



# Taijiquan Yin-Yang Silk Twining Training Master Class with Master Sam Masich on ZOOM



## Level One, Session One Same-side Arm Exercises

### Taijiquan Yin-Yang Silk Twining Training (*Yin-Yang Chansigong* 陰陽纏絲功)

*Yin-Yang Chansigong* (陰陽纏絲功) is one of the most important *taijiquan* practices for developing continuity and power. Silk-twining brings together *taijiquan* core-principles with *taijiquan* forms and can be understood as the glue that binds theory and practice. *Chansigong* is most often associated with Chen-style Taijiquan and, to a lesser extent, with Wu-style Taijiquan, however, it is also very much a component of the Yang-style Taijiquan. While it is greatly beneficial to all areas of internal-arts training, *chansigong* is almost completely unknown to Yang-style Taijiquan players as it has traditionally been taught in 'closed-door' settings.

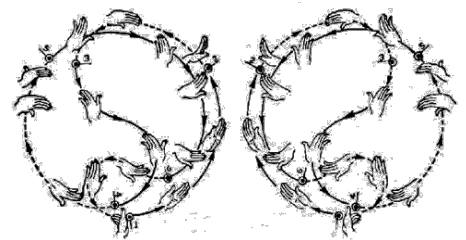
Three terms are commonly used in relation to *chansi* practice. The most frequently used is '*chansijin*' (纏絲勁) which refers to the martial-kinetic qualities (*jin* 勁) of the twining actions. The word '*chansigong*' (纏絲功) refers to practices (*gong* 功) that use *chansijin*. A less-known term, '*chansijing*' (纏絲精), refers to the internal energy (*jing* 精) gradually accumulated by *chansigong*.

#### 1. What is 'silk twining'?

The Chinese word *chan* (纏) means to 'twine,' 'entwine,' 'entangle,' 'wrap around,' or 'reel.' *Si* (絲) means 'silk' or 'thread.' '*Chan*' and '*si*' together form '*chansi*' which is usually translated as 'silk reeling,' silk winding,' or, more simply, as 'coiling,' or 'twining.'

The *chansi* analogy is usually said to refer to the drawing of fibrous silk threads from a cocoon created by a silkworm in order to house it's transformation into a moth or butterfly. *Chansi* can also be thought of as the wrapping of the silk around a spool. Another imagining of the *chansi* suggests the spinning of the silkworm itself as it generates the cocoon. The silk-twining idea suggests also that an opponent can become entangled, entwined, and stuck in the sticky web of silk.

These four images provide metaphors for the many small actions within the *chansigong* exercises and for the characteristic way movement unfolds in *taijiquan* and other *neijiaquan* arts. *Chansi*, both as an energy (*jin* 勁) and a practice (*gong* 功), supports the 'sticking-adhering energy' (*zhan-nian jin* 粘黏勁) approach to martial-arts training and is closely related to the twenty-five energies of Taijiquan's Theory of Energy (*Taijiquan Lun Jin* 太極拳論勁) found in Chen Yanlin's (陳炎林) 1943 *Taiji Boxing, Sabre, Sword, Pole, Sparring Compiled* (*Taiji Quan, Dao, Jian, Gan, Sanshou Hebian* 太極拳刀劍桿散手).



Silk-twining hands in Chen-style Taijiquan

## 2. Silk twining as an independant solo practice

The characteristics of silk twining are built into *taijiquan* solo-and-partner forms and practices and therefore, to a certain extent, it can be reasonably thought unnecessary to practice silk-twining exercises as independant solo practices. This assumes, however, that students are practicing their forms with correct *chansi* alignments and sequencing—which is rarely the case. If this level of connection is absent or faulty, a gap between principle and practice exists. Therefore, independant *chansi* practice can benefit the practitioner in their efforts to master the art.

Silk-twining solo exercises can be likened to other practices designed to bolster *taijiquan* progress, such as; standing-post training, *qigong* and meditation exercises, strength and flexibility training, etc. Such practices are used to augment the strict *taijiquan* practices to the point of being part of the art's curriculum. Compared to the above-mentioned methods, however, silk twining is baked into every aspect of the art and, therefore, silk-twining solo practices can be considered an essential part of training.

## 3. Yin-Yang Chansigong important points

- In Yin-Yang Chansigong, the terms *yang* (陽) and *yin* (陰) refer to the 'rolling direction' of the movements. 'Yang' practices 'roll' outward much in the way a wheel rolls forward, while 'yin' practices 'roll' inward much as a wheel rolls backward.
- Yin-Yang Chansigong involves a continuous interchange between 'ward' (*peng* 棚) and 'press' (*an* 按)<sup>1</sup> and, therefore, supports other *peng-an* based practices such as the Yang-shi Taiji Changquan (108 long form), *taijibaduanjin*, *dashou*, etc.
- The Single-arm Twining Exercises are done in 'horse stance' (*mabu* 馬步) only. Although shifting toward the left or right side begins to imply a 'bow stance' (*gongbu* 弓步), the horse stance should be maintained throughout. Maintaining the horse stance requires discipline but produces stronger long-term results.
- The *yin-yang* stance continuum is always at play during weight shifting—*tai-yin* (太陰) → *yang* (陽) → *tai-yang* (太陽) ← *yin* (陰) ← *tai-yin* (太陰). However, each of these exercises uses only one half (one side) of the stance—from *tai-yin* to *tai-yang* and back to *tai-yin*. Maintaining the half-stance limit requires discipline but produces stronger long term results.



## 4. Same-side single-arm exercises

*Forward rolling*

### 1. Advance with *peng*

Release wrist, elbow, shoulder

**Retreat with *an*** (inner-arm *lǚ*)

Sink inner shoulder, drop elbow, sit wrist

*Backward rolling*

### 2. Advance with *an*

Sink inner shoulder, drop elbow, sit wrist

**Retreat with *peng*** (supporting outer-arm *lǚ*)

Release wrist, elbow, shoulder



**Masich**  
internal Arts  
M E T H O D

<sup>1</sup> Note that 'peng' is commonly translated as 'ward off' and 'an' as 'push.'