

Gateway to Taijiquan for Overseas Learners

外国人学太极拳入门

王淑英 扈季元

主编

fire



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前 言

太极拳是中华武术中的宝贵遗产,它是一种融防身、健体、祛病、养性于一身的健身拳术。它以其独特的运动方式及其健身价值在世界各地广泛流传而闻名于世。外国朋友通过学习具有丰富古老的中国文化内涵的太极拳运动,可以帮助他们了解中国传统的文化,促进中西文化的交融。

为满足与适应广大外国朋友学习太极拳的需求,我们从实际出发,中英文对照,图文并茂,深入浅出地以太极拳文化及技术与方法结合编写了这本教材。本书通过简单易懂的语言,为外国朋友又快又准地学习好太极拳文化及其技术提供了不可多得的学习教材,也为广大教练员指导外国朋友学习太极拳提供了必备的参考资料。

本教材编写主持人扈季元,王淑英、扈季元任主编;王伟光、那松长任副主编。翻译:周立——第一章,张志龙——第二章第一、二、三节,韦会——第二章第四节。各章节的撰稿人如下:第一章——扈季元、王伟光,第二章第一节——那松长,第二章第二节——李凤芹,第二章第三节——王淑英,第二章第四节——信立天。

本教材是对外国人进行太极拳教学的第一本教材,我们衷心希望本书对学习太极拳的外国朋友们有所帮助。

编者

Preface

Taijiquan, a health-building boxing which integrates self-defence, health-care, disease elimination and moral cultivation, is a precious legacy of Chinese martial arts. It has been well known and widely spread all over the world for its unique patterns of movement and its value of health-building. Foreign learners acquaint themselves with the rich connotation and the long history of traditional Chinese culture by practising *taijiquan* which contains its essence, thus promote the cultural communications between China and Western countries.

To meet the needs of *taijiquan* learners, we compiled this book proceeding from the practical needs—parallel Chinese and English versions, accompanied with pictures and illustrations together with simple explanations to the profound culture and techniques of *taijiquan*. It provides foreign learners with exceptional learning materials in simple language and enables them to acquire the culture and techniques of *taijiquan* quickly and correctly. Meanwhile, it also serves as a necessary reference for *taijiquan* instructors teaching foreign students.

Mr Hu Jiyuan is in charge of the compilation. Ms Wang Shuying and Mr Hu Jiyuan are the chief editors and Ms Wang Weiguang and Mr Na Songchang are the associate chief editors. It is translated by Zhou Li (Chapter One), Zhang Zhilong (Sections

One, Two and Three of Chapter Two), Wei Hui (Section Four of Chapter Two).

The writers are as follows:

Chapter One: Hu Jiyuan and Wang Weiguang

Chapter Two: Section One — Na Songchang

Section Two — Li Fengqin

Section Three — Wang Shuying

Section Four — Xin Litian

This is the first textbook ever published in China on the subject intended for overseas readers. We hope the readers will find the book helpful in their learning of *taijiquan*.

Editors

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第一章 太极拳运动的基本知识

Chapter One: Essentials of Taijiquan

一、太极拳的起源与发展

太极拳是中华武术的重要拳种之一。它取历代名家拳法之所长,结合古代导引、吐纳之术,运用阴阳学说以及中医理论的经络学说创编而成。

太极拳因其动作如行云流水连绵不断,用太极阴阳之哲理来解释拳义而得名。它内容丰富,既能技击防身,又可修身养性,具有很高的锻炼价值和医疗保健作用。

据武术史学家考证,太极拳最早出现于清初河南温县陈家沟。在近300多年的发展过程中,经过无数太极高手的不断改进和创新,演变形成了陈、杨、吴、武、孙式等各种具有不同风格、特点的流派。

各流派的太极拳都有自己的练拳套路,陈式老架有五路,近代流传陈式太极拳有一路83式,二路71式。陈式新架套路也有两种:一种是“小圈拳”,另一种是“赵堡架”。杨式太极拳有85式。吴式太极拳有老架83式及经过简化的37式。当今社会流传广泛的是24式简化太极拳、32式简化太极拳和48式太极拳。

24式简化太极拳是在杨式太极拳的基础上,根据由简入繁、循序渐进、易学易练的原则改编而成的普及套路,并配以旋律优美的民族音乐。在1990年第11届亚运会开幕式的团体表演,赢得了极大的轰动。

I . The Origin and Evolution of *Taijiquan*

Taijiquan , one of the most important boxings in Chinese *wushu* , was established upon the basis of Taoist breathing exercises^① , applying the theory of *yin* and *yang*^② and the theory of *jingluo*^③ in traditional Chinese medicine .

