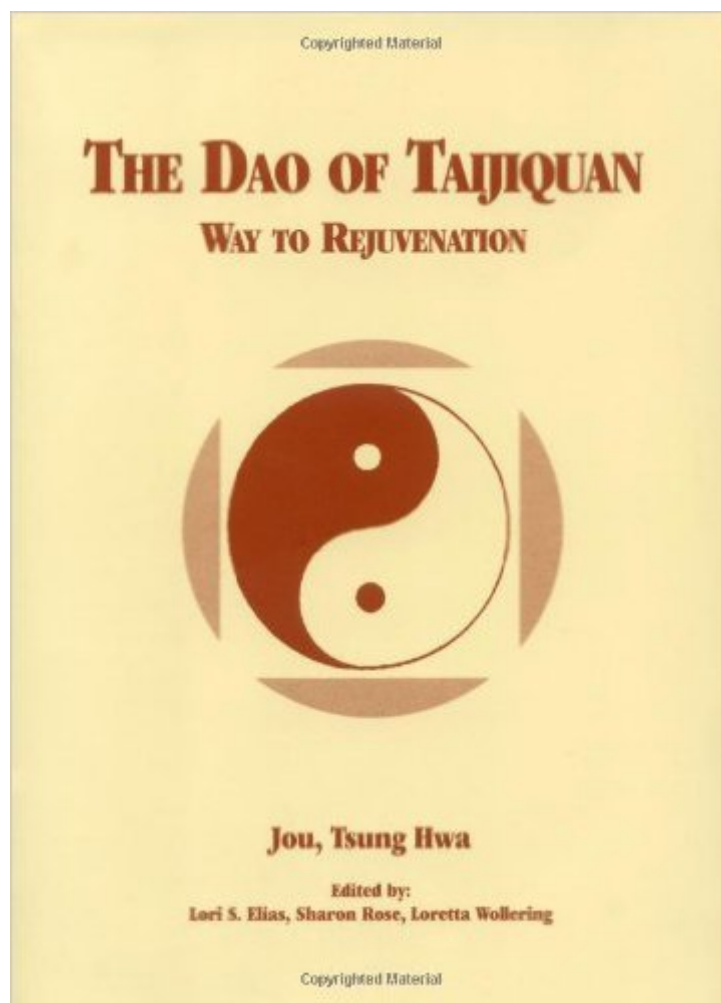


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The Dao Of Taijiquan: Way To Rejuvenation (Tai Chi)



Synopsis

In The Dao of Taijiquan, the author, Jou, Tsung Hwa, himself bears witness to the ability of Tai-Chi to relieve the body of pent-up tension and rejuvenate the spirit in a thorough study of the techniques and classical texts of this ancient martial art. In order to create a serious textbook that explains the philosophy behind the movements of tai chi chuan, he read all available books in both English and Chinese before writing The Dao of Taijiquan. Now this book can be used as a college textbook for courses in tai chi (whether as a philosophy or in Sports Studies). Jou, Tsung Hwa is also the author of The Tao of Meditation: Way to Enlightenment, and The Tao of I Ching: Way to Divination, both from Tuttle Publishing.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I've read a number of books on the subject but this one is, by far, the most comprehensive. While I never had the opportunity to meet the man, I've taken Tai Chi instruction at the late author's school only after, much like the author himself, being dissatisfied with my prior instruction at past schools. Once beginning my training at the "Tai Chi Farm" I found his spirit living on in his students and especially his apprentice, who's working towards mastery herself (LW - she know's who she is) and stories about him abounded. He walked away from formal instruction after ten years, dissatisfied with the quality of today's teachers of Tai Chi. From that point on he took instruction only from the classics, the writings of the original masters. Like those masters, he spent much time observing

nature, studying the movements of animals, insects, clouds, etc., hoping to glean insights for use in his own development. As his abilities and reputation grew, people from all over the world came to him for instruction. It's said that right up until his untimely death in an auto accident, at age 81, he was unbeatable when sparring, using principles and insights that he had gained during 40 years of intense practice. It's with these insights, along with his background as a college professor in mathematics and author of dozens of textbooks, that Master Jou wrote this, the DEFINITIVE text book on Taijiquan. It's one of those books that you can read again and again over the years and, as your own development progresses, get more out of it with each reading.

