

Tai Chi Lexicon

General list of terms associated with practice of Taji. Terms are presented alphabetically in PinYin, along with the proper tone(s) for pronunciation, along with the equivalent phonetic English. Phonetic English is based upon easily recognized sound patterns which are near equivalents of the properly spoken Chinese, using dictionary Mandarin Chinese, with a standard Beijing accent. There will be differences in the way Chinese people say these same words, there are many regional dialects and idiosyncrasies. This is T.V. Chinese, similar to what you might hear on the Asian news of the International Channel. Any changes additions or corrections are welcome, just let me know. Some of the tone markers are subjective, based upon personal experience, and may require some fine tuning.

Tones:

- 0 - neutral (no tone, pronounce the syllable without any inflection)
- 1 - high (the syllable is like the tip of a mountain, say it high, and hold the sound even)
- 2 - ascending (syllable spoken with the tone rising upward)
- 3 - dipping tone (starts almost low, dips a bit, then ascends slightly, think of the letter “u” or a valley)
- 4 - descending (syllable starts high, then tone drops or descends downward)

Chinese Term (In PinYin)	Tone	Phonetic English	Definition
An	4	anh	Push. Downward energy. The arms and body should move as a single unit. Number 4 of the 8 fundamental Taiji techniques.
Ba Duan Jin	1,4,3	bah dewanh gin	Eight Pieces of Silk Brocade. A highly regarded Qigong sequence.

BaGua	1,4	bahGwah	Eight Palms. Along with XingYi, one of the three pillars of internal arts. Eight trigrams. Eight basic principles after the two, Yin and Yang, but before the 64 hexagrams.
Ba Men	1,2	bah munh (“u” same as “u” in mud)	Eight Gates. The 8 fundamental Taiji techniques.
Bai He	2,4	buy heh	White crane.
Bai Hui	3,4	buy hweigh	“Hundred meetings”. Acupuncture point on the crown of the head, regarded as a nexus for many meridians.
Bu Fa	4,3	boo fah	Foot method. How your feet should move.
Cai	3	tsai	Pluck. Sometimes referred to as press (as in press down). Needle at sea bottom. Bring opponent’s force downward. Number 5 of the 8 fundamental Taiji techniques.
Chang, San-Feng (Zhang, San-Feng)	?,1,?	jahng, sahn fung	Chang, San-Feng (960-1279 A.D.), Historical lore credits him with being the creator of Taijiquan.
Chin Na (Qin Na)	2,2	chin nah	System using manipulation of joints, dividing the muscle, sealing opponent's breath and cavity press to defeat an attacker.
Chuan (Quan)	4	chwan	Fist. Last word in Taijiquan.
Chuang	1	chewang	Window. An opening through someone can attack.
Da Lu	4,4	dah leeooh (or lyu)	Large Rollback. Lu is Number 2 of the 8 fundamental Taiji techniques.

Dan Tian	1,2	don tienh	Field of Elixir. It is generally considered there are three in the body: 1) the brain; 2) the solar plexus; 3) the lower abdomen. Our focus is on the third, which is also referred to as QiHai (Sea of Qi). Depending on source of explanation, location will vary slightly. Generally OK to think of it as 3 finger widths below the navel, and two thirds of the body width from front to rear.
Dao de Jing	4,0,1	dow duh jing (or geengh)	Classic of the Dao. Everything you need to know in one book that will fit in your purse or pocket (but not necessarily your mind).
De Qi	2,4	duh chee	Acquiring Chi. More literally means to arrive at Chi.
Di Chuang	4,1	dee chewang	Ground window. Opportunity to attack an opponent from below.
Ding Bu Tui Shou	1,4,4,3	ding bu tweigh show	Stationary pushing hands.
Dong Bu Tui Shou	1,4,4,3	doong bu tweigh show	Moving pushing hands.
Er Jiang	4,1	are jiangh	Two generals. Referring to the sounds “henh” and “hah” which are used to coordinate Dan Tian with movement. “henh” for outward and forward energy; “hah” for downward.
Fa	1	fah	Striking or attacking. Number 5 or the 5 qualities of push hands.
Fei Long	1,2	feigh loong	Flying Dragon
Fo Jiao	2,4	fuo geeow	Buddhism. Teachings of the enlightened one.

