

## “THEM” Chi Gong (The Heaven and Earth and ME)

The following exercises derive from Tai Ji. Their main purpose is to cultivate, strengthen and build up the energy space around you. However, a build-up is only possible with a significant involvement of the legs. The legs are also called the second heart. According to the teachings of Tai Chi, which developed mainly from Daoism, people live between the power of heaven and earth. We absorb the elemental power through the earth.

This is done through the connection from the feet, through the legs into the pelvis. Every movement begins from the contact with the earth, within the body the movement then develops into the fingertips. Exercises that are only performed with the arms may have only a symbolic meaning.

*Almost all of the following exercises have the Tai Chi rhythm consisting of: Sink - Turn - Expand - Sink - etc.*

**Sinking** means to get down on one's knees and make a clear contact with the ground. Sinking also means "sinking" slightly into the sternum

**Turning** means to push off the ground with the feet and to turn the pelvis, from the pelvis the turning movement goes into the spine.

**Drehen** bedeutet, sich mit den Füßen vom Boden abzustossen und das Becken zu drehen, vom Becken geht die Drehbewegung bis in die Wirbelsäule.

**Expanding** means to slightly open the sternum from the rotation of the pelvis and spine and to make an opening or expanding movement with the arms.

In the following exercises, the expanding movements are limited because we want to cultivate the energy space, or figuratively speaking the cloud around us.

### Video 1: legs (earth)

(a) Stand a little more than shoulder wide, your feet pointing outwards (Charlie Chaplin position). The hands can lie loosely on the thighs or on the stomach. Alternate your weight from your left foot to your right foot, which means always SINKING deeply, and you alternately give 70% of your weight left / right into the soles of your feet.

(b) If you have practiced enough, you can try the + variation. You start again with Charlie Chaplin position. When you turn to the left you pull the right foot and then you have the whole weight on the left. Before you turn right, you open your right foot again and take your weight to the right and then pull the left foot.

### Video 2: Caring for my cloud in the back and front. (cloud hands from Tai Chi)

Assume the same foot posture as in video 1.

Starting position: the right hand points approximately 10 cm away from the belly, the left hand points approximately 10 cm away from the back (can also be reversed). Shift your weight to your right foot and turn your body to the right. Now the movement begins. As you slowly turn to the left, your hands will come away from your belly and back, the palms of your hands face to the ground. When the body is turned to the left and the weight is on the left foot, the left hand points to the belly and the right hand to the back.

So you swing back and forth. It is important that when you have turned completely to the left or to the right, you sink into your left or right leg. This creates a rhythm of ...SINKING - TURNING - EXPANDING (OPENING) - SINKING - TURNING ....

#### Video 3: turning the ball with hands (I)

(a) Put your hands in front of you as if you have a ball between your hands. First you just turn the ball, so that the right and left hand is up alternately.

(b) Now you start to point your feet outwards again like in video 1a and slowly change your weight from right to left and back. Whenever you are on one side with your weight, you turn the ball so that another hand is always on top.

(c) If you have practiced for a long time, you can try the +variation and turn your feet accordingly.

#### Video 4: **The eight** (cloud hands from Tai Chi)

This is a continuation of video 2: the feet are facing outwards as in 1 and 2.

You hold the ball between your hands, for example, so that your right hand is down. Then move your body (like V 2) to the right so that 70% of your weight is on your right foot and you lead the ball to the right. **Now** release the lower right hand from below, it makes a wide arc outwards - up - back to the middle. In the middle the right hand is now the upper hand on the ball. Then you move your body to the left etc.

If you have practiced for a long time, you can try the + variation and turn your feet.

#### Video 5: **The snake comes from behind.** (from Peking Form Tai Ji)

This is a continuation of video 3: **Now** the lower right hand loosens from below, makes a bow first to the BACK and then the fingertips come from behind like a snake at head height, only to touch the ball again from above.

If you have practiced for a long time, you can try the + variation and turning your feet.

#### Video 6: **The earth and people in the mirror.** (from 13 Form Tai Ji)

We go to the starting position like in the exercise "turn the ball with your hands". Now slowly pull the two hands apart as if you had a soft cake batter between your hands.

The lower hand moves upwards and the palm of the hand points to you like a mirror. You look at the mirror. The upper hand is already pointing to the ground, it moves downwards about a hand's breadth below the iliac crest. This hand makes contact with the earth. When both hands are holding the ball in the middle, this is the SINK position. We turn slightly to one side: TURN and pull the hands apart as described above. That would be the EXPANDING position.

In the + variant, the foot of the opposite side is pulled back, or opened again before the movement in the middle.

#### Video 7: **The Phoenix spreads its wings.** (from Baqua Mast Peng)

This movement is only directed forward. You stand forward with one foot, hands at hip level facing the ground. You make a circle outward-forward and come back to the middle.

When moving forward, approx. 70% of the body weight is absorbed by the front foot, when moving backward, it is absorbed by the rear foot. When moving backwards, the forefoot lifts from the ground so that when the arms are at hip level, the whole weight is on the back leg and the front leg only touches the ground with the heel.

In the plus version, the legs and the pelvis make the same movement. In the forward movement, the palms of the hands are directed outwards. In the maximum forward expansion, the hands turn slowly from outside to inside. When you have reached pelvic level, the hands turn to the side of the pelvis again, so that the palms of your hands are facing outwards.

#### Video 8: **Sky and earth.** (popular Chi Gong exercise a.o. from Lohan Gong)

This is a variant of a well-known exercise from Qigong.

- A) The knees are always slightly bent. The feet are closed and well connected to the ground. The hands form a bowl in front of the body and move slowly upwards, so that the palms of the hands are facing the sky. It is important that the elbows hang down freely so that the shoulders are not pulled up during this movement. The body weight shifts slightly to the front feet so that the pelvis and navel move slightly forward. Stay in this position for a few seconds.
- B) Now the hands move so that the fingertips of the middle fingers touch above the head (like a roof over the head), the palms of the hands point upwards and we push the palms of the hands upwards. Try again and again to push the palms upwards.
- C) Now you shift your body weight to the front part of your feet, or even to your tiptoes. The arms and hands open upwards and the fingertips point to the sky.
- D) You open your feet. In a wide arc you open your arms outwards first, then the arc closes in front of you so that the palms of your hands are facing upwards, then you make a small circle in front of your body outwards-upwards-inwards until the palms of your hands are in front of you, facing downwards towards the earth.
- E) While the palms of your hands and forearms are still pointing to the ground, pull your elbows backwards so strongly that the shoulder blades approach the back. During this

movement, inhale strongly, holding your breath for a moment. While the arms and hands move slowly forward again, breathe out slowly with a "lip brake".

Video 9: **Final exercise** (Final movement from Tai Ji, 13 and Peking Form)

You start like exercise nine with a bowl in front of your body. The feet are opened about shoulder width.

Big variation: Now move your arms in a circle outwards back to the centre, so that the hands cross over each other and the palms of your hands are facing forward. You roll your hands inwards so that the palms of your hands are pointing upwards, then you make a large circle outwards - upwards - with a strong inhalation. At the top, the palms of your hands turn downwards so that the space between your hands is compressed towards the pelvis when you move downwards. Do this big variation about 3 times.

Small variation: After rolling up, instead of the big circle, make a small circle in front of the body with a fine inhalation and exhalation. When you move the palms of your hands towards your body, you close your feet and enjoy for a while the space (your cloud) that you have built around you.

*Enjoy the cloud you have built around you.*