An absolute gem! From the very beginning, I was inspired by the amazing accomplishments of a man who first began his Tai Chi journey, at age 47, when he was at death's door due to an enlarged heart and severe gastric disorders. The extent of his accomplishments is quite evident from the extraordinary insights he shares on the internals - the true essence of Tai Chi. I dare say that there are many very senior practitioners of Tai Chi who, upon reading this book, will realize that they have not really been practicing Tai Chi at all. This book will quickly let sincere students everywhere know whether their current instructor truly knows Tai Chi, or whether they need to continue their search for a genuine master of this marvelous art. Master Tsung Hwa Jou's writings serve as a clear guide to help students to distinguish the few flowers that exist today in a vast field overrun by weeds.

In its time, this book was the most comprehensive text book of Tai Chi Chuan in the English language. Master Jou covered every topic in an academic and very intimate fashion. Master Jou was truly a Master of Tai Chi because he was very willing to expose his vulnerabilities and weaknesses to teach others how to be powerfully human. He introduced many people to the concept that tai chi was more than a form, but an entire system of development. He defined the lineages, traditions and histories of the major systems and was the first to introduce many players to Chi Kung and integrated movement. My students are all strongly encouraged to read this book. May he assume his place among the Immortals.

This book has much more wisdom packed within its pages than can be understood or appreciated on a first, second or even third read. It was written with the earnest desire to introduce Americans to the practice of Tai Chi, as the author would say, "not for fame or money, but to spread good health to American people." Having used Tai Chi practice to cure his own serious heart and gastrointestinal condition, he wanted to share its health benefits with all who had an interest. Master

Jou would frequently say that a student could take Tai Chi practice as far as he or she had interest and perseverance: health exercise, martial art or enlightenment. He was in it for enlightenment. I was one of Master Jou's first students and benefitted by his generous (free) instruction for many years in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Although he immigrated there to pursue an advanced degree in mathematics at Rutgers University (He was already a very successful and widely published author of mathematics text books in Taiwan), by the time he came to the US in 1971, his true passion was Tai Chi all day, everyday, with an intense desire to communicate what he had learned and was learning to his new American community. Master Jou was not fluent in English when he arrived, so he began by writing this entire book by hand in Chinese. He had the outline translated and then painstakingly worked with a small group of Tai Chi students (myself among them) to transcribe content and intent, frequently using mathematics to explain both underlying philosophy and technique. Although the first edition was rough, it was quickly recognized as a treasure and translated into many different languages and distributed worldwide. English improved with each new edition so that this book can now be appreciated by a beginner but is a "must read" for any serious student.

I felt this book was worth a read. Another reviewer mentioned there is too much personal interpretation. I agree and disagree. This personal flavor is both helpful and distracting. It is interesting to see how the author's thinking changes over time in his different forwards. Some of his statements and thoughts contradict each other but that seems natural when studying taijiquan - sometimes you think the "way" is this way, other times that way. Also, sometimes his opinions seem too dogmatic - "only taijiquan has X or Y", e.g., torso methods, whereas "external arts" do not have it, e.g., hand methods only - in my experience taijiquan is certainly unique but I wouldn't go this far. External arts have more value than he seems to have thought in my opinion. He also does not seem to try to separate fact from myth - going into a long account of Zhang San Feng's supposed 200+ year long life without seeming too skeptical about the legend or critical in his evaluation. The highlights of the book are the drawings, the author's earnest account of learning from different styles, advice for students to follow the same path rather than learn from just one teacher, and his hope that others will continue to restore the (declining according to him) state of taijiquan. Overall worth reading.

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