



## Kai Ming Association Newsletter

call: 07831 743737

<http://www.kaiming.co.uk>

e-mail us: [markpeters@kaiming.co.uk](mailto:markpeters@kaiming.co.uk)



### STANDING STILL TO MOVE FORWARD

(A personal experience)

I came across this article in an old international Tai Chi magazine and thought you may be interested in the author's ideas and how he brought Tai Chi into his everyday life...

"Every day as part of my Tai Chi training, I stand quietly, usually with knees slightly bent and arms rounded and extended forward, as if holding a large beach ball.

Other days, I will try to hold Single Whip, Strum the Lute, or one of the postures from Grasp the Bird's Tail.

Every day I stand. I don't particularly enjoy it, although someday I may! My body aches in different places, and often I seem unable to concentrate. I get bored at times, and I become aware of defects in my body alignments and posture.

It seems as if I'm going nowhere and doing nothing.

So, why would I stand still as part of a practice whose outward manifestation is motion? The very reason I stand is because I'm moving forward with my Tai Chi Chan practice and my physical and mental health.

I stand because I believe the end result is worth it.

I cannot scientifically prove or explain the ways in which standing practice affects the mind and body. I have only my own experience to speak from.

My approach is pragmatic. I don't know exactly how standing works, but I accept the fact that it does and I adhere to it as a regular part of training.

At the most obvious level, standing improves my Tai Chi Chan because it demands that I develop the fundamentals. I learn how to align my body while sinking down and relaxing. The chest is sunk, the back rounded, the elbows and shoulders sunk, and the crown is suspended.

The whole body is rounded like a sphere. If I can't hold these fundamental alignments while standing perfectly still, how can I possibly hope to maintain these vital body qualities in slow motion practice, much less in full combat?

My experience has taught me that when I stand regularly, my form practice shows the benefit. My root is firm, my stances are solid, and my body is more relaxed. I'm able to manifest more power with less effort.

It seems that my entire Tai Chi practice is of better quality because the basics are constantly reviewed in the stillness I gain from my practice of standing.

Each year of standing, I gain a little more knowledge about my interior. On the inside I can feel the relationship of the joints as they work together to produce movement of the body, not just the limbs. Each year of standing, I become more aware of the strange sensation of chi (energy flow) throughout my body. I seem to feel the movement of energy, which for me is like a low voltage electrical charge circulating along different paths. It's a wonderful neuromuscular feedback system that allows me to feel, rather than see, if part of my body is out of alignment. It makes the sense of touch more informative, heightening my awareness

of a partner's movements during push hands. Standing puts me in touch with the energy in my body that each of us hopes to command more fully as we travel down the Tai Chi path.

Other physical benefits have appeared over time. My breathing is exceptionally deep and relaxed. My overall level of health has improved. For much of my life, I've had one or two colds or bouts with the flu every year. But since the year that I began standing practice and internal martial arts, I have not experienced even the most minor illness.

Before Tai Chi, I was an advanced student in a martial art where great emphasis was placed on rigorous cardiovascular conditioning and weight training. I left that program thinking that I had a very high level of fitness.

Today, I still incorporate running and weight training in my workouts, but not with the intensity or frequency I did in the past. Amazingly, since I started standing, my running "wind" and endurance constantly improves, even during periods of one or two months when a busy schedule keeps me from running. In both instances, I've made far greater progress in the few years since taking up standing practice and Tai Chi Chan than in the twenty previous years combined.

The apparent mental benefits are no less significant. I'm calmer today than ever before. Sudden, unexpected noises or movements no longer startle me. I'm also able to concentrate better on my work. My mind still wanders and occasionally it outright rebels against my will.

However, I'm able to quickly recognize when my thoughts have gone astray and can direct my focus back to the object of my attention without extensive inner dialogue. I'm not quite as easy to upset as in the past, so my stress level is lower now than ever before.

I worry less, so I have more time for productive thought and action. I believe these changes are positive results of regular standing practice; simply more benefits of systematically removing excess tension from the body and the mind.

