So this exercise might not be the right one for you at this time, and it might not necessarily be good in the future for your friend. The key here is that a qualified teacher or a good book of guidelines, just like a qualified trainer in a gym, will be able to customize a special training program based on your specific criteria, and then you will not learn bits and pieces out of order. At this point, be cautious of anyone who learns a little traditional Chi Gung and then goes on to create his own "style" decorated with some Chinese philosophical terms to give the illusion of authenticity. He might even apply a little Chinese Medicine theory and some current Western medical data. To promote his style he then adds impressive illustrations and throws in some attractive pictures. On the surface his style will appear to be very impressive, but it is not correct. His style is incomplete. It has incompatible exercises within his self-developed system. Using a clever "commercial spin" and attractive language, he professes the benefits of his wonderful style. He takes unfair advantage of innocent seekers of Chi Gung lessons whose simple lack of knowledge made them vulnerable for exploitation by such a person.

13.4 Forced Breathing

Overly intense mental focus combined with forced breathing is incorrect. For the moment, let's define just what "intense mental focus" means through this example. Say that when executing some exercise, the eyes should follow the hand or finger, which is the specified point to where Chi is led or gathered. Some practitioners focus too strongly and tense up their hands or fingers to cause their muscles to shake or vibrate. Their breath is forced, giving them the feeling that they are *driving* power when in fact they are not. Their intentions or desires are too intense, and they are trying too hard to "power out." Breathing exercises should be executed naturally and not forced to prepare the candidate's body for the next level of training when his body is ready. When the practitioner's intention or enthusiasm is too strong, he might go too far with his breathing practice which turns it into *forced breathing*. There are several easy ways to detect this problem after exercising. For instance, when you don't feel your chest opening so that your breathing becomes shallow and you experience dizziness, then your exercises are too strenuous for your level.

If you get a headache and feel heavy or tight in the chest from your Chi Gung training, do some Wuji exercise to relieve this condition. (*Refer to Chapter 2.*) Doing Wuji is like "resetting" your body back to its natural state.

13.5 Illusion Confusion

Sometimes people will confuse imagined sensations or illusions with the "real thing," and their desire can be so strong that they become deluded. A legitimate Chi Gung feeling is not left up to the imagination. One can actually feel the Chi circulation **during and after** practice. There are times when an overactive imagination can persuade you to believe that you are having a real Chi experience, but if you can't maintain that feeling after practice, then your imagination got the best of you.

The problem with illusions and disguised desires is that when people head in the wrong direction of training, they don't understand the real Chi feeling. They enjoy and believe their illusions so much that they are unable to return to the correct path. They usually continue to go deeper and deeper into their illusion, and finally they become totally delusional. Some people imply that their Chi is "open" and strong, but the condition of their health betrays this claim. In fact, their appearance reveals dim eyes peering through an ashen face.

There is no spunk in their walk. They are often cold and sicken easily. So, these people who really believe their Chi is strong are only fooling themselves, and their illusions actually *thwart* any effort to do proper Chi Gung to help their lives improve.

How to Recognize Real Chi Gung Results

(These results are based on the experiences of people who diligently practice for a reasonable length of time, which can vary for each individual.)

- Hands and feet become warm
- Breathing and heartbeat remain slow and calm
- Good appetite
- Sleep soundly
- Improved balance, mentally and physically
- Good thermostatic-type control of your body
- Clear eyes
- Improved mental focus
- Vitality

The previous chart shows some easy tips to help a sincere Chi Gung student judge if he is practicing correctly and experiencing legitimate Chi Gung results.

Illusion is usually the result of a very strong desire, forceful breathing and over intense mental focus. If you recognize that you may not have the real Chi feeling, then check your posture and body alignment. (*Refer to Chapter 8, Important Acupuncture Points for Proper Body Alignment.*) Also try to relax your mind, avoid visualization and breathe easily.

13.6 Applying External Concepts to Understand Internal Theories

Some people believe that “what you see is what you get.” This is not necessarily true when talking about *internal* styles. It’s more like “what you see is not all that’s going on here!” A practitioner cannot possibly use

knowledge received from an *external style* to recognize *internal* movement. Often practitioners misinterpret the value or level of some styles based on the following five reasons:

- They believe that if there is less visualization (imagination) or mind application, then they are learning a lower level movement. In contrast, they believe that the more visualization or mental work, the higher the level of movement.
- Misinformed students think that soft movement is more internal and hard movement is more external.
- Some students think that more breathing techniques suggest that they are at a higher level.
- Some people believe that the more movements a style has, the better it must be.
- Others believe that if a style is made up of difficult postures, then it must be superior to styles with less difficult postures.

These misconceptions are based on *external* exercise ideas. Such students are aiming for a higher level, but they end up choosing an ineffective exercise that they hope will take them to this lofty goal. They worked harder but made slower progress. Just remember that anything that can help strengthen our Chi circulation is good, but it is not necessary for the practice to be hard or complicated. The truth is that almost every legitimate style of Chi Gung has simple forms, and deep medical and philosophical meaning. The more you practice, the more you enjoy it. You could go all the way from low level to high level with these simple movements.

13.7 Wasting Precious Chi Due to Over Enthusiasm

Often people get very excited when they first experience authentic Chi feelings like: the tingling, warmth, heaviness, sensations of “bigness” or “smallness,” the perception of lifting lightly or “flying,” or the body uncontrollably moving by itself. However, some of these people become overly enthusiastic, and right away

they try to enhance or to do something with this feeling of Chi. They will attempt to visualize or force the Chi into some special area of the body trying to create a special ability or talent. Some people might try to trace these feelings in order to duplicate, embellish or amplify them. Some people even try to send or remit Chi to others. However, this is precisely the time when they should relax and save the Chi, not drain it.

First. Let the feeling move at its own pace and come in its own time. You can't force it because, as time passes, you will constantly experience changes and feel different sensations. So don't try to duplicate, embellish or amplify these feelings.

Second. You can never cultivate too much Chi, especially beginners. You need to spend more time in those exercises that produce more Jing for cultivating Chi. The more you do this, the easier it is to do and the further you can go when *driving Chi*.

Third. Since most beginners do not have proper body alignment, they eventually lose the feeling and direction of their Chi Gung training when they try to use Chi too soon.

Now let's revisit the analogy of the battery and light bulb from Chapter 1. From this discussion we learned how vital material like the hormones ("Jing") are used to manufacture internal energy (power) so that your "bulb" (Shen) burns brightly. To take this concept a little further, let us assume that you replace the correct bulb for one with a higher wattage. Because the energy production remains at the same level, burning this bulb will use up the power faster than it is being made. Therefore, the energy source (battery) will soon be drained or "burnt out." The example of using a bulb of the wrong wattage illustrates what happens when you try prematurely using your Chi too soon or before it is strong enough. Such over enthusiasm can cause internal "burn out" and waste energy (Chi) that should have been stored (battery) for later use. On the other hand, if the bulb is switched to one with lower wattage, then the life of the bulb is extended and it does not exhaust or "burn out" its energy supply. If we really want to change to a stronger bulb, we should first find a more efficient way to recharge the battery. With the correct process and ingredients we can develop plenty of Chi and fully benefit so that our *"bulb burns brightly."* So, to recap, if your Chi is strong enough to feel, save it for when you really need it.

13.8 Lack of Practice

Many Chi Gung followers attend numerous seminars, and their bookshelves are weighted down with a ton of books and magazines on the subject; but they don't really practice! Avoid people who are constantly talking and volunteering all kinds of information. Sometimes they use Chi Gung conversation as another way to gratify their own ego and are just "showing off." Knowledge and experience are two entirely different things. Think of this: A man who is blind since birth can tell you everything written about colors, like their frequencies for example (knowledge), but he still will never really completely comprehend colors without actually seeing them (experience.) Through this example, you can see more clearly that if you do not *experience* something first-hand, you can never fully appreciate or truly understand it.

13.9 Inability to Apply Chi Gung to Life

If a Chi Gung student's life does not improve after continuous and correct practice, then maybe he has some bad habit countering the positive effects of his Chi Gung practice. A dedicated student should be able to slowly "fix" or "patch" any problem areas or bad habits in his life eventually. If, even after practicing for some time, he still doesn't repair any weaknesses or bad habits, then the author suggests that perhaps he might try reading some Chinese Classics, namely the I-Ching, Tao de Ching or Tai Chi Classics. Maybe then he will be willing to simplify his life and be able to overcome or replace any bad habits with good habits.

