

Tai Chi for Health & Community Fitness

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The “Text and Context” of How to Teach Tai Chi for Health Effectively

by Elva Arthy and Dr Denis Arthy

Genius of Sun Lutang: Origins and Concepts of Tai Chi for Health

By Dr Denis Arthy

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Tai Chi for Health & Community Fitness

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She is also the author of *Raging Ageing Gentle Exercise Manual for Design and Delivery*, a manual used as a resource for health and fitness professionals and carers of older adults. The manual is also a suitable and effective program for other persons in the community who have some health limitations or who may simply wish to exercise more gently. This is a set text in the training of community-based carers.

Dr Denis Arthy

Denis has been involved with the "gentle" or "yielding" martial arts since the early 1960s firstly in Judo and Jujitsu, and in later years he began training in the traditional Okinawan hard / soft style of Karate-Do known as Go-ju Ryu. Denis has his black belt, third Dan Instructor's certificate (Shidoin) in Karate-Do registered in Japan and has his black belt first Dan in Judo and first Kyu in Jujitsu through Sakurakan-QUBBA. He began his training in Tai Chi Chuan in the traditional Yang style over twelve years ago.

Shortly after, Denis began to explore the nexus of traditional martial arts with a modern and scientific approach to health, exercise and movement and also began to examine the commonalities of various styles of "internal" or "yielding" martial arts. He has also studied other styles of Tai Chi including Sun and Chen from both martial and health perspectives. Four years ago, Denis became accredited with the Australian Sports Commission through the Martial Arts Industry Association as a Martial Arts Instructor and formed his own school called *Gentle Arts of Self Defence* and teaches Tai Chi for Relaxation and Karate-Do for Self Defence incorporating aspects of judo, jujitsu and Tai Chi Chuan into the self-defence curriculum.

For a number of years, Denis has also been assisting his wife Elva in her *Tai Chi for Health & Community Fitness* activities, in particular, in her role as Master Trainer of Dr Paul Lam's Tai Chi for Health Courses as well as assisting her in teaching Tai Chi for Health classes in the Redlands. He is an accredited Instructor for Dr Paul Lam's Tai Chi for Health Programs-Tai chi for Arthritis (TCA) and Tai Chi for Diabetes (TCD) and was made a Senior Trainer with Dr Lam's Tai Chi for Health program earlier this year.

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*Yin and yang aren't sentimental
They exist without moralizing
They act regardless of our wishes
within the ebb and flow
of every pregnant moment*

**Lao Tzu, *The Tao Te Ching*
(Circa Sixth Century BC)**

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Abstract

In this paper we examine both the yin and yang of the question: How to Teach Tai Chi for Health Effectively. On the one hand, the technology, or the “how” of teaching represents the “Text”, a script, a theory, a set of guidelines or prescriptions of what is needed to explain what is meant by “teaching effectively”. On the other hand, different cultural, historical, social and legal frameworks provide multiple contexts within which “effective teaching” could be evaluated, judged, compared and contrasted. Any meaningful analysis on what is the “how of effective teaching” needs to consider this relationship between the “text and “context”.

To simplify for our purposes, this relational analysis between “Text” and “Context” begins with differentiating between two different “contexts” of tai chi, between how Tai Chi historically has been practised as a Martial Art and how Tai Chi is practised as a Health Art. What constitutes the “texts of effective teaching” in the martial arts through traditional contexts of lineage, secret transmission protocols, metaphysical and combative orientations (see Cartmell, 2003, Wong, 1996; Wile, 1993; Miller, 2000) are thus qualitatively different to the “texts of effective teaching” for Tai Chi for Health (TCH) within the secular context of evidence based research and the modern duty of care that operates within a scientific approach to the health and fitness industries (see Arthy, 2006).

Accordingly, the main focus of the discussion will be within the "context" of TCH wherein we will formulate "Effective Teaching Texts" as three specific and interrelated concepts of representing the comprehensive framework of effective teaching for TCH:

- Knowledge of Tai Chi, Fitness and Health
- Technical Skills of Teaching
- Connections between Teacher and Student

While the main practical "context" of TCH will be examined as the community based class, our discussion will also examine the need to expand the focus and support network that exists at present within the modern and secular concept of TCH. We will examine the need for the development of a comprehensive framework of "effective teaching" within the context of "training-the-trainer" of TCH.

This need for a comprehensive framework for TCH has its historical and philosophical beginnings with the "open mind" concept of learning and teaching of "Tai Chi as a Health Art" first radically promulgated by Sun Lutang in the world's first publication of Tai Chi, in his book titled *Study of Taijiquan* (Sun Lutang 1921; and Arthy, 2006). We know today that specific TCH Instructor Training has already expanded from the base level and short course workshop concept focussed on specific health issues as pioneered by Dr Paul Lam and developed further in Australia by Alice Liping Yuan through Exercise Medicine Australia. This needs to be extended even further into the contexts of professional health and fitness education and training programs, to provide resources and skills necessary to gain effective teaching expertise as an essential part of the accreditation of the different levels of the TCH Instructor. Teaching expertise needs to be an equal player and should parallel the development of the practical skills and research focus and outcomes of TCH.

In order to be effective in the broader "context" of the delivery of TCH, serious consideration should be given to the expansion of the concept of TCH Instructor Training into a multiplicity of other contexts, to make TCH teaching expertise both accessible and comprehensive. The "Effective Teaching Texts" of TCH could and perhaps should be written into the curriculum, to be inserted into the pedagogy of "training-the-trainer" modules of a range of health, exercise and educational professionals including – Medical Doctors, Community Nurses, Fitness Instructors, Therapists, School Teachers, Home Carers, Social Workers, Aged Care and Hospice Workers.

In the short-term, however, there needs to be a valid pathway and graded levels of opportunities for the TCH Instructor. This would involve accreditation and recognition independent from the pathway for accreditation for Tai Chi as a Martial Art. This accreditation for TCH would thus include an ongoing commitment to developing teaching expertise of TCH, to "how to teach TCH effectively", based on a comprehensive curriculum of "Effective Teaching Texts" which are fundamental to a secular and science based approach to TCH from beginners to advanced levels.

Introduction - Contexts of Tai Chi

In the mid-nineteenth century, a particular style of Chinese Boxing being taught by Yang Lu Chan at the Manchu Imperial Court was first linked by the scholar Ong Tong to the philosophical principles of the Tai Chi, the cosmology formulated over two and a half thousand years earlier to explain the Grand Ultimate, the universal principles of Nature. Thus was coined the term the Grand Ultimate Fist, Tai Chi Chuan, the supreme form of Chinese Boxing and was so described as a result of the effective fighting skills of Yang Lu Chan in being able to defeat his opponents through the particular "rules of engagement" that existed at that time in the Imperial Court of China. Yang Lu Chan's evasive style of fighting was thus perceived by Ong Tong to reflect the power of nature itself manifested in the dialectic philosophy of the yin and yang.

In order to identify possible contexts for our discussion, it is not inappropriate for our purposes, to link our task on "How to Teach Tai Chi Effectively" to the paradoxical logic of Tai Chi philosophy, of the yin and yang. Do we examine the techniques of "effective teaching" of Tai Chi Chuan in the different evolving historical context of "secret transmissions" (see Wile, 1993) through the traditional lineages of particular forms of Chinese Boxing, effective styles of combat first categorised by Sun Lutang as being part of the broader "internal" family style of the martial arts? (see Miller, 2000). Do we evaluate the techniques of "how to teach tai chi effectively" through the present-day context of the fighting, combat and martial arts equivalent to those existing in Imperial China at the time of Yang Lu Chan? Specifically in this regard, do we evaluate on an outcomes basis the "effective teaching of tai chi" in a martial context where all fighting styles come together under the minimum "rules of engagement" of the modern-day blood-sport "Ultimate Combat" in the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC), whereby serious injury or even death is a possible outcome? (see UFC, 2006)

Or do we examine "effective teaching" of Tai Chi in an entirely different context where the aim of Tai Chi teaching is to promote good health and well-being through safe and effective forms of exercise and to do no harm to our students? In an examination of the plethora of radically different contexts of Tai Chi, we will be exploring the question - Is it possible to

find a context for evaluating “effective teaching” for Tai Chi for Health that does not demand that martial prowess and a knowledge of fighting and combat techniques are necessary prerequisites?

Within the broader public relations context of Tai Chi being actively promoted as a Health art, it is not uncommon to hear that whatever else Tai Chi has become, “Tai Chi Is a martial art”:

T'ai Chi is fundamentally a close range, counter attacking art. It uses strikes to and from various parts of the body, locks and grips and uprooting techniques in various combinations. These skills are developed through a series of partner work exercises: Sticky Hands develops initial listening skills; Push Hands develops these on both physical and mental (energetic) levels through a wide variety of fixed pattern and free form routines; fighting applications of movements in the forms are developed taking into account skills trained in Push Hands and these can be taken in to more complex patterns and free sparring. (Tabrett, 2005)

The essence of an effective Tai Chi Instructor is claimed to lie in the ability of the teacher to demonstrate the martial ability, power and intention, not only in the solo form, but through tai chi's martial “rules of engagement” of “push hands”:

One of the beautiful things about T'ai Chi is the richness of the internal activity, both for health and martial arts.... So you want a teacher with good knowledge, who has received good instruction. Ask them about their training. Ask them what they have learned. Ask them about what goes on inside the Form. They should know push hands – have them push you so they can feel if they have some power. Ask if you can push them so you can feel if they know how to neutralize a push. Giving and receiving pushes should be gentle but something unique and powerful should be happening. (Cobb and Grannis, 2006)

Moreover, it is suggested that if you only learn the movements and not learn push hands, you are denying yourself an incredibly fascinating experience and limiting your knowledge of the art and you are denying yourself the added health benefits that actually come with learning the martial side of tai chi. (Mills, 2004) This claim to superior health benefits through the “martial side” traces its lineage of what is “real” or “authentic” tai chi back to the time when tai chi was practised as a martial art in China before the communist revolution in 1949:

Schools often started and founded on the reputation and skill of their teacher. If a master was defeated by a challenger, he would often close his school and follow the person with greater skill. If he didn't, then his students certainly did. (Mills, 2004)

This latter comment gives silent witness to the cultural context of a traditional martial form of Tai Chi practised in China when only men were allowed to receive instruction and practice any style of Chinese boxing due to the patriarchal Confucian tradition in Chinese society, which excluded women from government, education and martial activities. Historically, it was Sun Lutang who is stated to be the first Tai Chi Master to publicly break with this tradition by publicly offering Tai Chi to women in the early 1930s, and he was also the first in the early 1920s to write about, to publish and to promote Tai Chi as a Health Art as well as a martial art. (Miller, 2000) These historical facts about the origins and subsequent transformations of access to Tai Chi for all people, including women, are often ignored or obscured in the historical origins of Tai Chi practiced for health reasons (see Arthy, 2006) and in the claims that “tai chi for health” which is practised today is largely the product of the “standardised, and synthesised style” pioneered by the Peoples Republic of China. (Mills, 2004)

For some of the adherents to the traditional lineages of “Tai Chi Is a martial art”, there is a grudging acceptance that “Tai Chi for Health” actually exists today as “a fait accompli”. “It is a great shame,” it is suggested, “that the tai chi for health players have immense difficulty in recognising there are other levels to tai chi. (Mills, 2004) In response to this claim, it is whimsically suggested by one teacher of Tai Chi for Health who alludes to consumer choices made by students: “I don't emphasise too much martial art to new student, instead endeavouring to promote the health benefits and learning how to relax. As we know, many of our students are middle-aged elderly, so they may not want to enter the martial arena just yet”. (Gregson, 2005)

Some contemporary traditional Tai Chi Instructors take an even harder line in their critique of “tai chi for health” and include an attack on the belief held by those same traditional “tai chi Is a martial art” players who regard push hands as the ultimate martial and combat expression of tai chi. It is suggested that tai chi which is taught as a slow dance like form and tai chi which lauds “push hands” as the crux of the fighting arts are not “real” forms of tai chi:

So what if we are able to uproot! [through push hands training]. He comes back with a blade and cuts us! The push hands was only ever meant as means of learning balance and timing and not for self-defence or tournament There is push hands and then there is advanced push hands. This is where we learn about the dim-mak strikes

and how to use them at close range, this is the real reason for push hands, not for pushing but for striking. ... T'ai chi is dim-mak and to teach it at any other level is to deride this great martial art. I was once asked if T'ai Chi was good for fighting. I told the inquirer that I thought it not! And that idea has not changed much due to the fact that what most people are teaching as being representative of T'ai chi is just a very poor excuse for a fighting art. And so many are teaching at this level that most of T'ai chi nowadays is not good for self-defence. How can someone teach what he or she calls a martial art when they have no idea of how to defend themselves! (Montaigne, 2004)

As we can see, there are so many different possible contexts of Tai Chi that might form the knowledge base and criteria for evaluating effective teaching. Before we limit our discussion on "How to Teach Tai Chi effectively" to any particular context, however, we need to consider another broader context within which Tai Chi is often located and that is the yin-yang dichotomy of "internal" and "external" forms of the martial arts.

