

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

“Let us learn from one another!
We are all students, Taiji is the teacher.”

–Jou Tsung Hwa

Purpose

This is a report of research conducted in 1988 into Taijiquan instruction in America. Taijiquan is an art of movement that originated in China. While the external appearance and even the purpose of its practice differs from individual to individual and among various “styles,” each style tracing its history through a different lineage and having unique traditions, the art of Taijiquan is unified by certain principles. Its aim is to embody these principles through practice, until they cease to be isolated exercises and become part of a player’s way of moving through everyday life. A primary mode of practice is the regular performance of predetermined sequences of movements, called “forms.”

The present study was grounded in the belief that Taijiquan might be many things to many people. The purpose of this research was to develop a descriptive characterization or profile of the state of the art in this country. To

this end, a questionnaire was sent to Taijiquan teachers to gather personal data, and information on their training, views, and instructional approach. Both qualitative and quantitative analyses were conducted on the data from the 216 questionnaires which were returned. It was hoped that documentation of some of the great variety of perspectives on Taijiquan might lead to a more inclusive definition of the art, and foster an attitude of mutual respect among all players, especially between those who are at variance over approaches that might seem mutually exclusive.

To provide a context for this inquiry and its findings, this first chapter examines the history of Taijiquan in China and America, delineates certain issues arising from that history, summarizes some of the previous research on Taijiquan in English, and concludes with the specific questions which organized this inquiry.

Background

In China, Taijiquan is classified as a martial art: one of the few internal or soft style martial arts in which expertise is based on relaxation and the ability to cultivate and direct *qi* (life energy or inner force) with the mind. It is also seen as the embodiment of the philosophy inherent in the *Yi Jing*, or *Book of Changes*, a 3,000 year-old text, which depicts the dynamics of change in the universe through the alternation of polar opposites, yin and yang. Taijiquan is closely associated with Daoist beliefs, and with the other arts in the large and labyrinthine family of Chinese *wushu* (martial arts).

Lacking the language skill and access to original sources in Chinese, most Western writers, including the present researcher, must rely on the scant information published in English. As in other cultures, the ancestors of the Chinese people from prehistoric times undoubtedly performed various movement arts to celebrate cyclic processes, to bring themselves, individually and communally, into harmony and favor with natural forces, and to defend themselves and their communities. Ample evidence indicates there have been many arts related to physical culture and self-defense throughout Chinese history. Some writers, Chen Wei-Ming (1929, 1985), Huang (1974), and Jou (1988) among others, make a connection between Taijiquan and the scant records of certain figures and arts of the Tang dynasty (sixth to the ninth centuries of the modern era). Tseng (1976) points out that no proofs have been put forward in support of these claims. As Tseng says “The accounts of the history of [Taijiquan], as narrated by most pugilists, in China, are based on legend” (p. 6).

Authorities offer disparate accounts of the history of Taijiquan prior to the late 18th century. Most writers continue to acknowledge the traditional attribution of the founding of Taijiquan to the Daoist Zhang Sanfeng. Some say he lived in the 12th century, others as late as the 15th century, and some say he lived throughout the intervening period. Huang (1974) cites the late renowned Taijiquan centenarian Wu Tu-Nan as stating categorically that Zhang was born on the ninth day of the fourth month in the year 1247 (p. 41). Zhang, it is said, was inspired to create Taijiquan after watching a fight between a bird and a snake. Another version of the legend is that he learned it in a dream; yet another that he invented Taijiquan deliberately through his solid grounding in Shaolinquan, the *Yi Jing*, and Daoist yogic practice.

In China, it is customary to mythologize, or at least to blur the historical record with more colorful folk traditions. This is done in part to gain acceptance for newer things in a country whose mores are firmly embedded in a continuous civilization that has endured for millennia. Citing prior authority, Crompton (1987) puts forward this notion: "It is common in Chinese history for a group of people with a common interest to connect themselves with some famous person in order to boost their prestige, gain respectability and so on.... De Bary and Tseng claim that the adherents of [Taijiquan], in order to support their cause and art, put forward the redoubtable Chang San-feng [Zhang Sanfeng] as their founder" (pp. 150-151).