Some of the more challenging bad habits that people in today's society subscribe to are involved with an overindulgence of some kind: of alcohol, of smoking or of eating, to name a few. Many people have a bad habit of spreading rumors or gossiping whenever there's an ear to listen, which almost always creates a problem for them. A lack of cleanliness is another bad habit people develop. Many people in modern society make it a habit to buy everything they want whether they need it or not, or whether they can afford it or not. These people bury themselves in debt with this kind of obsessive behavior. Happiness acquired this way is short, while the worry and the responsibility, which follow can be so long. Too much television, constantly exercising, playing games and sports to a fault, and any abnormal obsessive behavior are all simply bad habits!

Reducing and eventually releasing yourself from all your bad habits is evidence that you are using Chi Gung in your life. The more you enjoy that “sweet” internal feeling received from Chi Gung, the less attention you will give to such superfluous substitutes for happiness. Then you have a better chance to free yourself from bad habits. That is the real purpose of Chi Gung.

13.10 False Chi Strengtheners

Just about everybody would like to take a pill to instantly provide something that the body can utilize to strengthen energy. Today such products on the market claim to be totally natural, made from very rare ingredients. Usually they are costly. Many customers think that they must be valuable because they cost so much or are so rare. Actually nothing is as good for you as what is manufactured *by* your body *for* only your body!

The Chinese people have been all through this idea of elixirs. For many years they tried to formulate special elixirs to maintain their health and increase their longevity. Some powerful and rich emperors invested heavily in this research, and many Taoist monks were involved in this project. Some of their experiments are quite interesting. They did discover some special herbal or chemical formula to heighten some body functions. Sometimes they made a surprise discovery through such chemical experimentation, like when Sun Si Miao (581-682 AD) invented gunpowder. Most of the time, however, they ended up with a temporary energy boost, but later on their health declined and their lives were shortened. During the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD) there were many emperors who died from ingesting these special remedies for longevity because they were fatally toxic. After thousands of years of unsuccessful attempts, those Taoist monks finally gave up and focused in another direction to maintain good health and increase longevity. They studied how the body can increase its own energy or power. The concept of improving or maintaining good health through oral treatment like elixirs or pills is called Wai Dan, which translates as external elixir or pill. The concept of improving or maintaining good health through internal exercise is called Nei Dan. Nei Dan translates to internal elixir or pill, which means that you manufacture this valuable substance in your body. (Refer to Chapter 6, Tu Na.)

The ingredients of most “energy booster” products are too complex for our bodies to absorb, and when ingested, these products overwork the kidneys and liver. According to Chinese Medicine Theory, these organs

are especially crucial for maintaining the balance of our basic energy. Overtaxing these organs is detrimental to health maintenance and inhibits the ability to produce energy. *(Remember, if we want to improve our health for the long term, we start by improving the kidney system first.)*

Even more than that, some energy boosters could overwork one organ system so much that its counter system cannot compensate quickly enough to restore the body's balance. *(See Chapter 6, The Six Healing Sounds system.)* Such is the case with users of the wonder drug Viagra, for example. This drug works through the kidney (elimination) and reproductive systems, and in Traditional Chinese Medicine, the element water represents these systems. Overusing this drug will cause a strain on the heart, which is represented by fire. Too much water extinguishes the fire. That is how Traditional Chinese Medicine explains why Viagra is not good for people with a heart condition or weak heart.

Nature's way is the best way! In the long run proper diets consisting of fresh fruits, vegetables, meats, etc. are better for your body than any food supplements or special elixirs. "Make your food medicine and your medicine food." Such a simple truth was quoted long ago by the ancient Greek physician Hippocrates, who is known as the Father of Medicine.

13.11 Escapism Instead of Realism

Today we notice that there are some people who are perpetually complaining. Their life is not right, their homes are too small, their kids don't respect them, the world environment is doomed, politics, schools, other people - just about everything! We all deal with life and its challenges, but these people are just not brave enough to face it. They are either very angry all the time, depressed or choose to fool themselves by isolating themselves from the world and "burying their heads in the sand." They complain but make very little effort to make change or at least recognize those that try to make change. Some of these people use Chi Gung as a way to avoid worldly issues or escape from the pressure of their own daily lives. This is NOT the purpose of Chi Gung. Quite the contrary, the intention of Chi Gung is to actually help a person cope with life more effectively and strengthen the person's ability to succeed with aspirations and goals. With a clear, calm mind and healthy body, there is no doubt that anyone can contend with life better. Through correct Chi Gung, the body easily readjusts to many physical changes like jet lag, hunger or an unexpected lack of sleep. A calm and

clear mind reflects the increased energy that enables anyone to analyze situations quickly and resolve them favorably. True Chi Gung practitioners are more resilient and can overcome obstacles much more easily than the average person. They seem to have better physical control and more control over their surroundings so that they can savor life and enjoy it to the fullest. Running and hiding from life does not help you at all.

13.12 Regarding Chi Gung as a Religion

After a period of serious Chi Gung practice, some people can recover from a serious affliction, acquire some abnormally heightened mental state or discover a special extrasensory skill. However, some of these people believe that these occurrences are some sort of *unique religious phenomenon* and are perceived as an indication of spiritual evolution. In some cases, such “gifted” practitioners naively empower their Chi Gung instructor, and he makes an example of them to demonstrate his “great” teachings. Some Chi Gung teachers may even take on the appearance of a “spiritual Master” or special religious guide. Then the students are convinced that their teacher possesses a type of supernatural power and that, if they are devout followers of his religious doctrine, they too will possess these mysterious “powers” someday. There are students who fear that if they lose their “God-like” teacher’s favor, they will suffer negative consequences.

We know that the history of mankind is loaded with examples of cultures, cults, groups and individuals who used some unusual occurrences in nature and combined them with people’s ignorance or simple lack of facts. They then were able to empower themselves to lead or dominate the people (followers) to gain fame, wealth and power. One such well-known example in Chinese history is Zhang Jiao and his brothers who set up Tai Ping Dao, “the way of peace.” They learned how to help people recover from health disorders from a Taoist monk. Then they traveled to many places in China and in 170 A.D. began setting up many branches Tai Ping Dao. They used a very simple process to relieve people of many health discomforts or illness. Their healing centers included “confessionals,” or rooms where patients would go to “confess” any wrongdoings or “sins” for the purpose of cleansing their hearts and minds. Here at these centers the patients were kept on a simple diet and remained isolated for at least seven days. Their solution for health maintenance was so successful that people listened to them and followed blindly. After about ten years Zhang Jiao had branches all over the country and was able to develop a huge well organized religious cult. He was more respected than the emperor was, and so he started plotting to become emperor himself.

In 184 A.D. more than a half a million people from this devout group spearheaded a violent rebellion. The Han Dynasty, however, was able to repress this rebellion, but not before it put the entire country into chaos. The destruction was enormous, and many people were killed. In the beginning of the rebellion, Zhang Jiao died of some illness and both of his brothers were killed in the battle. The irony is that their practice was originally started to *help heal* people, but slowly devolved into an intense religious and political delusion.

