

# T'ai Chi

The "Supreme Ultimate"  
Exercise for Health, Sport,  
and Self-Defense



TUTTLE

by Cheng Man-ch'ing & Robert W. Smith





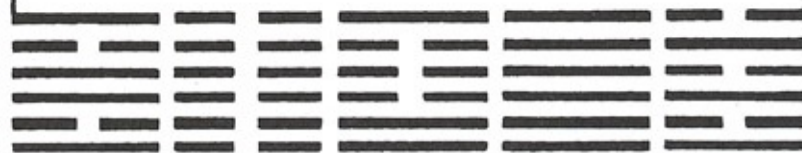
Cheng Man-ch'ing & Robert W. Smith

# T'ai Chi

The "Supreme Ultimate" Exercise  
for Health, Sport, and Self-Defense

TUTTLE Publishing

Tokyo | Rutland, Vermont | Singapore



---

## Disclaimer

Please note that the publisher and author(s) of this instructional book are **NOT RESPONSIBLE** in any manner whatsoever for any injury that may result from practicing the techniques and/or following the instructions given within. Martial arts training can be dangerous—both to you and to others—if not practiced safely. If you're in doubt as to how to proceed or whether your practice is safe, consult with a trained martial arts teacher before beginning. Since the physical activities described herein may be too strenuous in nature for some readers, it is also essential that a physician be consulted prior to training.

"All the photographs in this book are printed in reverse image to facilitate imitation of the movements illustrated. Thus you should follow the photographs exactly as though you were looking at your own reflection in the mirror. Accompanying the photographs are diagrams showing the exact position and weighing of the feet. Note that the foot diagrams are not reversed and hence show the position of your own feet as you stand looking in the "mirror" of the photographs. In some cases the photographs are not reversed and these examples are noted in the instructions."

Published by Tuttle Publishing, an imprint of Periplus Editions (HK) Ltd.

[www.tuttlepublishing.com](http://www.tuttlepublishing.com)

Copyright © 1966 Cheng Man-ch'ing and Robert W. Smith  
All rights reserved.

LCC Card No, 67-23009  
ISBN 978-1-4629-0158-6

First U.S. edition, 1967  
First paperback edition, 2004

Distributed by:

*North America, Latin America Europe*

**Tuttle Publishing**, 364 Innovation Drive  
North Clarendon, VT 05759-9436  
Tel: 1 (802) 773 8930; Fax: 1 (802) 773 6993  
Email: [info@tuttlepublishing.com](mailto:info@tuttlepublishing.com)  
[www.tuttlepublishing.com](http://www.tuttlepublishing.com)

*Japan*

**Tuttle Publishing**, Yaekari Building, 3rd Floor  
5-4-12 Osaki, Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo 141-0032  
Tel: (81) 3 5437 0171; Fax: (81) 3 5437 0755  
Email: [sales@tuttle.co.jp](mailto:sales@tuttle.co.jp)  
[www.tuttle.co.jp](http://www.tuttle.co.jp)

*Asia Pacific*

**Berkeley Books Pte. Ltd.**, 61 Tai Seng Avenue  
#02-12, Singapore 534167  
Tel: (65) 6280 1330; Fax: (65) 6280 6290  
Email: [inquiries@periplus.com.sg](mailto:inquiries@periplus.com.sg)  
[www.periplus.com](http://www.periplus.com)

14 13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 1107TP  
Printed in Singapore

TUTTLE PUBLISHING® is a registered trademark of Tuttle Publishing, a division of Periplus Editions (HK) Ltd.

[Foreword](#)

ix

I.	<a href="#">Introducing T'ai-chi</a>	1
	<a href="#">The Name</a>	2
	<a href="#">History</a>	3
II.	<a href="#">Principles of T'ai-chi</a>	5
	<a href="#">Relaxation and Ch'i</a>	5
	<a href="#">Like a Child</a>	6
III.	<a href="#">T'ai-chi for a Healthier Life</a>	8
	<a href="#">The Three Factors</a>	8
	<a href="#">Movement</a>	9
	<a href="#">Slowness</a>	10
	<a href="#">Swimming in Air</a>	10
	<a href="#">Linkage</a>	10
	<a href="#">Tranquillity</a>	10
	<a href="#">Breathing</a>	11
IV.	<a href="#">The Solo Exercise</a>	12
	<a href="#">Posture 1. Preparation</a>	13
	<a href="#">Posture 2. Beginning</a>	14
	<a href="#">Posture 3. Grasp Sparrow's Tail, Ward-off, Left</a>	15
	<a href="#">Posture 4. Grasp Sparrow's Tail, Ward-off, Right</a>	16
	<a href="#">Posture 5. Grasp Sparrow's Tail, Rollback</a>	17
	<a href="#">Posture 6. Grasp Sparrow's Tail, Press</a>	18
	<a href="#">Posture 7. Grasp Sparrow's Tail, Push</a>	19
	<a href="#">Posture 8. Single Whip</a>	20
	<a href="#">Posture 9. Lift Hands</a>	21
	<a href="#">Posture 10. Lean Forward</a>	22
	<a href="#">Posture 11. Stork Spreads Wings</a>	23
	<a href="#">Posture 12. Brush Left Knee and Twist Step</a>	24
	<a href="#">Posture 13. Play the Guitar</a>	25
	<a href="#">Posture 13A. (Repeat of Posture 12)</a>	25
	<a href="#">Posture 14. Step Forward, Deflect Downward, Parry, and Punch</a>	26
	<a href="#">Posture 15. Withdraw and Push</a>	27
	<a href="#">Posture 16. Cross Hands</a>	28
	<a href="#">Posture 17. Embrace Tiger and Return to Mountain</a>	29

