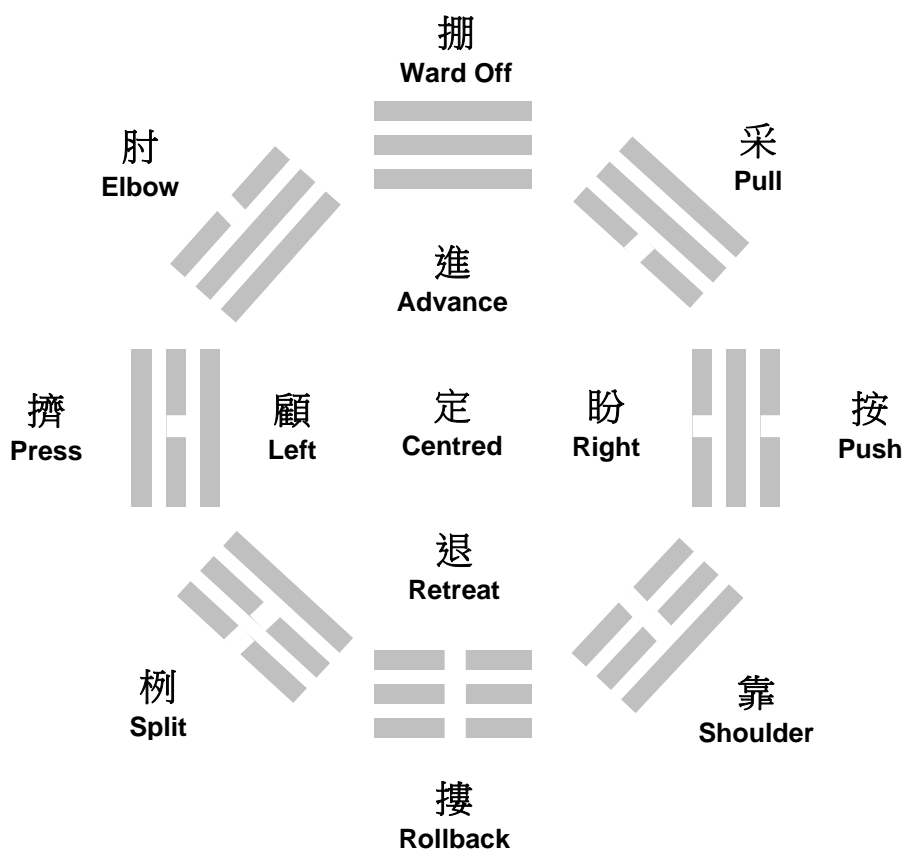


山右王宗岳太極拳論

太極者，無極而生，陰陽之母也。動之則分，靜之則合。無過不及，隨曲就伸。人剛我柔謂之走，我順人背謂之黏。動急則急應，動緩則緩隨。雖變化萬端，而理唯一貫。由著熟而漸悟懂勁，由懂勁而階及神明。然非用力之久，不能豁然貫通焉。虛領頂勁，氣沉丹田，不偏不倚，忽隱忽現。左重則左虛，右重則右杳。仰之則彌高，俯之則彌深。進之則愈長，退之則愈促。一羽不能加，蠅蟲不能落。人不知我，我獨知人。英雄所向無敵，蓋皆由此而及也。斯技旁門甚多，雖勢有區別，概不外壯欺弱、慢讓快耳。有力打無力，手慢讓手快，是皆先天自然之能，非關學力而有也。察四兩撥千斤之句，顯非力勝；觀耄耋能禦眾之形，快何能為？立如平準，活如車輪。偏沉則隨，雙重則滯。每見數年純功，不能運化者，率皆自為人制，雙重之病未悟耳。欲避此病，須知陰陽。黏即是走，走即是黏；陰不離陽，陽不離陰；陰陽相濟，方為懂勁。懂勁後，愈練愈精，默識揣摩，漸至從心所欲。本是舍己從人，多誤捨近求遠。所謂差之毫釐，謬之千里，學者不可不詳辨焉。是為論。



Tai Ji Quan Treatise

By Wang Zong Yue

Translated by Tina Chuanna Zhang and Frank Allen

Tai Ji is born of Wu Ji, the mother of yin and yang. Tai Ji in motion is changing, it divides; and in stillness is harmony, it unites. Tai Ji neither goes too far nor falls short. When the opponent is hard, I am soft, this is called neutralization; when the opponent is soft and I go along with him, this is called sticking. To the opponent's fast movement, I react fast; to his slow, I follow with slow. These kinds of changes are innumerable, but the principle is always the same.

To practice tai ji quan one must learn to first manage the form in order to understand the principles and meanings of the art (*zhao shu*). Then know the energy and development of one's capabilities (*dong jin*). Then comes the highest levels of spiritual illumination, after which the free use of tai ji quan will have been achieved (*shen ming*). One cannot suddenly understand tai ji quan thoroughly without having studied the art diligently for a long time.

In tai ji quan an intangible and lively energy lifts the crown of the head, *qi* sinks to the *dan tian*, and there is no leaning forward or backward. Energy and movement are suddenly hidden and reappear with equal suddenness. The body weight is heavy on the left, then becomes empty; as does the weight on the right, then it disappears. When (the opponent) goes upward, respond by going taller. When (the opponent) goes downward, react by going deeper. When (the opponent) advances, seem even farther away. When (the opponent) retreats, be even closer. A single feather cannot be added to it and a fly cannot land on it. My opponent does not know me, I alone know him. A real hero has no opponent and all tai ji quan comes from this thought.

There are many kinds of martial arts, and their techniques are different. Overall, they do not go beyond the concepts of the strong overcomes the weak and the slow yields to the quick. These attributes all come from abilities one is born with, and bear no relationship to one's effort of study and achievement. Examine these words: "Four ounces deflect one thousand pounds." Obviously this cannot be accomplished by strength. Observe how an old man can hold off a crowd of attackers and ask how he could do so with speed?

Stand like a balance scale and move like a cart's wheel. If one sinks more weight to one side it is easy to move or follow at will; one who is double weighted is stagnant. Whenever one sees those who have practiced tai ji quan for many years and still cannot employ neutralizing and thus are overpowered by opponents, one realizes that these practitioners simply have not yet understood the fault of double weighting. If one wants to avoid this fault, one must understand the balance of yin and yang and that to stick is to yield and to yield is to stick. Yang does not separate from yin; yin does not separate from yang. Yin and yang complete each other. Only then will one understand *jin*. After understanding energy (*jin*), more practice will bring greater refinement silently absorb the knowledge and carefully ponder the strategy, and gradually you will gain the ability of what your heart desires to do. The foundation is giving up self and following others. Many mistakenly go for distance and forget what is near, or go for the abstract and forget the obvious, often sacrificing what is near for that which is in the distance. As the saying goes, miss aim by the width of a single hair and you may miss the target by a thousand miles. The practitioner must study the art in detail. This is the treatise.