In "The Law of the Universe and the Creation of Taijiquan," (*Taiji Farm* Vol. 5, No. 3, May 1990) Jou Tsung Hwa suggests that, whether or not Zhang Sanfeng is historically responsible for Taijiquan, he can be accepted as a personification of the founding spirit: one of those who must find their own

way, and can look only to themselves for guidance. Chung-liang Al Huang (1973) puts it “the first [Taijiquan] master created [Taijiquan] out of the enlightenment of his own nature, out of his awareness of his body. He learned from the wisdom of his own body and his identification with nature” (p. 61). Wile (1983) says in this regard:

If Chang San-feng [Zhang Sanfeng] did not exist as the father of T'ai-chi ch'üan, it would be necessary to invent him. Most of the martial arts in China boast mythopoetic beginnings; it is simply a convention.... Legend is as enlightening in its own way as 'objective' history, and often more so in communicating the inner essence of experience. Tales of Chang's receiving the art in a dream or from observation of animal behavior remind us of our creative relationship to nature and to our own subconscious. The poetry of these legends is meant to inspire our movement as music inspires dance (translator's note).

As Chinese records of the early history of Taijiquan are “rather vague” (Yang, 1982, p. 10), choosing among various versions of its origin and early development becomes a matter of the tradition one ascribes to or of personal belief. For a more thorough treatment of alternative versions of history, the interested reader is referred to Gu Liuxin, “The Origin, Evolution and Development of Shadow Boxing,” in *Chen Style Taijiquan* (1984), to Jou (1988), to Yang (1986), and to Huang Wen-shan (1974). The latter states “Taijiquan is... a synthesis or a crystallization of the philosophy of Confucianism, Taoism, and Zen Buddhism--the Tao or Way of Chinese life” (p.14), and also calls it “the collective creation of Chinese civilization itself rather than the creation of a single man” (p. 32).

Gu Liuxin (in *Chen Style Taijiquan*, 1984), citing Tang Hao and other researchers of the 1930s as well as data subsequently discovered in the 1960s, concludes that Chen Wangting, patriarch of the Chen family living in Chenjiagou in Wen County, Henan Province, is the closest research has been able to come to finding an historical “founder” of Taijiquan. Gu dates the founding to sometime in the 1660s:

Making a comprehensive survey of the data on martial arts left by Chen Wangting, one can find that Chen made the following contributions to traditional Chinese martial arts...1) Combining martial arts with the techniques of *Daoyin* (the concentrated exertion of inner force and *Tuna* (deep breathing exercises.... 2) Creating spiral-like twining and arc movements, which are each connected with the other, smooth and graceful, tallying very much with the *Jingluo* theory of traditional Chinese medicine... 3) Creating the two-man push-hand exercises....4) Creating a set of basic routines for spear combat... 5) Developing boxing theories as contained in Qi Jiguang’s [1528-1587] *Canon of Boxing* and creating the theories of hiding firmness in softness and executing different moves to deal with changing tactics of the enemy... Thus, outward fighting skills were raised to a higher level where ‘power comes from within’ and ‘inner energy becomes outward power.’ This has great significance in the history of Chinese martial arts (pp. 3-6).

From Chen Wangting, an internal style of boxing was handed down through several generations of the Chen family in Henan province, and today the Chen’s style is one of the major styles of Taijiquan. In the mid-19th century, when Chen Changxing (1771-1853) was patriarch, the Chen family taught their art to Yang Luchan (1799-1872). Yang taught throughout China, passing it on to his sons. One of his students, Wu Yuxiang (1812-1880), who also studied with a Chen family member, Chen Qingping (1795-1868), seems

to be the one who can be credited with naming the art “Taijiquan.” The first record of the name is in the *Taijiquan Jing* (classic) and the *Taijiquan Lun* (theory) attributed respectively to Zhang Sanfeng and to Wang Zongyue, who reputedly taught the Chen family his art in the late 18th century. But these documents were “found” by Wu Yuxiang’s brother in a salt store. Wu, it is said, made copies of them and, with writings in his own name, sent them to his teacher Yang Luchan. Commenting on the serendipitous “discovery” of the documents, Pang (1987) says:

It is very possible that Wu Yuxiang was so excited about the Wushu which he had learned from Yang Luchan and Chen Qingping, he then named it Taijiquan and wrote the *Treatise on Taijiquan*. However, being a scholar from a gentry family, Wu probably did not want to associate his name with such a revolutionary event after his creative spirit cooled down. He used the pseudonym “Wang Zongyue,” credited Wang with what he, Wu Yuxiang, had written himself. His later writings under his own name would then appear to be continuations of an already established tradition (p. 221).

Huang (1974), citing Gu Liuxin, points out in a footnote that though Wang Zongyue was credited by earlier writers with having taught Chen Wangting, “according to the latest research, Wang lived in the reign of Chienlung (1736-95)... while Chen apparently lived a hundred years before him” (p. 49). Lacking substantiation for speculations about events prior to the time of Chen Changxing, Yang Luchan, and Wu Yuxiang, it seems fitting to draw a line at last between legend and fact. Zhang Sanfeng may be the patron immortal of the art, but modern players of all styles must now give credit where it is due:

- to the Chen family, for preserving the old forms, the *quan*; for push-hands; and for over 300 years of continuous cultivation
- to Yang Luchan, his descendants and disciples, for adapting the forms and refining and promulgating the art;
- to Wu Yuxiang, for the name *Taijiquan* and for the initial articulation of its fundamental principles;
- to the many players, known and unknown, for devoting themselves to the art and thereby contributing to its evolution and continuance.

Yang Luchan originated the Yang style, which today is the style practiced most widely in China and around the world. Wu Yuxiang originated the Wu style, also known as the Hao style, the name that will be used for it herein. From this Wu style came the Sun style, originated by Sun Lutang (1861-1932), and from the Yang style came the Wu style, originated by Wu Quanyou (1834-1902). The subsequent lineages and histories of these styles and their derivatives is documented in many texts, and it is not necessary to go into further detail here.

A detailed history of the spread of Taijiquan to America also must await the efforts of some other researcher. Huang (1974) and Maisel (1963) credit Choy Hok Peng (1886-1957) with introducing Taijiquan to the United States in the early 1940s; but he did not teach Westerners. The “history” of Taijiquan for Westerners in America seems to begin around the year 1960. While undoubtedly not the first Westerner to study Taijiquan, Sophia Delza was the first Western professional exponent of the art. She traveled to China and studied with Ma Yüeh-Liang, a master of the Wu style, and established her

School of T'ai-Chi Ch'üan in New York City in 1960. Her book *Body and Mind in Harmony: T'ai-Chi Ch'üan (Wu Style)*, published in 1961, was the first book on Taijiquan written by a Westerner. Only two books on Taijiquan appear in the Library of Congress catalog for 1955-1959: Ch'en Yen Lin's *T'ai-Chi Ch'üan, its Effects and Practical Applications*, published in Shanghai in 1947, and Lan Su-chên's *Mien Ch'üan*, (in Chinese, 1957). The previous catalog for 1950-1954 does not even list Taijiquan as a heading. The catalog for the years 1960-1964, however, lists 29 books on Taijiquan, Delza's among them. Other books in English followed rapidly, helping to popularize the art, including Maisel's *Tai Chi For Health* (1963), and Smith's *Secrets of Shaolin Temple Boxing* (1964).