It is quite common to characterise Tai Chi as an "internal" martial art with this way of classifying the martial arts in China having first been made by Sun Lutang in his pioneering publications on Xing Yi Quan, Ba Gua Quan and Taijiquan in the early part of the twentieth century (see Miller, 2000 and Zorya, 2006). Today, the focus on the "internal" in Tai Chi is described as being all about the "richness of internal activity", building internal energy or "cultivating the chi" (intrinsic energy), developing an inner force that can somehow be transformed into explosive and powerful ways that do not rely on external or muscular force. It is this so-called internal energy, which is characterised as contributing significantly to beneficial health and the reason why Tai chi has been practised historically as an ancient health art. Such a view may in some instances be involved in occult practices where fraudulent Tai Chi teachers and Qigong masters brainwash their students through psycho-suggestion to believe they have special powers where none existed (Yeo, 2008, pp19-20). At best this view is misleading, particularly where "internal energy" is represented as some mystical inner force that operates within a vacuum, that has no bearing on physical force, biomechanics, principles of leverage or as part of a range of specific fighting techniques:

The real difference between the internal and external martial arts is not chi, softness/hardness, or which is better for health; rather, it boils down to how specific movements are done in a particular mindset, and how these apply to real fights... For centuries, China has had a great variety of therapeutic chi kung and related health systems that are equally as effective as the internal martial arts for restoring, maintaining and improving one's health, and are far simpler to learn and practice than the internal styles. There was no need to invent complex and often extremely physically demanding martial arts to fulfil the same purpose. Although the internal martial arts may be practiced solely as exercises for physical fitness, they were not created with this goal in mind. The internal martial arts were developed for fighting, with their health benefits more or less side effects of training for martial ability. (Cartmell, 1992)

In addition, the "internal force" in a martial arts context represents a way of applying a range of techniques using the mind-body focus, the "whole-body" principle of attack and defence, the art of giving way, of evasion and yielding, maximising the effect of borrowing the opponent's energy thus minimising the effort or the need for excessive external energy in the application of the martial technique. This principle of "maximum effect through minimum force" and the application of specific techniques utilising so-called "internal energy" are not unique to Tai Chi but are features of other so-called "soft" styles of martial arts, which focus on the "gentle" and "yielding" principle.

The most well-known other "internal" style of the martial arts is Judo which was created by Professor Jigaro Kano in the late nineteenth century in Japan, who pioneered the health and ethical principles "Seirokyo Zenyo (maximum effect through minimum effort) and "Jita Kyoe" (Mutual benefit) in the promotion and development of a disciplined, relatively safe and educational form of physical exercise, sport and self-defence (see Kano, 1994 and 2005). Judo as an "internal" or "yielding" style martial art, however, does not focus on solo forms, but introduces two person forms (katas) at advanced levels, and thus does not readily lend itself to the type of exercise and health benefits for a broad range of people as do the solo forms of Tai Chi for Health. In addition, the modern combat and competitive "rules of engagement" of Judo and Tai Chi as martial arts are significantly different with the full contact and high impact aspects of Judo being decidedly unsuitable for most older people and people with certain health problems and injuries.

The idea that both "external" and "internal" forces are germane to all martial arts, however, is acknowledged by Cartmell (1992) and is echoed by Zhou Lishang where he states:

The way of Taijiquan is to practice both the internal and external. Not only should we practice tendons, bones and skin on the outside, but also we practice qi inside. So-called qi here includes spirit and will. Only by practising both the inside and the outside can we accomplish health protection and fighting skill.... In the past, there was a term 'internal boxing'. In my opinion, this term is a leftover of discrimination between the schools in the old society. In fact, many schools pay special attention to practise both the internal and external, and

hardness and softness in harmony. Their differences are in their methods for exercise and forms. That is, they reach the same goals by different techniques. (Zhou, 2006)

In other words, so-called “internal force” is the application of a range of techniques, which do not rely on exceptional physicality or brute strength in the application of the martial technique, but includes techniques of evasion and re-direction of the opponent’s force. Some Tai Chi for martial arts Instructors even suggest that most good martial teachers will point out that to categorise an entire fighting style as being “hard” or “soft” is actually nonsense. Any good martial art will use a mixture of hard and soft physical qualities along with both attacking and defensive strategies, all of which contributes to “real” and not “superficial” health benefits:

From a health perspective, careful practice of martial applications gives the body a much more complete physical workout than exclusively performing slow motion choreography. Furthermore, learning self-defence skills can be of the greatest benefit to those who could be seen as potentially more vulnerable. (Zorya, 2006)

There are thus some who argue based on empirical scientific research that all forms of martial arts have health benefits and are worthy of promoting as such for people of all ages. (Douris et al, 2004; Broudnek et al, 2002; Swiercz, 2005; Binder, 1999; Weiser et al, 1995) The martial arts are actively promoted as unique among most forms of exercise due to the way they blend strength, endurance, flexibility and balance. (Evenson, 2004) They are viewed as a form of self-defence against ageing:

If you want to do something that's fun, different and good for self-defense -- and good for long-term self-defense against disease -- do the martial arts... Dr. Douglas McKeag, a sports medicine expert at Indiana University in Indianapolis, believes the martial arts are a perfectly acceptable way to boost fitness, certainly in middle age it makes a great deal of sense. The sport is capable of delivering the type of stimulus that the body needs to get in shape. But he cautions that, as with any new sport, beginners have to come at it relatively slowly and intelligently. (Medicine on Line, 2004)

Within this broader context of the martial arts having significant health benefits, there are some very hard-line Tai Chi Instructors, however, who are waging verbal war against any notion of a separate category of “Tai Chi for Health” and that Tai Chi should not be practised or promoted as anything other than a martial art and are calling for an end to the “broad church” approach which includes any reference to “Tai Chi for Health”:

*The time has come to **completely** (sic) distance ourselves from new-age "Tai Chi" practitioners and reclaim the art for the ordinary martial artist. We also need to destroy the idea of T'ai Chi as a form of "gentle therapeutic exercise" or as some kind of "cure-all". As a martial arts instructor it is **not** (sic) for me to be making claims about healing people. "Tai Chi" is currently marketed as anything and everything from a form of spiritual healing to a method of relationship counselling; as "a path to enlightenment" or even as a beauty treatment. With so much mis-information around, no one needs to feel silly for having been mis-led, but we must now wage war on the charlatans who perpetuate the T'ai Chi mythology and reveal them as the frauds they are. There is nothing magical, mystical or even innately spiritual about T'ai Chi Ch'uan / Taijiquan - it is a fighting art, plain and simple. (Zorya, 2006)*

How then within this confusing array of contexts do we identify the bona fide or effective Tai Chi Instructor capable of teaching “real” or “authentic” tai chi with “real” and “non-superficial” health benefits? One way to resolve this issue is to accept the yin and yang of there being two broad poles of Tai Chi in the modern world which involve two distinct and different approaches to teaching Tai Chi – Tai Chi as a Martial Art and Tai Chi for Health (TCH).

Our starting point for TCH is thus to recognise and enthusiastically embrace the idea that TCH Is “a fait accompli” and that no one person or organisation can claim sole ownership of the philosophical term “Tai Chi” which has been utilised over a two and a half thousand year period in China in order to explain the order of the universe, the way of nature, all manner of things related to movement, stillness, time and space, how nature impacts upon and interacts with society, and how culture appropriates nature. The term “Tai Chi” was simply borrowed by the Yang family, thus providing a great public relations opportunity to capitalise on the cultural mythology and metaphysics surrounding “Tai Chi” philosophy, to promote and differentiate the Chen style adaptation of “Cotton Fist” boxing from other styles of Chinese boxing that existed at the time. We can thank Sun Lutang for being the first to liberate the “Tai Chi” from the exclusive brotherhood of the “boxers” and from the “mandate of heaven” of a Confucian social order by stating that the health giving benefits of martial forms and exercise can be accessed by everyone:

All people – men, women, the old, and the young – may practice in order to replace temerity with bravery, and stiffness with pliability. Those of you who are extremely weak, who suffer from fatigue and injury or illness, or who have weakened your qi from the practice of other martial arts to the point that you no longer have the strength to

train, all of you may practice Tai Ji Quan. With practice, the qi will quickly return to a balanced state and will become strong, while the spirit naturally returns to a state of wholeness. Disease will be eliminated and the length of life increased. (Sun Lutang, 1921, 60)

The genius of Sun Lutang (see Arthy, 2006) was that in Sun's day there was not yet the idea that "Tai Ji Quan" was a Health Art and that Sun recognized the health-building benefits of practicing "Tai Ji Quan" by making the connection between the development of "internal" power through natural exercise and its benefits for the individual's health. (see Miller, 2000)

The Challenge for Effective Teaching of TCH - Making a Difference.

Teaching Tai Chi for Health (TCH), as distinct from teaching Tai Chi as a Martial art, has gained tremendous popularity throughout the world. There is an increasing number of TCH Instructors who have not come through the ranks of traditional Tai Chi as martial-art training, they have never engaged in any form of push hands, grappling, striking or fighting an opponent under some "rules of engagement". Such TCH Instructors potentially find themselves on the margins of this huge block of knowledge collectively and historically known as Tai Chi Chuan. Through the inspired dream of Dr Paul Lam, the TCH Instructor is now in a position to deliver and enhance those same health benefits as the traditional Tai Chi Chuan teacher using modern and "effective teaching" techniques, applying "effective" forms of knowledge about specific health or medical conditions and making "effective connections" and thus extending the benefits of Tai Chi as a secular and modern health art to a much broader range of people.

Now more than ever, we are moving into the realms of specialised management of medical and health conditions involving mild to chronic forms of disease and pathology, as well as factoring into the teaching program, age, health and fitness levels of the participant. Thus the specially trained TCH Instructor is now in a good position to begin to make a significant and measurable difference in the broader community.

With the driving force of "making a difference", we are living in a time of corporate and professional responsibility in a society which is considered by some as becoming increasingly "litigious", but which really means people are better educated, they know and understand their legitimate rights of not having harm done to them by anyone providing goods or services in a consumer society. "Duty of Care", specialised training, safety guidelines and precautions are now or should be hallmarks of the expectations of not only in the delivery of medical services, but also in the delivery, the teaching, the instruction of Tai Chi in whatever form, health or martial, to the community.