---

<a href="#">Posture 17A. (Repeat of Posture 5)</a>	30
<a href="#">Posture 17B. (Repeat of Posture 6)</a>	30
<a href="#">Posture 17C. (Repeat of Posture 7)</a>	30
<a href="#">Posture 17D. (Repeat of Posture 8)</a>	30
<a href="#">Posture 18. Punch Under Elbow</a>	32
<a href="#">Posture 19. Step Back and Repulse Monkey, Right</a>	33
<a href="#">Posture 20. Step Back and Repulse Monkey, Left</a>	34
<a href="#">Posture 20A. (Repeat of Posture 19)</a>	34
<a href="#">Posture 21. Diagonal Flying</a>	35
<a href="#">Posture 22. Wave Hands in Clouds, Right</a>	36
<a href="#">Posture 23. Wave Hands in Clouds, Left</a>	37
<a href="#">Posture 23A. (Repeat of Posture 22)</a>	38
<a href="#">Posture 23B. (Repeat of Posture 23)</a>	38
<a href="#">Posture 23C. (Repeat of Posture 8)</a>	39
<a href="#">Posture 24. Squatting Single Whip</a>	40
<a href="#">Posture 25. Golden Cock Stands on One Leg, Right</a>	41
<a href="#">Posture 26. Golden Cock Stands on One Leg, Left</a>	42
<a href="#">Posture 27. Separate Right Foot</a>	43
<a href="#">Posture 28. Separate Left Foot</a>	44
<a href="#">Posture 29. Turn and Strike with Heel</a>	45
<a href="#">Posture 29A. (Repeat of Posture 12)</a>	46
<a href="#">Posture 30. Brush Right Knee and Twist Step</a>	47
<a href="#">Posture 31. Step Forward and Strike with Fist</a>	48
<a href="#">Posture 31A. (Repeat of Posture 4)</a>	49
<a href="#">Posture 31B. (Repeat of Posture 5)</a>	49
<a href="#">Posture 31C. (Repeat of Posture 6)</a>	50
<a href="#">Posture 31D. (Repeat of Posture 7)</a>	50
<a href="#">Posture 31E. (Repeat of Posture 8)</a>	51
<a href="#">Posture 32. Fair Lady Works at Shuttles, Right</a>	52
<a href="#">Posture 33. Fair Lady Works at Shuttles, Left</a>	53
<a href="#">Posture 33A. (Repeat of Posture 32)</a>	54
<a href="#">Posture 33B. (Repeat'of Posture 33)</a>	55
<a href="#">Posture 33C. (Repeat of Posture 3)</a>	56
<a href="#">Posture 33D. (Repeat of Posture 4)</a>	57
<a href="#">Posture 33E. (Repeat of Posture 5)</a>	57
<a href="#">Posture 33F. (Repeat of Posture 6)</a>	58
<a href="#">Posture 33G. (Repeat of Posture 7)</a>	58
<a href="#">Posture 33H. (Repeat of Posture 8)</a>	59
<a href="#">Posture 33-1. (Repeat of Posture 24)</a>	60
<a href="#">Posture 34. Step Forward to Seven Stars</a>	61

[Posture 35. Step Back and Ride Tiger](#) 62

---

[Posture 36. Turn Body and Sweep Lotus with Leg](#) 63

[Posture 37. Bend Bow and Shoot Tiger](#) 64

[Posture 37A. \(Repeat of Posture 14\)](#) 65

[Posture 37B. \(Repeat of Posture 15\)](#) 65

[Posture 37C. \(Repeat of Posture 16\)](#) 66

[Posture 37D. Conclusion](#) 67

[The Solo Exercise Checklist](#) 68

[The Solo Exercise: A Photographic Sequence](#) 69

V. [T'ai-chi for Sport](#) 78

[Pushing-Hands Practice: The Basic Movements](#) 80

[Movement 1. Single-Hand Exercise](#) 82

[Movement 2. Ward-off](#) 84

[Movement 3. Press](#) 85

[Movement 4. Rollback](#) 86

[Movement 5. Push](#) 87

[Uprooting Technique: How to Perfect It](#) 88

VI. [T'ai-chi for Self-Defense](#) 90

[Interpreting Strength](#) 90

[Self-Defense Movements](#) 92

[Movement 1. Step Forward, Deflect Downward, Parry, and Punch](#) 93

[Movement 2. Withdraw and Push](#) 94

[Movement 3. Squatting Single Whip and Golden Cock Stands on One Leg, Right](#) 95