Histories of Taijiquan would be incomplete without mentioning the most influential teachers, as it is not by books but by qualified instructors that Taijiquan is truly propagated. It was not the purpose of this study, however, to compile such a list, and a partial listing would invite more criticism than it would satisfy curiosity. Suffice it to say that no history of Taijiquan in America could fail to mention the impact of the late grandmaster Cheng Man-ch'ing (1900-1975), both during his lifetime and after his death. He was one of the first masters to open his classes to Westerners; his versatility with several traditional Chinese arts, his scholarship and his teachings continue to inspire players today. He and his students are responsible for many of the attitudes Americans hold regarding the art. There was a time when perhaps 90% of the Taijiquan one might have found in America would have been the Yang style short form devised by Professor Cheng. His students and their students still constitute a plurality in the American Taijiquan community.

The west coast hosted a wide variety of styles, and witnessed a more rapid spread of the art than the east coast. One renowned teacher was Kuo Lien Ying (1891-1984), a master of Kuang Ping Taijiquan, who taught many students in San Francisco's Portsmouth Square Park from 1964 until his death. Kuo appeared as himself, "playing" a Taijiquan master, in a 1975 movie starring James Caan.

As Taijiquan became more widely known, availability was the most important consideration to would-be students choosing among Taijiquan styles. Potential students in the 1960s and 1970s would have been fortunate indeed to have found even one teacher within driving distance except in areas near large Chinese-American populations, such as San Francisco or New York. Many teachers who were available in other parts of the country might have been studying only a few years. Their knowledge of the range of styles and richness of Chinese martial tradition would very likely have been limited to the style their teacher taught, and even more limited by the inability of some of this country's first Chinese teachers to communicate clearly in English, coupled with the scarcity of reliable books. Some of the books presented a narrow or biased view of Taijiquan. Authors often seemed most interested in promoting themselves, their own style, lineage, or approach; and unfortunately, would sometimes include disparaging remarks about other styles or teachers. Ironically, some of these same teachers who spoke ill of one another now appear side-by-side in accounts of the spread of the art.

While we know now that the five major styles and many lesser known ones were thriving on their native soil, American students were often at the mercy of teachers who conveyed that they were teaching "the only true

Taijiquan.” Perhaps these students needed to feel that they were drinking from the source. Perhaps their teachers were all too willing to feed their own egos. The lack of books in English as well as the relative isolation of individual schools and teachers also left students of Taijiquan at the mercy of instructors whose knowledge of Chinese culture was often limited to movies and a few books of popular philosophy in translation. As Crompton (1987) says

The East is a mysterious place for us in the West, even today. This fact plays strongly on the feelings and imagination of some students, and is often taken advantage of by some teachers of [Taijiquan]. Students frequently come to classes looking for mystery.... the teacher is constantly giving it to [them] in the form of pithy statements and wise sounding innuendoes... There are mysteries, but they are practical ones. They must be approached in a practical way (p. 5).

Western students of Taijiquan are also largely unaware that the opinions they inherited from their teachers about other styles and lineages are often the result of their teachers’ positions regarding the political and social division between mainland China (PRC) and Taiwan (ROC). Almanzo Lamoureux, a veteran of three years of study in the folk schools of Wuhan, Hubei Province, and first foreign student of Master Ding Hong-kui (1894-1986) has commented on the “bunch of dumb-ass American students who don’t have any idea that behind their teacher’s teachings and principles are crass f---ing politics” (conversation, 1991). Indeed, much of the wrangling among proponents of one style or another, or one lineage or another, is toxic waste from an older generation of teachers and the politics of an era that saw the creation of two Chinas. Most Americans who unwittingly take sides in this

old feud are completely ignorant of the geopolitical origin of their views. There is nothing inherently political about stylistic differences; yet ill-will and snobbery persist--between Yang short form players and players of "mainland" styles, for instance. It is time for all players to see these issues clearly for what they are.

Fortunately, there is an increasing sympathy among Americans for the people of mainland China, and increasing exchange, focused especially around visiting student programs at American universities. Austell (1990), for instance, found that one quarter of all foreign graduate student applications at one major university (UNC-Chapel Hill) were from the PRC, and that the number seems to have been increasing throughout the 1980s. Experience across the country shows that populations of students visiting from the PRC often include individuals with expertise in Taijiquan. This increasing exposure to the continuing tradition of *wushu* on the mainland seems to be resulting in a healthy broadening of mind among American players. It was easier for teachers to mythologize Taijiquan when China was far away and enshrouded with mists like a mountain in a Sung landscape.