The essence of *taijiquan* lies in the diagram of cosmological scheme. *Taijiquan* is famous for its smooth movements and *yin* and *yang* as its philosophical essence . With rich contents , it is designed not only to attack and defend , but also to cultivate oneself . Therefore , it is a highly-valued , health-care exercise .

Based on the historical study by *wushu* historians , *taijiquan* made its debut in Wenxian County , Henan Province in early Qing Dynasty . During its over 300 years of development , it has been improved and enriched by a number of masters . Among different *taijiquan* schools are the Chen style , the Yang style , the Wu style , Wu Yuxiang style and the Sun style , which are different styles each with their own distinct characteristics .

Every *taijiquan* school sets its own package of skills and steps . The Chen-style *taijiquan* falls into two types—the old and the new frames . The old frame has five sets . Two sets are seen in modern Chen-style *taijiquan* . One set with 83 forms , the other 71 forms . The new

① Taoist breathing exercises : a Taoist art to achieve longevity by breathing fresh air in and the useless air out .

② the theory of *yin* and *yang* : In Chinese philosophy and medicine , *yin* and *yang* are the two opposing principles in nature , the former feminine and negative , the latter masculine and positive .

③ *jingluo* : main and collateral channels , passages in the human body through which vital energy circulates and along which the acupuncture points are distributed .

太极拳和其他拳种相比,具有柔和性、完整性、连贯性、圆活性等鲜明的拳法特点。

(1) 柔和性 太极拳架式平稳舒展,动作轻缓柔和,紧而不僵,松而不懈,柔中寓刚,刚柔相济。

(2) 完整性 太极拳要求全身一动无不动,一静无不静,动作上下相随,气意内外相合,全身各部位紧密配合,完整一体。

(3) 连贯性 太极拳套路从始至终,首尾相接,虚实变化,姿势转换,互相衔接,一气贯穿。

(4) 圆活性 太极拳要求立身中正、左右转换,所有动作均走圆形曲线,包括大、小、平、立、椭圆等。

近年来,随着中外文化交流日益扩大,太极拳作为中外文化交流的友好使者,走向了世界。许多外国人都喜欢上太极拳这项中华传统武术项目,他们中间的许多人来到中国学习太极拳,并把太极精神带回自己的祖国。愿太极拳这朵中华武林的奇葩绽放在世界之苑。

frame Chen-style *taijiquan* includes "Small Circle Boxing" and "Zhaobao Frame". The Yang-style *taijiquan* comprises 85 moves, while the Wu-style includes the old frame of 83 moves and the simplified form of 37 moves. At present the 24-move, the 32-move and the 48-move simplified *taijiquan* have gained great popularity across the country.

The 24-move simplified *taijiquan* is developed from the Yang style under the principle of being easy to learn and practise, and from simple to complex. Its charm is in part attributable to its beautiful background Chinese folk music. In the opening ceremony of the 11th Asian Games, it was shown as a group performances, which caused a great sensation in the spectators' circle.

Taijiquan is characterized by features like: softness, wholeness, continuity, circular movements.

(1) Softness: The stances of *taijiquan* are steady and stretchy. The movements are slow and soft, tightened but not clumsy, relaxed but not slack, which is a good example of tempering force with softness.

(2) Wholeness: *Taijiquan* requires wholeness in actions, in other words, different parts of the body move or stop in harmony and coordination. There is an association of activity and stillness.

(3) Continuity: All the stances of *taijiquan* are performed consistently from start to end with a smooth shift between every two postures. It is known to be a continuum of force and movements, which should be practised at a stretch.

(4) Circular movements: All the movements take such shapes as a circle, a curve or an oval. A firm standing and good coordination between the left and the right is necessary.

Nowadays, with a broader cultural communication, *taijiquan* has carried with itself good wishes wherever it goes in the world. A lot of foreigners are fascinated by this charming Chinese sport. They come to China to learn *taijiquan* and take home *taiji* spirits. May *taijiquan* forever flourish and shine in martial arts home and abroad.

