

Dong Ying Jie's Words of Experience

By Dong Ying Jie

Translated by Alex Dong

1. Taijiquan is an internal martial art. Physical strength (Li) is stored in the bones and internal energy (Jing) is stored in the blood vessels. Do not train for strong muscles and tough skin; you should work toward strong Qi and unbreakable bones.

As they said in the old days, if you are going to learn how to jump and bounce, then you will go through the agony of twists and falls. In other words, if you have never tasted the bitterest bitter, then you do not know the sweetest sweet. Move in a fluid and natural way. Use your XianTian (inborn ability). Do not use resistance or force.

2. To practice Taijiquan, you must understand Sandao (the three things need to be reached or completed). The first thing you have to complete is your Shen (spirit); it must be unified with your movement.

The second thing you must complete is your Yi (thought, intention); Yi is an important part of every move. Third thing that has to be complete is your Shi (posture, position); posture must be correct and comfortable. Apply Sandao to your practice and your skill will improve quickly.

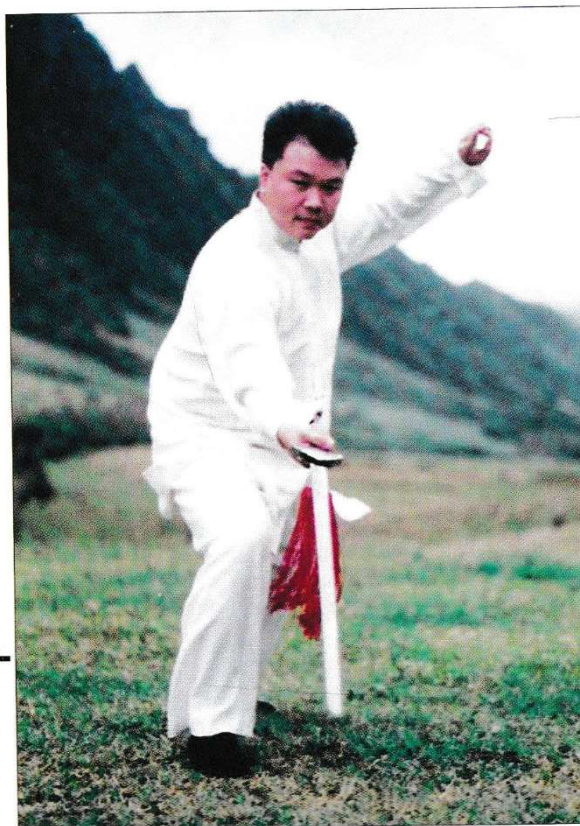
As you practice regularly, changes will occur. Be aware of this and examine the changes carefully.

3. If your postures are not correct, and if your mind and spirit are not complete, then it is

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Dong Ying Jie in the Dong Fast Form.



Alex Dong in Yang sword posture.

like using fire to heat a pot with no water in it. You will not progress. Ten years of practice may not even be worth three.

First, you must work hard. Second, you must understand and make the right steps. The level of your Gongfu (skill) and your knowledge will prevail. Constant practice will cure clumsiness and awkwardness: You cannot force progress.

4. During practice, breathing should be natural. Never force your breathing to be longer or deeper. Through practice, it will adjust to your movement naturally. To force it will do more harm than good.

5. The thirteen postures of Taijiquan are used to direct and guide your opponent's energy. As the director, you can guide your own circulation of the Qi. Good circulation will cure a hundred different kinds of illnesses.

Do not use force at any time; everything must be natural. With your tongue touching your upper palate, sink your Qi to your Dantian. Through practice, Qi will circulate thoroughly in your meridians. Everything happens naturally. You cannot use strength to circulate your Qi.

6. By relaxing your shoulders and dropping your elbows, your energy will go to your hands. Learn this, understand it and you will continue to improve. You should not have tension in your shoulders. Learn by being aware.

What you read or hear cannot substitute for experience. Do not move like you are walking through mud (stuck, clumsy). If you have any blockage or uneven kind of stiff strength, then you cannot achieve lightness.

7. Lift your head and drop your buttocks. The spine and coccyx should be straight and centered. Sit back with your chest slightly hollowed, but when you use Fajin, the spine should be straight.

8. When you train, it is best to practice the form at least three times. Use the first time to loosen up your muscles and joints, use the second time to correct your postures, and the third time you use more Yi and Qi. When you move fluidly and easily, naturally there will be Yi in your movements and swift-ness in your steps.

9. The fastest way to learn and understand the energy is to practice more Push Hands. Through Push Hands you can learn to understand the four basic energies (stick, continuous, stick with and following).

