

Master Cheng's Thirteen Chapters on T'ai Chi Ch'uan (Extracts)

1. **Ch.1, Pg7** – T'ai-chi is the mother of *yin* and *yang* and all embracing in its scope. The *I ching* states that *T'ai-chi* gives birth to the two aspects: *yin* and *yang*. When *yin* reaches its peak, it produces *yang*; when *yang* reaches its peak, it produces *yin*. The dynamic processes of hard and soft, movement and stasis are all based on these peaks.
2. **Ch.1, Pg7** – To study *T'ai-chi Ch'uan*, one must begin by “investing in loss”. At its highest level, learning to invest in loss produces precisely its opposite. This is the ultimate in gaining the position of advantage. We may compare this to the teeth, which are firm and hard, and the tongue, which is soft. Occasionally the teeth and tongue have disagreements, and the tongue must temporarily invest in loss, but in the end the teeth will crumble from hardness, while the tongue will survive through softness.
3. **Ch.2, Pg10** – The principles of *T'ai-chi ch'uan* are all contained within *yin* and *yang*; the transformations of its *ch'i* are all explained by the Five Phases. *Yin* and *Yang* are opposite in nature but have a complementary relationship and are always found together. *Yin* and *Yang* describe the fundamental dynamic balance of the whole universe.
4. **Ch.2, Pg13** – When the mind and *ch'i* are both concentrated in the *tan-t'ien*, not only can water be transmuted into *ch'i*, but *ching* can also be transmuted into *ch'i*. In transmuting *ching* into *ch'i*, the heat of the *ch'i* can be compared to electricity, which is able to pass through water, earth, and metals without difficulty.
5. **Ch.2, Pg14** – The *ching-ch'i* is to be converted into heat which passes through the *wei-lu* up the spine, reaching the crown of the head and spreading out to the four limbs. This further causes the warm *ch'i* to condense in the bones, where it is sealed in and cannot issue forth. In a short time the *ch'i* transmuted from *ching* once again reverts to water, and then gradually to fatty fluid. The fatty fluid then becomes solid matter in the form of bone marrow which sticks to the inside of the bones. After a long time, the marrow becomes very full, and the bones firm and strong. This is why we refer to them as “essentially hard”.
6. **Ch.3, Pg18** – “In concentrating your *ch'i* and becoming soft, can you be like and infant?”. The infant's body is pure yang. Pure yang means that the *ch'i* is abundant. When the *ch'i* is abundant, the blood is sufficient and the sinews are soft. Soft sinews are a special characteristic of the infant. If people who are not far from death are to have any hope of returning to youthfulness, it is only through concentrating the *ch'i* and becoming soft.
7. **Ch.5, Pg24** – T'ai-chi ch'uan is the method for storing *ch'i* and the technique for circulating it. With this it overflows into the sinews, reaches the bone marrow, fill the membranes and diaphragm, and manifests in the hair and skin. This is truly concentrating the *ch'i* and developing softness.

8. **Ch.6, Pg28** – Beginners must maintain both mind and *ch'i* in the *tan-t'ien*. After a long time, the *ch'i* naturally travels to the *wei-lu*, rushes through the *chia-chi*, traverses the *yu-chen*, and finally reaches the crown of the head from which it descends again to the *tan-t'ien*. This, then, is the connection of the *Jen* and *Tu* meridians, and the interaction of the heart and kidneys. However, this is not the work of one day; it cannot be forced and must be completely natural. If one can achieve it, then not only is there hope of reaching the pinnacle of perfection in *T'ai-chi ch'uan*, but immortality of the spirit, long life and health as well.
9. **Ch.8, Pg44** – *T'ai-chi ch'uan* exercise takes cultivating *ch'i* as its primary goal. Sinking the *ch'i* to the *tan-t'ien* may be called, “properly nourishing and not damaging it”. Walking, sitting, retiring or reclining, speaking, laughing, eating and drinking all provide an opportunity to cultivate *ch'i*.
10. **Ch.9, Pg46** – The martial arts can be divided into internal and external systems. These are called *Shao-lin* and *Wu-tang*. *Wu-tang* refers to *Chang San-feng's* internal system of *T'ai-chi ch'uan*. There is a saying which goes, “The internal trains the *ch'i*; the external trains the muscles, bones, and skin”. This indicates the internal system's emphasis on *ch'i*.
11. **Ch.9, Pg46** – In *ch'i* training, the ability to sink the *ch'i* to the *tan-t'ien* is of primary importance. When the *ch'i* sinks to the *tan-t'ien*, then it is strong. When the *ch'i* is strong, then the blood is full. When the *ch'i* and blood are strong and full, this is extremely beneficial to the internal organs.
12. **Ch.9, Pg47** – When the *Ch'i* sinks to the *tan-t'ien*, every time we inhale and exhale, the organs are able to relax and move. With inhalation and exhalation there is opening and closing. When we add movements to this –turning the waist and extending the arms, relaxing the chest and taking steps- then the organs are lightly agitated. Not only does the main connective tissue become daily stronger, but exposure to heat and humidity will not result in illness. Moreover, the strength of our back, heart and brain also increase accordingly. This is a summary of the benefits received.
13. **Ch.10, Pg56** – *T'ai-chi ch'uan* exercise is what is called “mobilization first and then movement.” Mobilization and then movement means that “the mind moves the *ch'i* and *ch'i* moves the body.” Thus we proceed from the inner to the outer, that is from the internal organs to movement of the limb. This, of course, is based on sinking the *ch'i* to the *tan-t'ien*, which has been discussed in detail in preceding chapters. To summarize again, we emphasize lightness and sensitivity to develop softness, without wasting the slightest energy. We move in such a way as to cultivate *ch'i* and invigorate the blood, relax the sinews and avoid strain. Furthermore, only seven minutes is required in the morning and evening, and it is best not to seek rapid progress.