

## **Tung Ying Chieh: Further Excerpts from his Book**

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[This contains selected commentary from Tung Ying Chieh's book, "T'ai Chi Ch'uan Explained" (printed in 1948).]

Talking about Taijiquan in lieu of practicing apparently is not restricted to the state of the art here today. Tung Ying Chieh advised students several decades ago that, in the beginning, a student should concentrate on listening and learning the correct forms from a competent master before getting too involved in pointless discussions on theory or the philosophy of tai chi. A certain maturity of practice is needed for one to be able to comprehend and discuss principles of the practice. There is no short cut around long, hard, lonely practice. Mr. Ma Yueh Liang recently has expressed the same thought. Mr. Fu Zhong Wen was talking about the same thing when he described Yang Lu Chan's method of attaining mastery -persistent, self sacrificing practice over a long period of time. As time passes, fewer and fewer learners of the art will be willing to pay the price for mastery in the sense of the earlier students.

Tung Ying Chieh relates that it has been said that in some important and necessary methods of acquiring mastery of Taijiquan have been lost. This he says is not true. Master Tung counsels that any one who studies and practices earnestly will eventually benefit from the exercise. The key to success depends on words: perseverance and diligence. The mind is of utmost importance in this subtle art.

### *Excerpts from "The Steps in Learning Taijiquan"*

"The key point is that you have to learn the real Taijiquan from a good teacher. Without grasping the main points of Taijiquan its effects, for the most, will not be better than common physical exercise. Consequently, you will not realize benefits in this most subtle art even though you have been practicing it for tens of years. If your method of practice is correct, you can also learn some skills of self defense besides its significant health effects. Some people are skeptical about the martial arts effects of taijiquan. They think that taijiquan is of no use in real fighting. This is only because their knowledge about taijiquan is too superficial and they haven't got a good teacher to teach them. "

### *Excerpts from "Our Experiences in Learning Taijiquan"*

"Taijiquan belongs to the internal school of Chinese martial arts. The strength used in Taijiquan is created by the bones, but the ling (strength) is stored in the tendons. The main purpose is to sink the internal qi and consolidate the bones."

"To loosen the shoulders and drop the elbows means not to concentrate the force at the back of the shoulders. Actually, the strength is transmitted through the upper part of the forearm."

" Always be aware of the incoming force from the opponent during push-hands. You are not practicing for the enjoyment of pushing your opponent out. The main task in push-hands is to keep from exposing your own center of gravity to the opponent, while the opponent's center of gravity should be controlled by you."

"You may practice your skill at any time, whether you are walking, resting, sitting or sleeping. The method is to move the internal qi with the motivation of the mind, and you should have the feeling of the movement. Try to hold a teacup with your hand. Try to find out the differences in the feelings when you are holding it with force and without force."

"When you have learned the forms well and the fundamental skills of push-hands have been learned, you can start to learn the various skills of using jing. There is adhering jing, following jing, sinking jing, internal jing, raising jing, twisting jing, rubbing jing, touching jing, hang over jing, sticking jing, shaking jing, quivering jing, shooting-an-arrow jing, sudden jing, going-through-the-bone jing, brisk jing, leading-along jing, fa-jing, preserved jing, and so on. All of these should be

learned from the comprehension and motion of doing the forms and push-hands during a considerable time of practice."

"The strength is rooted in the feet, launched from the legs, dominated by the waist, and figured out in the fingers. This is the rule of exerting the strength. There are also contra-indications, such as not to bend the knee over the toes, not to stretch the hand over the tip of the nose, and not to raise the hand over the top of the eyebrow. These malpractices undermine the concentration of strength. "

*Except from "Important Guidance for Attaining Skill"*

"The ancient master says: The qi is moving in waves, and the spirit is contained internally.

Explanation: The qi is moving like the tides on the beach which wax and wane constantly. Stillness and mind concentration help in storing up the spirit. The spirit is the expression of the mind and is always revealed in the eyes. The mind is the commander and the qi is the flag. Storing up the spirit has the effect of taking cover of your own ideas or intentions."