Although our reasons for teaching Tai Chi have changed from the martial methods of Chinese boxing, some of us still hold fast to certain aspects of the traditional ways of teaching, being respectful and humbled by the great wealth and knowledge of the teachers who have gone before us. Many TCH Instructors have come into teaching TCH from the health, fitness and caring professions and have been the recipients of scathing reprimand for stepping outside the boundaries of the traditional way, the correct way, interfering with something "we know very little about". We need to be reminded by Sun Lutang who observed that we need to be able to step outside of the inner circle and keep an open mind, and, in particular, understand that Tai Chi is as much for health as it is for martial arts (Sun Lutang, 1921; see Arthy, 2006). We need to see the bigger picture of the huge beneficial potential for teaching students in our care how to reduce pain and suffering, how to improve wellness and how to restore peace of mind and tranquillity through something that is a great deal more than "gentle physical activity". We should remind ourselves that sometimes we don't know what our end result will be; that much of this work is still pioneering and evolving. There will be change – there has to be change. Nothing changes if nothing changes. Tai Chi evolves - and we are on the cusp of change here at the very first International Conference of Tai Chi for Health.

Many people who teach Tai Chi have only a very limited amount of time and energy for their teaching. Most lead busy professional lives, and often wear many hats apart from the world of Tai Chi. There are very few of us who have the luxury of being able to devote our working lives to the practice and teaching of Tai Chi. Regardless of our diverse backgrounds, however, we all strive for our tai chi teaching to be effective – to have a good result. In order to become effective in our teaching, we need to find ways of connecting with our students, motivating them and encouraging them to stick to the journey that so many have tentatively begun, and for some having already overcome an enormous cultural barrier in giving it a go.

How do TCH Instructors connect with their students, especially those who are not motivated to want to learn, to take personal responsibility for their health and fitness, to acquire new forms of knowledge, and those who maybe are looking for the magic quick fix? How can we as teachers of Tai Chi for Health help them? Painful and tired bodies, reluctant minds, resistant to change, limited attention spans, unconvinced and unmotivated towards finding different ways of learning and working all provide a challenge to the Tai Chi for Health Instructor. Why are they like this? Fear of exacerbating their medical condition, having low self-esteem, depression, cultural biases disguised as metaphysical truth,

all conspire to inhibit and block learning and health improvement. Many people who begin the TCH journey do not start out to actively seek new forms of knowledge, nor are they interested in learning how to self-manage.

In addressing all of these questions and concerns involved in teaching TCH, there are different but interrelated factors, which can help us to become more effective teachers and help motivate and encourage our own students:

- Knowledge of Tai Chi, Health & Fitness
- Technical Skills of Teaching
- Connections between Teacher and Student

Knowledge of Tai Chi, Health & Fitness

The essence of teaching TCH is to "make a real difference" to people's health, fitness, mobility and quality of life through a shared knowledge of TCH. As we have discussed, there are many who set themselves up as teachers of Tai Chi and embrace a very broad range of different teaching styles and methods and within their own particular style, there is no doubt that they may well feel they are effective in what they do.

For our immediate purposes for examining TCH, however, what does "effective" mean? A dictionary definition of the word "effective" sometimes provides a useful starting point: (Wikapaedia, 2006)

ef·fec·tive adj.

1. *Having an intended or expected effect.*
2. *Producing a strong impression or response.*
3. *Prepared for use or action, especially in warfare.*

This implies both an outcome and a process by which some change has taken place and that change is capable of being measured in relation to some standards of performance. With the teaching of Tai Chi for Health, this can mean that the teacher has been able to successfully impart some knowledge to the student and that the student has been able to embrace and absorb this knowledge in some form of performance or outcome. What is effective for Tai Chi as a martial art will relate more to the notion of being "prepared for use or action, especially in warfare". The criteria for evaluation of a knowledge base for effective teaching in the martial arts lies in the demonstration of martial skills through success or failure on the battlefield, under whatever the rules of engagement that might exist in the context of fighting or combat. Our focus, however, is not on Tai Chi practised as a martial art, but on process and outcomes of Tai Chi practised as complex and effective form of exercise in the management of health and fitness of the student.

It goes without saying that there is a plethora of information on Tai Chi available to the trained TCH Instructor. In the broader sense, there is a rich history and tradition of Tai Chi practised as a martial art and which has subsequently evolved in fairly recent times into a widespread range of forms of movement and exercise aimed at promoting good health and fitness (see Miller,2000; Wile, 1993 Wong, 1996; Arthy, 2006).

The TCH courses and programs pioneered by Dr Paul Lam were designed specifically for certain health conditions using short forms such as the Tai Chi for Arthritis (TCA) 12 Form based on the Sun style of Tai Chi and the Tai Chi for Diabetes (TCD) 19 Form mostly based on Yang style Tai Chi. There are many other courses and programs which have already been designed and developed specifically for certain health conditions such as Alice Liping Yuan's (Exercise Medicine of Australia) Tai Chi for Health and Falls Prevention Program 11 Forms based mostly on Yang style Tai Chi. All of these programs, courses and short forms are also capable of being adapted by the TCH Instructor who has been trained to modify and adapt the form in relation to the particular student's health conditions and personal needs. The aim of modifying existing knowledge into suitable, practical and safe forms of Tai Chi movements is to assist in the health management for such conditions as post operative cancer cardiac rehabilitation, mental health, Parkinson's disease, haemophilia and palliative care.

Whatever the professional background of the newly trained TCH Instructor whether they are physiotherapists, fitness instructors or aged carers, the training is comprehensive and includes a sufficient amount of Tai Chi information, teaching information and safety information to begin teaching immediately. Even with limited experience in some areas when starting out, the existing programs are in themselves comprehensive enough to commence teaching immediately both safely and effectively. No matter how limited the knowledge of Tai Chi forms might be through the basic level of TCH Instructor training, what is important to highlight is that time, practice, focus, patience and a willingness to want to continue to learn, all of these are needed to become better teachers and to become more effective in the sharing of knowledge about TCH in the mutual relationship between exercise and health. As an extension of the TCH Instructor Training process and as part of supporting the knowledge base for Tai Chi, Dr Paul Lam's approach to TCH Instructor training is to encourage on-going learning and education and there is a rich variety of Tai Chi material, articles and

workshops to facilitate this. There is also the opportunity for TCH Instructors to participate in forums and exchange information through the global network that has developed for TCH. They can ask questions and receive answers, swap ideas and network in a knowledge exchange that is unprecedented in Tai Chi history in its global dimensions. For TCH Instructors, there is no excuse for not improving knowledge about Tai Chi, health and fitness.

Updating on research for health issues is already central to the professional interests of health and fitness professionals who have access to a professional network through membership organisations and professional conferences and training activities. At present, the support network for TCH Instructors for the acquisition and sharing of knowledge takes place through various training workshops, such as those facilitated by Dr Lam, and an informal network of individual people associated in a common interest in TCH. Updates and workshops are very significant and important opportunities to extend not only tai chi knowledge but are also opportunities to network with other health professionals with meaningful discussion.

As TCH Instructors quickly become more experienced and knowledgeable within their work environments they should be encouraged to document and study the evidence at a "hands on" level to maximise not only the outcomes of their specific client groups but also are ideally placed for new work ideas and directions for TCH. Any sharing of knowledge in this way whether publishable research material or anecdotal workplace documentation in newsletters and professional magazines or as articles on the web site will thus encourage others in the goal of enhancement of quality of life of their client group. Sharing of this type of experiential knowledge may encourage research ideas and facilitate funding opportunities for further research and training necessary for increasing the knowledge of Tai Chi and its beneficial impact on fitness and health, the management of chronic medical conditions, and in the broader sense, on contributing to reducing the enormous burden on health budgets around the world.

While some may argue that practice is a core component of improving performance of Tai Chi, what is important to emphasise, in particular to the new student, is that "practice" in itself is not about "getting it right". What is important, is to get students to understand that it is not necessary for them to know all about tai chi, nor is it desirable to try to achieve perfection for it to work for them and to improve their health. The journey of learning Tai Chi, acquiring the knowledge is not be something to be rushed, "quick fixes" are for speed junkies on a roller coaster that never ends. Slow and steady is not about a tortoise winning a race, but is about striving to learn and improve, about feeling comfortable and not stressed in the imperfection of the Tai Chi performance, thus learning to relax, enjoy and thus benefit from the journey. The finishing line is thus not important. The adage "fake it till you make" is not about failure, but about accepting the limitations on what we know in relation to the Grand Cosmos, learning to be patient in the acquisition of new and extended forms of knowledge.

*A little learning is a dangerous thing
Drink deep or taste not the Pierian spring:
There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
And drinking largely sobers us again.
Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*, 1709*

Technical Skills of Teaching

Newly trained TCH Instructors optimally abandon certain traditional teaching methods in favour of finding easier and more effective ways of teaching. For TCH Instructors who have come from a traditional Tai Chi background, change for them to new and more effective ways of teaching sometimes involves serious resistance. One of the distinctive differences between the more traditional view of "Tai Chi Is a martial art" and TCH is in this area of teaching methods and strategies. This is not the place, however, to compare and contrast the differences between the technical skills of teaching of the Tai Chi as martial arts Instructor and the TCH instructor. It is sufficient to note that one of the major differences between the two poles of the Tai Chi spectrum as previously outlined and in particular in Australia arises out of questions related to the legal principle of a "duty of care" that the teacher has towards the specific client group and how this impacts on the teaching strategies and methods.

TCH programs such as those devised by Dr Lam draw on a range of strategies of teaching that clearly factor in safety principles, that is, the "duty-of-care" responsibilities of the TCH Instructor towards the student. Central to Dr Lam's teaching method, for example, is what he terms the "1, 2, 3" method - "watch me, follow me and show me". This is a method that is not unique to TCH, but is central to teaching strategies within the martial arts generally, (for Judo see Kano, 2005) teaching and learning other forms of movement such as dance and sporting activities. For whatever reasons, and paradoxically one might add, the "1,2,3" method in any form is not a regular and essential component of the teaching strategy of the non-TCH Instructor.

Undoubtedly the 1,2,3, Step Method is a most effective method for teaching as it has clear advantages and works well for our client base. There will always be an argument for the simplicity of the "Follow Me" method. It is much easier for the teacher because all they need to do is "show" their own tai chi, and easier for the students because they don't have to process and don't have the pressure on at any time to work independently of the Tai Chi Instructor up the front with back turned towards the student. The lesson for some is enjoyable and relaxed. It takes a whole lot longer for improvement, however, and may work eventually but it is not an efficient way to teach. It is not an effective way as it takes a very long time to achieve the same level of co-ordinated patterns and consolidated whole body motor skills as the students who use the "show me" method (see also Kano, 2005) and is definitely not a "safe" method in relation to a significantly increased risk of injury for the student.

Not only does it take a long time "to cut the apron strings" from the teacher, or for the student to become independent from the teacher but technique has to be compromised. In some circumstances, students might not have a lot of time and the time they do have needs to be efficiently used to the best effect. If students can learn to think for themselves, to begin to consciously process information and remember it, they have something to practice. If they have something to practise, they will improve quickly. Students watch and follow all the time. This is how they lay down movement patterns. But "Show me" gives them their wings to independent study. Many teachers move on too quickly before the new component of information has been successfully consolidated. When some students successfully absorb that information and others do not, then it is the skill of the teacher to find ways of offering layers of information to that component without jeopardising the confidence of the new learner and without necessitating moving on too quickly. Giving new information too quickly may overload the student who is often processing more than choreography. The "moving on too quickly" teacher does not allow for the array of processing other than movement shape that is happening. When there is criticism of people doing "choreography" or "dance", this is what is happening. The teacher moves on too quickly and doesn't allow sufficient time for mental processing.

Knowing how to break down chunks of information or set movements into numbers is not a natural skill for most TCH Instructors. They themselves often have deficiencies in body awareness, in proprioception, in motor skills and need on-going training and support. Nor is it an automatic given that new TCH Instructors know how to modify and adapt movements or are knowledgeable enough to even recognise when students are having difficulty. It is not enough to ask "how does that feel" because there is too much going on with the execution of the movement, sequencing, balance and co-ordination and many other factors to make this recognition. If the answer is "good" this is not always the justification for the teacher to move on. Sometimes even facing the side of the room and changing direction is enough additional stimulation and repetition for proprioception and balancing to establish so that more practice can occur before "moving on". In the long run, even though it may sometimes take a little longer to teach a set of movements in this way, the "1,2,3" method is ultimately more effective and the overall result is the most advantageous.