[Movement 4. Separate Right Foot](#) 96

[Movement 5. Fair Lady Works at Shuttles, Right](#) 97

[Movement 6. Turn Body and Sweep Lotus with Leg](#) 98

VII. [Two Masters Look at T'ai-chi](#) 99

[Yang Cheng-fu's Twelve Important Points](#) 99

[Questions and Answers](#) 100

VIII. [The T'ai-chi Ch'uan Classics](#) 100

[The Body as One Unit](#) 100

[Coordinating the Substantial and Insubstantial](#) 100

[The Thirteen Postures and the Mind](#) 111

[Song of the Thirteen Postures](#) 111

[Song of the Pushing-Hands Practice](#) 111

Key to the Foot-Weighting Diagrams

11

Sequence Diagram of the Solo Exercise

11



After twenty years of practice, Professor Cheng Man-ch'ing in 1950 published *Cheng-tzu T'ai-chi Ch'uan Shih-san P'ien* (Cheng's Thirteen Chapters on T'ai-chi Boxing). A decade later the growing popularity of T'ai-chi Ch'uan in the world led Cheng to publish a text in English on the art. The text suffered, however, from severe inadequacies in scope and presentation. At Cheng's request, I took the text to the present publisher, but he was as disturbed about its imperfections as I. He suggested a fresh start on an entirely new book with my full collaboration. The present book is the result. It has been built from the published versions of Cheng's two books—the one in Chinese and the other in English—as well as from the oral instructions in T'ai-chi that I received from Cheng and my own research concerning the art.

Cheng Man-ch'ing is a remarkable man. He is a versatile and brilliant master of the "Five Excellences" (Painting, Poetry, Calligraphy, Medicine, and T'ai-chi), on the wrong side of sixty, but with the vitality of a man much younger. After I knocked on his door for a year—the usual Chinese custom—he accepted me as a student. For more than seven years it has been my pleasure to learn the intricacies of the art under his tutelage. Every bit a gentleman, he is the living representation of T'ai-chi. I have studied many systems of T'ai-chi and have had the opportunity to see in action the leading teachers of Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore. None can stand before Cheng.

So in all sincerity let it be said: this is his book. My part in it is to present his teaching as clearly as possible. Paraphrasing Michael Drayton speaking of his beloved Wales, I wish to say of T'ai-chi: "If I have not done it right, the want is in my ability, not in my love."

Both Professor Cheng and I thank Liu Chen-huan for his diligent efforts in helping to put the manuscript in final form; E. Gunberg, B. Fusaro, and D. Slater for editorial corrigenda and suggestions; and W. Neisler, R. Mischke, and E. Maginnes for assistance with the graphics. And by no means least, we thank Sylvia Jackson for her patient and excellent typing of the text through several revisions.

ROBERT W. SMITH



## Introducing T'ai-chi

Man cannot live fully without exercise. The *I Ching* (Book of Changes) says: "Nature is always in motion. Man also should strengthen himself without interruption." Exercise leads to robust health, high spirits, and rational thinking. There are, however, many kinds of exercise: ballplaying, swimming, traditional boxing, wrestling, and weightlifting, to name but a few. Without exception, each has built-in limitations. Weather restricts ballplaying, weakness prevents participation in the more rigorous sports, and age and sex inhibit activity in others. More importantly, though these sports differ in form, they are similar in that most never go beyond reliance on weight, force, and speed.

T'ai-chi is both an integrated exercise and an enjoyable sport for all: rich and poor, strong and weak, young and old, male and female. Weather does not inhibit its practice. Requirements of time and space are minimal. If one has a space approximately four feet on a side and can spare ten minutes a day, he can practice T'ai-chi without spending a cent.

For hundreds of years Westerners have been puzzled at seeing Chinese from all walks of life doing this effortless, rhythmical, ballet-like exercise both at dawn and at dusk. By way of explanation, Chinese say that whoever practices T'ai-chi, correctly and regularly, twice a day over a period of time will gain the pliability of a child, the health of a lumberjack, and the peace of mind of a sage. The amazing results achieved suggest that this is not just idle boasting, that perhaps, in some way unknown to Western science, T'ai-chi can indeed do all this, and more. Stressing slow respiration and balanced, relaxed postures, it certainly promotes deep breathing, digestion, the functioning of the internal organs, and blood circulation. And perhaps there is also basis for the claim that T'ai-chi can relieve, if not actually cure, neurasthenia, high blood pressure, anemia, tuberculosis, and many other maladies.

*The T'ai-chi symbol and the eight trigrams. T'ai-chi's eight postures as well as the functions of evolution and the operations of nature are symbolized by the eight trigrams.*



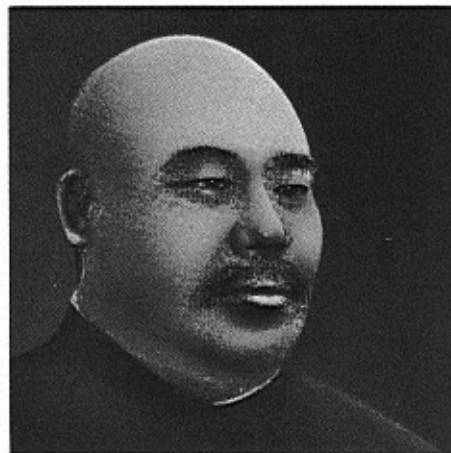
Besides the Solo Exercise (pages 12-77) with its therapeutic value, T'ai-chi also has two other

aspects. The Pushing-Hands Practice (pages 80-89), in which two opponents compete in trying to uproot each other, constitutes a sport. Beyond this, T'ai-chi is a method of self-defense par excellence. Judo, Aikido, and a few other Asian methods stress the yielding principle of T'ai-chi, but none achieve to the same degree its relaxation, suppleness, and subtlety.

