

## Kai Ming Association Newsletter

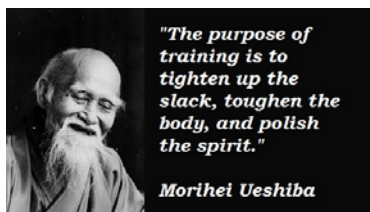
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Happy New Year to everyone. As this New Year unfolds in front of us maybe you have made new years resolutions to get fit, be healthier, get rid of those old habits. Well I say its time to commit to the lasting benefits of tai chi and chi-kung (qigong). There are exciting times ahead with the council's active parks project expanding all across Birmingham who knows how large it can grow as other cities join in; maybe this year is the year to bring back World tai chi day to 'Tai Chi in the Park'. In previous years we've had well over 100 people take part and now with the support of BeActive it can go even bigger!!

We have a new Chi-kung DVD available soon and other DVD's planned for this year. The focus on last years Advanced Sunday Sessions was form and function looking at empty hand form and push-hands. This year will add the dimension of weapons awareness. The true benefit of weapons awareness is learning to connect beyond yourself, enabling whatever you are holding to become a natural extension of yourself; this is seen in calligraphy practice where the same skill for swordplay is used for brushwork and visa-versa.

Make your New Years resolution to take your Tai Chi Journey beyond attending a weekly class, make a commitment to yourself to integrate tai chi principles into your daily life.



### Tai Chi Straight-Sword by Chen Yanlin

*Extract from "Taiji Compiled: The Boxing, Sabre, Sword, Pole, and Sparring"*

Taiji sword (straight-sword) is also called Thirteen Dynamics Sword [Shisan Shi Jian], having thirteen techniques: drawing, dragging, lifting, obstructing, striking, stabbing, tapping, flicking, stirring, pressing, chopping, checking, and clearing. Also translated as: Whip (Chou), Lead (Dai), Lift (Ti), Obstruct (Ge), Strike/Beat (Ji), Pierce (Ci), Dot (Dian), Burst (Beng), Stir (Jiao), Pressure (Ya), Split (Pi), Intercept (Jie) and Wash (Xi). It is one of the later weapon sets to become a famous part of the Yang family curriculum. The sword postures are elegant to behold and their applications are subtle.

The movements are entirely led by your waist and thighs. Never depart from the boxing principles: during the movements, you should forcefully press up your head-top, contain your chest and pluck up your back, sink your shoulders and drop your elbows, loosen your waist and liven your wrist, sink energy to your elixir field, and send power from your spine. This sword method is easy to learn but difficult to master. Generally when beginners do not yet have depth of skill, they practice it too hurriedly, most of the time using too much strength and not completing the movements, the postures lacking in beauty as a consequence. This is all because they have no skill in their waist and thighs, and this is the result of not understanding the applications.

The sword, if we think about more than just its tip, is a double-edged weapon and so the edges do not divide into a right edge and a wrong edge. Both edges can be used and are unusually sharp. When using it, you must therefore never draw it in so much that it touches your body, nor coil it around your head, nor hold it across your waist; otherwise the opponent will not have to do anything, for you will be wounding yourself. While the character for "sabre" (broad-sword) is a picture of a knife with a single blade, the character for "sword" (straight-

sword) breaks down into "all bladed". Consider this when working with swords. When using the sword, your whole body must be nimble, the movements must be agile, your spirit must lift up, passing through to your head-top, your breathing must be natural, and your eyes are to look toward the sword tip. This will cause your essence, energy, and spirit to merge with the sword and become as one.



The hand that holds the sword must be relaxed and flexible. You must not grasp with all five fingers too tightly, for that would be a hindrance to using the sword in a lively way. You need only grip it with your thumb, middle finger, and ring finger. Your forefinger and little finger should be constantly loose. There should be emptiness in the palm so that it is like holding a writing brush. When internal power leaves your sword, it initiates in your elixir field, issues from your spine, and goes through your arm to the sword tip. When issuing, it is like an arrow going to a target. Advance bravely. When the opponent's sword slightly moves, your own sword has already arrived. If done in this way, you will then be able to attain perfection in it.