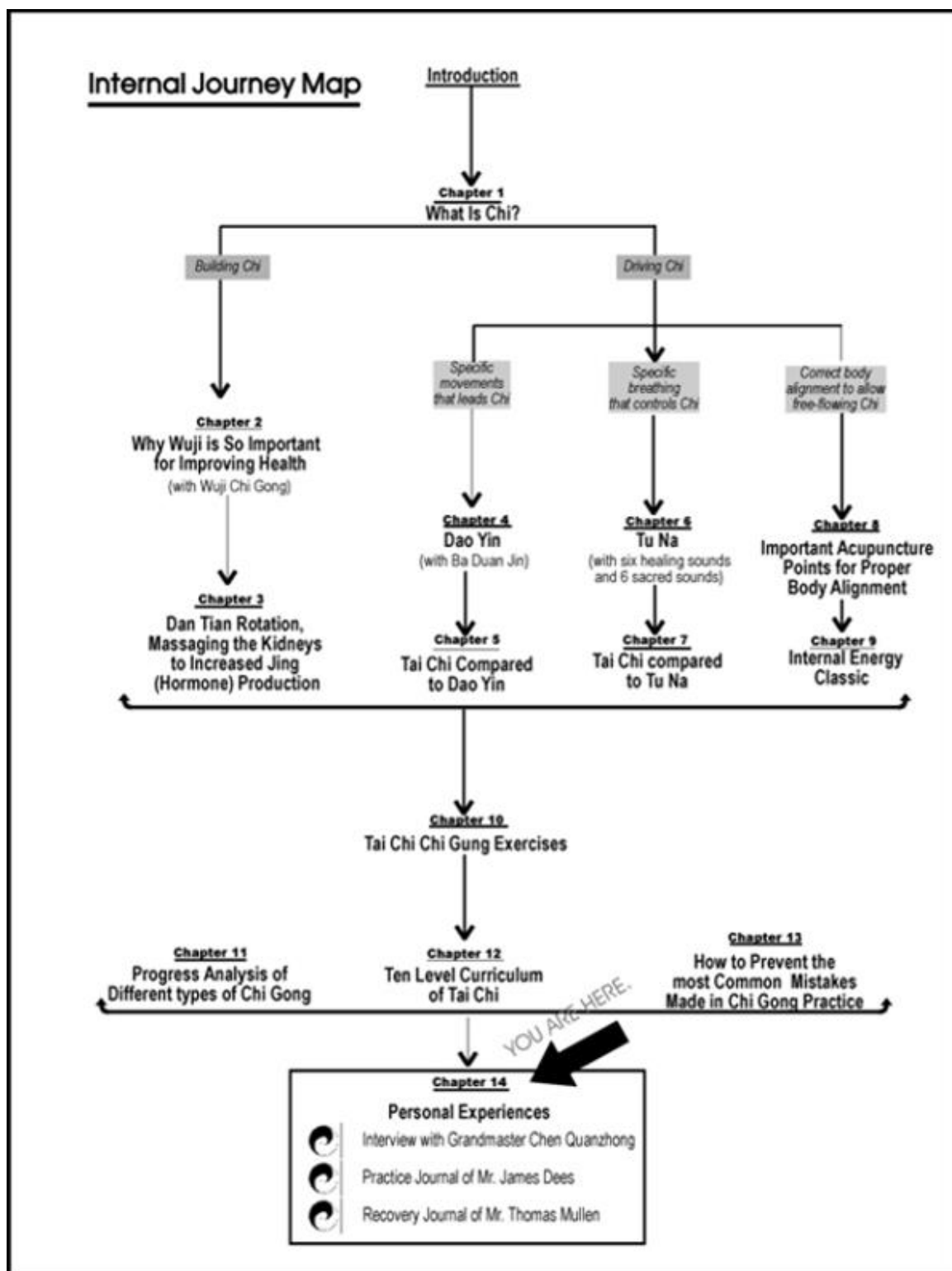
Zhang Jiao's claim to a special medical "miracle" was unfounded because his healing procedure was quite logical and not supernatural at all. If you didn't skip any chapters and have read up to this point in this guide, it should be very easy to understand why Zhang Jiao's method was so successful. When his patients were alone, at first nothing would distract them and they could think quietly. They would rethink many things in their life. When they followed Zhang's ideals, they began to face the error of their ways and "confessed." It was not easy for them to admit to their mistakes because they wanted to protect themselves. Once they overcame this, the mind was released and returned to a natural peaceful balance. The kidneys performed much better when the mind was in this serene state, and so they produced more original natal energy. (*Refer to chapter 2.*) This was the turning point in the patient's recovery. Furthermore, because the mind was calm, the body also relaxed and Chi blockages were dramatically reduced. In addition, the diet played a significant role in the patient's recovery. The "pure," simple food that was served helped their body to purge any impurities. The results of this seven-day process were mental serenity or "quiet," relaxing the body, cleansing the system and increased energy production.

Then, because the body readjusted itself, it was capable of *healing itself* from minor ailments and some fatal diseases also. Zhang Jiao didn't directly heal his patients; he just showed them how to help their bodies help themselves. This was no miracle!

Now and then we can happen upon a group of kind, honest, generous people, but we then discover that they follow a curious belief system. In many such cases, their spiritual guide has convinced them that because of his high-level "spiritual connection," like the Zhang Jiao brothers professed almost two thousand years ago, their lives improved, but ***not*** because they became honest, kind and more mentally balanced. ***Are you one of them?***



Chapter 14
Personal Experiences



Real People. Real Stories.

Many things described in this chapter are unusual for people who know very little about Internal Exercises/Chi Gung. We put footnotes throughout this chapter to help the reader associate the knowledge imparted in the previous chapters with these personal experiences.



Figure 14-1
Grandmaster Chen Quanzhong leading a group practicing Tai Chi in Xian, China.

14.1 Interview of Grandmaster Chen Quanzhong

Grandmaster Chen Quanzhong

Grandmaster Chen is a 19th generation member of the Chen family, the founding family of Tai Chi. He is President of *Xian Chen Style Tai Chi Association* in China and Senior Member of the Executive Council of *American Chen Style Tai Chi Association*. Born in 1925 and still very active in the Chinese Martial Arts community, he possesses invaluable knowledge on Tai Chi that is not readily available to the Martial Arts community or the public. Today Grandmaster Chen remains strong and healthy. The evidence of this can easily be seen in his soft skin, robust appetite, deep powerful voice and sound sleeping habits. Every day Grandmaster Chen practices pushing hands with young people and is a model example of just how much Tai Chi can benefit health and longevity. The following interview of Grandmaster Chen was conducted in 1996.

The Interview:

Key: I Interviewer C: - Chen

I: What method do you emphasize in your training?

C: In the old days, Tai Chi training focused on the form. When a student finally acquires proper body alignment through form training, then virtually any question about this internal art can be answered. Chi will flow naturally on its own when the body is straight (aligned). Chi is the leader of the blood and, when Chi and blood circulates throughout the entire body, you will be healthy and strong. When the form is practiced correctly, it means that you know the proper training method for Tai Chi. Therefore, you will understand how to soften and relax the upper body, and how to make the lower body heavy and full. At that point you won't have to concern yourself with pushing hands and self-defense because it will become automatic.

I: What kind of teacher is a good teacher?

C: It is very difficult to be a good teacher because he has to instruct in different ways for different levels. Most of the Martial Arts Classics give instructions to people at high level. This poses a problem for beginners because most beginners cannot do everything that they read about in these Classics and want to do. For example, a baby wants to eat everything he sees but you know where that can lead. So the teacher has to have a step-by-step curriculum for training them. Besides that, different people have different interest and talents, and so the teacher must design individualized programs for each one of them.

In order to teach a beginner well, any instructor has to know philosophy and medical knowledge.

I: What do you think about middle level training?

C: Middle level students should know the direction of their training program and should not deviate from it by practicing other kinds of different disciplines. They should especially not force anything! Practicing Martial Arts is like feeding a tiger: If you know how to use him, he can help you; otherwise, he can turn on you. How many people have learned this lesson the hard way! However, it is very difficult to explain the scientific method of training in one or two sentences.

I: Then what about high level training?

C: For those people who have reached a certain level in training, they must be able to apply the theories they learned to their practice and depict exactly what part of the body belongs in which position. Then they must integrate this capability with their Chi and Shen so that all three things work together effectively. If a student practices an actual application repeatedly, eventually he will understand this concept and will know what is right and what is wrong. To the amateur (beginner), most right and wrong perceptions seem very similar, almost the same sometimes. The beginner cannot differentiate between a right method and a wrong one. However, the more you practice, the easier it is to distinguish between correct and incorrect methods. When you achieve a proper understanding, your outer form, the Classic theories, and your technique all coordinate with each other and come together. They match!

I: What requirement do you emphasize in training?

C: Everyone must know how to relax naturally and keep the body straight so that the upper body and lower body move together. People should pay close attention to their lower body movement and footwork because you need a strong “root” to have strong Chi.

In Tai Chi, the circular movement plays a very important role. The whole body works together and every part moves with circular motion in perfect synchronicity like well-oiled machinery.

You must be quiet to feel these things in your inner training.

I: What is the most important technique for building internal power?

C: Silk Reeling energy is the core of Chen Style Tai Chi. [\[51\]](#) Without it, you cannot perform Tai Chi and there will be no internal power. Therefore, Silk Reeling is the most important technique. If a practitioner knows how to do Silk Reeling, then he will automatically have internal power.

I: Could you tell me what kind of exercise you do in your training now?

C: I am already over seventy years old with limited energy. Every day, I just practice Chi and a few techniques.

I: How do you do “Fa Jing” (explosive action) in form and pushing hands practice?