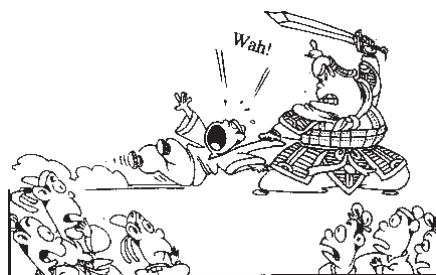
In early youth, I read over and over again biographies of famous internal boxing masters and tales of their often-incredible exploits. Either the skills attributed to them were false, or these giants of the past knew a secret that promoted great fighting skills and longevity.

I promised myself that I would personally explore the internal arts to discover the truth of the matter.

Today, I believe that if there is any secret to internal boxing, it is found in the very basic elements of training. I am reminded of it frequently when I take a step forward in my Tai Chi practice.

**YOU HAVE TO STAND STILL TO MOVE FORWARD.**

Chris Recklies - Youngstown. US.



## **New Year**

### **Bring a Friend for FREE**

You know how much you enjoy your tai chi classes but maybe you have a friend who is considering having a go (but won't put their hand in their pocket) so why not take our gift to you and BRING A FRIEND FOR FREE to one class to let them see how much they enjoy it.

Hopefully, they will get to see and feel how enjoyable it is plus you now have a comrade to work on the other ney-sayers out there.

You may have to initially bring them kicking and screaming but once they realise how much they enjoy it they may even sign up to continue attending. Share the love...

## **THE ROOTS OF TAI CHI AND TAOISM**



What does the “spiritual” side of Tai Chi mean?

Many people shy away from this aspect of Tai Chi because they do not understand what it means or expect something wildly different from what they are familiar with; maybe they feel it could be in conflict with their religious beliefs.

Some may even expect some form of esoteric and unrealistic occultism. But the spiritual aspect of Tai Chi is not in any way involved with occultism or religion. It is founded on the precepts of Taoism, the most ancient spiritual philosophy of China.

The spiritual aspect of Tai Chi has to do with living. It has to do with one's own living breathing spirit, not in the sense of an ethereal ghost like form, but spirit in the sense of what is driving a person here and now in the present, from the inside.

We all know people with low spirits and others with happy carefree spirits.

Some call it our character.

This approach to spirituality has to do with such real life things as compassion, diligence, open mindedness, simplicity, honesty, humility, perseverance, self-confidence, patience, non-possessiveness, sensitivity etc.

Taoism became the basis for the formation of Tai Chi. The “empowerment of the spirit”

To be working along spiritual lines generally means working to cultivate a better, deeper, more real and enriching relationship with one's self and with life. One may see Tai Chi practitioners who do their form without a lively spirit.

They may appear saggy and collapsed in mind and body, and feel tired after practice instead of open invigorated and “full”

Tai Chi practitioners know well that when one's concentration is undivided, their Tai Chi is more powerful and meditation can be deeper.

The phrase “death of the mind” is sometimes heard when explaining the deeper stages of spiritual work.

It is said death of the mind, which in many cases can mean death of the ego, is necessary to reach the enlightened state of mind and the ultimate — or the Tao. To invest in loss.

This will allow you to be relaxed and natural in the midst of alert awareness. Stillness within your movements.

Lu Yan, who is the author of “Secret of the Golden Flower” whose writing is very much aligned with ancient Taoist thought, wrote, “One cannot handle attainment with a careless or arrogant attitude”.

You need an open and impartial mind. (Kai Ming)

You see people come into Tai Chi as beginners without this mind frame and sometimes you find that they never “get it”

They do not seem to realise the secret is that they will need to make some changes in themselves and maybe their attitudes. These people may be missing one of the main points of Tai Chi – personal involvement. It will only work if they see this.

Otherwise, they may feel Tai Chi has nothing to offer them.

I read once “Not having commitment is analogous to a person who buys a toothbrush and expects it to work by itself, without using their muscles. The toothbrush is simply a tool, just as Tai Chi is a tool.

When one relaxes into one's Tai Chi, entering a quiet and tranquil realm, and are able to maintain it throughout your form practice, one can attain a joyfulness akin to what Lu Yan speaks of.

It can relieve stress and release tensions from your day-to-day life.

It is difficult to imagine that the sayings of Tai Chi did not come from the ancient ideas. Lu Yan and many other of the Taoist sages wrote many ideas which are the inner recommendations and guidelines that inform and give Tai Chi depth, philosophy, and spiritual richness. The ancient texts seem to be the forerunners of Tai Chi, and reading them can enrich one's practice.