After students learn the choreographed movements, how then do we successfully transform those movements into Tai Chi movements that will maximise health benefits? How and when do students become responsive to body awareness? How does the TCH Instructor teach how to access and harness inner strength? Whichever way we learn, our bodies will always be different and will always handle the interpretation and absorption of knowledge differently. Students cannot understand and explore the many layers and dimensions of Tai Chi in the beginning. However, students need to understand that all Tai Chi movements, which are safe will begin to enhance their health and well-being. This is the fundamental truth of TCH programs as we know them. It goes without saying that in order to get a better result, that this is undoubtedly dependent on the quality of the knowledge and skill of the TCH Instructor to modify the movement to the ability, health and fitness level of the individual student. No two people can respond to and absorb knowledge in the same way. Not only do our students have different health profiles, different life experiences and capabilities but they also have different ways of learning. Subconsciously as teachers we know this and yet many teachers openly favour the fast learner or the physically competent in a class situation. We would be more effective as teachers if we understood more thoroughly how people learn. Some people respond to aural cues, some have an acute ability to observe and replicate detail. Some people need to read and understand, or write it down and commit it to memory before they can begin to process and translate it into movement and transform it into TCH.

There are many other techniques which work comfortably within the "1,2,3" methods and which will contribute to a better quality of teaching. However, two of the most successful techniques for accelerated learning for TCH that can be briefly mentioned here are - "mirror image" teaching and "concept imagery". There are certain aspects associated with becoming skilful using these techniques which are culturally sensitive and which rely on the skill of the teacher to establish the necessary connections with the student.

Mirror image teaching involves the teacher performing the movement while facing the student who is attempting to perform the movement by copying the teacher and self-correcting. Facing the student has the significant advantage of not only ensuring that movements performed by the student are attempted in a safe manner, but also enables the teacher to establish how well the student understands the movement and allows the student to respond to facial cueing techniques of

the teacher. The idea of watching the student at all times is one of the big advantages of modern teaching methods. With "mirror image" teaching the only time the back ideally needs to be turned away from the students is to demonstrate the form or part of the form in the "watch me" phase of the "1,2,3" method. After a few "follow me" practices, an assistant or more experienced student can stand in the front of the group and thus be the person to follow while the teacher observes and coaches the group. If teaching alone, mirror image allows the teacher the advantages of facial cues, being able to watch the students' reactions and coping abilities, and especially watching them for safety. The "mirror image" technique is efficient, safe and it enhances the communication between teacher and student. The difficulty for the teacher is to learn to verbalise the cueing while physically performing and saying the exact opposite to what the student is performing. There are some forms within a choreographed sequence where there are problems with mirror imaging such as in "brush knee/push". However, this can easily be overcome in most instances by breaking down the movement not simply in terms of numbers in the overall performance of the form itself, but in the technique of "losing one or more parts of the body", that is, to isolate sections or parts of the form which enable practice to be performed quite comfortably using mirror imaging techniques. For example, by "losing the feet", by concentrating on the upper body and not worrying about the turn, transfer of weight or direction, or by losing not only the feet but only focussing on one part of the body, the arm, the hand, fingers, elbows, spine and some of the associated movement in the sequence.

The other technique central to the effectiveness of TCH is "concept imagery". While Tai Chi for some may be viewed as a martial art, there are many students who commence Tai Chi for health and fitness reasons and who either do not want to or who prefer not to have the "martial", "combat", or violent imagery as part of the learning process. As TCH Instructors, we need to respect and understand those wishes by the student and thus, this poses a particular challenge to the TCH Instructor, in particular, to someone who has had a martial arts background before training as a TCH Instructor. The idea of "concept imagery" simply put, is to find some constructive way to establish the appropriate metaphor for the student in front of you, a metaphor that assists the student in trying to remember how to move and co-ordinate the body and most importantly, a metaphor coupled with encouraging the student to use the "mind" as a key learning strategy. The "mind" will only be receptive if the metaphor is understandable, accessible and culturally acceptable. Culture, gender, social class, age, legal and ethical principles are all variables which need to be factored into the process of finding the appropriate "metaphor".

The concept imagery associated with Tai Chi as a martial art quite legitimately refers to the concept of martial force and martial power. As discussed earlier, the division of the martial arts into "external" and "internal" finds its mirrored expression in the use of the dichotomy of force being split into "internal" and "external" forms of power, energy, chi or ki. As a martial arts concept, "external force" is based on those "concept images" which directly relate to muscular and physical force and strength whether gentle or brute. The martial concept of "internal" force is related to technique, biomechanics, leverage, co-ordination, posture, mind-focus and martial concepts of "borrowing" the opponent's force through yielding, deflecting, sticking and "push-pull" techniques. Accordingly within the context of Tai Chi as a martial art, there is nothing mystical or magical about "internal power" as part of this involves learning how to use "mind-body" connections to maximise the use of technique for the intention of defeating or stopping the opponent. Internal power therefore is a metaphor to describe a range of techniques designed to increase leverage, to limit the use "external" effort or force for the purpose of achieving a successful outcome. A smaller person properly trained thus is able to defeat a larger, much stronger opponent in combat, by using sufficient physical force and power, but through the leverage of the smaller combatant's superior skills. Within the context of Tai Chi as a martial art, the effect of defeating an opponent thus demands a combination of physical power with an appropriate level of skill and technique sufficient to neutralise or defeat the opponent's combined use of so-called "internal" and "external" forces.

In TCH, the only limitation as to what non-martial forms of "concept imagery" can be used is the imagination itself. For example, continuing with the "brush-knee push" movement, there are any-number of ways to describe the concept of force and power without needing to rely on martial images of violence. To illustrate, the biomechanics of this particular Tai Chi movement, we can look at any number of physical or sporting activities that use similar forms of biomechanics to maximise the effect of the techniques of co-ordination of all parts of the body and how the mind is instrumental to focussing on maximising the technique, to maximise the desired effect. These activities include - baseball pitching, swinging a golf club, serving at tennis, throwing a ball or stone. The TCH Instructor has a specific challenge in teaching this form in such a way as to enhance co-ordination between the upper and lower body. This is significant area of difficulty for many students.

As TCH Instructors, the use of accessible and constructive forms of "concept imagery" will significantly speed up the process of learning to co-ordinate facilitating the movement of the whole body as a unit, and thus fast-tracing the student's feeling of well-being and health enhancement, and sooner than later beginning to feel more relaxed, have more energy and deriving more health benefits. A further example of the "concept imagery" method here may be to use the idea of "puppet strings" attached between specific points of the upper and lower body - for example the fist and follow step foot in the punch from the TCA 12 movements. For students familiar with the concept of a "puppet" and the string from the top to the bottom, this is easy to "see" and is immediately recognised and processed by the student. The concept imagery of the

“Puppet” can also be used almost everywhere where upper and lower body co-ordination is required. What is important, however, for the TCH Instructor, is to ensure that the concept imagery is agreeable to and understandable by the student. In general terms, what is important is to make the right connections with the students in order to more effectively transfer the knowledge of TCH to the TCH student and thus which is aimed at enhancing health and fitness. (see Arthy, 2006) While there is absolutely nothing wrong with using martial concept imagery, the TCH Instructor who values and respects the wishes of students in their class, will need to be responsive and find suitable non-violent "concept imagery" to facilitate and enhance the so-called "internal power", that is, the techniques of co-ordination, posture, biomechanics all within the ethical and legal frameworks of safety, mutual respect and the sharing of knowledge.

Connections between Teacher and Student

The relationship between the teacher and the student has a huge bearing on the effectiveness of teaching. There are some Tai Chi teachers whose connections to the student is about "showing knowledge" and not "sharing knowledge". These teachers show their knowledge through demonstrating their Tai Chi skills while using a style of language that fails to communicate, in particular to the beginning Tai Chi student. Little or no effort is made to find a common language with the student, instead choosing a syntax and vocabulary that is difficult, metaphysical, mysterious and sometimes incomprehensible. The expected student's role here is to accept these new forms of knowledge as an act of faith, thus bypassing the intellect yet encouraged to feel positive energy and emotions, to get in touch with their inner feelings and chi by copying and following in the faceless shadow of the Tai Chi teacher. This style of teaching makes certain assumptions about how knowledge is integrated and internalised by the individual, the effect of which is to significantly delay the acquisition of knowledge and skills about tai chi by the individual student. This approach by a Tai Chi teacher who may well be very knowledgeable about Tai Chi in "showing" this knowledge, unfortunately inhibits the student to begin to take personal responsibility for their own health and development of skills and knowledge and fails to generate "mind-body" awareness, a prerequisite for independent learning and development.

There may be some TCH Instructors who may have limited knowledge of Tai Chi Chuan, or who may have a considerable amount of prior teaching experience, and may have many students who are highly motivated and enthusiastic. In the short term, students might flock to them, and lessons will have a palpable vibe and happiness. In the longer term, these teachers will only continue to be effective with a ongoing commitment to acquiring more forms of knowledge about Tai Chi and how Tai Chi works in relation to various levels of health, age and fitness. Such teachers continue to be motivating and nurturing by refreshing, learning, enhancing, exploring the many layers of knowledge about Tai Chi, health and fitness to invigorate and inspire their students.

Initially, it is the TCH Instructor's responsibility to find out why the student wishes to attend the TCH class. It may seem an impossible task to seek out these answers that on the surface seem unimportant. The students have enrolled, paid their fee and they are there to learn. Everyone can see how a student seems to be, but very few take the time to see who they are. This is not the same as knowing intimate details as the TCH Instructor always needs to maintain a professional teacher-student relationship. It is about knowing why they are at the class, knowing what their expectations are. Making a connection! Giving them the opportunity to tell you about themselves! They know that you are the teacher and through reputation or written material or through recommendation, they will have certain expectations about you both as a teacher and about what they will be learning.

One of the most difficult aspects of teaching is holding on to beginners. Holding on to them long enough for them to not only make a connection with you the teacher but with themselves, particularly in relation to "mind-body" awareness. When students come to you and leave, the teacher may feel a strong sense of loss. This is a loss of opportunity to make a connection with them, for them to make a connection with themselves, with their body, to discover or re-discover the power of the mind and receive knowledge to enhance their health. This sort of knowledge takes quite a bit longer – as teachers we know that but if we can't make the right connection with them in those early days our chances of holding them will be minimal. If you are expecting your students to stay with you – you need to find out why they are coming and more specifically what they their needs are.

It is therefore essential for the teacher to find this out very early in the relationship. You can rely on your memory if you have people skills, or you can keep a little card system where the student actually states their reasons for attending. Creating an early knowledge and understanding of the student's needs and goals is a great advantage for the teacher and has excellent beneficial outcomes for all students. Reviewing needs and goals is also very worthwhile in the medium to longer term.

For many of us teaching TCH, our lessons take the same format – greetings, warm-up, learn something new, cool-down, be positive, be encouraging, have fun. But it is often the subtleties that make people feel comfortable or uncomfortable. If you are able to create a teaching environment that is not only welcoming and friendly, but also accepting, if you can teach in a generalised manner that treats everyone equally and with respect, and if you can develop of sense of humour and

optimism, people will want to be there. Tai Chi should be pleasant, friendly, and non-threatening at a personal level. You need to create an environment that is a pleasant experience where people feel happy and want to be there. It follows that if they want to be there, they will get to know other people in a socially non-threatening and uplifting and positive environment. You will then have the opportunity to share what you have to offer.

We need students to periodically recognise that they have learned something new, to have made a change, through a review process of reflecting back. We need to confirm with the student that they must continue to take personal responsibility in maintaining or improving their health. They have a part to play, as we have a part to play in teaching, not only the form, principles but about the "mind-body" connections and how that relates to personal development and health improvement. We have to constantly maintain that relationship of connection.