Gongfu	1,4	goong foo	Kung Fu. Energy and time. A focus on accomplishment/excellence. Now taken to mean Chinese martial arts. Same origin as Gung Ho in English.
Ha	4?	hah	A sound which you can emit as part of practice. Yang in nature, increases the focus of energy and augments power.
Hai Di	3,3	high dee	Sea bottom. The groin area.
Hen	4	henh	Yin when done inhaling. Said to condense Yi and Qi into the marrow. When done exhaling, still negative with some positive.
Hua	4	hwah	Neutralizing. Number 4 of the 5 qualities of push hands.
Ji	3	gee (like gee whiz)	Press. First stick to your opponent, then press before he/she has opportunity to move or adjust. Forward expanding energy. Like a coin bouncing off the surface of a drum. Like water penetrating a rock through a fault in its surface. Number 3 of the 8 fundamental Taiji techniques.
Jin	4	gin (and tonic)	Muscular energy.
Jin Bu	1,4	gin boo	Step forward. Number 1 of the 5 fundamental movements of Taiji.
Jing	1	jing (or geengh)	The 12 pairs of energy channels through which Qi flows.
Jing	1	jing (or geengh)	Different character than above. Essence of your living body. Can mean semen. This is the part of you which is energized by Qi.
Jing Shen	1,2	jing (or geengh) shun	Vital. If you have it, you are active and vigorous.

Kao	4	cow	Bump (with the shoulder). Number 8 of the 8 fundamental Taiji techniques. In fact, the bump can be with the shoulder, hip, thigh, back, leg, any body part.
Kong Men	1,2	kung (think “King Kung”) mon (like money without “ey”)	Empty door. An opening for attack.
Kou Jue	4,3	Koh(like “coat” without the “t”) jeweh	Literally "mouth secrets". Secrets that are passed down as part of restricted oral tradition. Those things we hope teacher will give to us if we're very good.
Lao Shi	3,1	lau (like “loud” without the “d”) shirh	Teacher (respectful address)
Lao Zi	3,4(or0)	lau dz	Literally means “old one (particle)”. History tells us this is the name of the man who wrote the dao de jing, at the request of a border guard just before checking out of society. Uncertain whether the person existed in fact.
Leng Jin	3,4	lung gin	Cold Jin. An attach which is sudden and surprises your opponent. A sucker punch.
Li	4	lee	Muscular power. Force. It's what your feel when someone hits you. You can feel their Li, you can not feel their Qi. They can sense their Qi, they can not feel their Li.
Liang Yi	3,1	leeangh ee	Two 1's. Means two posts.
Lie	4	leeyeah	Split or Tear/Rend. Using opposing forces to off balance an opponent. This is Number 6 of the 8 fundamental Taiji techniques.

Lu	4	leeooh (or lyu)	Roll back. Number 2 or the 8 fundamental Taiji techniques. Softness, yielding. Control/capture incoming attack, offset balance. Allow opponent to enter, and rotate with his force. Energy down and back.
Ming Men	4,2	mingh munh (“u” same as “u” in mud)	Door of Life. Behind Dan Tian. Between second/third lumbar vertebrae, just beneath the two kidneys, and opposite the naval. Moves back when “sitting”, or when executing moves as in the Ba Men.
Mo	1	muo (or mwaugh)	Smear. Something you do as part of double pushing hands practice. You’ll recognize it when you feel it.
Na	2	nah	To grab/control.
Nian	2	nienh	Sticking. Number 3 of the 5 qualities of push hands.
Ni hu xi	4,1,1	knee, who, shee	Reverse breathing. Breathing opposite of normal. Physical compression on inhaling, physical expansion on exhaling.
Pan Xi	2,1	panh shee	Coil-suction. Cobra. Like a snake. A way of sticking and adhering to part of an opponent’s body.
Peng	3	pengh	Wardoff. Number 1 or the 8 fundamental Taiji techniques. Bounces incoming energy back in the direction from which it came. Denotes strength, power, boundless energy, like inflated ball. Expansive.
Peng Jing	3,1	pengh jing (or geengh)	Ward off power.
Qi	4	chee	Essential energy.

Qigong	4,1	chee goonhg	The practice of movement to encourage chi enhancement and circulation in the body for health and or martial purposes. Study of internal arts for self improvement.
Qi Hai	4,3	chee high	The “sea of Chi”. That location in the lower abdomen which acts as the vault, bank, storage area, or “sea” of Chi.
Qi He	4,2	chee heh	Gather your chi.
Qi Xing	4,1	chee shing	Seven Stars.
San Cai	1,2	sahn tsai	Three Wisdoms.
San Bao	1,3	sahn, bow (as in “bow down”)	Three Jewels (Treasures). Jing (deer) - seminal energy; Qi (crane) - life energy; Shen (turtle) - spiritual energy.
San Jiao	1,3	sahn, geeow	Triple burner. Bodily function not rooted in physiology regulating water and energy in three areas: upper (head/chest-heart/lungs); middle (navel-stomach/spleen); lower (kidney/liver).
San Shi Qi Shi	3,2,7,4	sahn shir chee shir	37 postures which populate the pattern.
San Yuan	1,2	sanh yewanh	Three circles.
Shaolin	3,2	shau linh	Shaolin (small woods/trees/pines)...the temple which coalesced the essential martial arts (377 A.D.).
Shen	2	shun (like shun evil)	Spirit (where mind and thought function). In some contexts, refers to the creator.
Shen Fa	1,3	shun (like shun evil) fah	Body method. How your body should move.