Taijiquan is classified in China as a martial art, arising out of a long martial tradition and coexisting in Chinese popular culture alongside and embedded in a constellation of other branches of martial art, all referred to broadly as *wushu*. But as Taijiquan takes root in this country, an interesting phenomena is occurring. Perhaps because of the culture of the 1960s and 1970s during which Taijiquan began its spread in this country, perhaps because many who were attracted to Taijiquan were those interested in the alternative world views offered by Eastern cultures, a trend documented by

Cox (1977) and others; in any case, the martial aspects were toned down and its other aspects came to the fore. American players were looking for alternative health care, specifically, holistic modalities that took the whole person into consideration. Americans were interested in activities such as chanting, meditation, yoga--in short, any activity which promised epiphany: connection between mundane or material life and an inner or spiritual perspective. Living in a material world, without even the language to talk of these things, Americans were looking for methods which offered tangible, physical experiences of subtle energy.

All these aspects were already present in Taijiquan. They were not invented by flower children, the New Age, or the original Chinese teachers who introduced Taijiquan to this country, and became the personalities behind its popularization. Long before its American advent, Taijiquan was regarded as a system of exercise for health, as a way of cultivating subtle energy, as a unitive practice linking body, mind, and spirit: as, in short, a meditation in motion. But more importantly, in China, Taijiquan was part of an indigenous habitat peopled by many other arts and systems, many of which share aspects of the things Americans find most attractive about Taijiquan. In America, Taijiquan stands alone. Most Western players can't pronounce it. They don't know what it means. They are unaware of the way in which international politics of the earlier part of this century affect the biases they adopt toward other styles. They are unaware of the close connection among the martial arts of China, and the place of Taijiquan within this family. Taijiquan in America is like a Giant Panda in a zoo, separated from the environment that nurtured it and isolated from the context which made its existence meaningful.

What does this mean for Taijiquan? Does this mean that Taijiquan is “lost,” as some players cry in the popular literature? No. They need only travel to China to see that the old art, with all its martial and cultural implications, is alive and well. Does it mean, as some claimed earlier in Taijiquan’s sojourn on these shores, that the *true* Taijiquan emigrated from China with their teacher, and that all forms of Taijiquan found elsewhere in the world, including its native country, are just weak sappers with no life of their own? No. People who claim this today would be well advised to stick their heads back into the sand. Taijiquan is gaining strength in America: evolving here--as in China--into a stronger, well-rounded art, even as it is simultaneously misunderstood by many players. How can this be? Taijiquan is an art that thrives in individual practice. It is not a thing of schools and systems, of organizations and rules. Each new player contributes something new to it, at whatever level of ability or understanding they are working; for Taijiquan is a thing of the individual: it is a thing of the spirit. If we conceive of a guiding genius behind the art, and give it the name Zhang Sanfeng, can we not imagine that spirit looking on jovially, that is, with god-like good humor, as the art spreads to people from such different backgrounds, with such different lives and aspirations, with so much enthusiasm and so little knowledge of what Taijiquan is “supposed to be about”? We must believe that all the inventing and tinkering and bickering over fine points is vastly amusing to him, for his agenda stands behind all of this, and is being served no matter what we do, or think, or believe.

Taijiquan is a language of form and gesture expressive of a culture, context, and worldview alien to most Americans. Teaching it is a very

different challenge here than in China. For this study, the issues related to this were conceptualized as tensions created by the introduction and increasing popularity in America of this essentially pre-modern, Eastern discipline. Traditional teaching methods in China based on lineage, for example, differ from current models of instruction in this culture. The Chinese are historically more comfortable with rote learning and place greater value on the role of the "family" created by a chain of teacher-student relationships in the transmission of knowledge from generation to generation. This model of the educational process raises complicated issues and creates relationships such as those of "inner" and "outer" students, with which Americans are unfamiliar. Teachers in China test before they trust, often withholding key information for years, sometimes passing certain aspects of their art to only one or two key students, sometimes dying without having completed the transmission.