However if you only pay lip service to these teachings without exploring them for yourself, or not understanding their full meanings, you may be one of those who "don't get it". Tai Chi is so much more than just gentle movement or martial art.



Wow... 25 years.... It's amazing how time flies when you are having fun. Kai Ming literally means open minded, and was formed to continue the legacy of Tai Chi Chuan passed down to us through the lineage of Grand-Master Cheng Man Ching. We follow in his tradition and continue to learn and develop with an open minded approach

Cheng Man-Ching ——— Master of the five excellences: Painting, Poetry, Medicine, Calligraphy and Tai Chi passed away aged 75 in 1975.

A great deal of what we know about him as a man and Tai Chi Master has been learned from the writings of Robert W. Smith, who was an American martial artist and writer most noted for his prodigious output of books and articles about the Asian martial arts and their masters. Smith's writing was an important factor in the spread of Asian martial arts such as judo, karate, and Tai Chi Chuan.

Everything he has written about his Master (Cheng) and friend and the time he trained with him is filled with his admiration, and the love he feels for him shows through.

So I thought you may like to share some of his stories about Grand-Master Cheng Man Ching over the next year in the Kai Ming news letter as "The Legacy Continues".

The first insight is an excerpt taken from Robert's tribute to his beloved Master.

**"Cheng who had so much left to teach is dead.**

And yet it seems to me that the Professor's greatest teaching is that each of us has to do it for himself.

He always said there are no secrets; he could not give us a pill.

There was only the work of relaxing and sinking (and we know how hard that is), or 'investing in loss' and thereby winning by losing. These are truths.

During the week in which the tiny 12 line notice about his death appeared in the Taipei China Post another story appeared and was given full treatment headlining as "Local Kung Fu Fighter Overpowers US expert"

The fighter was a local screen boxer who outpointed a young American none of us had ever heard of !

You may wonder why I cringe from commercialism.

Our Kung Fu heroes today with their trampolines, sound effects, trick cameras, and public relations prostitutes have so little knowledge that most would not even recognize the high skill Cheng possessed. But we knew it. Put it this way there was not only nobody equal, there was not even anyone second!

The sadness of all this is that one of the last giants is gone. Each generation sees more of the brilliance of real *chuan fa* die

It is not nostalgia that puts Yang Lu-Chan far above Chien-hou, and he above Cheng-Fu, and he superior to Cheng. There is much credible evidence establishing this sad decline.

Cheng wanted to be more than a Tai Chi master. And he was

**PLEASE NOTE:**

**The articles and research in this months issue are all done by  
Jenny Peters.**

**Send your contributions for  
future issues to  
markpeters@kaiming.co.uk**



**RECIPE**

**Sausage & Caramelised Onion Jackets**

This is a healthy winter snack or supper. Low in fat, saturates, sugar, and salt but not in TASTE.

**Ingredients——**

- 4 Baking potatoes
- 4 Fat reduced Sausages (or vegetarian sausage if preferred)
- 2 Large white onions
- 2 Cloves of Garlic
- 2 tsp Brown sugar
- 2 tbsps Balsamic vinegar
- 100g Kale

Preheat oven to 200C gas 1  
80C fan Gas 6

Prick potatoes with fork, put on a baking tray and bake in the oven for 50 mins  
Until soft in the middle. (or cook in Microwave if very hungry !!!)

Meanwhile, heat 1 tsp rapeseed oil in a pan over a medium heat,

add 4 Fat reduced sausages and cook until browned evenly all over

add 2 Large white onions finely sliced, to the pan and cook for 5 mins until softened.

Add 2 cloves garlic, finely sliced and cook for 2 mins.

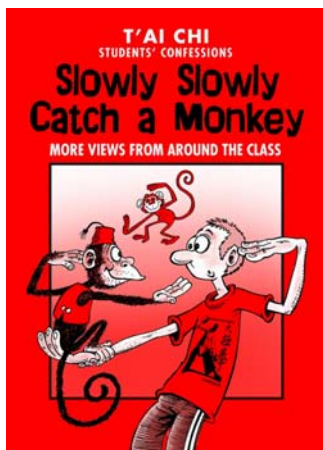
Add 2 tsp Brown sugar and 1 tbsps balsamic vinegar then increase the heat and cook for 5 mins until the onions are caramelised.

