



W H A T I S
'Tai Chi'?

Peter A. Gilligan

WHAT IS 'Tai Chi'?

Peter A. Gilligan



SINGING DRAGON
LONDON AND PHILADELPHIA

First published in 2010
by Singing Dragon
An imprint of Jessica Kingsley Publishers
116 Pentonville Road
London N1 9JB, UK
and
400 Market Street, Suite 400
Philadelphia, PA 19106, USA

www.singing-dragon.com

Copyright © Peter A. Gilligan 2010

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any material form (including photocopying or storing it in any medium by electronic means and whether or not transiently or incidentally to some other use of this publication) without the written permission of the copyright owner except in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 or under the terms of a licence issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency Ltd, Saffron House, 6–10 Kirby Street, London EC1N 8TS. Applications for the copyright owner's written permission to reproduce any part of this publication should be addressed to the publisher.

Warning: The doing of an unauthorised act in relation to a copyright work may result in both a civil claim for damages and criminal prosecution.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

A CIP catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978 1 84819 024 5

Printed and bound in Great Britain by
Athenaeum Press, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear

W H A T I S
'Tai Chi'?

of related interest

Alchemy of Pushing Hands

Oleg Tcherne

ISBN 978 1 84819 022 1

Eternal Spring

**Taijiquan, Qi Gong, and the Cultivation of
Health, Happiness and Longevity**

Michael W. Acton

ISBN 978 1 84819 003 0

Chen

Living Taijiquan in the Classical Style

Master Jan Silberstorff

Translated by Michael Vorwerk

ISBN 978 1 84819 021 4

Tàijíquán


Li Deyin

Foreword by Siu-Fong Evans

ISBN 978 1 84819 004 7

龍騰虎躍
民族精神

杜友題



"It is a delight to all to see the play of tigers and the dragons gamboling in the heavens."



Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	9
A NOTE ON ROMANISATION	11
WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THIS BOOK	13

Part I Preliminaries and Preconceptions

Chapter 1 A Punnet of Problems	23
The problems of gradings; The problem of cultural communication; The problem of language; The need for contextual study; The systems approach; The basic Chinese world view; Conclusion	
Chapter 2 What's in a Word?	39
Taijiquan as self cultivation; Cultivation; Qi; Yin–Yang; Qi Gong; Schools of Qi Gong; Internal and external; The use of sensitivity; The use of intention (will/imagination); The three systems in Qi Gong; Types of Qi Gong; Jing Gong; Jing-Dong Gong; Dong Gong; Use of Xin (sensitivity) and Yi (will) in Qi Gong; Summary	

Chapter 3 Laying the Martial Ghost. 59

Taijiquan as self-defence; Self-defence and martial art; Wu and martial are not the same; Martial art and Wu Shu; Wu Shu, Gong Fu and self cultivation; Taijiquan as Wu Shu; Three levels of testing in Taijiquan; The role of 'sparring' in Taijiquan; A Taijiquan approach to Wu Shu; A personal encounter; Conclusion



Part II Initial Foundation

Chapter 4 Returning to Nature: Restoring Spring 83

The meaning of Natural in Taijiquan; The Rectification of the body; The need for a teacher; The Rectified body; The Rectified body: No blocking or wasting; Natural alignment; Structure and posture; The application of Yin–Yang to the body; Conclusion

Chapter 5 Learning How to Learn 104

Don't try too hard; Should is a condition – not a command; Wei Wu-Wei; Song; 'Song' is the expression of Taiji in the body; Testing; Methods of testing; Testing 'Song'; Making the most of your teacher; Summary; Basic standing posture; Three Circle Theory

Chapter 6 Methods and Techniques 130

Taiji and Taijiquan are not the same; Daoyin; What are methods and techniques?; People are individuals, unique and different; Daoyin is Qi Gong; Daoyin and Gong Fu: Internal and external; Daoyin in Taijiquan; An exercise to learn Daoyin; The three systems of Daoyin Qi Gong; Conclusion

Part III The Art of Taijiquan

Chapter 7 The Six Secrets..... 153

The Six Secrets; Nei Gong; The Six Secrets as Nei Gong; Discussion of the Six Secrets; 1. Three Circle Theory; 2. Yin–Yang Form; 3. ‘Spiral’, or Qi, Form; 4. Centre-Turn Form; 5. Spiral in the leg; 6. Yin–Yang Head and Hands; Conclusion

Chapter 8 Practise to Perfection 193

The syllabus of Taijiquan; The Taijiquan teacher’s job; Practising Taijiquan; Syllabus, technique and method; Internal breathing; Nei Gong; Nei Gong Daoyin exercise; Testing and warnings; Traditional Nei Gong; Conclusion

APPENDIX: FORMS, TECHNIQUES AND PRACTICES 207

REFERENCES 210

BIBLIOGRAPHY 211

INDEX 214

W H A T I S
'Tai Chi'?

of related interest

Alchemy of Pushing Hands

Oleg Tcherne

ISBN 978 1 84819 022 1

Eternal Spring

**Taijiquan, Qi Gong, and the Cultivation of
Health, Happiness and Longevity**

Michael W. Acton

ISBN 978 1 84819 003 0

Chen

Living Taijiquan in the Classical Style

Master Jan Silberstorff

Translated by Michael Vorwerk

ISBN 978 1 84819 021 4

Tàijíquán

Li Deyin

Foreword by Siu-Fong Evans

ISBN 978 1 84819 004 7

WHAT IS 'Tai Chi'?