C: Everyone knows that relaxation is important. First, you need to relax the mind and then the body. When the entire body is relaxed and in harmony, you will do “Fa Jing” naturally. Explosive power is based on Silk Reeling energy with internal Chi, relaxation and harmony.

I: What type of Chi do you practice?

C: Whole body “(Natal) Original” Chi; “Zhou Shen Hun Yuan Xian Tian Zi Qi.” [\[52\]](#)

I: What kind of Chi Gung is best for Tai Chi training?

C: I was born in a Tai Chi family, which is perhaps why I don’t follow any fashion of Chi Gung disciplines. I just follow Tai Chi, and I believe that it is one of the best and most effective types Chi Gung.

I: What is the best method to improve your Chi?

C: The most effective method for improving Chi begins with a clear comprehension of how Chi flows throughout the body. By practicing the Stillness Stance, you can adjust your body alignment, which will help you understand Chi circulation more. The Stillness Stance is necessary in your training program. Any posture in our form can be used as a Stillness Stance to help you reach a level where body alignment and Chi function harmoniously.

I: The Stillness Stance is very important. Can you tell me more about it?

C: You can benefit in three ways when you practice the Stillness Stance. First, this type of practice will help you build a strong root. Second, this stance will help you learn how to calm down and be patient so that you can feel your Chi. Third, if you feel a blockage in your Chi, the Stillness Stance will help you readjust your body and to remove this blockage.

I: How do you teach and practice with the students?

C: Like I said before, I emphasize the form. Teaching a beginner is like planting a tree: if you have a good tree but it is not straight then it cannot become a big tree. Therefore, a teacher must give the new student the right direction. I focus on Chi circulation by keeping the body straight and relaxed. When I teach the form, I explain the application of each posture to the students so they can practice them while the pushing hands. Then when a beginner gets lost in pushing hands, he will practice the form more seriously. Now the student practices form and pushing hands over and over. They are motivated and work very hard. Of course, students need a good teacher to show them the Tai Chi principles in pushing hands or they will lose their direction in training.

I: What do you think is the future of Tai Chi?

C: In the next century, more and more people globally will understand the benefits and pleasure of practicing Tai Chi. In other disciplines, if you don't practice for a while you will regress. However, unlike other Martial Arts and exercise types, you can remain at the same level you achieved in Tai Chi, even if you don't practice for a while. Tai Chi is based on the harmony between Chi and the external body. As long as you maintain this balance between the body and Chi, you won't lose your level. That is why you don't regress in Tai Chi like other disciplines. Once you truly know Tai Chi, it is automatically applied in your daily life without any conscious effort.[\[53\]](#) This is so wonderful for all people.

14.2 Practice Journal of Mr. James Dees

Before I go into a few of my experiences, I would like to tell you a bit about myself. My name is Jim Dees and I am 38 years old. Since childhood, I have always had an interest in Martial Arts. After completing college, I served as an officer in the United States Marine Corps. For almost ten years now, I have been a law enforcement officer in South Florida. I have had a wide range of assignments and all of my time in law enforcement has been in a high crime area. This has added a sense of urgency and practicality to my training.

It has been my great fortune to receive an individual training program from Mr. Yan. I first met him at the end of 1995 at a seminar. We became friends and he later agreed to teach me. When I began the program I was extremely inflexible. For example, if I were to try to touch my elbows together in front of me, I would fall short by about eight inches. My entire body suffered from the same level of tension.

I remember the first set of exercises that he taught me was Ba Duan Jin, or Eight Piece Brocade. This simple yet profoundly beneficial set was the foundation of my program. While it seems so simple, it is actually very hard to do it correctly. Not hard in the sense of difficulty but rather hard in that there are so many subtleties that can cause one to easily perform the exercise incorrectly. I remember thinking that many parts of my body, mainly shoulders at the time, were hopeless. A couple of months later, Mr. Yan showed me the first level of Red Palm Chi Gung. This was a powerful exercise whose results were almost immediate.

My individual program consists primarily of Wuji (stillness stance) combined with the Eight Piece Brocade and Red Palm Chi Gung, Internal Martial Arts Xing Yi, and Chen Style Tai Chi. Mr. Yan considered my little strength

and many weaknesses and determined that this would be appropriate for me. Time has proven him correct. I will share with you a few of the developmental highlights that I experienced as well as some of the beneficial side effects.

As I mentioned, I initially felt that my shoulders, if not my whole body, were hopeless. Within a few months I could literally feel the Chi strengthen in my body. One thing that Mr. Yan would never do was to tell me what I might feel. This way my imagination was left out of the picture. When I had a new or interesting feeling I would tell him about it. Then he would explain to me what was happening inside my body. I can only imagine that he laughed at me at times. I am afraid that I called him rather late sometimes to describe a feeling that he would describe as merely natural. But I was like a kid in a candy store and was compelled to share my feeling with someone who would understand. I think that he understood.

Specifically, I began to feel the Chi in my hands and feet. I could feel it correspond to my breathing. After four months, I could consciously control my Chi and send it to my hands and feet at will. The next month, my entire body would get physically warm after my stillness stance training. At times I would sweat and feel deep warmth in the torso. After six months I was warm inside all the time even when not practicing. Mr. Yan explained to me that the Chi circulation was getting stronger. I was beginning to feel certain organs at this stage of my development. The kidney was the first. I had previously been plagued with ankle problems about twice a year as a result of a few too many sprains over the years. When this happened, I would get a stiffness that would all but prevent me from walking. I woke up one morning and found it happening again. I got up and did my Internal Exercise. I concentrated on sending Chi to my stiff ankle. Within a few minutes the pain was gone and I had full range of motion. That was more than three years ago and the stiffness has not returned.

I continued with my training program and gradually was able to gain more and more flexibility in my body. My shoulders finally improved. I came to realize that this type of training really changes your body from the inside out. At this time, I was able to exchange Chi with the environment. My entire body actually began to breathe through the skin. It is an amazing but natural feeling. My breathing sank to the Dan Tian area as opposed to just the lungs. In less than a year of daily practice, my hips began to open up and I gained a greater range of motion. I was now able to touch my elbows in front of me. While it may sound silly to some, it was a big deal to me. I could see and feel the difference in my body that the Internal Exercise had made.

But I realized that I was only scratching the surface. One evening when practicing stillness stance, I felt a huge surge of energy go up my back and down the front of my body. I called Mr. Yan and described what I was doing and what had happened. He explained to me that I had opened the Large Heavenly Circle. This was a tremendous feeling.

A couple of months after having opened the Large Heavenly Circle, I had the opportunity to travel to the Philippines where my wife is from. We had a great family trip and visited many of her relatives. She had a niece who was recovering from a brain disorder that required two surgeries to correct the problem. The last procedure left her in a coma for three months. She was unable to walk for no apparent reason other than atrophy. I taught her a modified version of Eight Piece Brocade and Red Palm. The modifications were necessary because she could not stand. I spent about an hour teaching her. During this time, she was able to feel the Chi in her hands and feet, which had previously been numb. I instructed her to do the exercises that I gave her twice a day. I did not see her anymore after that day. About a month later, after we had returned home, we heard that she was walking on her own. She had also gained weight in her legs, which were previously shriveled. Her only therapy was the individual exercise program that I gave her. As you can see, these are actually very powerful and effective exercises. It was during this same trip to the Philippines that I had the chance to train with a karate club in Manila. These were all very serious students who train very hard and realistically. I had a great time exchanging ideas with them. When we were done, I noticed that I had sustained a bruise on the back of my right hand. I could feel my Chi automatically going there in an apparent attempt to heal it. It was a strange feeling. In most cases a bruise will go through several color changes black, blue, brown, yellow during the healing process. In my experience before, this could take a week or more to go through these phases of healing. I noted that this process was greatly accelerated. Within 24 hours, the bruise was completely gone. It had gone through all the colors in a single day as my Chi healed the injury at an accelerated rate. I found this fascinating.

After we returned home I taught the Eight Piece Brocade to my parents. At the time, they were 67 years old. My Mom had suffered from a sinus condition that was, at times, serious. After three days her condition was gone and has not returned. My Dad reported that he just feels better. To this day, they each start their day with the Eight Piece Brocade exercises.

