



Taijiquan Core Principles
(Level Three)

Four Session
Master Class
with Master Sam Masich

Level Three, Session Two Dantians, Mottos, Ji & Lü

Taijiquan Core Principles are descriptions of the essential criteria for *taijiquan* practice based on natural laws governing human structure, movement, and function. They are trainable concepts meant to be integrated into any and all *taijiquan* solo and partner practices. Taijiquan Core-principles—Level Three concepts use classical *taijiquan* literature, internal energetic points and functions, and the deep theoretical structures of *taijiquan* to approach the significance and meaning of the basic principles that guide our study and practice. They are directly related to the ideas and practices found in Taijiquan Core-principles—Levels One and Two.

1. The three *dantians* (*san dantian* 三丹田)

The Thirteen Powers Song (*Shisan Shi Ge* 十三勢歌) states:

From the still centre, movement stirs; in movement there remains stillness—the cause of the opponent's undoing is mystical (*shenqi* 神奇).

The power behind the 'powers' (*shi shi* 勢勢) is to keep the 'heart' (*xin* 心) under control by use of intention (*yi* 意)—attainment comes unconsciously with effort over time.

The Taijiquan Treatise (Taijiquan Lun 太極拳論) introduces this idea with the image of an older person successfully fending off a group of attackers. The explanation for this has to do with the physics of a wheel.

Consider the saying, 'Four ounces turns a thousand pounds.'

Obviously, this cannot be a victory through strength.

Witness a person of more than seventy years defending against numerous others; it cannot be due to swiftness.

Stand precisely balanced. Resemble a 'cart-wheel.'

Asymmetrical sinking (*pian chen* 偏沉) allows 'following' (*sui* 隨).

Symmetrical weightedness (*shuangchong* 雙重) is a defect (*bing* 病).

The central hub is what allows the wheel to turn. Likewise, movement takes place around a still centre. If one biases to one side or the other movement will take place.

In *taijiquan* the term '*dantian*' (borrowed from Chinese daoist alchemy) is often used to describe the 'centre.' The word '*dantian*' (丹田) describes a non-biological entity with location and qualities but not physicality. A *dantian* is understood to 'represent,' 'resonate,' 'emanate,' and 'discern.'

In earlier core-principles studies we see the segmented nature of the body, the idea of the body as a series of blocks on springs—pelvis (block), waist (spring), torso (block), neck (spring), head (block). The pelvis, torso, and head are separate regions, sometimes referred to as 'bowls.'

The *dantian* represents the centre of each bowl and can, therefore, be called a 'bowl centre.'

In any person there are three *dantian* structures, each residing in one of the main structures of the head-torso-abdomen complex. If properly understood and mastered the three *dantians* can be used as a supra-sensing organs—tools for perception.

Lower *dantian*

Located in the abdomen, the 'lower *dantian*' (*xia dantian* 下丹田) is the centre of movement in the physical body. This *dantian*—often simply called 'the centre'—refers to the 'centre of gravity,' 'centre of mass,' and 'centre of movement.' The oft-used expression 'sink the *qi* to the *dantian*' (*qi chen dantian* 下則氣沉丹田)—specifically referring to the lower *dantian*, refers back to the second and third of the inner three-harmonies concepts:

- 2) 'Intention' and 'vital energy' harmonize (*yi yu qi he* 意與氣合)
- 3) 'Vital energy' and 'force' harmonize (*qi yu li he* 氣與力合)

The implication here is clear: When *qi* is directed or gathered in the *dantian*, physical force can more effectively be expressed.

