



Compiled by

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Taijiquan Classics

Translation by Jou, Tsung Hwa

FOREWORD

This compilation of the three major Taijiquan Classics is the joint-effort of my senior students, Richard Kovarik, Zhao Jinxiu, Cheryl Lynn, and Selden Lamoureux. It includes the works of Zhang Sanfeng, Wang Zongyue, and Wu Yuxiang, and an accompanying comparison of eight Taijiquan Lun translations. It is designed as a compact reference workbook to encourage and assist the more serious and dedicated taijiquan student to consult the Taijiquan Classics. In addition, and more importantly to me, it gives access to a Chinese dictionary in self-search of a deeper, more illuminating understanding of the principles and practices underlining the foundation of our art, as expressed in the original Chinese of these seminal writings.

In my study of taijiquan, beginning in 1971, the pairing of form training and Taiji Classics reading began simultaneously, first through the influence of the Cheng Man-Ch'ing school, then by the teachings of T.T. Liang, and finally by the personal instruction and example of Jou Tsung Hwa. The full importance of the understanding and use of this literature was indelibly impressed upon me in the Hubei Province folk school of Ding Hongkui, which I attended 1985-88. Ding YeYe, and all my other teachers during this sojourn, used and quoted daily from the Classics as though the writings were a contemporary guidebook.

For those readers outside the MagicTortoise Taijiquan Jia who come across this workbook, Jou Tsung Hwa, 1917-1998, is the mentor, guide, and spiritual inspiration of our school, and, his book, *The Dao of Taijiquan: The Way to Rejuvenation*, is the source of the Classics translation of this work.

Upon meeting Jou Tsung Hwa in 1981, I had just completed graduate school in Asian Studies where I had been introduced to Chinese language, writing, calligraphy and brushwork. I was most impressed by Jou Shifu because he included Chinese characters in his writings. Up until then, the reference books I was using did not include Chinese characters. Many still do not. In those cases, not only did you have to take the authors' words for their translations, but, you had no way to verify the translations on your own. Because Jou Shifu's translation and commentary on the Classics includes the Chinese characters, you are given the opportunity to look-up any word, phrase, or line of the three major Classics. And, in an open letter to his students (both those in his New Jersey school, and those of us in the farther-flung Southeastern T'ai Chi Ch'uan Association) of his then-current, 1983, "breakthrough in practice," he challenged us to do just that!

Even though I had been studying the Classics, I took this challenge seriously to heart, and began a concentrated effort to, "...[become] well-versed in the Tai Chi classics."* My first surprise was the significant differences in the Classics translations, at least between Jou Tsung Hwa's translation and the ones I had been reading (which, perhaps back then,

had a single source to begin with). Then, when I was able to actually look a word up in a dictionary, far greater revelations lay in store.

Therefore, the intent and main purpose of this *Taijiquan Classics Compilation and Comparison* is to give the inquiring taiji student a compact reference, with all the relevant material I find helpful, for a deeper understanding of the Taijiquan Classics. For all with limited Chinese language skills, may it be a guide to a Chinese dictionary in order to discover revelations of their own. I hope this study will help all levels of students to progress in the study of our art. I also hope it will introduce its readers to the simple fun and joy of researching the unique and beautiful system of Chinese picture words.

* Jou, Tsung Hwa, *The Tao of Tai-Chi Chuan: Way to Rejuvenation*. Taiwan: Tai Chi Foundation, 1991, p.A38.

NOTES ON CONSULTING A CHINESE DICTIONARY

For the taiji student with limited Chinese language skills, particularly reading and writing, three ingredients are necessary to confidently prowl a dictionary searching out characters. Along with the character, the student must be armed with the character's transliterated word in English (the Romanization of the Hanyu pinyin or Wade-Giles systems). They must also be familiar with that word's tone indication, either four marks in the pinyin system, or four numbers in the Wade-Giles.

This work uses pinyin with its four tone marks over the vowel in each word: a straight line for 1st tone (-), a slanting line up from bottom left to upper right for 2nd tone (/), a slanting line down and then up for 3rd tone (v), and a slanting line down from upper left to bottom right for 4th tone (\).