Gradually, the Chi feelings that I had were getting stronger and stronger. As a result of my training program, I felt a great deal of energy. Sometimes during stillness practice, the Chi got so strong that it felt as though my finger nails were about to actually shoot off my finger tips. I also felt that my midsection would get very full and thick. I remember one time practicing in the park I told Mr. Yan that it felt as though concrete were setting in my abdomen. It felt very heavy and strong and thick. This was happening due to stronger Chi flow. The Chi was starting to accumulate in the Dan Tian. This was happening due to my body becoming more relaxed. I felt extremely strong and full of energy.

In the Spring of 1997 I had worn some improperly fitted shoes which resulted in my right foot swelling and becoming tender. When I took the shoe off, it was red. I placed my hand on the injured area and sent Chi into it. Within one minute, the swollen vein had returned to normal and the redness was all but gone. I did this as I felt that the problem was a Chi blockage. I tried to free the blockage by sending more Chi to the area. When I told Mr. Yan about this he said that my assessment was correct. He said that my Red Palm training allowed me to do this.

Mr. Yan was now starting to check my Chi by having others punch me in the abdominal area. He did this himself as well. The first time he had people do this it came as a total surprise to me. While at his apartment one night with several other students, he asked me to stand and told the others to hit me with their bare fists as hard as they could. His only instruction to me was to relax. Since I trusted him, I agreed. A few different men hit me in the abdomen. I felt the pressure of the punch, but they bounced off. They described it to be like hitting an inner tube. Mr. Yan explained to us all that the Chi was protecting me. This test has been conducted many times and the results are always the same. I have not yet sustained a bruise as a result of being hit.

I have had some experience in martial arts competition and my internal training has really helped me. My weight ranges from 220 to 230 and I have been comfortable competing against others more than 300 pounds. The fullness and strength that I have gotten from my internal training gives me the feeling that no matter how hard I am hit I will be fine. The training in Internal Martial Art also has given me a good understanding of mechanics. This understanding of body mechanics is the same no matter what the internal training program consists of. With a foundation in proper structure and alignment, the Chi strengthens as does one's martial ability.

My wife would occasionally suffer from carpal tunnel syndrome as well as bursitis in her shoulder. I taught her the Eight Piece Brocade and a couple of other specific exercises for these problems. She was relieved of any symptoms within two days. Once in a great while her carpal tunnel syndrome will return. This is not too surprising as she does not do the exercises I showed her any more. She is a little bit lazy when it comes to practicing them. But when the trouble comes back, she is quick to ask for a refresher. After one day, the symptoms disappear for several months and the cycle continues. It was around this time that something that Mr. Yan told me was starting to make sense. He said that he can see where the Chi is stuck in people. I was finally being able to see this as well. As a result, I was beginning to see how to fix people's ailments with Internal Exercise.

I had primarily been interested in Internal Martial Arts for fighting, but I was now gaining a keen appreciation for the health benefits as well. This has now become a source of tremendous interest and satisfaction. Last year my nephew injured his lower back. He was unable to drive or walk. He went to the doctor and was sent to a physical therapist who had given him a program to help him recover. I believe that he was supposed to follow this program for three to four weeks before returning to work. When I saw him I asked him to demonstrate the exercises given to him by the physical therapist. Based on what I had learned about Chi and circulation, it seemed to me that what he was doing was actually harmful to his back. I explained this to him and he asked for my help. I gave him some exercises and the next day he was walking. In three to four days he was working again. Unfortunately his wife injured her lower back a few months ago. I gave her an internal exercise program and she was also able to walk after one day.

In early 1999 while practicing I became very hot. My wife took my temperature. I had a body temperature of 103 degrees. I felt hot but fine and very comfortable. This was a very unusual feeling. My wife said she could have fried an egg on my stomach. Other times I have felt ice cold on certain parts of my body while training. Mr. Yan said that this is my body balancing itself and releasing wet Chi from deep inside my body. He said that this is good and natural. This brings up an important point. We are all individuals. While there will be some feelings that students of Internal Exercise will share, they should not be compared to others. Also, just because someone has a particular feeling that does not mean that you ever will. Or that a certain feeling will ever be felt again. Each person and each moment of training is unique. Mr. Yan used to tell me after I described a new feeling never to chase it. Just relax and focus on the exercise.

A few months ago I had my schedule turned upside down and had to work all night for three nights in a row. This interrupted my normal training routine. I got lazy and felt that I needed sleep more than I needed to do my Internal Exercise. I was wrong. I felt pretty bad and worn out after the third day. I did an abbreviated version of my program that lasted only 20 minutes. Afterwards I felt great. I was fully energized and got through the day as though I had had been sleeping each of the past three nights. I will not make that mistake again. I think that even a cut-down version of any good internal program helps to reset the body and give you a better night's sleep. Or, if you are not getting ready for bed, it will recharge you and allow your body to function naturally and energetically. This is a tremendous benefit that any of us, regardless of our lifestyle or profession, should consider.

I have tried to share a few of the benefits that I have personally enjoyed as well as some of my experiences helping others. I have shared a few healing experiences for only one reason. That is to show the power of an individual Internal Exercise program. Chi is nothing mystical or magical. It is natural and when Chi is flowing freely, it can keep the body healthy or heal it. There have been several times when my wife, co-workers or kids were sick when I managed to escape illness. I feel that the single reason for this is that I practice Internal Exercise every day. Please do not get the impression that I am a master of anything or a person with some special internal understanding. I am only lucky to have been taught a few very natural things. In my personal training, I have only begun to scratch the surface of what can be understood. But even a basic understanding of a few simple internal exercises can give one tremendous health benefits.

It is very important to bear in mind that my training program is completely natural and in no way involves imagination or mystical concepts and is free from any religious overtones. It is completely scientific and natural. Every point in any Internal Exercise can be explained in terms of relaxation, body structure and alignment. This is nature's way. This also happens to be the safest and quickest way to internal development. These concepts seem so simple but are elusive. I have read many books on the subjects of Internal Martial Arts and Chi Gung. It was not until the subjects were explained to me in terms of structure and alignment that I began to understand Chi. Before this, Chi was something that I thought was probably real, but beyond my level of comprehension. Now I can see that it is as natural as breathing and as understandable as any other natural body function. Over the years there have been some people who have clouded this topic in mysticism out of their own ignorance or for their own gain. This is sad because everyone

can enjoy the study of Chi. I hope that you can find a teacher who can explain Chi Gung training in very clear terms. If he or she cannot, it may be an indication that they themselves do not fully understand yet. Another tip, if you do not feel some positive results within a few weeks, there is something wrong with your training program. These things are natural and one should benefit fairly quickly. If you experience headaches, your program, or the way you are doing it, is wrong.

Chi training should not be uncomfortable or cause pain. If this happens, stop. It can be dangerous to continue a program that causes you to have headaches or pain. Once a person gains a fundamental understanding of Chi as presented in this book, Chi Gung training can become a part of his daily life. The benefits that one will achieve from correct daily practice are many. The benefits range from improved health and, at higher levels, a calming of the personality. Once the range of mood stabilizes, you will become more calm and stable. This has been a brief glimpse at a few of the ways an internal training program has improved my health and my life. I encourage everyone to find a qualified teacher and spend even a few minutes training every day.

14.3 Recovery Journal of Mr. Thomas Mullen

My name is Thomas Richard Mullen. I work for the Broward County School System in Coral Springs, Florida. I am 47 years old and currently study therapy with Mr. Gaofei Yan.

At 20 years old, I was diagnosed with diabetes. For years I had no problems and still participated in lots of sports, like tennis. At that time, every checkup showed that I was in good health. Around 1986 I was still teaching and I started a Saturday program for performing arts with the Broward County School System and was coordinating on county level rather than on local level. This increase in responsibilities expanded my workload to six and sometimes seven days a week, which made work even more stressful. In 1987 work became even more demanding after I was promoted to Director of the Broward County Performing Arts for grades six through twelve. Around 1989 I was diagnosed with radical high blood pressure fluctuations. Due to the relationship between blood pressure and the kidney, my doctors wanted to do a renal examination to closely monitor my kidneys and blood pressure. That's when I learned that I had End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD). I then began regular visits with Dr. Richard Sandler, a nephrologist (kidney specialist) and internist in Plantation, Florida. To this day he is still my main doctor. Even though I fully complied with all the doctors'

instructions, they still believed that my kidneys would fail. By 1992 the kidneys finally failed, and I was so bad that I had to stop working.