Upper *dantian*

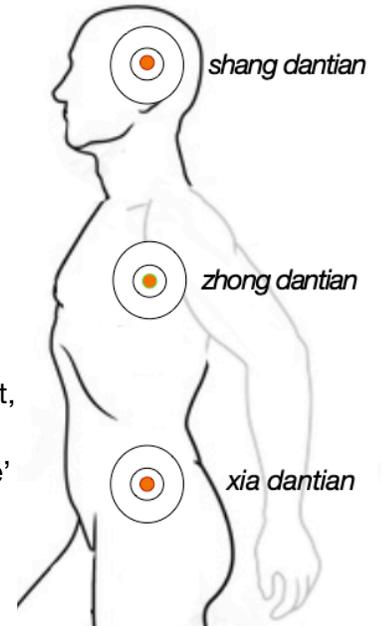
Located in the head, the upper *dantian* (*shang dantian* 上丹田) is a place of convergence for processes having to do with 'conscious interiority;' thought, intention, imagination, memory, and aspects of identity. In internal-arts traditions, the upper *dantian* is described as 'the one that connects all three' (*yiguan santian* 一貫三田) and can, therefore, be related to the thalamus which acts as a relay station for sensory and motor information.

Middle *dantian*

Located in the torso, the middle *dantian* (*zhong dantian* 中丹田) is often thought of as the 'heart centre' and is related to the '*xin*' (心) energetic complex that is linked to the upper *dantian*. The middle *dantian* has, in part, to do with the *qi* of emotional activity, blood movement, and functions as a link between the upper and lower *dantians*.

Aligning the three *dantians*

The idea of 'centring oneself' can be understood as the act of bringing the three *dantians* into alignment. Due to poor posture, over-focusing on the concerns of one or another of the centres, or neglect of any of the three regions the *dantians* can reside in an unaligned state. Taijiquan is a practice both for-the-purpose of and dependant-on *dantian* alignment. The 'five words of self-composure'—'breath,' 'calm,' 'centre,' 'root' and 'energy'—can help one to align the three *dantians*.



Tell your friends!

fully-edited versions of
Taijiquan Core Principles
(Levels One & Two)



Taijiquan Core Principles (Level One)

Buy individual sessions or, buy all four
and receive a Coupon Code for a free T-Shirt!

Watch trailer below



Taijiquan Core Principles (Level Two)

Buy individual sessions or, buy all four
and receive a Coupon Code for a free T-Shirt!

Watch trailer below



2. The Masich Internal Arts Method Mottos

The twin mottoes of the Masich Internal Arts Method reflect the *yin* and *yang* mind-body nature of the internal martial arts.

Wuyi Budong (無意不動)

The first motto, means 'Lacking intention, do not move.' In the 'Thirteen Powers Circulation & Cultivation Transmission' (*Shisanshi Xing Gong Xinjie* 十三勢行功心解), it is stated:

'The *yi* and *qi* must interact adroitly—only then is there roundness, liveliness and delight.'

This follows the idea of the internal harmonies regarding 'heart,' 'intention,' and 'vital energy' harmonization. The notion that movement stirs from the still centre reflects, once again, the idea of *wuji-to-taiji* and the importance mindfulness of the centres.

Rouze Changcun (柔則長存)

The second motto, means 'Softness endures.' It is one half of the Chinese saying;

'Rigidity breaks easily, softness endures'
(*Gangze Yizhe, Rouze Changcun*)

The word *rou* (柔) means 'softness,' 'looseness,' 'suppleness,' and gentleness.' The Japanese art of *judo* (柔道) also uses this character along with *dao* (道) or 'way.' Such a quality of pliability can only be achieved if one's energies are consolidated and not dispersed. *Dantian* alignment is critical to this mission.

The 'Taijiquan Treatise' (*Taijiquan Lun* 太極拳論) further states:

'When the opponent is rigid, I am soft; it is called receiving.'

3. The 'Centres': *Ji* & *Lü*

Just as 'ward' (*peng* 棚) and 'press' (*an* 按) are supported by the *baihui* (百會) and (*huiyin* 會陰) centre, the other 'eight-gates' energies can also be related to points along the 'governing channel' (*dumai* 督脈) and 'conception channel' (*renmai* 任脈). The governing and conception channels belong to the 'eight extraordinary channels' (*qijing bamai* 奇經八脈) in traditional Chinese medicine.

In the case of 'squeeze' (*ji* 擠) and 'roll' (*lü* 履) the support centres are the 'scarlet palace' (*jiangong* 絳宮) and the 'double pass' (*shuangguan* 雙關).