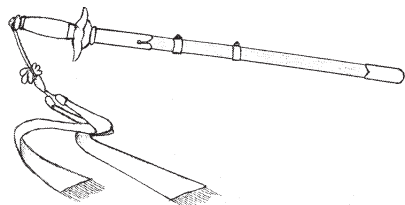
It is said the key to using the sword is to work hard at the best aspects of the sword method to thereby achieve the sword's effectiveness. The best technique of all is to attack the opponent's wrist. When engaging an opponent with weapons, if you can establish yourself at his wrist, being the area where he is controlling his weapon, his weapon will immediately lose its effectiveness. Ancient masters used just the last two or three inches of the sword, and so the tip needed to be extremely sharp to be able to attack an opponent's wrist or stab to his solar

plexus or knee. Beyond this, the sword ring (the sword's pommel section) should be given attention. The other hand is to be often placed behind it, but should not go ahead of it. A common saying goes: "With a sabre, mind the hand. With a sword, mind the ring." Once you can understand this, you will be able to avoid great mistakes.



Grand-Master Tan Ching Ngee of Singapore developed his 13 sword-secrets form to enable focused practice and application of the 13 techniques/energies of sword. This coupled with sword-sparring gives the opportunity to practice and develop sword skills in a live and practical way. Please remember to always treat your sword with the respect it deserves as a live weapon and true to its original intentions.

I plan to work on the straight-sword in the February Advanced class on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup>. No previous experience is necessary but please do bring a straight-sword if you have one. The aim will be understanding the 13 techniques of the sword for both empty-hand and weapon application. If you have any questions please contact me or speak to your instructor.



### TAI CHI TRAINING IN HONG KONG

Recently I have been very fortunate in that I have had the opportunity to travel to Hong Kong on the kind invitation of Karen who is a friend of Marlena (my wife). Whilst I was there, Karen arranged for me to train with the local Tai Chi group on Lantau Island where she lives. On the Monday morning at 7.15.a.m., I waited for the group to arrive in the open

air shopping mall where the class was held - a pleasant setting with views to the distant green hills of Discovery Bay. A few students started to arrive and I introduced myself; they spoke very good English and told me they would translate for me as 'Sifu' (Master) spoke very little English. When he arrived, they explained who I was. He greeted me and ushered me to the back of the class with the beginners - I was happy with this as the students had told me it was a different style to Cheng's 37 step form.

After a vigorous warm up with lots of stretching and high kicks, we proceeded to do a short kung fu type routine which included waist high kicks and punches. I was now certainly starting to feel warm as it was around 26 centigrade with high humidity even at this time in the morning. I was amazed at the flexibility of the group; three-quarters of them were well into their 70's. One guy was 88!!

The other students had told me that the training they did was called Koo Tai Chi Ch'uan and consisted of three forms - a 105, 42 and 32 step, the last one only found locally. The long form (105) took about 15 minutes to complete. I did my best to follow these new routines but of course lagging a second or so behind the more experienced practitioners - a good experience though.

Their forms contain many of our moves i.e. snake creeps down, ward off, cloud hands, four corners etc. but there were a few notable differences these being:

- Quite a few waist high kicks and punches.
- Double push with palms (wrists bent).
- Deep squatting moves with one leg behind the other and then sharp changes of direction.
- A shoulder-elbow followed with a quick back fist.
- Hand twists as if applying a lock or escaping one.

Compared to Cheng Man Ching's form, it was more martial with quick kicks and punches, whereas our form is slow and subtle with the martial element hidden. When you look at the background history of Koo Tai Chi (see below) you will understand the kung fu martial element. Below is an history of Koo Tai Chi which I hope you will find interesting.

#### The History of Koo Tai Chi

Koo Tai Chi was created by the famous martial artist 'Iron Palm' Koo Yu Cheung.

Koo Yu Cheung was a native of Jiangsu, China. He was one of the most famous kung fu masters of our time and was especially renowned for his Iron Palm skills. His Father, Koo Lei Chi, was a Master of the Tam Tui (Springy Leg) style of Kung Fu. He operated an armed escort service at Zhangjiang and because of his kung fu expertise his services were always in demand. Master Koo began his journey into the martial arts world by first studying under his father, in the Tam Tui Boxing style. When his father became ill, he requested Koo Yu Cheung to study Northern Shao Lin Kung Fu style with Yim Kai Wan of Shan Dong. He learned Shao Lin Fist and Iron Palm from Master Yim. Later he learned Tai Chi Fist and Tai Yuet Sword from General Lee Jin Lian.



