

## **Chen Xin: Meaning of Taiji in context to the starting position**

Taiji is born of Wuji or Ultimate Nothingness. Although this state represents something shaped with a sound, it is still known as the Absolute Nothingness. Conversely, the state of Wuji (Ultimate Nothingness) can also be defined as Taiji.

Although Taiji is known as shapeless and soundless, the pre-origin of the seed of a great fruit begins to take form, which will eventually transform into a seedling. This is the formless newborn mechanism of motion and motionlessness, not yet sufficiently formed to be launched or represented as a seed. Heaven and earth are still in the state of shapelessness Oneness of the Great Chaos, Wuji, a traditional name describing the initial cosmic state of non-differentiation between Yin and Yang. Still the mechanism of differentiation already exists, marking the condition just prior to the appearance of forms, a pivotal point between opposing impulses from which creative activity emanates.

This transition from external stillness to readiness for movement is known as going from Wuji to Taiji. Movement will cause clear qi to ascend to heaven and muddy or „impure“ qi to fall to earth. Prior to this, there is no differentiation between clear and impure qi. Thus, the ancestors used the term Taiji to denote the non-separated state depicted by heaven and earth, Yin and Yang and the Five Phases, a state beyond any name or concept. So when we talk about Taiji, we mean the initial form of Yin and Yang and the Five Phases.

At the starting position of Taiji performance, although the four extremities are still motionless, the internal mechanism of Yin and Yang, opening and closing, growth and decline, full and empty contained in the mind/heart and abdomen is maintained properly due to the adjustment of all the body's parts. At this very moment, unification of volition and the concentration of spirit will occur if the starting position of the form is treated respectfully and carefully, whilst the dualistic principles of Yin and Yang, opening and closing, growth and decline, full and empty and so on are still beyond visual manifestation and thus cannot be defined or named. For the sake of clarity, we use the term Taiji to describe the initial or preparatory stage of the entire routine.

Preparation is necessary to establish one's balance and bearing prior to movement. Though not visible to the eye, it is crucial. Before starting to practice the Taiji routine the student must first purify her heart and empty her mind of thought. As a result, she will possess a look of serenity, and her physical and mental conditions will be completely mobilized to launch the mechanisms of Taiji motion. The aim of the practitioner is to unite the two extremes into one in order to return to Wuji through practice and accomplishment of the Taiji routine.