There is a tension also between personalization and popularization. The traditional teaching of *wushu* in China is often teacher-centered more than subject-centered. It is not what a teacher teaches but who a teacher is that counts. Many traditional instructors, particularly those within a lineage, teach their system in a manner that varies from student to student--that is, without a standardized curriculum. The teaching is viewed as being contained *in the person of the teacher* and is transferred experientially to the student. This model of teaching--where, in a sense, the teacher *is* the curriculum--is very different from school models in American society in which teachers are often viewed as faceless implementers of curriculum. Western instructors who imitate this teaching method run the risk of falling prey to ego-driven, holier-than-thou cultism. On the other hand, Western instructors whose only model

of teaching comes from their own experiences with American formal education run other, perhaps equal risks.

The most discordant notes in the American Taijiquan community, apart from the dissonances of political factionalism, are struck by those who face off over whether Taijiquan can be practiced for its martial aspect without loss of its unitive quality, and over whether competitive tournaments, anticipating its pending inclusion as a sport in the Olympics, violate its mentative aspect. (For definition of *unitive* and *mentative*, see Chapter III.) In relation to whether it is necessary to practice fighting applications to master Taijiquan, one respondent to this study said “if you are interested in the elephant’s tail, it’s not necessary to study the tusk” (176). We might counter “if you try to study the tail, you must sooner or later tangle with the tusk.” It is time to accept the whole animal for what it is; it is time for a wide-angled, more inclusive view. A hundred schools of thought are in contention: let each appreciate its own uniqueness, but also feel the common ground from which it has sprung: the garden in whose soil its roots are entwined with those of others. Let a hundred flowers bloom!

This is a time of great possibilities. A hundred and fifty years ago, Taijiquan had to be learned by “peeping through a fence” in a remote Chinese village. Twenty-five years ago in America, only a handful of Taijiquan teachers would have been found, and those only in the major metropolitan areas of the east and west coasts. Today it can be learned in 10,000 locations. Taijiquan in America is becoming rich and complex, suggestive of the diversity, of the interweaving of art, philosophy and life to be found in its birthplace. Who is teaching? How are they going about it?

What do they believe Taijiquan to be? What might the future of Taijiquan in America be like? These are some of the questions that prompted this study.

Previous Research

The literature in English on Taijiquan is nearly all popular and descriptive. Books tend to be “how to” manuals on individual forms, with short sections on principles of movement, introductory material on Chinese philosophy, and general or personal history geared toward those interested in practicing the art. What little research has been done has focused primarily on the exercise value of Taijiquan. In one study, reported in Galante (1981), for instance, it was discovered that Taijiquan done in a low stance produces greater cardiovascular stimulation than Taijiquan done in a high stance. Results of a study of Taijiquan’s health benefits by Zhou, et. al. (1984) were published in the *Canadian Journal of Applied Sports Science* and reported in *T’ai Chi* (April 1986). The study, which focused on cardiovascular and metabolic measures, classified Taijiquan as moderate exercise which “seems insufficient to generate improvements of cardio-respiratory fitness in healthy young adults.” Zhou, et. al. also concluded that the long form is more strenuous than the *jianhua* (simplified) form.