Shi Fu	1,0	shirh foo	Martial arts master. English common usage is the word Sifu (see foo). Also used to address someone with competence in a specialized skill. Ex: Sifu Eric Clapton.
Shou Fa	3,3	show fah	Hand method. How your hands should move.
Si Xiang	4,4	szi shiang	Four directions. Also means 4 elephants (like elephants which support the weight of creation standing at the four foundation points).
Song	1	sungh	Relax. Elimination of counterproductive tension. Elimination of muscular ratcheting. Not same as "relax" in English. Close to the state your are in when you are doing cloud hands, and forget you have arms.
Taijiquan	4,2,2	tai gee chwan	Grand ultimate fist.
Tian Chuang	1,1	tienh chewang	Sky window. An attack opening in the higher part of the defender's body.
Tian Ling Gai	1,2,1	tienh lingh guy	Heaven spirit cover. Top of the head.
Ting	1	ting	To listen. Listening. Number 1 of the 5 qualities of push hands.
Ti Song	3?,4	dee sungh	Relax (or sink) the body. Establish your root.
Tui Bu	4,4	tweigh boo	Step backward. Number 2 of the 5 fundamental movements of Taiji.
Tui Shou	4,3	tweigh show	Push hands.

Wudang	3,1	woo(silent "w") dahng	Mountain in Hubei. A remote center of development in the martial and Daoist arts. See <i>Crouching Tiger</i> for more insight.
Wu Qi	1?, 4?	woo chee	Stillness. The primordial state. Before thought, intent, and Taiji. Preceding Yin and Yang, and the 10,000 things.
Wushu	3,4	woo shoo	Military arts. This is how the mainlanders refer to what we call Kung Fu.
Wu Xiang	5,4	woo shiang	The 5 directions. The 5 fundamental movements of Taiji.
Wu Xing	3,2	woo shyeeng (like "shyeenging" in the rain)	The 5 elements. Some where, some how, some way, they're at the foundation to everything.
Xiao Lu	3,4	seow leeooh (or lyu)	Small rollback.
Xin	1	shin	Literally, it's the heart organ. Coincidentally, it can mean "Mind". It can also mean "What's in your heart", like English, an intention, idea or thought, not yet expressed.
Xin Gong	1,4	shin goong	Working the mind.
Xin Jing	1,4	shin geengh	Calm the mind. Clear the mind.
Yan Fa	3,3	yen h fah	Eye method. How your eyes should move.
Yang	2	yahng	The full, positive, or forceful, or energized pole of the manifest world.
Yi	4	yee (the "y" is nearly completely silent)	Mind. Yi is the expression of Xin. Mind is commonly expressed as "Xin-Yi". Also intent, mindfulness, focus.

Yin	1	yinh	The empty, recessive, weak (apparently), negative pole of the manifest world.
Yong Quan	3,2	yong quan	“Bubbling Spring”. Energy source and connection to the ground beneath your midfoot/arch.
You Kong Men	4,4,2	yoh coongh munh	Right empty door. Opening on opponent’s right through which you can enter for an attack.
You Pan	4.4	yoh panh	Right Look. Look to your right. "Beware of the Right", after moving to the left. Number 4 of the 5 fundamental movements of Taiji.
Zhan Zhuang	4,1	john jewangh	Stand like a post (or stump, or stake). Body is still. Qi and breath are moving.
Zhong Ding	1,1	joong ding	Middle spot. Central Equilibrium. Number 5 of the 5 fundamental movements of Taiji.
Zhong Yi	1,1	joong yee(the “y” is almost completely silent)	Chinese medicine.
Zhou	3	jou (or joe)	Elbow strike. Number 7 of the 8 fundamental Taiji techniques.
Zhuang Zi	? ,4	juwang dz	Chuang Tzu. Third century Daoist scholar. Brilliant and sometimes humorous portrayal of the Dao. Sometimes called the “Genius of the Absurd.”
Zou	3	dzough	Walking. Leading by walking away. Number 2 or the 5 qualities of push hands.