From the first lesson you can give them the responsibility to practise. You may need to have written guidelines in the beginning to help them learn more effectively – but that will soon pass as they begin to focus and begin to train to memorise as they train the body. If you notice that improvement, even without being obvious, this is very encouraging for a new student. Eye to eye contact with an accepting attitude is all that is often required for the student to feel encouraged.

The teaching skill of the TCH Instructor will be most evident in the efforts made by the students. When being tough was part of accepting criticism and correction, it was a necessary condition for effective martial conduct. In TCH, it is accepted and expected that simulated and real forms of assault for learning self defence purposes is not part of the curriculum. In a few Tai Chi schools, self-defence is the reason why students are learning. It is understandable in a violent world that some might be attracted to learning self defence through the intrinsic intelligence of Tai Chi Chuan as a martial art, than with some of the more physical, full contact forms of the Martial Arts where exceptional physicality is often a necessary prerequisite for success. It is important for any prospective student to understand, however, that many Tai Chi schools simply do not teach self-defence in any practical form. Some Tai Chi Chuan Martial Arts Instructors would claim that very few Tai Chi schools teach any form of martial arts or any form of self-defence. (see Zorya, 2006; and Montaigne, 2004) A vital part of teaching TCH is for the TCH Instructor, however, is to understand that many students do not want to put themselves into confrontational situations of learning or even understanding the self-defence applications of Tai Chi Chuan. Feelings of making strikes and warding off blows are not conducive to happy and relaxed thoughts, especially for the beginner. For some students, however, it may be a revelation that Tai Chi Chuan, is a martial art and a few may express some interest in understanding the martial application or context. The extent as to how this should be managed by the TCH Instructor is of course dependent on the dynamics of the TCH group itself and the martial knowledge of the TCH Instructor.

The central point for our purposes is that the TCH Instructor needs to ensure that all students are able to participate in a comfortable and relaxed environment. Minimising correction is an important part of Effective Teaching. Except for matters of safety and issues related to mutual respect within the class, there is not a place for "this is wrong" or "this is a better way" – which implies the first way was not acceptable. A teacher can always be positive about their students' efforts and gradually work towards improvement by teaching and demonstrating principles and encouraging practice. The TCH Instructor will find that the teaching will be truly effective if students understand that their tai chi is not something that should be compared with other students' levels of performance. What is important to develop is an understanding about the "mind-body" connections, a conscious reflection on what the body is doing at any point in time and to generate an enthusiasm for the continuing tai chi journey itself, and not the finish lines in the struggles and races of competitive egos.

We need to learn to focus not at an end result, but on the process or journey interrupted at periodic intervals where we are able to consciously reflect on a set of characteristics, principles, strategies that allow us to know we are on the right track, so that we might be more effective in our teaching role. Our students should have a degree of happiness, not necessarily happy-delirious, but happy and satisfied enough with their progress, happy in their relationship with you as their teacher, happy in the social environment you have created. They should achieve some skills with respect to the expectations of fitness and their improvement should be, but not necessarily always be visible. In other words they should exhibit some of the outcomes of good TCH teaching. The TCH Instructor will be able to see a difference or improvement and they will be able to know that it feels better. Knowing that "it feels better" is perhaps the single most important motivator for students continuing with their Tai Chi.

The success or otherwise of "mind-body" connections are most evident through the "show me" phase of the "1,2,3" method in the teaching cycle of the TCH Instructor. The idea is to work towards achieving a level of independence from the teacher that will allow students to practise safely with a clear understanding of what they are doing, and allow them to strengthen and realign their Tai Chi form independent from the class environment. The TCH Instructor should teach in such a way that the student will be seeking more knowledge and more guidance from you as the TCH Instructor and finding that mental quietness and inner strength is at their fingertips. It might even come as a surprise!

It is the nature of human beings to yearn for freedom, equality and dignity. If we accept that others have a right to peace and happiness equal to our own, do we not have a responsibility to help those in need? ... When we do not know someone or do not feel connected to an individual or group, we tend to overlook their needs. Yet the development of human society requires that people help each other. (Dalai Lama, 2000)

Conclusion

Our discussion began by reviewing a broad range of possible contexts within which effective teaching of Tai Chi could be examined and evaluated. At the outset, we established two distinct poles of how Tai Chi may be taught and practised - Tai Chi as a martial art and Tai Chi for Health. Quite clearly, the processes of evaluating "how to teach tai chi effectively" along this Tai Chi continuum are different. The aim of any martial art is to train the pupil to become effective in combat, to become a "warrior" to be able to effectively fight an opponent under certain "rules of engagement", with and without the use of weapons. Tai Chi practised as a health art is unmistakably different, where the purpose of training is to engage in varied forms of exercise, which are relatively safe and effective for the health, fitness, ability and age levels of the individual student.

Accordingly, the specific context for our discussion has been "how to effectively teach" TCH as a secular and modern concept. Secular in as much as the training of the TCH Instructor does not require any knowledge about the mythology and metaphysics of Confucianism, Christianity, Buddhism, Shintoism or Taoism. Modern in as much as that TCH is science based and therefore secular in its rationale and delivery and accordingly provides the evidence and justification for health and fitness related benefits and more importantly for our purposes informs the modern legal and ethical responsibilities of the TCH Instructor (see Arthy, 2005).

Within the broader social context of TCH, health and fitness benefits of Tai Chi are maximised where the teaching of Tai Chi embraces science based research, secular ethical and legal principles and eschews all forms of metaphysics be they monotheistic, polytheistic or atheistic. TCH is thus different from certain so-called traditional ways of teaching and practising Tai Chi, many of which may well be aimed at promoting health and fitness but which include aspects of a metaphysical journey. There is absolutely nothing wrong with any form of Tai Chi practised as a martial art or in combination with metaphysical metaphors providing some "players" various forms of peace and harmony with the world, with nature and with their own spiritual connections with the Grand Cosmos.

But this is not the mission of Tai Chi for Health, which claims to be based on scientific and evidence based research and which is promoted as targeted forms of scientifically based exercise programs aimed at enhancing health and fitness to specific populations within the broader community. From those who are super-fit, athletic and healthy, to a larger majority of those who are relatively unhealthy and unfit, to those who are indeed suffering pain and discomfort from various chronic diseases and illnesses - TCH through its secular and modern orientation does not include certain metaphysical or marital orientations which are indeed an integral feature of some Tai Chi teaching practices. The consumer of health and fitness programs has a legitimate right to be properly informed as to the contextual basis of the type of Tai Chi program which is being promoted in the broader community whether it is martial or not, and also whether it is secular or otherwise. Similarly, government and other funding authorities will be more likely to support TCH programs which can be demonstrated as being effective and safe in their outcomes of health improvements and supported by evidence based scientific research based on secular, empirical and modern ethical standards:

The way for Tai Chi to be propagated by official bodies is through scientific studies. Governments and large organizations have heard about the benefits of Tai Chi as have many physicians and other scientists. But they need proof, the kind of proof that only scientific studies offer. Currently, the going word for health planners worldwide is "evidence based". To be supported, a program needs to have scientific evidence, just as a doctor is required to practice evidence-based medicine. (Lam, 2006)

In the same way the medical doctor practices evidence based medicine by offering professional fee-for-services, all health and fitness professionals have responsibilities to their patients or clients to operate within secular and modern ethical and legal standards (see Arthy, 2005).

In the modern age of promoting professional health and fitness services, "Effective teaching" of the TCH Instructor can only effectively function with proper regard to legal and ethical realities in the delivery of a professional fee-for-service to any particular client group. What happens and who is responsible if the outcome of the TCH activity results in some form of harm to the client or even someone else, in particular, where that activity involved negligence, breaches of the law and professional misconduct by the TCH Instructor? The answers are not to be found within medical or scientific research but within a culturally specific set of legal and ethical standards, which govern acceptable levels of performance. While different countries may have different legal and ethical contexts for professional TCH Instruction, the secular and modern concept of TCH necessitates the training of the TCH Instructor to have a sound knowledge of and abide by a minimum

standard of legal and ethical responsibilities acceptable to an international community of professional TCH Instructors and relevant to the delivery of the TCH program in the local community.

In the past decade, new models for the delivery of TCH programs have emerged in Australia. These have been pioneered by Dr Paul Lam, who has radically extended Tai Chi beyond the context of Tai Chi practised as a martial art into a science and research based secular and modern form of exercise with a specific focus on TCH Instructor training to include a range of health and fitness professionals in the delivery of TCH in the broader community. In his particular model for the delivery of the TCH Instructor Training program, Dr Lam has extended his version of TCH into the global community through the engagement of Master trainers, and others whom he authorises to deliver his programs, as his agents under licence and in more legal terms all of these (principal and agents) are collectively known as course providers of the TCH program operating under licence. Regardless of the different models of delivery of the TCH program, the aim is to train the TCH Instructor to deliver a packaged TCH program in the local community through effective teaching methods, which are based on an understanding of and commitment to safety issues and harm prevention. Martial or fighting techniques are thus not part of the targeted TCH program, techniques, which involve physically pushing, throwing, grappling, sparring or weapons training as may be found in the training of the Tai Chi for Martial Arts Instructor. The contextual legal framework for "effective teaching " methods for the TCH program is the British "common law duty of care" which is about legal and ethical responsibilities of the TCH Instructor to provide a responsible and reasonable standard of care to those to whom a service is provided and, in the provision of that service, to protect them from harm.

It is important to highlight that in Australian law, both the course providers of the TCH Instructor Training program and the TCH Instructor have a non-delegatable duty of care, a legal responsibility called "professional liability" to the consumer of the TCH program (see *Romel El-Sheik v Australian Capital Territory Schools*, 1999) to ensure that the actual delivery of the particular TCH activity by the TCH Instructor is safe, as there is an ethical and legal duty to do no harm to the client. The duty is to ensure that such measures are taken as in all the circumstances are reasonable to prevent physical injury. The duty is not so onerous as to insure no injury occurs at all but to take reasonable care to prevent injury that ought to have been reasonably foreseen. The duty of care cannot be delegated which means that course providers in the first instance have a legal responsibility to the consumer of the TCH program to ensure that the TCH Instructor has sufficient knowledge on how to teach students safely and to understand their legal responsibilities. This includes ensuring that the TCH Instructor knows how to be sufficiently connected with the individual student in order to provide alternative safe movements for those persons whose health conditions and physical capabilities are restricted and to know how to teach students to take personal responsibility for themselves, to work safely within their own health, fitness and ability levels. The TCH Instructor also needs to ensure that all TCH activities are closely and properly supervised understanding that the traditional "follow me" method alone of teaching Tai Chi is dangerously deficient in regard to a "duty-of-care".

In addition, both the course providers of the TCH program and the TCH Instructor again have a non-delegatable duty of care called "public liability" to ensure the safety of the physical space of the TCH activity for entry, participation and exit for all participants, clients, visitors and other members of the public. There is a legal duty of care to ensure that there is a safe environment of facilities and equipment, that there is nothing faulty or potentially unsafe. This includes the need to have a risk management strategy formulated, for example, to include clearly defined emergency procedures for evacuation. Other legal and ethical responsibilities also need to be included by the course providers in training the TCH Instructor to ensure that the TCH Instructor has a proper understanding of various laws and professional ethical standards. These include - occupational health and safety (OH&S), trade practices, privacy, discrimination, harassment, copyright, defamation and professionalism of the instructor-client relationship. (see Appendix)

The TCH Instructor who operates in the community under the license of the TCH program is therefore legally obliged to operate within all the terms and conditions express or implied of that license, which include teaching within the legal and ethical standards as outlined in the TCH program, not delegating the duty of care to anyone, being present at all times and taking responsibility for and being vigilant at all times in the delivery of the TCH program. The terms of the license for some TCH programs may also include the need to update skills and knowledge of TCH on a regular basis. As a specialist TCH instructor for any particular populations, there is a legal duty of care on both the course provider of the TCH Instructor Training program and the TCH Instructor to ensure there is a higher skill and diligence than one who is less specialised. In Australia, any injury or harm arising out of a TCH activity which resulted from simply not knowing about the multitude of legal responsibilities for TCH Instruction is not a defence in law – "*ignorantia juris non excusat*", which as a legal maxim literally means: "ignorance of the law is no excuse".