Mucci (1987), conducted research on Taijiquan as part of graduate study in exercise physiology at Southern Illinois University. In a report of his research published in the August 1989 issue of *T’ai Chi*, Mucci asked “How could we tell if [Taijiquan] does something unique to the body if it isn’t compared with a typical form of exercise? There were other measures not present in the [Zhou] study which would have been revealing.” (p 2). Mucci compared Taijiquan practice with exercise on a stationary cycle. As in Zhou, et. al., his subjects were experienced Taijiquan players. Mucci spent months figuring out ways to conduct tests of oxygen consumption, heart rate and

blood pressure so as to intrude as little as possible on the normal practice of Taijiquan. His results indicated, among other things, that cardiac output was similar during Taijiquan and cycling, but that “Taijiquan can elicit a relaxation response characterized by low heart rate, ventilatory equivalent and respiratory rate.” (Mucci, 1987, p. ii). Mucci’s research supports the traditional belief that Taijiquan can be a “moving meditation.” Another research project is currently in progress at Emory University to test the effect of Taijiquan on the health and equilibrium of older subjects.

These and other scientific studies serve an important role in contributing to the increasing understanding and acceptance of Taijiquan in the West. However, researchers must attempt to assess Taijiquan for what it is, rather than by the parameters of a model derived from Western perspectives. In comparing Taijiquan to other exercises, researchers tend to overlook the traditional Chinese view of the human body and the internal aspects of the art that might make such comparisons invalid, or at least less appropriate. It is likely that more appropriate means of measuring its effects have yet to be devised. As Dr. Yang Jwing Ming (1989) says, “naturally, first modern science must reach an understanding of internal energy [*qi*], which is still new to it. It is only in the last decade that [*qi*] is beginning to be understood as bioenergy” (p 15). Researchers must study the goals and training methods which make Taijiquan unique.

Loupe (1986) takes an interesting turn in this direction. Her research, conducted as part of graduate work in Dance-Movement Therapy at the Antioch/New England Graduate School’s Department of Professional Psychology, focused on the experience of playing Taijiquan. She utilizes a

technique of movement analysis called Labananalysis to describe the dynamics of Taijiquan in Laban's terms of "time, weight, space, flow, shaping, and spatial characteristics" (p. 28). She discusses the psychological components of Taijiquan in reference to the work of Reich and of his pupil, Alexander Lowen on bioenergetics, and the work of Carl Jung on spirituality, polarity, and imagery. Against this background, she employed a survey instrument to elicit qualitative data from twenty players on their experience of performing specific Taijiquan postures. In her abstract, she concludes "the experience of [Taijiquan] movement contains a number of therapeutic elements which do seem to have the potential to promote physical and emotional integration and to enhance psychosomatic unity" (p.2).

Another precursor of the present study is to be found in early issues of the bimonthly newsletter *T'ai Chi*, published by Wayfarer Publications, Los Angeles, since 1977. The editor of *T'ai Chi*, Marvin Smalheiser, surveyed teachers among his readers and published the results as direct quotes excerpted from instructors' responses on various topics. The March-April 1980 issue, for instance, contained comments by women on learning and teaching; the September-October 1980 issue focused on the development of the student; March-April 1981 reported teacher's comments on how to find a teacher; July-August and September-October 1981 centered on essential points of Taijiquan practice. Other issues focused on other topics, each summarized briefly by the editor. This effort to share ideas among teachers is closest in spirit and method to the current study.

Research Questions

Against this background, the present study was designed to address three primary questions regarding Taijiquan instruction in America:

1. Who is teaching? Specifically, can we characterize the population of Taijiquan teachers in the United States according to experience, training, and various demographic measures?

2. What is Taijiquan in America? That is, how do teachers in this country view Taijiquan, and by extension, present it to others? Does it seem to be something other than what it is in the culture to which it is indigenous?

3. How is Taijiquan taught in this country? Specifically, to what extent do teachers pay attention to the design, delivery and evaluation of instruction? Is the art of teaching practiced in conjunction with this art of movement?

This study was conceived of as a general profile of the profession of Taijiquan teaching in America. These research questions served to organize the inquiry and inform the design of the survey instrument. In addition, the plan of analysis and interpretation included the aggregation of survey items into composite variables, or indexes, which would provide some measure of respondents' relative positions along thematically derived continua. These indexes, together with groups logically distinguished by responses to categorical items such as gender or income level, would serve as the basis for statistical comparisons.