二、太极拳与中国文化

太极拳是在中国传统文化的影响下成形和发展的。学习和了解太极拳形成与发展的文化背景,将有助于外国人理解太极拳拳理,为学好太极拳技术打下基础。

1. 太极拳与中国传统哲学密切相关

太极拳得名于《周易·系辞》的“易有太极,是生两仪”,它直接参照太极图形编排动作,而形成自己独特的运动形式。所谓“太极”,在中国哲学中指派生万物的本源,包含动、静,阴、阳两个方面,具有动而生阳,静而生阴,既对立又统一,相互消长、转化,不断运动、变化的特性。从太极拳要求柔缓浑圆,强调“以静制动”上看,它与老子“重柔主静”的思想相通。从太极拳的动作要求上看,那种精、气、神的和谐统一,一动俱动、一到俱到的“内外合一”的整体运动规范,是受中国传统的“天人合一”观念的影响的结果。太极拳的动作路线和规格要求多表现为欲左先右、欲开先合、欲伸先屈、欲紧先松等反向着手开始动作的表现形式,可溯源《老子》的“将欲歛之,必固张之;将欲弱之,必固强之;将欲废之,必固兴之;将欲取之,必固与之”的辩证思想。

由此可见,中国传统的哲学思想对太极拳理论及其技术的形成有着至关重要的影响。同时,我们应看到,由于中国传统的哲学流派如儒、道、理等学说都注重养生,这样,太极拳在受到传统哲学影响的同时,必然会与中国传统养生文化和医学发生一种天然的姻缘关系,如

II . *Taijiquan* and the Chinese Culture

Taijiquan originated and developed under the influence of traditional Chinese culture. An understanding of its cultural background will assure a better understanding of the morality of *taijiquan* and will hence lay a solid foundation for the learning.

1. *Taijiquan* Is Closely Tied to Traditional Chinese Philosophy

Taijiquan won its name from *The Book of Changes of the Zhou Dynasty*. As the book puts it, "Where there is *taiji*, there is peace and harmony between the positive and the negative." Its unique form originated from the diagram of cosmological scheme. In Chinese philosophy, *taiji* refers to the ultimate source of the universe. It contains two opposite aspects of activity and inertia, with the former bearing *yang* and the latter *yin*. *Yang* and *yin* are contradictory yet complementary. There is an increase in *yang* if one moves and an increase in *yin* if one remains still. *Taijiquan*, by highlighting "Softness can counter hardness", complies with Laozi's idea of softness and motionlessness. The conception of absoluteness, coherence and unbrokenness in movements, and the unity of spirit, energy and concentration exemplified in *taijiquan* draw its inspiration from the theory that "Man is an integral part of nature." The route and movements of *taijiquan* largely embody in "Go right first when you intend to go left; bend first when you intend to stretch; tighten first when you intend to let loose." The traceable source is rooted in the dialectical idea of Laozi—"Open in order to close; weaken in order to strengthen; abolish in order to establish; give in order to take."

阴阳平衡论、精、气、神等等学说,对太极拳理论的逐步完善起到了重要的指导作用。因此,了解中国传统养生(医学)文化对太极拳的发展的影响,会使我们进一步了解使其赖以生成与发展的文化背景的全貌。

2. 太极拳与中国养生文化

太极拳运动之所以在中国经久不衰,是因为其独特的健身、祛病、养生、自卫等深受广大人民喜爱的功效,而这一点又得益于中国传统养生(医学)文化。受其影响的太极拳拳理及其功法使中国传统养生文化在健身应用上变成现实。因此,了解养生文化对太极拳运动的影响,将有助于外国人理解太极拳文化。

(1) 阴阳学说论

中国古代阴阳学说最早发源于公元前八世纪的西周末年。到了战国末至西汉初期的《易经》中,阴阳学说才在哲学领域中得到较全面系统的发挥,《周易·系辞》中称:“刚柔相推而生变化”;“日月相推而明生焉”;“寒暑相推而岁成焉。”可见,世界的万事万物无不在阴阳相互作用中变化、生长。在此基础上《易经》提出的“一阴一阳之谓道”的对立统一的辩证思路,被视为万事万物运动变化的总规律。如后世科学家基本上是遵循了《易经》的辩证思想,用对立统一的规律来解释人体生命活动现象的。明代医学家张介宾在《类经·阴阳类》中曾指出:“道者阴阳之理也。阴阳者,一分为二也。太极动而生阳,静而生阴,天生于动,地生于静,故阴阳为天地之

Hence we can see that the traditional ideas of Chinese philosophy play an important role in the theorization and formation of the skills of *taijiquan*. It follows that, since separate schools of Chinese philosophy such as Confucianism, Taoism and Neo-Confucianism of the Song and Ming Dynasties all attach great importance to nourishing life, *taijiquan* is bound to have genealogy with the tradition and medical science of health-care, e.g. the balance theory between *yin* and *yang*, the theory of spirit, energy and concentration, etc. all function to consummate the theory of *taijiquan*. The mentioning of the tradition of health-care enables us to be further aware of its evolution.