In brief, what is required of the TCH Instructor is to ensure that there is high standard of professionalism at all times in the effective delivery of the TCH program. This means that there needs to be a valid pathway and graded levels of opportunities for the TCH Instructor independent from the pathway for accreditation for Tai Chi as a Martial Art. TCH Instructor training must therefore continue to develop programs, which provide graded levels of training with each level identifying "effective teaching" and the underlying "duty-of-care" principles as the cornerstone of TCH. This is already starting to happen, for example, in Australia the Fitness industry now has only recently recognised for the first time a

fitness specialisation that specifically includes Tai Chi as the vehicle for the delivery of safe, secular and modern form of exercise to an older population. This initiative is to be applauded and supported. In the global context, training the trainer in "effective teaching" of TCH by course providers must not be left free to float floundering on a sea of mythology, amateurism, voluntarism and misinformation but firmly contextualised as secular, professional and modern, linked specifically to practical and scientifically based forms of knowledge of Tai Chi and health, to efficient teaching techniques and to high standards of ethical and legal responsibilities. This is the real challenge to making a global difference!

Appendix

Extract from - *Legal & Ethical Responsibilities of Tai Chi for Health (TCH) Instructors*

By Dr Denis Arthy May 2005

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Overview:

- Legal basis of the "Duty of Care"
- Relationship between the legal concept of "Duty of Care" and the ethical principle of non-maleficence in context of TCH Instruction
- Practical requirements related to "Duty of Care" for TCH Instruction
- Other legal and ethical responsibilities involved with TCH Instruction

1.0 "Duty of Care" – “To Do No Harm”

1.1 Common Law Principle - The "Duty of Care" principle in Australia is based on the common law and not statute law. The legal precedent of "Duty of Care" was established in a specific court case where it was found that the manufacturer of bottled soft-drink had a legal responsibility towards all consumers of their products, not just to the woman who had become ill after drinking the contents that contained the sediments of a decomposed snail. The court ruled that it was reasonable for the woman to rely on the manufacturer to supply a product that was not going to make her ill and found that the manufacture was negligent and was therefore responsible in law for causing injury and harm to her as a consumer. What was significant in this particular case was that, even though there was no direct transaction or relationship existing between the woman and the manufacturer, the manufacturer had a legal "Duty of Care" responsibility that extended beyond its immediate customer, the retailer who actually sold the soft drink to the woman.

1.2 Ethical principle of non-maleficence - "Duty of Care" is about your legal and ethical responsibility as a TCH Instructor for SAFETY with all related aspects of offering your services. It is the common law legal principle, which requires you to provide a responsible and reasonable standard of care to those to whom you provide a service and, in the provision of that service, to protect them from harm. This "Duty of Care" in common law not only includes the ethical principle of beneficence – “of doing good”, but extends to the ethical principle of non-maleficence - “the duty to do no harm”. Negligence would be the legal consequence of a breach of the ethical principle of non-maleficence - the duty to do no harm.

1.3 Risk Management for TCH Instructor - For the TCH Instructor, "Duty of Care" carries with it a responsibility to ensure that all aspects of the TCH Instructor's provision of a service are considered, even where certain aspects of providing that service may not be directly under the instructor's control or even related to TCH Instruction. In the first instance, "Duty of Care" means identifying and minimising not only the potential risk of physical, emotional and financial injury or harm to your students but to non-participants as well. Harm or risk may result out of something you have done or have failed to do for such as persons who are visitors at your class, and persons who use the same facilities at some subsequent time. The wide ranging possibilities related to "Duty of Care" necessitates the TCH Instructor to have in place a proper "Risk Management" procedure and “Code of Conduct” for your TCH Class, school or organization to which you may be operating through or with.

1.4 Special "Duty of Care" to Client Group - In establishing the “reasonable” standard of care, one has to keep in mind that not only children under the age of 18 and people with physical or intellectual disabilities, but also aged persons require a greater standard of care. There needs to be an appropriate balance between an individual's right of “informed consent” to participate in a TCH program and the responsibility of the TCH Instructor to ensure a safe program and environment for students and other users of the facilities related to the instruction.

1.5 Other Legal and Ethical Duties to Client Group and other Teachers – This includes being aware of social justice and equity issues, and other legal requirements and relevant practices to ensure a safe, harassment free environment for all persons related to or impacted by TCH related activities which may include classes, workshops, demonstrations and social functions.

2.0 Practical Requirements of Legal and Ethical Responsibilities of TCH Instructor

2.1 Provide a safe environment by TCH Instructor

Facilities and equipment must be safe for users, visitors and others involved

- Liaise with facility providers to ensure that appropriate safety standards are met and monitored
- Safe environment for entry, participation and exit is the responsibility of the TCH Instructor
- The TCH Instructor should have in place clearly defined emergency procedures

2.2 Activities must be adequately planned by TCH Instructor

Use appropriate progressions in the teaching of new skills

- Even for advanced students, new complex skills can be daunting. Ensure that all skills, whether aimed at a beginner or advanced level, are progressed in a safe manner that builds student confidence and competence whilst minimising the risk of injury

2.3 Instructor needs to obtain informed consent for participation in the TCH program

The TCH Instructor needs to ensure that there is “informed consent” by the student as to the guidelines associated with the TCH program

- Instructor advises the student to obtain clearance from a qualified health professional for participation in TCH program as per a prescribed form
- Instructor needs to teach students how to take responsibility for themselves as a TCH student, to work underneath their pain level, to visualize what they are not capable of physically doing, to take frequent rest breaks
- Instructor provides alternative safe movements for persons where relevant
- Instructor needs to be aware that the student may not know whether the planned skill practice or activity will exacerbate his or her incapacity or injury. As a specialist TCH instructor for any particular populations, one is bound to a higher skill and diligence than one who is less specialised

2.4 Activities must be closely supervised

Total adequate supervision by the TCH Instructor is necessary to ensure that training sessions are as safe as possible

- Ensure that any designated assistant has a minimum of TCH Instructor Training and is accredited with the particular TCH program of the target population and are present to supervise training routines
- Ensure the Instructor–Student relationship is safe

2.5 TCH Instructors must be able to deal with health emergencies

Instructors must be able to properly deal with a range of health emergencies

- TCH Instructors must have a nationally accredited Senior First Aid certification, which includes a good understanding of the STOP (Stop, Talk, Observe, Prevent further injury) and RICE (Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation) routines
- Properly equipped first aid kit, including ice packs available at each training session
- Strategy involving procedures in the event of a medical emergency including student information readily available on the student

2.6 TCH Instructors should keep adequate records

Records should be kept of all students with relevant general information, accurate attendance records, medical clearance and consent forms

- Instructor needs to maintain a database of all students with information from their application forms, including emergency contact persons and attendance records
- Instructor must produce and retain proper documentation of any emergencies

2.7 Other legal and ethical responsibilities of TCH Instructors

TCH Instructors should be familiar with and attend to a range of other legal and ethical issues and requirements such as

- Occupational and Safety (OH&S) requirements in involving other teachers
- Anti-Discrimination Laws regarding the treatment of students and other teachers
- Ethical principles and laws on harassment and sexual harassment
- Legal and ethical principles on intimate relationships between TCH Instructor and student
- Formulation of Code of Conduct/Practice to ensure a positive, safe and harassment free environment for all participants and teachers, including information on expected behaviour of teachers and students, and on requirements concerning clothing, hygiene, infectious diseases and policy on health screening
- Formulation of Risk Management Plan covering all possible activities and consequences of TCH activities

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Genius of Sun Lutang: Origins and Concepts of Tai Chi for Health

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Abstract

The original motivation for this project was based on a single premise. Over years of researching the histories of the Asian martial arts, and in particular, the various myths and histories written about Tai Chi, I came to the conclusion that Sun Lutang has clearly not been given the proper credit for the genius that he was. As recognised by Tim Cartmell (2003), Sun Lutang was the creator of a different style of Tai Chi, which is both, an effective fighting style, and a style very suitable for promoting Tai Chi for Health. Unlike other styles of Tai Chi, Sun style Tai Chi does not rely on exceptional physicality as a prerequisite for fighting ability and it contains stances and combat techniques that are both practical and highly effective as a Martial Art suitable for people of all ages not just the young. The style also contains a basic footwork pattern, which makes it relatively safe and simple for the beginner to establish the correct whole-body rhythm and alignment that is the signature of all Tai Chi styles and thus is more readily accessible to a broader range of people, men and women, old and young.

This paper has been written to enhance the application of Tai Chi for Health promotion in the twenty-first century through an examination of the radical contribution that Sun Lutang made almost one hundred years ago to the promotion of Tai Chi for Health and to the subsequent transformations of Tai Chi as a Health Art from Tai Chi practised as a vigorous and combative form of Chinese Boxing in the early part of the twentieth century in China (see Wong, 1996; Wile, 1993; Miller, 2000).

This examination outlines a snapshot history of the emergence of Tai Chi for Health based on various facts, evidence and respected published accounts of the historical emergence of Tai Chi for Health and the roles played by Sun Lutang, Chen Wei Ming and Yang Cheng Fu. It is the juxtaposition of facts and evidence, grounded within a consistent and coherent chronology, which questions and challenges the pervasive views that Yang family style of "Taijiquan" was the original Tai Chi health art and that Tai Chi is a Taoist art advocating harmony with Nature, and characterising conflict with Nature as contributing to illness, poverty and disease. More significantly for our purposes, is that Sun Lutang was the first Tai Chi Master to break with the patriarchal Confucian tradition by publicly offering Tai Chi to women, and he was the first to write about and publish Tai Chi for Health and personal development and was thus the first Tai Chi Master to promote to the public Tai Chi as a Health Art (see Miller, 2000).

However, the main focus of the paper is on analysing contributions to Tai Chi for Health as specific concepts and principles of Tai Chi which were published by Sun Lutang and by Chen Wei Ming. This examination highlights both the insights and genius of Sun Lutang and the historical significance of Chen Wei Ming in the subsequent motivations to transform the vigorous and combative Yang family style of Tai Chi to the slow and graceful Yang style Tai Chi as it is practised and recognised today (see Wile, 1993). These contributions are articulated in the paper in a language that is accessible and suitable for the general reader and student interested in Tai Chi as a contemporary secular Health Art.

In regards to research methodology for this paper, an understanding of Tai Chi for Health epistemologically and historically cannot be gained through the academic paradigms of the scientifically controlled experiment, epidemiology or medical research (see Popper, 1974; Kuhn 1970; Lakatos *et al* 1980). Social and cultural historiography driven by a semiotic analysis (see Barthes, 2001; Eco 1976; Foucault 1977; Hirst *et al*, 1984; Levi-Strauss, 1977; Rose and Rose 1977; Ryan, 1973; Turner, 1975) has informed the intellectual engine of the research methodology for this paper in an evaluation

of myths of Tai Chi often presented as history and in the presentation of concepts and principles of Tai Chi for Health. Semiotics and Tai Chi philosophy of the Yin and the Yang are tarred to the same East and West brush of paradoxical logic, an unusual but legitimate nexus of intellectual endeavour within a qualitative approach to the social sciences.

In the context of Tai Chi as a contemporary secular Health Art, the paper identifies the radical contribution to Tai Chi for Health made by Dr Paul Lam in the international arena of the latter part of the twentieth century and spearheading the way into the twenty-first century. In addition, the paper outlines the rationale and the necessity for Tai Chi for Health Instructor Training and for public policy development of Tai Chi for Health to be formulated, promoted and practised, not as a metaphysical journey or as a martial art, but as a secular Health Art (see Cheryl, 2001) which is based on evidence based, scientific research and on the modern duty-of-care principle (see Arthy, 2005).