I immediately began dialysis treatment three times a week and was closely monitored by my doctors. Between January and June of 1993, I went through the preparation procedures necessary for a transplant at the University of Miami. I saw many specialists and went through a battery of tests to make sure that my health was able to withstand the transplant. Finally in August 1993, Dr. Joshua Miller, who at that time was the director of the transplantation program at the University of Miami, did my renal surgery at Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami. After about 13 days, I went home with a list of medications and a rigid weekly testing schedule for testing my kidney functionality and to maintain and adjust my medication dosages.

Today, I am on the same medications as I was six years ago. I take transplant maintenance drugs called Sandimmune and Imuran. However, the most important medication for maintaining the transplant is named Medrol. Every transplant patient is taking some form of steroid because it helps the body accept the transplanted kidney as part of its system and prevents the body from rejecting it as a foreign organ.

A couple of months after the surgery (October 1993), I discovered tightness in my right leg and a stiffness that I mistook for a muscle cramp that just wouldn't go away. When the doctors diagnosed me, they found a blood clot in my right leg, which they explained was a common side effect from any type of surgery. A year after the surgery, I went back to work at the elementary school in Coral Springs, Florida, where I currently work today. I was feeling good and the doctors informed me that the operation was very successful. I was ready to go back to work and I was feeling very good. The 1994-95 school year went well and I felt wonderful. I was just so happy to be back to work. I was functioning normally, but it was a short-lived feeling.

In June 1995 I experienced such sharp pain in one leg that I had to go home. X-rays had revealed a severe medication-induced arthritis, called vascular necrosis (AVN), which is a side effect of the steroid medication, Medrol. If I decided to cease taking this medication, the arthritis would go away, but I didn't have that choice because Medrol is the number one medication for maintaining my transplant. The kidney transplant maintenance is not a cure but rather an ongoing procedure. So, I immediately went to my nephrologists, who explained to me that he didn't think there was much that could be done for this type of arthritis. He then sent me to an orthopedic specialist who concurred. It was this specialist who confirmed the diagnosis and

reasoned that this arthritis was most likely medication-induced. He also told me that there was basically nothing I could do and suggested physical therapy, which I did on a regular basis.

I rode a low-impact stationary bike for resistance therapy and the therapists put weights on my legs and moved them in various directions. But everything seemed to hurt me more. The physical therapy was actually making the arthritis worse so that it was more painful to go and less painful to stay away. At my doctor's urging I went to a rheumatologist, an arthritis specialist and an excellent doctor at the University of Miami. Her office is located in Broward County. After doing range-of-motion measurements, she agreed with the other specialists and doctors, and also explained that there was nothing I could do because I had to take the kidney-maintenance medication.

My arthritis continued to worsen and by October-November 1995 it spread to my left leg, left hip and eventually moved to my right hip and left shoulder. At night, my joints would uncontrollably twist and I would wake up in excruciating pain. I didn't like taking the prescribed pain medicine because of the transplant, blood pressure and anti-clotting medications I was already taking. I just didn't want to take any more medicine but I had to do something about this 20-hour, unbearable pain.

I tried a variety of pain medications but a half-tablet dose of Tylenol 3 was the only one that was mild enough for me to handle while allowing me to function at my job. However, walking became so difficult that I had to use a cane and could not walk too far. The school facilities had to provide me with a wheelchair every time I wanted to use the rest room. The pain was just too much and getting worse.

By September 1995 I noticed that I had a circulation problem in my fingertips. My fingers were feeling numb and my hands were getting cold, which frightened me. My doctor then urged me to see a hematologist, a blood specialist, who treated me before and diagnosed this condition as ischemia. My regular doctor suggested that I bathe my hands in warm water and Epsom salts, which seemed to relieve them but was only a temporary solution. These daily and numerous salt baths were drying my skin and finally my right thumb cracked and developed an open lesion in October 1995. Because of the poor circulation of my fingers, this was a very scary time for me and so I went to the hospital for treatment. A few specialists examined my hands and recommended a couple of ointments that seemed to help, one of which was Silvadene, which is a very effective ointment used by burn patients. I was having so much pain that one week I went four nights

without sleep. The sleep deprivation and pain were driving me crazy and the doctor finally prescribed a mild tranquilizer to help me sleep at night. Even though I was in rough shape, I was still able to work, and I wanted to! My arthritis doctors, the rheumatologist and the orthopedic specialists were all telling me that there was nothing they could do. I was still seeing a highly regarded blood specialist who was helping me maintain circulation to my hands and prescribing ointments that seemed to help, but it was a very slow process. I was ingesting high doses of Coumadin to help the blood circulation in my fingertips, but I couldn't play the piano anymore.

In mid-December 1995 my wife, Toni and Mike McDonald, a teaching associate, accompanied me on my first visit to Yan. I didn't know anything about Martial Arts and was a little reluctant to meet him, but Mike persisted and I was running out of options. It was a chilly night and I could barely walk. Everything seemed to be coming down on me at the same time, the severe arthritis, the thumb problem and the poor circulation in my hands and fingertips. My doctors and I both suspected that part of the problem with my hand was a result of the pressure exerted on the palm of my hand when using the cane to support my body weight. As a result, this damage prevented blood from circulating to the ends of my fingers. So I got rid of the cane and used a walker, which still limited my mobility. People who knew me, like my wife, Mike and Yan, witnessed constantly cold hands and bluish-purple discoloration in my fingertips; their pinkish color was entirely gone!

I had never been in a Martial Arts studio and didn't know anyone who was going to the school except Mike. So this first meeting with Yan was a brand new experience and quite interesting to me. Yan took a few minutes from his class and spoke to me in the office. As he interrogated me, he seemed to be observing my health and physical condition. He then instructed me to sit, extend my arms in front of me, and positioned my hands a certain way which immediately directed a sensation to the hands and fingers. I believe that anyone doing this exercise will feel his hands get warm. So I did it for a few minutes. Then he said go home and practice this "sitting-still" exercise, which I later found out was supposed to be a "standing-still" exercise. I could only sit in that position for five minutes but by the end of the week I worked up to 10 or 15 minutes.

The following week, when I attended his class, Yan pulled up chair and instructed me to sit still in this position while he taught class. After a while, Yan came over to see how I was doing and said, "I want to do something for you." So as I sat in posture watching the class go through the form, Yan stood behind me. I couldn't see him but I could feel him. The best way I can describe the sensation I felt is that it was almost like a warm

breeze. Then he moved from behind me to the side of me and I could see out of the corner of my eye that he was moving his hands. A while later I was not feeling the warm breeze anymore but warmth on the inside of me. After a short while he moved from the side to the front and I could see Yan moving his hands in some sort of pattern and I was getting very hot. It felt like I walked into a steam room and was on the verge of breaking into a sweat. My whole upper body from the waist to the top of my head felt extremely hot. I couldn't understand why I felt so hot, especially since he wasn't touching me or really doing anything significant as far as I could see. When he finished, he asked me how I felt and what sensation I experienced. Warmth! I felt extreme warmth inside my body. He then returned to his class but before I left he explained that he was sharing his Chi [\[54\]](#) with me. Even though I didn't quite know what he meant, I continued to practice.

Once a week I attended Yan's class in Pompano and kept up my practices. He explained that the exercise he had me do is called Yi Zhi Chan or "One Finger Chan." ("Chan" is more commonly known as Zen.) I still didn't know what "one finger" meant because my exercise had nothing to do with "one finger." But I didn't question it since I could feel it helping me. In the very first week, this exercise started to reduce my pain. I tried not to take the Tylenol 3 or codeine, my mild pain medication, until I couldn't stand the pain anymore. However, I felt much better and had more confidence in Yan's prescribed exercises because they seemed to have a relationship to the pain and I didn't have to take the pain medication. Soon after I began private lessons with Yan and heard from Mike that Yan believed that there was an 85% chance that he could help me. I thought that was kind of interesting considering that all my doctors gave me 0% chance with my arthritis. I didn't realize then that Yan's main concern was my circulation.

With the private lesson, we could take our time. From the very beginning, I could only sit in a chair for maybe 15 minutes or so and as Yan stood opposite from where I was sitting, he would "share" his Chi with me. When Yan shared his Chi, initially I felt the heat, the pain started to go away and warmth returned to my hands. Initially the vascular necrosis prevented blood from reaching my joints and they were so stiff and closed that they felt sort of rusty and not lubricated. So Yan tried several ways to alleviate my pain when I exercised. One way he tried was to have me lean against a wall to support my posture, but because my joints were so closed and twisted, I was in great pain. He then devised a way using a stool propped up with pillows to help my legs straighten and prevent the pain from surging when I practiced. I could then lean against the stool to let my legs and feet touch the floor. This made a big difference and I was able to practice more comfortably.