This Compilation has been constructed so that each Chinese word in pinyin is situated under its character. (This same format is also used in our MagicTortoise Glossary, and for the same purpose.) The Chinese language is based on monosyllable words, usually of 2 to 5 letters. They can be written in a sentence as separate words (as in *tài jí quán*). Or, for various reasons, they can be combined together (as in *tàijíquán*). When words are combined, what helps to isolate the individual word are the tone marks. Each Chinese character will have a single tone mark in its transliteration. There should be 3 marks in *tàijíquán* (4th, 2nd, 2nd) if it is written combined as a single word. With a little practice, this system will become clear and easy to use.

Let us take the first principle, on page 1, of Zhāng Sānfēng's *Tàijíquán Lùn*:

Yījǔ dòng, zhōushēn jù yào qīng líng, yóu xū guànchuàn.

Counting the characters, there are 3 characters and a comma, then 6 characters and a comma, and then 4 characters and a period for, 13 characters total. Underneath each character there is a word, but since there are 3 compound words, the word count is but 10. However, if tone marks above the words are counted, we'll be back to 13! The punctuation, commas and periods, not always present in Chinese writing, are added here for clarity and ease of counting.

The four tone marks are pronunciation indicators of putonghua or Mandarin. For our purpose here, however, attention to them is essential as words in a Chinese dictionary are organized by their order: 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th tone characters. Take the fourth word above, “zhōu,” and go to a dictionary. There are 22 entries under “zhōu”. But going to the 1st tone category, we find our “zhōu” in the 4th entry, with the meaning “circumference”. Under each major entry there may be a list of compound words in brackets. If we examine this list we'll come to “zhōushēn” meaning “the whole body,” so we need not go and separately look up the fifth word, “shēn”.

With just a character to research, the student must be at least knowledgeable of radicals, radical index, stroke order and stroke counting. The pinyin by itself is next to useless. Pinyin with tone mark is workable, but very discouraging. However, if one has a character, has the word with its tone mark, the wonderful world of Chinese language is accessible to all of us.

I believe it is valuable to all students of tàijíquán to have this handy, compact resource of just the Tàijíquán Classics, Jou Shifu's translation, and a comparison of other translations (even without the necessary further explanations and commentary). It is my added hope and desire, however, that it will lead to further research by students into the characters themselves and thus afford deeper insights into the principles underlying the art of tàijíquán, as written by the Founder and early Masters of our art.

LaoMa
Black Bamboo Pavilion
10th Month, Horse Year, 4700

太極拳論

Tàijíquán Lùn

Tàijíquán Theory

by

張三豐

Zhāng Sānfēng

Translations are adapted from The Tao of Tai-Chi Chuan: Way to Rejuvenation, by Jou, Tsung Hwa.

“Zhāng Sānfēng identified a number of practices and guiding principles for the student of Tàijíquán while he lived on Wūdāng Mountain. The purpose of this work was to relay his knowledge to those interested in enjoying a long, healthy, and happy life, not simply to teach Tàijíquán as a martial art.”

-- Jou, Tsung Hwa. The Tao of Tai-Chi Chuan: Way to Rejuvenation

(一) 一舉動， 周身俱要輕靈， 尤須貫串。

(1) Yījǔ dòng, zhōushēn jù yào qīng líng, yóu xū guànchuàn.

In any action, the whole body should be light and agile (qīng and líng). One should feel that all of the body's joints are connected with full linkage.

(二) 氣宜鼓盪， 神宜內斂。

(2) Qì yí gǔ dàng, shén yí nèi liàn.

Qì should be stirred. The spirit of vitality (shén) should be concentrated inwards.

(三) 毋使有缺陷處， 毋使有凸凹處， 毋使有斷續處。

(3) Wú shǐ yǒu quēxiàn chǔ, wú shǐ yǒu tū āo chǔ, wú shǐ yǒu duàn xù chǔ.

Do not show any deficiency, neither concavity nor convexity in movement. Do not show disconnected movement.