If you don't have a partner, practice of the forms is necessary. Practice the forms as if you are using each move with an opponent. This will give you a better understanding of the energy.

10. When you practice Push Hands, pay close attention to all details. Do not laugh or celebrate after a push. Be respectful. Learn to control your attacks; do not hurt people. Then people will respect you from the heart.

11. You can practice Taiji while walking, standing or lying down. You can always use Taiji principles and work on your Taiji in any situation. For example, try to pick up a cup or glass using a lot of energy and very little.

Pay attention when you walk. Are your steps heavy or light? Compare standing with knees locked and then bent with hips relaxed, or on one foot versus both. These can all be good learning experiences.

12. As a beginner, if you feel aches and pain, do not worry. Do not give up; regular practice will give you lightness and quickness. Your spirit will increase and you will be full of Qi. Your pain will disappear when your tension is relaxed.

13. After your form has become fluid, when you learn Push Hands, try to understand all of the energies in Taijiquan. Understanding the energies comes through practice. This is the only way you can really understand. Practice with others will speed up your



Dong Ying Jie in a sword form.

learning. Dummies and punching bags are not alive so they not considered as partners.

14. Movements are even in speed. You root with your feet. Fajin comes from your legs. The waist is like a steering wheel; it controls the body and energies. Direct your energies with your fingers like the wheels on the car control its direction. This is the basis of Fajin.

Knees should not extend past your toes. Your hand should not cross your nose when you push straight ahead, and your hand must be lower than your eyes, but above your stomach when push straight. In order for your right hand to push to the left, you must turn your left shoulder; otherwise your hand will cross over the centerline of your body.

This will keep your body mechanics correct, and your power at its maximum. Energy comes from your feet.

Changes are in the chest (turn your waist is to move your chest). Direct your energies with your hand and fingers. Your waist connects the upper and lower body.

15. Learn to sense and feel. When someone throws a punch at you, it is natural to block or dodge, but you need to understand his reaction and changes. If they are going to use their right hand, their left shoulder will have to slant back, and if they are going to pick up their right foot, they must shift their weight to the left. It is the same on the other side.

This is human nature; it is how the body mechanic works. You must be steady, accurate and fierce when attacking.

When your opponent does not move, you do not move. When your opponent makes a slight move, you move ahead of him. Just before he is able to bring up his spirit and extend his energy, you move ahead of him.

16. When you are practicing Taijiquan, it is better not to lift heavy weights to build strength. Abandon stiff energy; always be natural and loose. In Taijiquan your whole body is loose and soft.

Try to stretch your tendons and circulate your qi. Too much physical strength will slow your improvement. Through soft practice your physical strength will turn into internal power.

Physical strength comes from your upper body, internal strength comes from your lower body and qi comes from your dantian. It is like a bank account: physical strength is your capital; looseness and softness is the way to invest it. With a little bit of money you can make more.

Even if you have a lot of capital, if you don't know how to invest it correctly, it will never grow and eventually it will run out. Practicing Taiji can improve other activities like sports but other exercise or sports do not have the complete package that

Taiji offers.

17. The principle of the Tao is the balance of Yin and Yang. Taijiquan is based on the principles of Yin and Yang. In this world everything involves Yin and Yang. Your movements should be even and fluid. Your Yin and Yang cannot be balanced if you are Double-Weighted or one-sided. With every move, when there is Yin, there must be Yang. Think about it.

18. Taijiquan consists of Wen and Wu. Wen is the literary and philosophical side of Taijiquan; Wu is the physical and martial aspect. Wen is to heal and rejuvenate, Wu is to defend yourself and protect your family. Wen is to be gentle, fluid and calm inside, Wu is to have courage, spirit and physically strong.

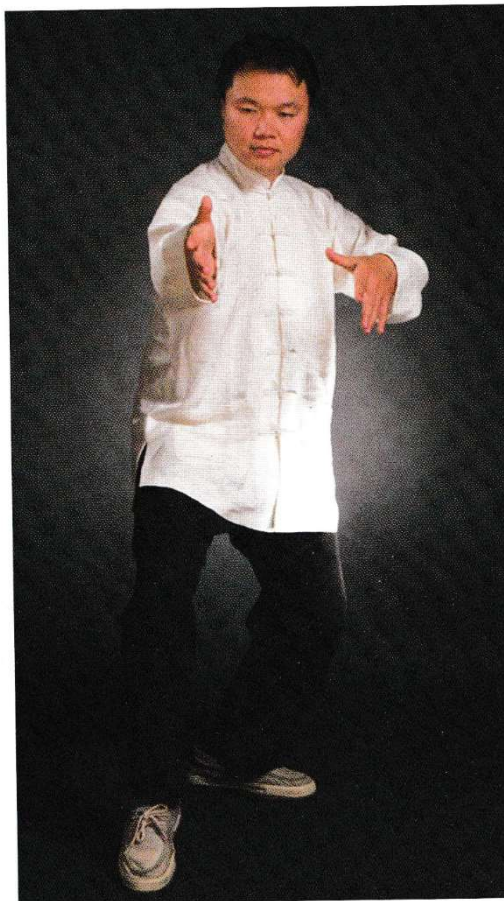
19. Everything I have written is based on my experience and common sense. This is real Gongfu. Everything evolves from the Thirteen Postures. When you develop Gongfu, you will develop fine skills.