The Taoists advocate *wu wei* (non-action or effortlessness) and the Buddhists venerate "emptying." The motto for T'ai-chi practice must be "investment in loss." It is what Confucius meant by *k'e chi*—subdue the self. How is this manifested in mundane affairs? It means to yield to others, thus quashing obstinacy, egotism, and selfishness. But it is not an easy thing. To persist in the Solo Exercise amid life's busy requirements is self-humbling. In the Pushing-Hands Practice, the student must accept failure many times over in the early stages. To yield and adhere to an opponent cannot be achieved by an egotist—his ego will not tolerate the bruising necessary before mastery comes. But here, as in life, this proximity to reality must overcome ego if one is to walk a whole man.

**THE NAME** The full and formal title is T'ai-chi Ch'uan (pronounced "tie-jee chwan,") the latter word meaning simply "fist" or "boxing." The term *t'ai-chi* is derived from a concept of Chinese philosophy meaning "supreme ultimate." Philosophically, T'ai-chi is said to be the primary principle of all things and is represented by a circle divided into light and dark aspects, representing the yang and yin concepts, which reflect opposite attributes such as male and female, activity and inactivity, firmness and softness, light and darkness, and positive and negative. Through the complementary interaction of yin and yang sprang the five elements—fire, water, earth, wood, and metal. This book is not the place to go into the intricacies of the subject. Suffice it to say that T'ai-chi was named for an ultimate philosophical principle because its early proponents felt it expressed an ultimate physical principle.

*Yang Cheng-fu, a late master of T'ai-chi. Yang was the teacher who handed down this centuries-old art to the senior author. He is the author of "Yang Cheng-fu's Twelve Important Points" (see Chapter VII).*



**HISTORY** There are four main theories on the origin of T'ai-chi. The most popular states that Char San-feng, a Taoist priest of the Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), learned it in a dream. \* A second theory holds that it originated in the T'ang dynasty (618-907) and developed through four separate schools—the Hsu, Yu, Ch'eng, and Yin. A third claim states that the Ch'en family of Ch'en Chia Kou in Honan province created T'ai-chi during the Ming dynasty (1368-1654). The fourth thesis—and the most reasonable—simply avers that the founder is unknown, but that the development of T'ai-chi dates from one Wang Tsung-yueh of Shansi province, who introduced it in Honan during the reign of Ch'ien-lung (1736-95) of the Ch'ing dynasty. This last theory holds that once, while passing through Ch'en Chia Kou in Wen-hsien (Honan province), Wang Tsung-yueh saw the villagers practicing a form of hand boxing called *pao cti ui*. Later at his inn he made an offhand remark on the method which the villagers—almost all surnamed Ch'en—had practiced for generations. His remark brought

several challenges and he met them all successfully. The villagers were impressed and asked Wang to stay for a short while to teach them his method. Moved by their sincerity, he agreed and helped them modify their hard boxing method into the softer T'ai-chi.

Much later, T'ai-chi at Ch'en Chia Kou was divided into the "new" and "old" styles, with Ch'ang-hsing representing the "old" and Ch'en Yu-pen the "new." Ch'en Chiang-hsiang, another famous teacher of the "old" style, was engaged by a druggist in Yung Lien Hsien (in what is now Hopei province) to teach his sons. A servant of the family, Yang Lu-ch'an, secretly watched the practices and soon became so expert he was accepted as a student. Yang later went to Peking, capital of the Ch'ing dynasty, where he taught the emperor's guards. He met challenges from all sides of the boxing spectrum and was never defeated.

Yang Lu-ch'an passed his art on to his two sons, Chien-hou (d. 1917) and Pan-hou (d. 1881). Chien-hou in turn transmitted the family skill to his two sons, Shao-hou (d. 1929) and Cheng-fu (d. 1935). The latter, Yang Cheng-fu, brought T'ai-chi of the Yang variety to South China. \* The author of this present text, Cheng Man-ch'ing, learned personally from Yang for nearly a decade and today is spreading the Yang style of T'ai-chi throughout the world.

#### FOOTNOTE

\* Legend sits heavily on this personage: he was reputed to have lived several hundred years and his exploits were so supernormal that one must conclude that they derive more from legend than from historical fact. His more responsible biographers and his tombstone state simply that Chang was a Taoist living on Mt. Wutang in Hupeh province and that he created a so-called internal school of boxing. The postures of his method, however, bear little resemblance to the T'ai-chi we know today.

\* See Chapter VII for the core of Yang Cheng-fu's teaching.



