

Subject: Tung's Comment on the Incorrectness of Popular Beliefs Re Lost methodologies
Date: Sun, 06 Aug 2000
From: leroyc lcmc@nwlink.com [LeRoy Clark]

Good Morning,

Yesterday in re-reading Tung Ying Chieh's 1948 "Tai chi chuan Explained" for someone a couple of points stood out that seemingly would be apropos for some now. Specifically, they are related to the requisites for development of skill. In addition he (Tung), as others of his time and earlier times, held to a belief system about the character (martial ethics) of a learner required by a genuine master before being taught anything but the most superficial. Undesirables pervaded them and us. For this reason, many who claim /ed to have those original teachings old or modern, in fact, did not.

In his preface, on page 12, Tung described the most valued six skills in ancient China as protocol, music, archery (martial arts were part of archery), horseback riding, calligraphy, and mathematics. The imperial court mandated the upper class be proficient in these six, that they be proficient in civil and military capability. However, Tung said, for our people, it is advisable to not fight with each other in a brutal manner. For martial arts, tcc may only be used for self-defense. Tung said the famous general, Zhang Liang, a thousand years ago stated that it is reckless courage to draw his sword in order to fight a duel with whomever should disgrace him. The General (& Tung therefore) said this is because of his self-restraint, self-cultivation, greater attainment in martial art, and ambition.

The learner needs morality, restraint, self-cultivation, and to give precedence to others over one's self.

signed, Tung Ying Chieh

Tung goes on in another area to describe the ten types of people to whom m.a./tcc should not be taught. We could call these the ten "nots". BTW, "man" in our pc culture today would probably be "student".

Then ...

1. Do not teach a pagan man;
2. Do not teach a man who ignores the doctrine of teacher/disciple relationship;
3. Do not teach an immoral man;
4. Do not teach a man who is unable to offer continual, steady effort to attain the skill'
5. Do not teach a man who is likely to give up the study half way;
6. Do not teach the man who has gained fruitful results but neglected his teacher;
7. Do not teach the man who is not open minded or who does not respect his teacher;
8. Do not teach the man who is easy to anger;
9. Do not teach the man who is full of personal, strong desires;
10. Do not teach a man who is committed to evil deeds.

<The genuine masters of those earlier generations had a selection, screening process, on-going. Some, like YCF, later realized they had made certain bad decisions and discontinued that close relationship. Of course, the unscrupulous, then and now, continued to claim a full transmission. I propose that these unscrupulous are largely at fault for so much misunderstanding today of the genuine article. Of course, others might say the fault lies with those guarding the vault. Not me. And, I believe, from Tung's 10 "not's" and his comment below, he would not say so either.>

Tung describes his wish to contribute all that he has learned from tcc to the reader. He said his descriptions are without flowery adjectives.

In another paragraph, Tung said he included in the first part of his book "articles written by masters of our elder generations. Except for the explanations, no words or sentences have been changed from those originals. He said those without explanations will be explained later in the chapter entitled "About Our Experiences in TCC", which is presented at the end of this book.

In the following paragraph, #5, Tung describes the chapter "About Our Experiences in TCC" deals with the experiences gained from our long study and experience teaching tcc. "The Chinese have a saying, 'If you want to know the way beyond the mountain, you should ask the man who came from that place.' Then Tung advises, "The reader should not regard this chapter as unimportant."

(poster - please note the following)
Paragraph # 6.

The way of developing skill, which is based upon the author's own experience, is elaborated in this chapter. Stress has been laid on natural breathing. The learner must discard any compelled and un-natural breathing method.

(poster - also please note the following)

Paragraph 7.

Some have said that some of the methods needed in tcc to acquire skill have been lost. This is not true. Anyone who studies and practices earnestly will finally benefit from the exercise. The way to success depends on two words: perseverance and diligence.

Paragraph 8.

The early masters usually taught their students with pithy, oral sayings. There were very few written works. Those sayings, which are still available, now are all presented in this book.

Paragraph 9.

Key points of the pithy sayings passed down by early masters are comprised mainly of 8 characters in Chinese. They are: lightness, agility, looseness, externally soft, internally energetic.

Paragraph 10.

Tung explains that 3 different frames comprise Yang's tcc - the large, the small, and the middle frame. Then he says, actually if one's tcc is mature, one can make their frame higher or lower, quicker or slower, according to one's skill.

Forty years ago, the author (TYC) saw tcc performed by Master Soa Lin of which the forms were compact and well-knit and neither quick nor slow as compared to the forms people are doing now.

Soa Lin was the son of Feng Hou, the eldest son of Yang Lu Chan. Soa Lin's form was taught by Ban Hou. (poster note - recently saw/translated another description of Soa Lin's tcc by yet another tcc mainlander student)

Yang Chengfu's frame was extensive, soft, and slow; while Yang ShaoHao's frame was compact and quicker.

I learned the good points from these three masters and finally created my own. My frame is condensed and neither quick nor slow and was created after my maturity in tcc.

Then on page 55, in his chapter entitled, "The Way of TCC" ...

Do not use strength energetically;
The pace is that of a cat walking;
Breathing is done naturally;
All the movements are linked to each other continuously in one line;
Allow the chi to travel through the extremities;
Circular movements are made with ease;
Motivate the chi with the mind;
Harmonize the movement of the upper and the lower extremities;
The waist dominates changes of posture;
Changing void and solid is done distinctly.

Tung, in other areas, also describes characteristics of mature practice as 'without phenomena, without form'. Therefore, he knew that tcc landmark Song ShuMing poem, "Guarding the Secret".

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