Add 100g Kale to the pan and cook for a further 5 mins

Cut the baked potatoes in half, lengthways.  
Break up the flesh with the back of a fork and fill with the sausages. Onions, and kale.

Serve the baked potatoes immediately.





### Tai Chi Book 3 is out!!

We have produced two previous volumes of “Students Confessions” and this will be our final one in the series. This is entitled “**Slowly Slowly Catch a Monkey**” and is about the tai chi journeys of each of us.

Chapters are written by both students and instructors to share their experiences. The first two volumes are on the ‘must read’ list for many other tai chi clubs and I can see this being equally as important.

It has just been released and copies will be available in class very soon. It is currently available in Kindle on Amazon if you can’t wait....

The launch price will be £8.50 and as a special bonus, you can buy all three volumes as a set for £20

Please ask your instructor or contact Mark & Jenny on **0121 251 6172** or [markpeters@kaiming.co.uk](mailto:markpeters@kaiming.co.uk)



Advanced Sunday training sessions 2018  
Below are the dates for 2018. Sessions run 9.30 to 12.30 and are £30

Please ask your instructor if you are unsure about attending or call Mark on 0121 251 6172

- Jan 14th
- Feb 11th
- March 18th
- April 15th
- May 13th
- June 3rd
- August 4th & 5th – camp
- Sept 9th
- Oct 14th
- Nov 11th
- Dec 9th – grading day

When researching recently, I came across this extract from a book first published in 1931 and felt it so relevant for today that I decided to share it. In the haste of the world little time is given to the science of development of refined arts.

### A MORE SCIENTIFIC MARTIAL ART: TAIJI BOXING by Wu Tunan

“Our nation’s martial arts were the earliest to be invented. Since as far back as the time of legendary emperors, whether besieging cities or battling in the wilderness, martial skills always produced extraordinary successes. Why is it then that by our time these arts had degraded into such a lackluster state? Apart from the invention of firearms, as well as the custom of treating literary concerns as being of more worth than martial ones, mainly it was because skillful martial artists were generally uneducated and illiterate, and so were incapable of teaching their art publicly or of recording it in books. Often someone chanced upon a mere part of an art [“a scale or a claw (of a dragon, unable to see the whole beast)”], treated it as the highest truth, and then kept it to himself. There has also been sectarian bias, schools resenting each other. Studying martial arts in these ways [illiteracy, secrecy, feud], we would be unable to promote them.

Furthermore, when ordinary people notice these issues, they hesitate to go near these arts or put any time into them, much less be willing to open their minds and ask for instruction. Thus people who are inclined toward literature tend to stick with literature, while only those inclined toward martial arts give time to martial arts. This is farcically contrary to the ideal that ancient people had of giving equal emphasis to both civil and martial affairs. During the three earliest dynasties [Xia, Shang, Zhou], skill with weapons [“shields and halberds”] was practiced by young boys. Thus martial arts in those days were universal and the people were strengthened by them.

In the present era, our revolution has succeeded [1911] and our new nation has been founded. After thinking over the causes for our nation’s previous

weakness, Sun Yat-sen then taught that we should promote our martial arts to develop our national prestige, throwing out those parts of our culture that are corrupt and instead spreading what is constructive. In order to get everyone in the nation to be more inclined toward martial arts, martial arts must be made more scientific. Then all will be able to practice – young and old, women and children. These arts will outwardly build strength and inwardly bolster spirit. There will be value in studying them, for they align with the principles of mechanics. That the status of these arts will increase and easily be spread thus goes without saying.

In the past, the more scientific martial art of Taiji Boxing degraded most of all. Why so? Because its methods are simple and easy, and its movements are balanced and harmonious, and so people at the time gave it no attention. Thus this noble and unique martial art almost vanished to the point that it could not be examined. Fortunately wise people have emerged who are determined to do the work of carefully examining Taiji Boxing, especially in terms of physiology, psychology, and physics. Consequently, it is scholars who are often fond of this art. If leaders in government will then set an example by strongly endorsing it, the people will start to understand just how scientific the internal styles of boxing are, Taiji Boxing most of all, and this more scientific martial art will rise in popularity as we speak. Is it not without equal among all of our martial arts?

Knowing the reasons why our martial arts have degraded, the methods for promoting them will henceforth become clear, and these arts will flourish as a result.

Comrades, let us encourage each other!