When I was sitting, my feet were crossed, and when I was almost standing or leaning on the stool, I could keep my legs straight with the toes and feet pointing inward. Yan explained that this was the best way for this particular posture, and so we continued with the stool for perhaps up to a year. At the end of my exercise program, Yan and I did a series of shorter exercises that involved moving the hands. At times, he would step behind me and guide my movements to open up the hip area. He instructed me in numerous small ways and sometimes I even had to lean on his chest for support. He would lead me through various movements in a very gentle way, and I am happy to say that today I can do these movements all by myself.

After about a year I could sit on the stool 20 or 30 minutes, which was a very long time for me, and I felt very good. My body experienced the usual warmth and relaxation, and I was alert and full of energy. There were times when I was practicing Yi Zhi Chan that I felt strong sensations as though my skin came alive and “woke up.” It would even seem like something was touching my body in various places but whenever I looked, nothing was there. One time, after about 15 or 20 minutes, I decided to stand up without warning. I thought, “Let me try it.” I experienced a very strange activity in my right hip where the arthritis was the worst. I really can’t put it into words but it felt like a wave passed through the inside of my body, my leg, and within that wave I felt like a series of “clicks.” I could hear them distinctly, and I certainly could feel them. This phenomenon was so strange that it actually frightened me. It was fast like a drum roll and very, very powerful. A single wave from the top of my body to the bottom of my foot moved in a split second. These rapid-firing series of clicks were just so fast! It was the feeling and the sound that shocked me, surprised me! It also scared me so much that I started to reach for Yan and as he went to grab to me, I suddenly realized that there was nothing to be afraid of. Initially I thought that I had done something wrong but when he didn’t grab me, I just leaned back into the position. That’s when I realized something good just happened, something “opened.” Later Yan told me that the joints opened and the Chi had flowed through the openings where it had been stuck before. [\[55\]](#) From that point on, I was doing the beginning of my lesson on the stool and maybe 10 or 15 minutes while standing!

From the onset, Yan pointed out that, although some exercises are for meditation, my assigned ones were not. He told me to be sure not to concentrate or think about them as long as the posture was correct, and he was always there to readjust my posture if I lost and drifted away from it. The easy way to keep the exercise going was by watching a movie especially without commercials to distract me. It was easy for Yan and me to work together just by picking out a subject and having conversations. I would do 40 or 45 minutes exercising.

As of June 1999, I was able to stand sometimes up to 70 or 80 minutes, which is unbelievable. To think that three or four years ago I couldn't do the sitting exercise for more than five minutes!

Yi Zhi Chan is a separate form of exercises from the Shaolin Temple and, as I then realized, was a very special form. The first posture of this form is for the whole body and, for about two years, I practiced without doing the "one finger" part. When Yan felt I was ready, we started moving the fingers on both hands in a particular sequence. Eventually, we practiced that way in the middle of the exercise program. After 20 or 30 minutes of the still-standing part of my program, we include the finger movements in a special order and time. Yan explained to me that the purpose of bending the finger is send Chi to a certain organ or area in the body and what area Chi will be directed to depends on the specific sequence that you move your fingers in. As Yan explained, the concept at work here is that this Chi direction technique works like a water hose. When you bend the hose, pressure builds and then when you unbend it, a strong stream of water gushes out. [\[56\]](#)

Yan informed me that I cannot do this exercise until I have enough Chi. According to Yan, my Chi is very strong and that, after three years of One Finger Chan, I actually have more Chi than the average guy. If you saw my upper body today you wouldn't believe that I have any health problem at all. My face has a red healthy color, my voice is deep and loud, and I can walk for a long time like anyone else. The only downside to my condition is that I still have to take medication, but it's a lot less than it was four years ago.

I was slowly building more confidence in this program. By April 1997, I was standing the majority of the time during exercising. Although each exercise is the same way for everyone, Yan specifically designed a program for me, which included an additional series of gentle movements done a different way. First he had me hold my walker and move from side to side without any arm movement. After several months, I practiced by placing one foot forward and the other foot backward for a set, and then reversing the feet to move in the opposite directions but still without any arm movement. Step by step, I now practice a whole of series with three-dimensional universal movements [\[57\]](#) after my Yi Zhi Chan exercises.

By this stage of my recovery program, my circulation was improving, my thumb completely healed, my hip joints had less pain, I gained more mobility and I could get rid of the wheelchair service in school. In many ways large and small I had plenty of evidence that my exercise program was working.

To this day I am still being treated for this complication, but my leg doesn't swell like it did six years ago and my medication is gradually being reduced. I take a lot of medication, so I took additional medicine to prevent blockages, maintain a steady bowel movement and allow me to urinate regularly for the sake of the kidneys. However, under my doctors' careful scrutiny, I was able to stop taking that medicine. Also the blood thinner that prevented blot clots was reduced by almost 50 and I completely discontinued at least three or four medications. I continue to take three main medications for maintaining the transplant, which I will probably have to do for the rest of my life, but I either take bare minimum amounts of the lesser maintenance medications or have stopped completely. Today I still visit the University of Miami transplant program once a month to make sure that my vital numbers remain healthy and steady.

When I first started standing during my recovery, anyone could definitely see that my feet were pointing forward while my upper body turned to my right. I was actually standing with my feet pointing forward and my head pointing to the right, maybe 10 off to the right. It is still that way when I start to stiffen up, but now I know what exercises will restore my whole body so that it is facing forward and more open. I had to use support bars installed on both shower doors and the right wall because my stiffness prevented me from moving around when showering. Today, however, I pretty much can shower like anyone else, without those bars!

For the longest time, I couldn't go into big stores like Home Depot or a supermarket. They were just too big for me to walk around in. What a thrill it was when I could finally shop with my wife! Walking on the soft and uneven surface of a sandy beach without falling down is now possible for me. Before I couldn't do all those little things most people take for granted, like getting in and out of a car, brushing my teeth, washing my face, doing laundry, stacking the dishwasher and many, many more. Now I can. At first simple tasks would take me 10 times longer than the average person to complete, but now they might only take me twice as long or less to complete and without a lot of effort, pain or stiffness. That's quite a change!

Today I enjoy a better sense of humor and have more enthusiasm in whatever I do. My temperament has mellowed, my intuitive awareness is more tuned in to my surroundings and my overall outlook is positive. I'm still amazed about how much I can do now compared to what I could do before. When I first got arthritis, whenever I did the music and directed big chorus productions with the kids at school, I would just sit on a

stool and try to stand a little at the end of the performance. However, at the last performance in June 1999, I stood throughout almost the entire performance and was able to move too while conducting.

Without the support and encouragement of my wife Toni [\[58\]](#) and my friend Mike, I would have never headed in the direction that eventually brought me to Yan and my continuously improving health. To this day my wife and I still enjoy my lessons from Yan.

***N. B.** - The authors of this book are very glad to see Tom recovering and very much admire his strong will to live, which is the most critical factor in his recovery. Without his determination, no one could do anything for him*

Chapter 14 Footnotes

51. *For silk reeling movement see Chapters 5 and 8.*
52. *For Original Natal Chi see Chapters 2 and 3.*
53. *Author's note: People do many kinds of exercising, like aerobics, running and swimming, but once they leave the gym, they cannot practically apply the movements to their everyday physical and mental activities and behaviors. However, when they truly know Tai Chi, their bodies automatically, without any thought, function and move according to the principles of Tai Chi. This happens in every single phase of*
54. *physical and mental activity, even in sleep.*
55. *See Chapters 4 and 6 for more details in emitting and sharing Chi.*
56. *For stillness exercises to open our joints and Chi channels, check Chapter 4.*
57. *For changing the body position to affect Chi circulation, see Chapter 4.*
58. *For more information about three-dimensional universal movement, see Chapter 5.*
59. *Toni Stamos Mullen*



Postscript

Today technology is so advanced that we can travel into space, build skyscrapers, “smart” cars and homes, and communicate across the planet in a split second. Yet no matter how highly evolved the accomplishments, none compare to man’s ability to control his own body. Often we witness how successful people after gaining fame, fortune and power. Various circumstances arrive to the conclusion that the most valuable asset they possess is their own body. By comparison, everything else is insignificant.