Koo Yu Cheung combined the Tai Chi theories and techniques with the Northern Shao Lin combat postures to create his own unique Tai Chi Fist. In 1928 Master Koo obtained excellent results in the First National Martial Arts Examination. After that he came to Guan Dong and became the instructor of Guangzhou and Guangxi Martial Arts Institute, and was hired by the army to instruct Kung Fu to the soldiers. Then he set up the Chinese Fitness Association in Hong Kong with some friends for the promotion of traditional martial arts. In 1950, Master Lung was hired by the Kowloon Chamber of Commerce as a coach and thus began his promotion of Koo Tai Chi in Hong Kong. Master Lung Kai Ming, eldest son of Master Lung Chi Cheung takes up the mission of his father. In 1974 he assisted the government in organizing the 'Morning Tai Chi Classes'. He was also responsible for establishing the Northern Shao Lin Lung Chi Cheung Martial Arts Association. Cheung Sifu is also a member of this organization and is a registered instructor of the Hong Kong Leisure and Cultural Services Department where he teaches Tai-Chi and Tai-Chi Sword classes.

Did you notice the name Lung Kai Ming 'how strange'!!

I will continue my adventure in the next issue. Neil Rankine - Instructor

This was submitted by one of our students so I thought I would share it with you. They asked not to add their name at this time.

### Just Being

Trying to live in the moment is something I was told when I needed help and was shown how to apply CBT. Then it occurred again and again in many Tai Chi and QiGong books read since. Also many feelings including “letting go”, “learn to eat bitter”, “don’t anticipate, don’t dwell, don’t resist”, and many many others. Just being, soooo tricky to achieve. However, when out walking I saw sheep, trees, horses, etc - just being; everything except humans seem superb at - just being. The white crane and snake where - just being. So maybe it’s not so hard after all, if we ‘just be’ then into my simplified mind popped the basic feeling of the most basic building block for everything (as far as some say) and out popped the following. If it sparks even just some little idea to help you then that’s what it’s all about....

I am but quanta – meaningless energy.

I am a person.

Do I have feelings –yes  
Do I have memories – yes  
Should I let the free flow of cosmic quanta pass through me – yes  
Should I let happenings be stopped by my mind as dwell and worry – no  
I exist, I experience  
I am but meaningless energy.

I am a tree.

Do I have feelings – yes  
Do I anticipate the future – no  
Do I have a choice - no  
I sway gently as the breeze blows, refreshing, with every quanta together – as one  
I exist.  
I am but meaningless energy.

I am a horse in a field.

Do I boast about my Derby wins – no  
Do I reminisce on the glory – no  
Do I dwell on why I cannot do that anymore – no  
Do I worry about tomorrow – no (tomorrow / the next minute / second may not exist for me)  
I am but just in the moment – I exist, I feel, I experience.

I am the wind.

I am water.

Do I know my strength – no  
Do I know my softness – no  
I am but meaningless energy.

I am a universe.

“Full” of meaningless energy  
Do I use my size to dominate – no  
Do I have a soul – yes – maybe the combined souls of all within  
Do I have power – no  
I exist (for now).

I am but meaningless mish/mash of cosmic energy.

No more or no less powerful, influential, important, significant than any other drop of quanta.

I just am - existing in the sub-second.

*“Promise me you’ll always remember,  
You’re braver than you believe,  
and stronger than you seem.  
And smarter than you think.”*

Christopher Robin to Pooh

To understand the difference between Tai Chi softness (rou) and flaccidity (ruan) is vitally important, as is really understanding song.

Rou is elastic or Bamboo-like, so that when stretched and released it springs back - inside, there is action and reaction. Ruan is like chewing gum; when stretched beyond a certain limit it collapses.

Song is like water; if it is released on you from somewhere nearby it is like having a shower, but if it descends from a great height then you won’t be able to withstand it.

Song is something that when looked at appears to have substance, but when you attempt to strike or grasp it, it disappears. It is like bobbing for apples, the harder you try, the more it evades.

Some people say that you must be like water when pushing hands, so they play as if they were playing in a shower, but when you use the force of a tidal wave or a waterfall they say that this is using strength.. This is not the case; rather, it is the speed with which the song substance comes at you that gives it the force. Thus, when doing pushing hands, to check that you are really using Tai Chi, you must ask yourself if you are being Rou or Ruan.....

