

The Tai Chi Classics

Chang San Feng –Taoist (13th Century)

In every movement the entire body should be light & agile, and all of its parts connected like a string of pearls.

- All postures must be practiced without the slightest constraint of energy & without any irrelevant tensions. Only then will the legs, arms, and trunk be weightless & nimble; only then will the body feel lively, alert, smooth and free.
- The lightness is not emptiness; it contains intrinsic energy. The agility is not superficial; it conceals a watchful awareness. Only when the entire body is light & agile in every movement can we talk about connecting all the parts of the body, like a string of pearls.
- In order to achieve the above, the following conditions need to be achieved:-
 1. Concentration of the mind
 2. Complete relaxation of the body
 3. Sinking of the Qi to the Dantien, & abiding by it so that the breathing may be deep & slow

The Qi should be stimulated & the spirit of vitality should be concealed within. When this occurs,

- the heart (mind) will be tranquil & the entire body relaxed so that one may become alert & sensitive; disease can be prevented, and longevity enhanced. The classic continues;

There should be no deficiency & no excess, no hollows, no projections and no severance.

- When practicing, the whole body should be rounded out. The movements should be slow, smooth, even, effortless & continuous, so the blood can circulate freely.

The energy is rooted in the feet, develops in the legs, is directed by the waist & moves up to the fingers.

- The feet, legs and waist must act as one, so that when advancing and retreating you will obtain a good opportunity & superior position.
- After prolonged practice the Qi that is rooted in the feet, develops to the legs, to the waist, spine, arms and fingers.

Mental Elucidation of 13 postures

Wang Chung Yueh – Ming Dynasty

- *This classic emphasises the methods of practice, with the utmost delicacy and accuracy.*
- The key principles include;
 - the mind directing the Qi (a leading premise of this classic)
 - Head suspended by a thread from above
 - When standing, the body should be erect & relaxed, able to sustain an attack from any direction.
 - The abdomen is completely relaxed, enabling the Qi to sink and penetrate the bones.
 - The mind is the commander, the Qi is the flag, and the waist is the banner. Basically, the mind leads, and the body follows

Tai Chi Chuan Treatise

Wang Chung Yueh – Ming Dynasty

- *Tai Chi evolves from Wu Chi and is the mother of Yin & Yang.*
- In movement the two become separated, in stillness they combine into one. There should be no excess and no insufficiency. You give (yield) as the opponent stretches out.
- To conquer the strong by yielding is called withdrawal; to make a favourable position of your own and a defect in your opponent is termed adherence. You respond quickly to fast action, and respond to slow action in a leisurely manner.
- Stand like a balanced scale, move actively like a cartwheel.
- if you keep your weight on one side, you can adapt to all circumstances; if you are 'double weighted', your actions will be impeded.
- *This classic is more focussed on martial application.*