Zuo Gu	3,4	dswaugh goo	Step to the left. Beware of the left. Number 3 of the 5 fundamental movements of Taiji.
Zuo Kong Men	3,4,2	dswaugh coongh munh (“u” same as “u” in mud)	Left empty door. Opening on opponent’s left through which you can enter for an attack.

Ba Men (The 8 Gates) - 8 Fundamental Techniques of Taiji

(Combined techniques and directional movements are sometimes referred to as the Shi(2) San(1) Shi(4), or the 13 items)

Peng	3	pengh	Wardoff. Number 1 or the 8 fundamental Taiji techniques. Bounces incoming energy back in the direction from which it came. Denotes strength, power, boundless energy, like inflated ball.
Lu	4	leeooh (or lyu)	Roll back. Number 2 or the 8 fundamental Taiji techniques. Softness, yielding. Control/capture incoming attack, offset balance. Allow opponent to enter, and rotate with his force.
Ji	3	gee (like gee whiz)	Press. First stick to your opponent, then press before he/she has opportunity to move or adjust. Like a coin bouncing off the surface of a drum. Like water penetrating a rock through a fault in its surface. Number 3 or the 8 fundamental Taiji techniques.
An	4	anh	Push. The arms and body should move as a single unit. Number 4 of the 8 fundamental Taiji techniques.
Cai	3	tsai	Pluck. Sometimes referred to as press (as in press down). Needle at sea bottom. Bring opponent’s force downward. Number 5 of the 8 fundamental Taiji techniques.

Lie	4	leeyeah	Split or Tear/Rend. Using opposing forces to off balance an opponent. This is Number 6 of the 8 fundamental Taiji techniques.
Zhou	3	jou (or joe)	Elbow strike. Number 7 of the 8 fundamental Taiji techniques.
Kao	4	cow	Bump (with the shoulder). Number 8 of the 8 fundamental Taiji techniques. In fact, the bump can be with the shoulder, hip, thigh, back, leg, any body part.

Wu Xiang (5 Directions) - The Five Fundamental Directional Movements of Taiji

Jin Bu	1,4	gin boo	Step forward. Number 1 of the 5 fundamental movements of Taiji.
Tui Bu	4,4	tweigh boo	Step backward. Number 2 of the 5 fundamental movements of Taiji.
Zuo Gu	3,4	dswaugh goo	Step to the left. Beware of the left. Number 3 of the 5 fundamental movements of Taiji.
You Pan	4.4	yoh panh	Right Look. Look to your right. "Beware of the Right", after moving to the left. Number 4 of the 5 fundamental movements of Taiji.
Zhong Ding	1,1	joong ding	Middle spot. Central Equilibrium. Number 5 of the 5 fundamental movements of Taiji.

Zhan Zhuang (Standing like a Post) - Basic Sequence

Wu Qi	1?, 4?	woo chee	Position #1. Stillness. The primordial state. Before thought, intent, and Taiji. Preceding Yin and Yang, and the 10,000 things.
Liang Yi	3,1	leeangh ee	Two 1's. Means two posts.
San Cai	1,2	sahn tsai	Three Wisdoms.
Si Xiang	4,4	szi shiang	Four directions. Also means 4 elephants (like elephants which support the weight of creation standing at the four foundation points).
BaGua	1,4	BahGwah	Eight Palms. Along with XingYi, one of the three pillars of internal arts. Eight trigrams. Eight basic principles after the two, Yin and Yang, but before the 64 hexagrams.
Gongfu	1,4	goong foo	Kung Fu. Energy and time. A focus on accomplishment/excellence. Now taken to mean Chinese martial arts. Same origin as Gung Ho in English.

Fundamental Preparation for Tai Chi

Xin Jing	1,4	shin geengh	Calm the mind. Clear the mind.
Ti Song	3?,4	dee sungh	Relax (or sink) the body. Establish your root.
Qi He	4,2	chee heh	Gather your chi.

The Five Properties of Push Hands

Ting	1	ting	To listen. Listening. Number 1 of the 5 qualities of push hands.
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Zou	3	dzough	Walking. Leading by walking away. Number 2 or the 5 qualities of push hands.
Nian	2	nienh	Sticking. Number 3 of the 5 qualities of push hands.
Hua	4	hwah	Neutralizing. Number 4 of the 5 qualities of push hands.
Fa	1	fah	Striking or attacking. Number 5 or the 5 qualities of push hands.

The Four Methods

Shen Fa	1,3	shun (like shun evil) fah	Body method. How your body should move.
Shou Fa	3,3	show fah	Hand method. How your hands should move.
Bu Fa	4,3	boo fah	Foot method. How your feet should move.
Yan Fa	3,3	yen h fah	Eye method. How your eyes should move.