太極拳論

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Zhāng Sānfēng

This document contains a summary of translations of the Zhāng Sānfēng Tàijíquán Classic by various authors. Not every author translated every line of this classic. All translations are copyright by their respective holders. Chinese characters are taken from The Tao of Tai-Chi Chuan.

Legend

JTH	Jou, Tsung-Hua. <u>The Tao of Tai-Chi Chuan: Way to Rejuvenation</u> , 1985
TTL	T. T. Liang. <u>T'ai Chi Ch'uan For Health and Self-Defense</u> , 1977
YJM	Yang Jwing-Ming. <u>Tai Chi Secrets of the Ancient Masters</u> , 1999
WYH/MYL	Wu Ying-hua and Ma Yueh-liang. <u>Wu Style Taichichuan</u> , 1991
KLY	Kuo Lien-Ying. <u>Tai-Chi Chuan in Theory and Practice</u> , 1999
CMC	Cheng Man-ch'ing and Robert W. Smith. <u>T'ai-Chi</u> , 1966
WSL	Waysun Liao. <u>T'ai Chi Classics</u> , 1977, 1990
WSH	Wen-Shan Huang. <u>Fundamentals of Tai Chi Ch'uan</u> , 1974

The Zhāng Sānfēng Tàijíquán Classic has an annotation, attributed to Yáng Lùchán, which is translated by the various authors as follows:

- JTH: Zhāng Sānfēng identified a number of practices and guiding principles for the student of Tàijíquán while he lived on Wūdāng Mountain. The purpose of this work was to relay his knowledge to those interested in enjoying a long, healthy, and happy life, not simply to teach Tàijíquán as a martial art.
- TTL: This treatise has been handed down by Founder Zhāng Sānfēng of Wūdāng Mountain so that brave men everywhere can prolong their years and enhance longevity, not use the art merely as a means to martial skill. (Translation by Master Liang's editor, Paul Gallagher)
- WYH/MYL: This is the work of the late Zhāng Sānfēng of Mt. Wūdāng, who wanted the "heroes" in the world to prolong life and not solely for martial arts.
- WSH: This is the theory transmitted by Master Zhāng Sānfēng of Wūdāng Mountain, with a desire toward helping all the able people of the world to attain longevity and rejuvenation. The technique and art are the least things to be concerned with.

(一) 一舉動， 周身俱要輕靈， 尤須貫串。

(1) Yījǔ dòng, zhōushēn jù yào qīng líng, yóu xū guànchuàn.

- JTH: In any action, the whole body should be light and agile (qīng and líng). One should feel that all of the body's joints are connected with full linkage.
- TTL: In every movement the entire body should be light and agile and all of its parts connected like a string of pearls.
- YJM: Once in motion, entire body must be light (qīng) and agile (líng), (it) especially should (be) threaded together.
- WYH/MYL: At the start of any movement, all parts of the body are called upon to move and act agilely. They should be functionally and sequentially linked throughout the body-action.
- KLY: In any single movement of whatever sort, the whole body must move lightly, nimbly, and in coordination.
- CMC: In any action the entire body should be light and agile and all of its parts connected like pearls on a thread.
- WSL: Once you begin to move, the entire body must be light and limber. Each part of your body should be connected to every other part.
- WSH: In any action, the entire body should be light, alert and coordinated like a string of pearls.

(二) 氣宜鼓盪， 神宜內斂。

(2) Qì yí gǔ dàng, shén yí nèi liàn.

- JTH: Qì should be stirred. The spirit of vitality (shén) should be concentrated inwards.
- TTL: The qì should be stimulated and the spirit of vitality should be retained internally.
- YJM: Qì should be full and stimulated, shén (spirit) should be retained internally.
- WYH/MYL: The qì should be stirring, and the vital force is concentrated inwardly.
- KLY: The qì should be active as the propellant power behind all movements and the spirit should be gathered internally...

- CMC: The ch'i should be cultivated; the spirit of vitality should be retained internally and not exposed externally.
- WSL: The internal energy should be extended, vibrated like the beat of a drum. The spirit should be condensed in toward the center of your body.
- WSH: The Chi⁴ (vital energy, prana in Sanskrit) should be actively excited, but the Shen² (spirit) must remain calm internally.