2. *Taijiquan* and the Chinese Health-Care Tradition

Taijiquan has flourished with its functions of disease-curing, health-keeping and self-defence. All of them are clearly attributable to the impact of traditional health-preserving culture which turns theory into reality. So, an understanding of the influence of the culture of health-preserving on *taijiquan* will help us understand the culture in *taijiquan* better.

(1) The theory of *yin* and *yang*

The theory of *yin* and *yang* turned up in 800 B.C. It didn't contribute its due share to philosophy until the end of the period of the Warring States. *The Book of Changes* said, "Change comes from the applied force between softness and hardness; light comes from the applied force between the sun and the moon; season comes from the transition between hotness and coldness." It is thus evident that everything of nature grows and changes under the force of *yin* and *yang*. "*Yin* and *yang* reflects Tao" had symbolically represented all changes in the cosmos. Scientists of later generations inherited this philosophy to expound human life and activities. Zhang Jiebin, a medical scientist of the Ming

道。”这说明了中国传统医学理论将阴阳的相互消长作用视为人体生命活动的根本。换言之，自然界都是阴阳二者相互作用的产物。太极拳正是依据前人的阴阳学说的根本原理，创编了独特的拳理、结构和特征。从太极拳传统套路的动作和结构上看，都是由两个相互对立、相互依存、相互制约并转化而又统一的阴阳物质所组成。拳理中的静与动、柔与刚、虚与实、浑圆与松沉的要求无不体现阴阳物质的相互间关系。如传统套路中的手挥琵琶、棚捋挤按等动作将阴阳合为一体，相互对立又依存的一招一势的阴阳运转极佳地展现了阴阳学说理论在太极拳式中的具体运用。

(2) 精、气、神的和谐统一

精、气、神在中国传统养生理论中占有重要的位置，被视为人体生命活动的三个基本要素。它与阴阳、五行学说理论一样与中国古代哲学存在千丝万缕的联系，认为世间一切物质现象都是精、气、神的存在形式。如老、庄子认为“道是万物源，而气则是道的另一种表达方式，万物都是由气化生的。”《庄子知北游》称：“人之生，气之聚也，聚则生，散则死……故曰通天下一气耳。”把气看成了构成万物的基本要素。又如中华医学理论认为，“精”是人体生命活动的重要物质，它是由先天的肾精和后天饮食水谷的精气所结合的化生物质。“气”是维持生理功能的，“气”的存在是通过一定的生理功能表现出来的，它的生成又与肾、脾、胃、肺等脏腑器官密切相关。由此可见，“精”和“气”是人体生命活动的重要物质基础。

Dynasty pointed out in his *Book of Categories*, "Yin and yang is Tao. They are two opposite sides. According to *taiji*, yang grows in mobility and yin grows in immobility." It proved that Chinese traditional medical science took the two complementary interactive forces as the base of human activity. In other words, even nature is the product of the interaction between yin and yang. Its theorization, composition and characteristics are all created on this basis. As far as movements and composition are concerned, both of them are linked to yin and yang that are opposite, interdependent and mutually restricting. The interaction between yang and yin can be seen everywhere — in activity and inertia, in hardness and softness, in excess and deficiency. For instance, opposite yet interdependent moves as in "Playing the Lute" in the traditional routine of *taijiquan*, integrating yin and yang, echoes the application of the yin and yang theory in *taijiquan*.

(2) *The unity of spirit, energy and concentration*

Spirit, energy and concentration, three essentials of life, are highly valued in Chinese health-care culture. Like the yin and yang theory and the five-element theory^①, it is directly associated with ancient Chinese philosophy, holding that all material phenomena take the form of spirit, energy and concentration. According to Laozi and Zhuangzi *tao* is the source of nature and energy is an alternate representation of *tao*. Zhuangzi claims in his book, "Life is an accumulation of energy. Accumulation of energy leads to life, while dispersal of energy leads to

① The five elements (metal, wood, water, fire and earth) were believed by the ancients to compose the physical universe and the five-element theory was later used in traditional Chinese medicine to explain various physiological and pathological phenomena.