Introduction

The beginning student to Tai Chi can be easily overwhelmed by the plethora of information, by the sometimes confronting style of language and by myth presented as history related to what is Tai Chi. Even the name Tai Chi itself can be spelled in English and referred to in such a variety of ways - Tai Ji Quan, Tai Ji boxing, Shadow boxing, Tai Chi Chuan, Taijiquan, T'ai C'hi Ch'uan, T'ai C'hi - and there are more. While this paper has been written with the beginning student in mind, it will also be suitable for the Tai Chi teacher who is interested in a snapshot of the early history of Tai Chi for Health as distinct from mythical origins, and in a practical way of communicating an understanding of the underlying concepts and principles of Tai Chi suitable for the general reader and student interested in Tai Chi as a secular Health Art.

Historically, what is today known as Tai Chi Chuan (Grand Ultimate Fist) was first ascribed to the particular style of Chinese Boxing practised by the Kung-fu Master, Yang Lu Chan in the mid nineteenth century. His style was known then as the martial Chen family style and referred to as "Mien Quan" (Cotton Fist) or "Hua Quan" (Neutralising Fist). While teaching Chinese boxing at the imperial court, a scholar called Ong Tong was so impressed by the way Yang Lu Chan performed his techniques, he felt that Yang's movements and techniques expressed the physical manifestation of the principles of the Chinese philosophy of Taiji contained in the *I Ching*, or *Book of Changes* written nearly three thousand years earlier. He wrote for him a matching verse:

*"Hands Holding Taiji shakes the whole world,
a chest containing ultimate skill defeats a gathering of heroes"*

Thus was created the first connection between this ancient Chinese philosophy and what would later come to be known as a particular "internal" style of Chinese boxing. The name Tai Chi Chuan was from that time on adopted by the Yang family thus differentiating the Chen family style modified by Yang Lu Chan, from that of the traditional Chen family style of Chinese boxing. At this time both Yang and Chen family styles of Chinese boxing, however, were practiced as vigorous and effective forms of fighting, through grappling, striking and throwing techniques aimed at defeating an opponent using powerful striking, leverage and yielding techniques through the principle of "borrowing" the opponent's force to maximum advantage.

Also at that time, only men were allowed to receive instruction and practice any style of Chinese boxing due to the patriarchal Confucian tradition in Chinese society, which excluded women from government, education and martial activities. In addition, until the late nineteenth century, Kung-fu Masters and martial artists were primarily uneducated farmers who used these arts for fighting, some using their skills as bodyguards with the different styles being known by family tradition and geographical location and not by groupings as "internal" or "external" styles.

Genius of Sun Lutang

It was not until the early part of the twentieth century that "Tai Ji Quan" came to be identified as one of the three main "internal" styles of Chinese boxing - Xing Yi, Bua Gua and Tai Ji. The Kung-fu Master Sun Lutang was himself largely responsible for this new classification of Chinese boxing into "internal" and "external". Sun Lutang was born in 1861 in Wan county near the city of Bao Ding in Hebei province. From very humble beginnings, he succeeded in becoming not only a famous Kung-fu Master of all three internal styles of Chinese boxing but someone who was well educated and had a deep knowledge of the literary arts including Daoism, Confucianism and the philosophy of the Tai Ji. More importantly, Sun Lutang began to write and publish books specifically to promote the martial arts for health. In these books, he articulated the importance of health and a balanced sense of well-being through physical training.

Prior to the publication of Sun Lutang's first book titled *The Study of Form-Mind Boxing* in 1915, there was very little discussion in China on philosophy or health maintenance in relation to the martial arts. Sun Lutang's publications on the "internal" martial arts, which addressed health and fitness issues, represented the turning point in the way in which educated people began to view the martial arts in China.

In understanding the origins of Tai Chi as a Health Art, it is Sun Lutang's third book published in 1921 titled *A Study of Taijiquan*, which is important and historically significant as it was the first book ever published on the art of "Tai Ji Quan". Specifically, Sun Lutang articulated and promoted the health benefits of physical training in "Tai Ji Quan" as a constructive way to address the widespread social problem of what was referred to as the "sick men of Asia":

All people – men, women, the old, and the young – may practice in order to replace temerity with bravery, and stiffness with pliability. Those of you who are extremely weak, who suffer from fatigue and injury or illness, or who have weakened your qi from the practice of other martial arts to the point that you no longer have the strength to train, all of you may practice Tai Ji Quan. With practice, the qi will quickly return to a balanced state and will become strong, while the spirit naturally returns to a state of wholeness. Disease will be eliminated and the length of life increased (Sun Lutang, 1921, 60).

The genius of Sun Lutang was that in Sun's day there was not yet the idea that "Tai Ji Quan" was a Health Art and that Sun recognized the health-building benefits of practicing "Tai Ji Quan" by making the connection between the development of "internal" power through natural exercise and its benefits for the individual's health.

In addition to being the first Tai Chi Master to promote the practice of "Tai Ji Quan" as having health benefits for "all people", Sun Lutang broke with the patriarchal Confucian tradition central to Chinese society by establishing the first female martial arts course in 1931. Previously, "Tai Ji Quan" had been viewed and practiced as a martial art for men.

In his book *A Study of Taijiquan*, Sun Lutang articulates certain key concepts and principles concerning the practice of "Tai Ji Quan". These are outlined below using the specific language of Sun Lutang identifying a number of principles categorised as "Sun Lutang's Eight Concepts of Tai Chi", each of which is followed by the author's interpretation using a language accessible to the general reader, thus providing a clear framework within which contemporary health, fitness and martial aspects of Tai Chi can be examined and practised.

Sun Lutang's Eight Concepts of Tai Chi

1. Know Your-Self, and Know Others

- Practice the "body" of the art through solo forms
- Practice the "application" of the art with a partner
- Together "body" and "application" represents a complete martial art
- Focus is on beneficial cultivation of one's natural life force as the core of training
- There is great emphasis on the method of cultivating the body

This is the concept of Tai Chi as capable of being practised as a health art, a martial art or both. Practicing forms by oneself promotes health benefits, practicing the applications facilitates an understanding of the intention of the forms, and practising both solo forms and application of the art can lead to health enhancement and proficiency as a martial artist. One does not need to train vigorously and develop brute strength to become healthy and be competent in the martial arts.

2. Movement through the Forms is the Kung Fu of Understanding the Self

- Withdrawing is closing, releasing is opening
- When still, all is still, stillness is closing
- In the midst of closing is the desire to open
- When in motion, everything moves, movement is opening
- All movements must be performed in a continuous flow

The concept of strategic movement is on how to practise the solo forms using the conscious mind to focus on all movements as "opening and closing", aiming to practice the solo forms in a relaxed state as continuous flowing movements. The expression "opening and closing" is the key principle of understanding movement within the concept of "Tai Ji", the principle of mutual interaction of opposites. One needs to use the conscious mind when practicing to understand that strategic movement is based on the balance of opposite movements flowing with some specific intention.

3. Obtain Opportunity and a Superior Position

- Move the entire body as a co-ordinated unit.
- The whole body must be without misalignment
- Spirit and Qi must be stimulated by raising the spirit
- Do not let your spirit be dispersed externally
- Concentrate your spirit and Qi in your bones
- Front of the hips must have power

- Shoulders must be relaxed
- Qi must be sunk downward
- The head feels as if suspended from above

The concept of strategic posture is on how the biomechanics of the body, co-ordinated movement, posture and body alignments, all combine with the focus of the mind and energy flows in the practice of solo forms and the practical martial applications in order to achieve maximum benefits through minimal force and effort. The position of the head as if suspended by a golden thread from the crown above with shoulders relaxed and pelvis tucked under the hips provide the postural basis of correct alignment which must be maintained throughout the movements of the forms.

4. The Force is Changed Internally

- The force must come from the heels
- Transformed in the legs
- Be stored in the chest
- Moved in the shoulders
- The leader is the waist, the arms co-ordinate in the attack, the legs follow
- All of these energies are controlled by the intent and not by brute force, use the intent to move the Qi

The concept of strategic force is described as “internal”, whereby in practising the solo forms, the conscious mind controls the use of minimal force through the co-ordinated biomechanics of the body, with the waist co-ordinating the movements of the upper and lower body without the need to utilise or develop mindless “external” brute strength. Strategic force is grounded in the feet, progressed through the legs, magnified by the thrust of the hips and waist, carried through the back and transmitted by the hands.

5. Practising with an Open Mind

- The student can both practice the art and research the extreme depth of the underlying principles, character and teachings of the art with an open mind
- Before moving, check to see if the whole body is conforming to the above principles
- Immediately make corrections if any part of the body is not in alignment with any of the above principles
- This is why the forms must be done slowly and not quickly

The concept of open mind, of the importance of becoming self-regulating is linked to learning how the conscious and open mind needs to constantly focus on how to incorporate the strategic concepts of movement, posture and force into the practice of the forms. It is easy to be hard and fast, it is difficult to be slow and controlled. The student needs to keep an open mind, to develop techniques of consciously observing body posture, alignment and movements, to make adjustments, to reflect on “opening and closing” movements, on “substantial and insubstantial” and on weight shifting, to differentiate between what is “apparent and real”, to modify according to conditions “internal and external” at the time of training.

6. Practising with a Partner is the Kung-Fu of Understanding Others

- Knowing others in movement and stillness
- Give up yourself and follow the opponent
- So as to you may use one ounce to deflect a thousand pounds
- Causing your opponent to fall into emptiness
- All this still involves questioning the self

The concept of yielding to the "other", of feeling the ebb and flow of the "external" force, is facilitated by practising with a partner enhancing an understanding of the principles of deflection and re-direction of force, which is embedded in the martial intention of the solo forms. Practise with a partner may take any form of practice from the minimum of sensitivity training, through to mild or vigorous forms of push hands, through to the ultimate combat form of full contact sparring with a partner where the risk of injury can be high.

7. Remedy the Problem of “Double Weighting” by Borrowing Your Opponent’s Force

- Be positioned correctly
- As soon as the opponent moves do not disturb the actions
- Take advantage of the movements and the opponent throws himself
- The answer is found in yin/yang and opening/closing
- This is what is meant by “Know yourself and know others, and in a hundred battles you will taste victory a hundred times”

The concept of equilibrium is about how to defeat the "other" through strategic force, to remedy the problem of "double weighting" where force meets force, through practising with the conscious mind focussed on how to “borrow the opponent’s

force” by learning how to follow and stick to the opponent’s force. All of this means to understand how weight changes in the upper and lower body, whether co-ordinated or not, impacts upon balance and equilibrium. In a martial context, this translates into knowing how to strategically unbalance the opponent or redirect the opponent’s force and movement. One of the martial aims of defeating an opponent is to upset the balance or equilibrium of the opponent, and in the internal arts this is achieved not through brute strength as may be the case with the “external” martial arts, but by sticking to, by following and by “borrowing the opponent’s force”.

8. Practice Diligently with the Above Principles

- Brute force will naturally dissipate
- You will come to know beforehand the amount of force your opponent exercises
- Over time you will be able to control others without yourself being controlled by others
- Your Qi will quickly return to a balanced state and you will become strong and your spirit will return to a state of wholeness and your length of life will be increased

The concept of diligent practice means practice with focus and purpose incorporating all the principles of Tai Chi. Diligent practice can lead to improvement in health and fitness levels by combining all of the Tai Chi concepts of slow, relaxed, focussed, co-ordinated and controlled movements. Practising Tai Chi for health means that there is no “quick fix” to good health and fitness, but through diligent practice of Tai Chi, it is possible to achieve a “Sound Mind in a Healthy Body” – “Mens Sana in Corpore Sano”.