For thousands of years the Chinese people gradually developed a profound health care system based on their understanding of the human body, practical experience and observation. I myself am someone who personally received tremendous benefit from this system.

When I was six years old, I was diagnosed with arthritis in both knees, which would eventually have a fatal affect on my heart. My parents tried everything, including physical therapy, acupuncture, acupressure, herbal treatment and Western medical therapy and treatment to name a few. For more than 10 years I was so weak that I periodically suffered normal maladies like colds and nervous stomach disorders until I met my teacher, Master Chen Quanzhong. Within one year of training under his guidance, all those conditions and the symptoms of the arthritis disappeared completely and permanently. To this day I haven’t even experienced a simple cold. I constantly think that even if a million dollars were offered to the person who could prevent anyone from getting a cold for 10 years, there would be no takers. However, my teacher did that for me and more!

Often man laments the loss of valuable knowledge from ancient civilizations, such as the construction of pyramids. Perhaps in the future when the medical experts review my case and that of Thomas Mullen (*see Chapter 14.3, Recovery Journal of Mr. Thomas Mullen*), they might declare these cases as some kind of “miracle cures” or the experts might conclude that they never occurred at all.

Generally speaking, mankind subconsciously views himself as the “center of the universe.” For example, the Chinese people call their country the *Middle Kingdom*, as if the rest of the world was designated to the corners. Also, in movies depicting the planet Earth in trouble, the action usually occurs in the United States according to *Hollywood* movie studios. This mentality makes it easy for people to deny that which they don’t understand. We assume that our ancestors were not technically astute and could not possibly be as smart or advanced as we are today. Therefore, when we uncover some ancient information that we do not understand, we tend to reject it. That’s human nature.

The intention of *What Is Chi?* is to keep a record of such worthy ancient information before it gets lost and nobody believes that *once upon a time* there existed an invaluable and effective system.

- *Master Max Gaofei Yan*

What Is Chi?

Chinese Word Usage

Ba Bei - Raising the back

Ba Duan Jin - Eight Piece Brocade

Bai Hui - “Convergence of Hundreds of Meridians” (Acupuncture point referenced)

Bao Ping Qi - “Energy in a treasure bottle”; Buddhist breath-control exercises

Bu Chi - Infuse Chi into the (internal) organs

Chang Qiang - “Long Strong” (Acupuncture point referenced)

Chi - Energy; Air

Chi Gong - Internal energy exercise

Chong point - Qi Pouring (Acupuncture point referenced)

Chu Huo Ding - “Wild Fire Under Control”; Buddhist advanced breath-control exercise

Da Gan - Long Staff form

Da Zhou Tian - Exercise of the Large Heavenly Circle or macro-orbit

Da Zhou Tian - Large Heavenly Circle or macro-orbit

Dan - Pill/elixir

Dan Tian - Area used to make “Dan”; refers to the lower abdomen region unless otherwise indicated

Dang - Arch (shape)

Dang - Inner thighs

Dao Yin - Leading and guiding energy/Chi.

Du - Governing Vessel Acupuncture Meridian

Du Meridian - The primary channel in which Chi flows posterior to the spine up to the Bai Hui (crown point) and then descends to the mouth to connect with and flow down the Ren meridian completing the Small Heavenly Circle

Fa Jing - The rapid fire type of explosive power that is released along the “Shoulder Well” (Jian Jing) and the “Curved Pond” (Qu Chi)

Feng - Wind

Feng Shui - Chi/energy is hidden and yet permeates throughout our natural environment

Feng Shui - Refers to the permeation of Chi throughout our natural environment

Fu Gui Wu Ji - Back to Emptiness/ Wuji (5 of 5 Chi Gung category)

Guan - Observation

Guan Xian - Exercise that uses the breath in conjunction with the mind

He Gu - Acupuncture point at the area located between the index finger and your thumb known as the “tiger’s mouth”

Hou Zi Shi - “Alive at midnight”

Huan Tiao - Circling Jump (Acupuncture point referenced)

Hui - To converge (Acupuncture point referenced)

Hui Yin - Merging Perineum (Acupuncture point referenced)

Jian- Sword

Jian Jing -Shoulder Well (Acupuncture point referenced)

Jing - Hormone

Jing Lou - Chi meridians or pathways

Jing Luo - Chi meridians (channels)

Jiu Jie Fo Feng - “Nine Section Buddha’s Wind”; Buddhist advanced breath-control exercise

Jue Yin - Heart / Arm Acupuncture Meridian

Jue Yin - Liver / Leg Acupuncture Meridian

Kua - The hips area

Lao Gong - Acupuncture point in the center of the palm

Liang Jing Hua Qi - Build More Jing / Produce More Hormones

Liang Qi Hua Shen - Practicing and Driving Chi (3 of 5 Chi Gung category)

Liang Shen Huan Xu - Heightening the Mental Capacity or Other Special Ability (Four of five Chi Gung categories)

Long Men Pai - Dragon gate

Ming - Physical and energy body

Ming Men - Gate of Life (Acupuncture point referenced)

Na - Inhale

Nei - Internal

Nei Dan - Internal elixir (special); breathing exercises

Nei Gong Jing - Internal strength through

Nei Wai Shuan Xiu - Practicing internal and external together

Ni Chan - The outward rotation done when the thumb rotates toward to little finger, which creates centrifugal force or opening and expanding

Pei Yuan Gu Ben - Building a Foundation (1 of 5 Chi Gung categories)

Peng Lu Ji An - Four of the eight basic directions of delivering force as taught in martial movements for example

Pi Quan - Split fist

Pi Wei Pai - Spleen-Stomach School

Qi Hai - "Energy Sea (Acupuncture point referenced)

Qi Men - Cyclic Door (Acupuncture point referenced)

Qu Chi - Curved Pond (Acupuncture point referenced)

Ren - Conception Vessel Acupuncture Meridian

Ren Meridian - The primary channel on the center line front of the body in which Chi flows down to the Dan Tian and then to the Hui Yin (perineum point) to connect and flow up the Du channel completing the Small Heavenly Circle

San Ti - Three forms

Shao Yang - Gallbladder / Leg Acupuncture Meridian

Shao Yang - Triple Warmer /Arm Acupuncture Meridian

Shao Yin - Heart /Arm Acupuncture Meridian

Shao Yin - Kidney / Leg Acupuncture Meridian

Shen - Mental capacity; enlightened spirit

Shui - Water

Shun Chan - The inward rotation done when the little finger rotates toward the thumb, which creates centripetal force, or closing; collapsing

Song - Relax

Tai Yang - Small Intestine / Arm Acupuncture Meridian

Tai Yin - Lung /Arm Acupuncture Meridian

Tai Yin - Spleen / Leg Acupuncture Meridian

Tian - Field or location (calderon)

Tu Na - Exercise that uses the breath to help improve and strengthen Chi circulation

Tua - Exhale

Wai - External

Wai Dan - External elixir or pill

Wai Dan - External medicine; pill

Wu Qin Xi - Five Animals Play (early Dao Yin exercise)

Wuji - State of “Nothingness”; empty

Xian - Contemplation

Xiao Zhou Tian - Exercise of the Small Heavenly Circle or micro-orbit

Xin Shen Pai - Heart-Kidney School

Xing - “Intrinsic natural” (spiritual body)

Xing Ming Shuan Xiu - Physical and spiritual training.

Xing Ming Shuang - Achieved fulfillment both in the physical body and in one’s intrinsic nature

Xiu - Beautiful, elegant, handsome

Yai Yang - Urinary Bladder / Leg Acupuncture Meridian

Yang Ming - Large Intestine / Arm Acupuncture Meridian

Yang Ming - Stomach / Leg Acupuncture Meridian

Yin - The anus and genitalia (Acupuncture point referenced) **Yong Quan** - “Bubbling or Gushing Well” or the “Gushing Spring” (Acupuncture point referenced) **Yu Kuo** - Mouth; the way Chi goes down by going thru the Yu Kuo.

Zhan Zhuang - Stillness Stance

Zhang Men - Bright Door (Acupuncture point referenced)

Zhong Fu - Central Mansion (Acupuncture point referenced)

Zi - Suspend





Zi Guan Exercise that uses the breath in conjunction with the mind like Guan Xian; insight, contemplation and observation

Zou Chan - (Buddhist) Sitting meditation



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When the student is ready, the teacher will appear. - Buddhist saying





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