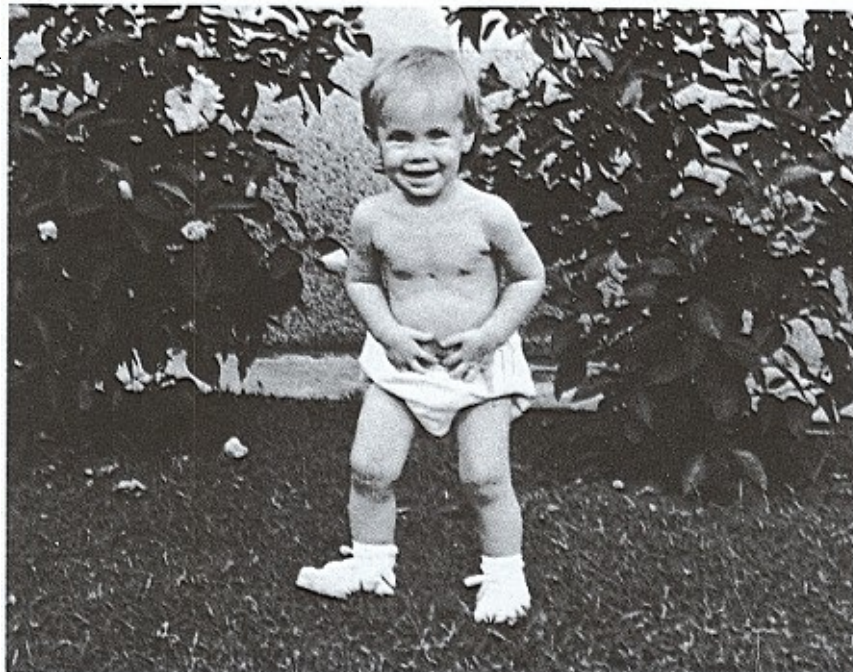
## Principles of T'ai-chi

RELAXATION AND CH'I In considering the fundamental principles of T'ai-chi we immediately come upon a word—*ch'i* (pronounced "chee")—which is as important as it is difficult to define. It can mean simply "air," as in the context of respiration, but in true T'ai-chi it should mean much more. W. T. Chan has well observed that "ch'i denotes the psychophysiological power associated with blood and breath," or another English equivalent might be "intrinsic energy." Oddly enough, most writers in English on T'ai-chi have maintained an embarrassed silence concerning *ch'i*. Cheng Man-ch'ing, however, gives it a central place in his system, saying that mind (*i*) and intrinsic energy (*ch'i*) are complementary bases of T'ai-chi, without which it would become merely a physiological exercise undeserving of the name "supreme ultimate." In the present book, then, *ch'i* is considered to be at the very heart of T'ai-chi, and we shall continue to use the Chinese term rather than any of the necessarily inexact English equivalents.

How should a novice begin his training in T'ai-chi? He should relax completely. The aim is to throw every bone and muscle of the body wide open so that the *ch'i* may travel unobstructed. Once this is done, the chest must be further relaxed and the *ch'i* made to sink to the navel. After a time the *ch'i* will be felt accumulating for mass integration in the navel, from where it will begin to circulate throughout the body. A tornado is but the massed movement of air and a tidal wave that of water. As-whiff, nothing is more pliable than air; as a drop, nothing more yielding than water. But as tornadoes and tidal waves, air and water carry everything before them. Mass integration makes the difference. Later, the student will be able to direct the *ch'i* instantaneously to any part of his body by means of his mind.

Exercise your spine so that the *ch'i* can travel this avenue to the top of your head. Your head is held as if suspended by the scalp from the ceiling of the room. This posture immobilizes the head and spine so that neither can move independently of the rest of the body. It strengthens the spine, the vital inner organs, and the brain itself. Make a habit of concentrating on the *ch'i*. This can be done at work or play, walking or riding. Formation of the habit requires perseverance but is infinitely better and far less expensive than the modern practice of regular ingestion of medicines.

The movement deriving from this internal generation and circulation of the *ch'i* we call "propelled" movement. During the exercise, limbs and other body components are moved not so much by localized exertions as by the force of the *ch'i*. In the next, more advanced stage, the *ch'i* is absorbed by and stored in the marrow, causing the bones to become steel hard and essentially indestructible. When this stage is accomplished the student may be said to have reached the highest level.



*You must become like a child.*

**LIKE A CHILD** Observe a child. Note how he breathes —not high in the chest but low in the abdomen. See, too, how he meets an accident—relaxed and with no apprehension in his mind. You may charge this off to ignorance, but, this notwithstanding, the child more often than not emerges from accidents unscathed. So perhaps the experience/intelligence clogging the adult's mind and causing his body to stiffen is really not such an asset after all. Let the child grasp your finger and try to retract it. Difficult, isn't it? The grasp is firm but not frenzied; there is true energy involved. Finally, watch how a child stands —straight but not stiff. We can truly learn from children. T'ai-chi believes that progress can be made only if one becomes like a child.



## T'ai-chi for a Healthier Life

The chief aim of this book is to impart information on T'ai-chi as a system of health-giving exercise. This chapter gives the information which is required by the reader before he begins the exercises in the following chapter. The application of T'ai-chi in sport and self-defense is presented in Chapters IV and VI.