Chen Wei Ming Motivates Tai Chi for Health

Chen Wei Ming, also known as Chen Zeng Ze, is one of the key historical figures which links the early beginnings of Sun Lutang's pioneering of Tai Chi for Health with later developments of Tai Chi being further transformed and practised as a health art. The Kung-fu Master Yang Cheng Fu was motivated in the late 1920s and early 1930s by his "educated disciples" to transform the "external", vigorous and combative movements of “Taijiquan” into what is today recognised as the gentle, graceful, flowing and “internal” Yang style of “Taijiquan”, variations of which are practised all over the world today. The Chinese boxing style practised by the Yang family up until this point was itself a variation of the vigorous and explosive martial style adapted from the Chen family style by Yang Lu Chang, the grandfather of Yang Cheng Fu.

The health benefits of this slow and graceful style would be taken up in 1956 by the government campaign in the People’s Republic of China in the promotion of Tai Chi as a method of keeping fit through the creation of the simplified 24 Yang form, based on Yang Cheng Fu’s thirty four distinct postures.

What is significant, is that the transformation of Yang family “Taijiquan” from a vigorous, martial and “external” style to a slow, graceful, gentle and “internal” style took place in the historical context of an emerging recognition in China of the health benefits of the “internal” martial arts pioneered by Sun Lutang more than a decade earlier. In 1915, the publication of *The Study of Form-Mind Boxing* by Sun Lutang, the Kung-Fu Master of three "internal" martial arts styles, represented a pivotal point in Chinese history of the significance of “internal” styles of martial arts as being beneficial for health maintenance.

In the preface to Sun Lutang’s seminal text which promoted the health benefits of “internal” forms of Chinese boxing, Chen Wei Ming wrote about the essence of "Tai Ji boxing" and his high regard of Sun Lutang as a true “Tai Ji boxer”. Chen Wei Ming would in later years become one of Yang Cheng Fu's educated disciples to motivate Yang Cheng Fu into modifying “Taijiquan” for practice by "intellectuals, the sick, the elderly, and women", and in assisting promoting “Taijiquan” through various publications, one of which is widely regarded today across the Tai Chi spectrum - *The Ten Important Points for Tai-chi Ch'uan* (see Professor Wile, 1993, pxiv and pp9-14; see also Wong Kiew Kit, 1996, pp35-38).

From their first meeting in July 1915, Chen Wei Ming was to become a long-standing pupil and friend of Sun Lutang and a Tai Chi Master in his own right. In Sun Lutang's "Preface" Chen Wei Ming wrote:

The state of being completely rounded out without any break is in accordance with the principle of the Tai Ji. Styles and methods are but its outer form. There are many Tai Ji boxers who perform the long style [of Tai Ji Boxing] and the Thirteen Postures [Tai Ji Thirteen Styles] without understanding the state of being completely rounded out without any break. They are really not true Tai Ji boxers. Mr Sun Lutang is versed in Xing Yi, Bua Qua, and Tai Ji and thus can merge them together (Sun Lutang, 1915, Third Preface by Chen Zeng Ze, p 59).

As we will see below, this concept of "Tai Ji boxing" as being “completely rounded out without any break” is articulated in more detail as the consummate expression of Tai Chi in what are today known as Yang Cheng Fu's Ten Principles, first published by Chen Wei Ming in 1925 in Chen’s own book *The Art of Tai-chi chu'uan*.

Using a language accessible to the general reader, the following is the author's interpretation of these ten principles, which is practical and focussed expressly on the health and fitness aspects of Tai Chi practised as a contemporary secular Health Art.

Ten Principles of Tai Chi for Health

- 1. Posture Head – Golden Thread** – Relax the head, chin tucked in and allow the body to re-align itself vertically, the joints of the spine are relaxed and opened by visualising a golden thread suspending the head with the body underneath completely relaxed with no stress or tension.
- 2. Posture Shoulders – Chest and Back** - Relaxed shoulders allowing the chest to sink, with the back slightly rounded in a relaxed state with no tension. This does not mean to allow a stooping forward posture and forgetting the golden thread. Relaxing the shoulders means avoiding the pulled back tensed shoulders of a “soldier” standing to attention.
- 3. Posture Waist - Loosen the Waist and Hips** – The capacity for the body to yield and to exert co-ordinated power, while maintaining the posture of head and shoulders, is controlled by the waist and hips. Loosening the waist and hips releases tension in the upper body enabling the lower body to be strong and stable, and re-aligns the natural upright posture governed by the golden thread.
- 4. Body Movement – Weight Shifting** - Knowing the difference between “substantial” and “insubstantial” with upper and lower body is the first fundamental principle of Tai Chi related to movement. Differentiating between "opening and closing" movements of the upper body is important to co-ordination and balance. Learning to control weight transference from one leg to the other using a “feather-touch” principle is crucial to maintaining balance, strength training of the legs, and flexibility of the feet.
- 5. Posture Arms - Sink Shoulders, Drop Elbows** - Sinking shoulders allows the upper body to relax with arms dropped down naturally. If the elbows are raised, then the shoulders will be tense and the whole body will easily tire and lack strength. Dropping the elbows relaxes the shoulders and allows the body to co-ordinate and flow.
- 6. Mind Directing the Body - Use Will, Not Strength** - First quieten the mind, then using the mind to relax the body, opening the joints, stretch and lengthen the tendons and ligaments, relaxing the muscles using minimum force and effort for maximum benefit and effect. Through a relaxed body and a quietened mind, there will be more control of all circular movements.
- 7. Whole Body Moving Together - Co-ordination Between Top and Bottom** - The upper and lower body start and arrive together, they move as a co-ordinated whole, maximising leverage through controlled and focussed execution of movements. Direction of eyes, movement and posture of head, hands and arms co-ordinated by the waist, combine with leg and feet movements to become a single unified movement.
- 8. Training the Mind - Internal and External Unity** - It is easy to be hard and fast, it is difficult to be soft, slow and controlled. Training the mind is paramount and requires the student to become self-regulating, to develop techniques of consciously using the mind to observe body posture, alignment and movements, to make adjustments, to reflect on “opening and closing” movements and “substantial and insubstantial” weight shifting, to differentiate between what is “apparent and real”, to modify according to conditions “internal and external” at the time of training - fitness and health levels, weather and location. To the observer of the performance, the focus of the eyes, the position of the head reveals the intention of the mind.
- 9. Continuous Body Movement – Regulated by Controlled Breathing** – Each form is executed as a cycle of “opening and closing” movements in a relaxed and continuous manner connecting with the next cycle of “substantial and insubstantial” weight shifting using the mind co-ordinating the relaxed body and not brute strength. Breathing techniques are used to co-ordinate and focus the appropriate rhythm, speed and intention of the movements.
- 10. Mind Enhancing Energy – Relaxed Continuous Movements Through Breathing** – Combining all the other principles of Tai Chi, using slow, relaxed, co-ordinated and controlled movements regulated with appropriate breathing techniques creating the illusion of stillness in motion, a form of moving meditation. The experience is for some a mystical or spiritual perception of being in harmony with the cycles of nature, with the "Tai Ji" as the Grand Ultimate or Cosmos. In practical and secular terms, stillness in motion represents a means of pacing oneself with much practice and more practice, having the attitude, the patience and the desire to achieve a balanced healthy body and mind enjoying the pleasure, beauty and power in the journey of Tai Chi.

Tai Chi for Health in Australia Today

Following in the pioneering footsteps of Sun Lutang only as recently as ten years ago, Dr Paul Lam, a Sydney Medical Doctor and an internationally recognized Tai Chi Master, also broke with the traditions of tai chi as a martial art in developing new beginnings of Tai Chi as a Health Art in the latter part of the twentieth century specifically to assist in the health management of the disease called arthritis. In consultation with a number of health professionals, Dr Lam through Tai Chi Productions has created and published the Tai Chi for Arthritis exercise program based on the Sun style of tai chi. The result was the introduction of a safe and secular form of physical activity which has been successfully promoted internationally to a range of people who suffer from a multitude of debilitating conditions coming under the umbrella of arthritis. In the ringing endorsement of one very grateful participant of Dr Lam's TCA program:

Thank you so much Dr. Lam. I just wish I could buy one of those shirts so I could proclaim to the world that Tai Chi with Dr. Lam will loosen and strengthen your joints and calm you as well. P.S. As a rather gung ho Christian I had trouble with bowing to god shelf at local classes and this video did not have the religious element. I highly recommend it and am asking our library system to purchase it. I work full time (I do a set at my lunch break) and this video has been something wise that I have done to improve my life. Cheryl 2001.

Since then, a number of other Tai Chi based exercise programs have been created and designed by Dr Lam to assist people with "back pain", "diabetes", "and osteoporosis". In addition, other programs have been created in Australia, which specifically offer Tai Chi as a secular Health Art, as a safe form of exercise for health enhancement and sickness prevention through specially designed courses such as the Tai Chi for Health and Falls Injury Prevention program created by Alice Liping Yuan (Exercise Medicine Australia) in consultation with health professionals.

Thus in the past decade in Australia, Tai Chi has come to be offered to the broader community, not simply as an attenuated form of a martial art promoting fitness, a feeling of well-being and health to generally healthy people seeking alternative, "spiritual" or "new age" ways of coping with the rush, speed and stresses of contemporary society, but as a legitimate science based and secular Health Art for a much wider range of people than were previously available through the traditional martial arts approach of traditional tai chi often promoted as a metaphysical journey. Tai Chi for Health thus embraces Sun Lutang's vision and concept of tai chi being suitable for "all people" regardless of age, levels of health and fitness. Tai Chi for Health operates within the secular framework of modern science based research informing the duty-of-care responsibilities of competent tai chi instruction whereby not only health, fitness and mobility levels of the individual student are paramount but a proper understanding of the range of legal and ethical responsibilities of the TCH Instructor are essential (see Appendix). Tai Chi for Health as a concept, as a strategy is able to deliver a much broader range of classes, courses, workshops, and activities relevant to a diverse range of people who would benefit from competent and professional instruction. Such a concept includes the ability to teach Tai Chi at various levels of competency from beginners to advanced levels where the central focus is on *Tai Chi as a Health Art* which is capable of being delivered with a proper understanding and commitment to safety issues and harm prevention as well as to health enhancement.

Training of the Tai Chi for Health Instructor does not require martial or fighting techniques which involve physically pushing, throwing, grappling, sparring or weapons training as may be found in the traditional training of the Tai Chi for Martial Arts Instructor. Nor is it necessary or even desirable for the Tai Chi for Health Instructor to become inculcated into Confucianism and Taoist metaphysics that underpins many of the traditional practices of Tai Chi as a martial art. In the public relations arena, Tai Chi is often portrayed as a Taoist art, which focuses on learning to be in harmony with Nature, where conflict with Nature is characterised as contributing to illness, poverty and disease. This view cannot be justified by evidence based historical research, but represents a pervasive myth founded on mystical and patriarchal origins of Tai Chi for Health emerging from Confucian and Taoist metaphysics and superstitious social practices. Historically, such practices in China have combined to legitimate the feudal social order, including the inferior role of women and grinding poverty for the vast majority, justified by the divine right to rule through Nature's way and the mandate of Heaven.

In the context of Tai Chi as a contemporary Health Art, such atavistic, metaphysical and historically aberrant views of the origins of Tai Chi are anathema to public-policy development of Tai Chi to be accepted, promoted and practised as a secular Health Art which claims to be based on evidence based and empirical scientific research. Central to the strategic public policy direction of Tai Chi for Health is the Sun style of Tai Chi as an integral feature of a range of courses, and instructor training programs, which can be offered for the beginning student as well as the serious Tai Chi for Martial Arts practitioner who is interested in embracing the philosophy, vision and genius of Sun Lutang. In the words of Sun Lutang, "*all people – men, women, the old and the young*" - may wish to experience the challenges and opportunities of Tai Chi as a Health Art through the Tai Chi style that was the first to promote Tai Chi for health to the general public and the first to offer Tai Chi for women, and through a teaching, learning and instructor training framework that articulates, understands and embraces modern "Duty of Care" responsibilities and evidence based research as the basis of practising and promoting Tai Chi as a secular Health Art.

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