Training should always take precedence over theories. In the old days people had better Gongfu; modern days students tend emphasize theory rather than practice. Too many theories can distract your training.

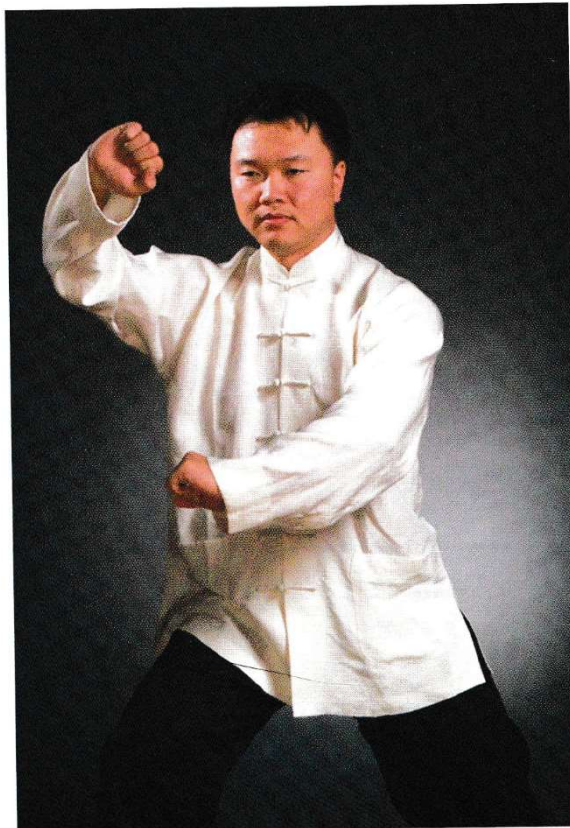
As a martial artist, you should always be kind and fair. As a student, you should respect your teacher and dedicate yourself to your art. Your teacher's teachings are valuable; preserve them and pass them on. This is the traditional Chinese way. To learn the real Gongfu, you need to understand this.

20. If you use your heart and concentrate, you will understand human nature. When you understand human nature, you will understand the nature of the universe. Flames rise up, water flows down; this is their nature. New growth in the spring dies in the fall. This is the nature of the universe.

To wish to be free from work and live a life of wealth and to fear death and want to live forever are human nature. Wind can bend the flame downwards, fire can evaporate water, and pine trees will live through fall and winter. Humans



Alex Dong in a Wu/Hao posture.



Alex Dong in Strike the Tiger.

can learn to have manners and live a heroic lives; this is second nature.

Before learning Taiji your meridians are blocked, your ligaments are tight and short and your energy is stuck in your shoulders. Through practice, you will open the circulation in your meridians and loosen and stretch your tendons.

Your energy will move from your shoulders to your arms, then from your arms to your wrist and to your palms and fingers. You can slowly turn HouTian (second nature) into XianTian (first nature). XianTian energy and skill are very powerful and have no limit. When you understand the natural power, nothing can hold you back.

Notes:

XianTian—"Xian" means before, "Tian" means universe, sky or heaven. This word is frequently mistranslated. XianTian means inborn, congenital or first nature. Everything has its nature: Humans, objects and the universe. XianTian also refers to innate instincts, like getting angry, resisting and wish to live forever.

HouTian—"Hou" means after. HouTian refers to these qualities that arise after birth, things you develop and learn in like that are second nature. You learn to yield, have manners, to understand life and its evolution.

XianTian is leaving it to nature and let everything evolve naturally; this could be good and bad. For example: if you let a child grow up naturally with any form of schooling, then the chances of them not succeeding are greater.

HouTian is like giving a child the proper training to live in this society. To reach the highest level, you have turn HouTian abilities into XianTian abilities.

For example, proper education can teach a person to have respect, manners and how to act in different situations so that others will think he is successful.

But only if what you have learned has become a part of you (XianTian) and what you do is from your heart, then this is the ultimate. If you are putting up an act then that is not you. •