**THE THREE FACTORS** In T'ai-chi three factors are very important: correct teaching, perseverance and natural talent. Of the three, correct teaching (or right method) is the most important. Without it no success comes even if a student of high natural ability works himself beyond human endurance. On the other hand, given the right kind of instruction, success can be achieved through perseverance even if one's natural talent is below average. In essence, two of the three factors—correct teaching and perseverance—are prerequisites for success. Natural ability is only helpful when the other factors are also present. There is a wonderful passage in Confucius which says: "Some are born with knowledge, some derive it from study, and some acquire it only after a painful realization of their ignorance. But the knowledge being possessed, it comes to the same thing. Some study with a natural ease, some from a desire for advantages, and some by strenuous effort. But the achievement being made, it comes to the same thing."<sup>\*</sup>

The usual type of T'ai-chi consists of 128 postures, including many repetitions. To go through a full round requires more than fifteen minutes if done at the recommended speed. In order to shorten the time required, Cheng Man-ch'ing reduced the number of postures to thirty-seven by eliminating most of the repeated postures. Compared with the earliest T'ai-chi, which numbered only thirteen postures, Cheng's method contains nearly triple the number of the original actions. Moreover, it does not leave out any of the essential elements of the 128-posture method nor does it change the sequence. To go through a round requires from three to five minutes, depending on one's speed. If done daily, one round in the morning before breakfast and one before retiring at night will contribute greatly to a healthy life. This ten-minute investment a day is paltry enough, but the returns are great. The student, however, must take care not to miss a round. Miss a meal, be a few minutes late for bed, but do not miss a round of T'ai-chi. Perseverance is-a must!

If one has natural talent, his progress will of course be speedier and surer. Unfortunately, in this respect nature is liberal to some and sparing to others. Moreover, when the allotment is made, it is fixed and beyond human power to modify it for the better. Knowledge and skill are quite different—even the least talented can acquire these through determined application. In *The Doctrine of the Mean* Confucius speaks thus of the superior man and learning: "He will not interrupt his labor. If another succeeds by one effort, he will use a hundred; if another succeeds by ten efforts, he will use a thousand. If a man proceeds in this way, though dull, he will surely become intelligent; though weak,

he will surely become strong." Therefore, if lacking in natural aptitude, do not despair. All that required is more work!

---

**MOVEMENT** All movements are done with a relaxed body and a calm but concentrated mind. Walk like a cat—light and firm. In moving backward, touch the toe down first; in going forward, let the heel touch first. Then, as you shift your weight onto the foot, let the rest of the sole gradually proceed in place. Make the hands and head move as a part of the body and not independently. Almost all the movements are made circularly. This permits the reserving of energy, negates tension, and enhances relaxation, quite apart from its functional benefits. From Posture 3 to the concluding posture of the Solo Exercise (with the exception of Postures 24 and 33-1) the level of the body remains generally the same, that is, there is no rise and fall from shifts of body weight and there is little squatting or bending at the waist.

**SLOWNESS** The movements must be done at the same slow pace throughout. There are no fast postures—all are done at the same speed. The student may vary the speed used for the entire round but he should not vary the speed of separate postures. Slowness permits distinctness of movement and is attuned to calmness of mind. Also, it enables the mind to function to its fullest in imagining an opponent and in recognizing and appreciating the role played by the components of the body as one moves through the exercise.

**SWIMMING IN AIR** Man lives on land. His long familiarity with air often makes him forget its existence. Since it lacks solidity and shape, it eludes attention or easy mental grasp by the beginner. To liken air to water aids the imagination. It is like water in the sense that if one pretends to swim while out of water, his movements automatically conform to the principles of T'ai-chi. By the practice, the novice ultimately will "feel" the air to be heavy in the sense that he feels water to be heavy. At this stage his body has become lighter and more pliable than that of the average man. The feeling of buoyancy and suppleness derives from firmly rooting the feet and using the body in "diving swimming." Functionally, this slow movement against an imagined resistance will ultimately create great speed in responding to a fighting situation.

**LINKAGE** Although the movements are done slowly, there is no interruption. The postures flow evenly without pause from start to end. The *ch'i* is blocked when the flow is impeded. Once one has paused, it takes several postures before one is again "on the track." This wastes these postures since, if they are not *true*, they are useless. Do the exercises as though "pulling silk from a cocoon." Although Westerners initially may not understand this, a few words will make it clear. In pulling silk one must pull slowly, easily, and—above all—steadily. If one pauses, the strand will break when the pulling is started again.

**TRANQUILLITY** Slowing down the natural processes will not help if the mind is not calmed. Escape routine thoughts; initially concentrate on the postures. At first it will be difficult to block out extraneous thoughts and images, but disciplined practice will prevail in the end. As you proceed through the postures, you must think totally on them, so totally, in fact, that the mind literally embraces the postures and vice versa.

**BREATHING** Correct breathing must be coordinated with your movements. Inhale through your nose as you extend your arms outward or upward and exhale through your nose as you contract your arms or bring them downward. Initially, it is best not to be too concerned about breathing: first learn the



techniques of the postures and then incorporate the breathing. Ultimately, the breathing becomes such an intrinsic part of the exercise that you will not even have to think of it.

---

You are now ready to begin to learn the physical-exercise aspect of T'ai-chi, the Solo Exercises. Remember, as you are learning the exercises, to strive to form good habits based on the principles you have learned in this chapter.