*Attributed to Master Tan Ching Ngee*

### Grading Day December 2013

This years grading saw instructors and trainees alike delivering a short class on a line from the Ta Chi Classics. Ian Jacob and I wanted on with great interest at how each person interpreted their line and connected it through the class experience. I gave no rules as to how their line was to be interpreted and taught; some chose a well-being approach, others an academic exploration and some a more martial exploration. I to learn a great deal as the teacher is always the taught.



The training that preceded the grading was planned as a precursor to the grading and built on the neutralising from the previous month. Some as you can see from the photos played a more active and lively part in the morning and some took a more cerebral approach... you can figure out who.



I would like to thank all who took part and congratulate all who achieved their grade. In 2014 we will continue to build on the foundations of previous years with the added dimensions of weapons awareness and more.





## Swedish Quorn Balls with vegetarian Sauce

Serves 2

This recipe is quick and easy to cook. The Quorn Balls provide the protein, while the vegetables and herbs add welcome flavour. It goes well with mashed potatoes and Brussels sprouts.

Cooking Time - approx 20 minutes

### Ingredients

- Swedish Quorn Balls, frozen - 4 or 5 per person
- One onion, finely chopped
- One large carrot, peeled and finely diced.
- One parsnip, finely diced
- Peppers - approx one pepper, yellow or red, cut into one cm pieces
- Olive oil
- Vegetable Stock cube
- 2 teaspoons Herbs de Provence ( or mixed herbs)
- Water

Prepare the vegetables in advance. Cover the base of a medium pan with olive oil, and bring to a medium heat. Add the onions and Quorn balls, stirring frequently for 3 or 4 minutes to prevent sticking. Add the remaining vegetables and crumble the stock cube into it. Add boiling water to make a sauce. Stir in the herbs and cook on moderate heat until the vegetables are cocked but not soggy.

Serve with mashed potatoes and Brussels sprouts.

Recipe submitted by David Jones  
Lichfield Instructor  
and consummate vegetarian



## The Three Fearlessnesses Cheng Man Ching



First, do not fear bitter work: In the Tai Chi Chuan Classics it says, "The root is in the foot". If a person is afraid to take pain, it will mean that the foot cannot be dropped into the ground to grow root. There is also no doubt that such pain taking is beneficial to one's cardiovascular system and benefits the brain. The fundamental method for a person who has just begun to do Tai Chi is to take three to five minutes in the morning and the evening, alternating standing first on one leg then on the other. Gradually the time is lengthened, gradually the person sits lower. The mind should be put into the tan tien, and without forcing, even a little bit, the heart of the foot should adhere to the ground. When one is rooting, he should extend his middle and index fingers to hold onto the back of a chair or the edge of a table, in order to be stable. After a while, when that is familiar, he can take away the middle finger, using just the index finger for assistance. Eventually even this will become very stable and the person will not need to be assisted by his fingers anymore. Then one can utilize the "lifting hands" and "playing guitar" as two positions for this standing (or rooting) discipline. The basic "preparation stance" is also the rooting exercise – the basic rooting exercise – for the complete gung fu of the person's "one unity with the ground". The "single whip" is the extending and opening discipline, with all the joints open. All of these positions greatly benefit one's health and one's self-defense ability. One cannot afford to overlook them.

The second and third, do not fear loss and do not fear ferocity will be in the next issue



I felt the need to defend myself  
To keep me safe from harm  
But while I'm punching out their lights  
I'd like to stay quite calm.  
So I'm standing here waving my arms  
about  
Trying to do this thing called TAI CHI  
Though I'm doing my best  
I can't keep up with the rest  
So what the heck's up with me?  
I practice in the morning  
And again quite late at night.  
But I have to hide inside the garage  
out of the neighbors sight.  
I've bought the books and video too  
Thinking they would help get me  
started.  
But every time I hit the deck  
I can't help feeling down hearted.  
My instructor said the breakthroughs  
close  
It could come to me anyday.  
He thinks another **£1000** of lessons  
And I'll almost certainly be OK...

by Jenny Peters



### Training Dates

We hold monthly advanced training session in South Birmingham.

9.30 to 12.30 (3 hours) - £25

### **Dates for 2014**

12th Jan  
9th Feb  
9th March  
13th April  
18th May  
29th June

### **Camp is planned for 3rd August**

14th Sept  
12th Oct  
9th Nov  
7th December.