Peter A. Gilligan



SINGING DRAGON
LONDON AND PHILADELPHIA

First published in 2010
by Singing Dragon
An imprint of Jessica Kingsley Publishers
116 Pentonville Road
London N1 9JB, UK
and
400 Market Street, Suite 400
Philadelphia, PA 19106, USA

www.singing-dragon.com

Copyright © Peter A. Gilligan 2010

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any material form (including photocopying or storing it in any medium by electronic means and whether or not transiently or incidentally to some other use of this publication) without the written permission of the copyright owner except in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 or under the terms of a licence issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency Ltd, Saffron House, 6–10 Kirby Street, London EC1N 8TS. Applications for the copyright owner's written permission to reproduce any part of this publication should be addressed to the publisher.

Warning: The doing of an unauthorised act in relation to a copyright work may result in both a civil claim for damages and criminal prosecution.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

A CIP catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978 1 84819 024 5

Printed and bound in Great Britain by
Athenaeum Press, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear



Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	9
A NOTE ON ROMANISATION	11
WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THIS BOOK	13

Part I Preliminaries and Preconceptions

Chapter 1 A Punnet of Problems	23
The problems of gradings; The problem of cultural communication; The problem of language; The need for contextual study; The systems approach; The basic Chinese world view; Conclusion	
Chapter 2 What's in a Word?	39
Taijiquan as self cultivation; Cultivation; Qi; Yin–Yang; Qi Gong; Schools of Qi Gong; Internal and external; The use of sensitivity; The use of intention (will/imagination); The three systems in Qi Gong; Types of Qi Gong; Jing Gong; Jing-Dong Gong; Dong Gong; Use of Xin (sensitivity) and Yi (will) in Qi Gong; Summary	

Chapter 3 Laying the Martial Ghost. 59

Taijiquan as self-defence; Self-defence and martial art; Wu and martial are not the same; Martial art and Wu Shu; Wu Shu, Gong Fu and self cultivation; Taijiquan as Wu Shu; Three levels of testing in Taijiquan; The role of 'sparring' in Taijiquan; A Taijiquan approach to Wu Shu; A personal encounter; Conclusion

©

Part II Initial Foundation

Chapter 4 Returning to Nature: Restoring Spring 83

The meaning of Natural in Taijiquan; The Rectification of the body; The need for a teacher; The Rectified body; The Rectified body: No blocking or wasting; Natural alignment; Structure and posture; The application of Yin–Yang to the body; Conclusion

Chapter 5 Learning How to Learn 104

Don't try too hard; Should is a condition – not a command; Wei Wu-Wei; Song; 'Song' is the expression of Taiji in the body; Testing; Methods of testing; Testing 'Song'; Making the most of your teacher; Summary; Basic standing posture; Three Circle Theory

Chapter 6 Methods and Techniques 130

Taiji and Taijiquan are not the same; Daoyin; What are methods and techniques?; People are individuals, unique and different; Daoyin is Qi Gong; Daoyin and Gong Fu: Internal and external; Daoyin in Taijiquan; An exercise to learn Daoyin; The three systems of Daoyin Qi Gong; Conclusion

Part III The Art of Taijiquan

Chapter 7 The Six Secrets..... 153

The Six Secrets; Nei Gong; The Six Secrets as Nei Gong; Discussion of the Six Secrets; 1. Three Circle Theory; 2. Yin–Yang Form; 3. ‘Spiral’, or Qi, Form; 4. Centre-Turn Form; 5. Spiral in the leg; 6. Yin–Yang Head and Hands; Conclusion

Chapter 8 Practise to Perfection 193

The syllabus of Taijiquan; The Taijiquan teacher’s job; Practising Taijiquan; Syllabus, technique and method; Internal breathing; Nei Gong; Nei Gong Daoyin exercise; Testing and warnings; Traditional Nei Gong; Conclusion

APPENDIX: FORMS, TECHNIQUES AND PRACTICES 207


REFERENCES 210

BIBLIOGRAPHY 211

INDEX 214

龍騰虎躍
民族精神

徐友題



"It is a delight to all to see the play of tigers and the dragons gamboling in the heavens."