#### FOOTNOTE

\* [The Doctrine of the Mean](#)



## The Solo Exercise

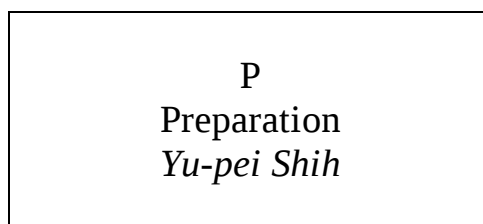
This section is the focal point of the book. Pains have been taken to make the explanatory material—both text and graphics—as clear as possible. Study it, work with it, and knowledge will come.

The entire Solo Exercise consists of sixty-five postures; thirty-seven are basic postures and twenty-eight are repetitions of basic postures. Each posture is designated by a number and name. For example, Posture 12, Brush Left Knee and Twist Step; followed by Posture 13, Play the Guitar. Following these is Posture 13A, which is a repetition of the movements in Posture 12.

Photographs for each posture are placed next to the appropriate text and are numbered consecutively for easy reference. *All the photographs in this chapter are printed in reverse image* to facilitate imitation of the movements illustrated. Thus you should follow the photographs exactly as though you were looking at your own reflection in a mirror.

Accompanying each photograph is a diagram showing the exact position and weighting of the feet. North is always toward the top of the page. Note that *these foot diagrams are not reversed* and hence show the position of your own feet as you stand looking in the "mirror" of the photographs. A key to the eight types of weightings indicated in the diagrams is given at the end of the book.

Also on the same page is the Sequence Diagram of the Solo Exercise. Again north is at the top of the page. This diagram will provide additional orientation as you begin to link together the various postures. It will also serve as a sort of shorthand guide after you have mastered the postures and begin to practice the full exercise as the uninterrupted sequence it should be.



Stand erect facing north, your heels together (*Photo 3*). Shift your weight to your right leg, bend slightly, and rest on it. Raise your left foot and place it about a foot laterally to the left, your toes pointing directly forward. Shift most of your weight to this foot. Turn your right foot on its heel inward until it is parallel with your left foot. Both feet should point directly ahead and your knees should be bent slightly. The distance between your feet should equal the width of your shoulders. Bend your elbows slightly outward and the backs of your wrists upward. Your fingertips are raised slightly and are relaxed, neither stretched nor clenched (see page 68 for T'ai-chi hand). Your palms are downward. Hold your head erect, your shoulders slumped, and your chest depressed, enabling your *ch'i* to sink to your navel. Your tongue should be held against the hard palate (roof of the mouth) and your mouth lightly closed. Without staring, look directly ahead (4). Your mind is at ease and concentrates calmly.

on your breathing.



P  
Beginning  
*Ch'i Shih*

Inhaling slowly, raise your arms upward to shoulder height. The wrists should be bent, the fingers hanging down, until your arms reach the height of your shoulders (*Photo 5*). Then, as you mobilize

your *ch'i*, extend your fingers (6). Your arms should ascend almost as if they were raised from above by something outside of yourself. Now draw back your arms by bending your elbows and, when your hands near your chest, lightly take them to your sides, fingers down, your wrists carried as though sinking into water and your fingertips floating off (7). You are again in the position ending Posture 1



8



9



P  
Grasp Sparrow's Tail, Ward-off, Left  
*Lan Ch'iao Wei, P'eng, Tso*

Shifting most of your weight to your left leg, bend your knee, relax the right side of your upper torso, and turn on your right heel, toes raised slightly, to the direct right (east). The bending of the left knee lowers the body; one knee or the other is kept well bent through the remainder of the Solo Exercise until the concluding posture. Your right foot is now at right angles to your left foot. In turning, you must move your waist and thigh coincidentally with your foot. Simultaneously, raise your right hand, palm down, to the level of your right armpit, and your left hand, palm up, to the right side of your waist. Thus you simulate holding a ball in your hands. Be careful to keep your right shoulder slumped and relaxed during this action. Your eyes accompany the movement and now look directly to the right. Your weight has shifted to your right foot, so that your left is brought to its toes (*Photo 8*). Now, take a step directly north with your left foot, the heel touching first. Bending your left knee, gradually shift 70 percent of your weight to your left foot while turning the right side of your upper torso to the left. Raise your left hand to a point parallel with your chest, palm toward you and slightly down. Simultaneously, lower your right hand beside your right thigh. Lastly, turn your right foot on its heel slightly inward. Your eyes accompany the gradual turn and now look directly north (9). Grasp Sparrow's Tail comprises the four movements: Ward-off, Rollback, Press, and Push.



10



11



P  
Grasp Sparrow's Tail, Ward-  
off, Right  
*Lan ch'iao Wei, P'eng, Yu*

Shift most of your weight to your left leg until your right foot is brought to its toes. Simultaneously turn your left hand over so that the palm is down while your right palm is up (*Photo 10*). Relax your left shoulder, turn your right thigh to the right, turn on your right toes about 45°, and take your right foot four inches forward from its previous position and place it down heel first at the spot previously occupied by the toe. Shift 70 percent of your weight to your bent right leg. Your upper torso is now in the Ward-off, Right posture. Your right arm, with its palm toward your chest, has the elbow slightly down, and your left arm, elbow down, has its palm facing outward midway between your right wrist and elbow, but not touching. Lastly, stretch your left leg and turn your left foot slightly inward by turning on the heel (*11*). You now face directly east.

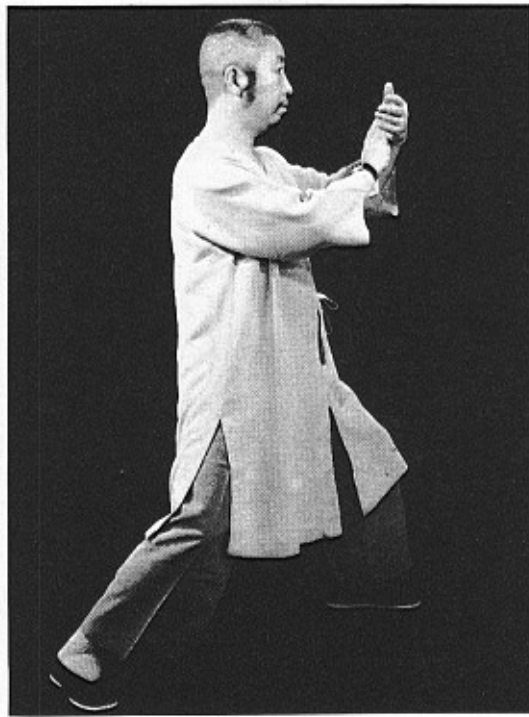


P  
Grasp Sparrow's Tail,  
Rollback  
*Lan Ch'iao Wei, Lu*

Relax your right arm, turn your upper torso to the right (southeast), and extend your right arm slightly (Photo 12). Then turn your right wrist simultaneously with your waist to the northeast while your left hand, palm up, is held near your right elbow for protection. Your left knee is bent and receives all your weight as your upper torso and arms turn back to the northeast (13). This posture is the epitome of the yielding required in T'ai-chi and must be done correctly. Remember that your arms do not move independently of your body.

P  
Grasp Sparrow's Tail, Press  
*Lan Ch'iao Wei, Chi*

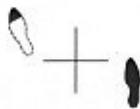
Continuing, carry your left hand in a clockwise circle, turn your right hand so the palm faces your chest, and protect your chest with your right arm, elbow bent. The fingers of your left hand lightly touch your right arm between your elbow and wrist. Stretch your left leg and shift 70 percent of your weight to your right leg. Press forward and slightly upward, keeping your arms relaxed (Photo 14). You are now facing directly east again.



P  
Grasp Sparrow's Tail, Push  
*Lan Ch'iao Wei, An*

Withdraw, shifting all of your weight again to your left foot while separating your hands, which come in front of your shoulders, the palms facing outward (*Photo 15*). Then shift 70 percent of your weight forward to your right leg and push forward with both arms and upper torso (*16*). Your arms are bent but do not move except as part of your body. If they act independently, the exercise is worthless. This rule applies to every posture. Heed it well.





P  
Single Whip  
*Tan Pien*

Shifting most of your weight to your left foot, turn on your right heel and turn the toes inward as far as possible. Simultaneously, holding your arms parallel and slightly bent at the elbows, turn your body as far as possible to the rear left corner (northwest) (*Photo 17*). Now, as you shift most of your weight back to your right leg, bring your left palm up near your right armpit. At the same time, your right hand circles laterally, counterclockwise in front of your chest and then makes a hook with the fingers pointing down above your left palm. Raise your left heel and turn the foot a little to the left (bringing the heel rightward) while extending your right "hook" hand to the right corner (northeast) relaxed and not rigid (*18*). Now, take a big step to the front left with your left foot, the heel touching first. Gradually shift your weight to your left leg and bend the knee. Simultaneously, extend your left hand, palm inward, at chest level to the left until your waist faces directly west. Then turn your palm up and outward as your eyes, which have accompanied the gradual turn, look out over your fingers. Lastly, turn on your right heel and turn the toes inward (*19*). Make this a big stretching movement but keep your spine straight, your navel facing straight ahead, and don't let your left knee extend beyond your left toes.

P  
Lift Hands  
*Ti Shou*

Turn your upper torso slightly to the right and shift almost all of your weight to your left leg. Resting on your left leg, bring your right foot leftward to where it comes down lightly on the heel, the knee bent. Your right foot is now on a line with your left heel. Relax your arms and turn them inward so that the palms face each other. Slowly bring your arms closer together until your right hand is in front aligned with your right leg, and your left hand in back directly opposite your right elbow. Both your



- [The Woman Who Gave Birth to Rabbits: Stories pdf, azw \(kindle\), epub](#)
- [download Rapid Review Pathology \(4th Edition\) pdf, azw \(kindle\), epub, doc, mobi](#)
- [download online New in Chess: The First 25 Years pdf, azw \(kindle\), epub, doc, mobi](#)
- [download online The Humbling](#)
  
- <http://yachtwebsitedemo.com/books/The-Fry-Chronicles.pdf>
- <http://qolorea.com/library/Rapid-Review-Pathology--4th-Edition-.pdf>
- <http://reseauplatoparis.com/library/The-Forgotten-Room.pdf>
- <http://www.rap-wallpapers.com/?library/The-Cows.pdf>