



Tai Chi Newsletter

<https://www.paintingtherainbow.co.uk>

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Community Based Tai Chi & Chi-Kung for everyone

Improvement cannot always be measured, it is something you feel

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Let me tell you a story...

At a recent instructor's Sunday training, Mark noticed one of those present had a wrist brace on. Being a caring soul, he asked what had happened. "Well I got the hose out to water the garden and one minute I was standing up and the next I was on the floor !!! Not sure what happened Did he trip? was he focused on something other than the hose? On hearing of his plight, Mark reassured him it can happen to anyone, even a Tai Chi exponent of many years, in fact, he related that I (his wife) had fallen over and bruised both legs the week before!!! The next day the instructor's wife kindly called to see how I was after the "fall".

I need to explain how this occurred to save further embarrassment.

I actually fell UP some steep steps on our patio, yes it is possible to fall UP if you don't pay attention to what you are doing.

I am not very good at living in "the now". My mind is always ahead of what I am doing, the next job I have to do that day, the phone call I need to make that I forgot yesterday, or maybe reminding Mark we haven't started the newsletter yet and Instructors Sunday is 4 days away!!!!

If I had been in "the present" I would not have misjudged the distance between the 3 steep steps in front of our French door and "tripped" or "fell up" them.

Luckily I did an Aikido roll down the remaining step and saved Mark the trouble of a hospital visit. A quick ice pack and regular applications of Arnica Cream to the bruises on both shins saved the day.

The moral of this story is even if you have done Tai Chi for 30yrs you still need to feel the ground beneath your feet when you step, use your eyes to judge distance, and stay in the "now" and focus on one thing at a time to avoid accidents.

Mark has been suitably admonished for leaking my "uphill fall" and I won't reveal the instructor's name who did similarly, but thank Lynn, his wife, for the call.

by Jenny Peters



Tai Chi and Health

Keeping healthy is one of the main aims of those who practice Tai Chi. Hence it is most appropriate to pose the question: how does Tai Chi contribute to my health and wellbeing?

In the warm up exercises (Chi Kung), the rhythmic movements help the muscles and joints and keep the circulation active. The breathing exercises are vital for the lungs. The regular deep breathing energises the systems and increases the oxygen intake of the body. At all times breathing should be through the nose not the mouth. Breathing should be coordinated with the body movement. The general rule is that you inhale when you contract or pull back, exhale when you expand or strike.

The regular exercises help create the feeling of well being. It is a known fact that exercises produce endorphines. Production of endorphines in the brain induces the sense of well being and happiness. Of course some people are happier than others during the classes; this depends on the level of endorphines, beside other factors.

Doing the exercises in the open air is another benefit. Fresh air contains more oxygen, and is more energising to the individual. Practising the form at home is better if you have more space to move. If these practises are carried out in open space as in the garden, the benefit will be greater. However, avoid slippery surfaces.

Tai Chi helps you to be more aware of your surroundings. The more you practise, the more aware you are of the environment around you. To increase this awareness, you can practise parts of the form with eyes closed. One needs to be careful when changing orientation such as in turning and kicking with the sole and sweeping in the lotus movements (when you turn 180°). If you practise Tai Chi on this deeper level, your process of "anticipation" will increase through your increased awareness of your surroundings.

Posture is emphasised in all Tai Chi sessions, especially in “the form”. Maintaining a straight back cannot be stressed enough. The spine should be held straight and vertical. One of the scourges of our present day life is backache. Training oneself to straighten the back is a great asset in life, more so as one advances in age. Tai Chi practitioners should use the chance of practising the art to acquire the habit of having a straight back. The more self conscious you are about that most important posture, the more it becomes a habit.

Tai Chi has a calming effect on the individual, and in our present day stresses and tribulations that is an asset. Here, concentration and proper regular breathing during the sessions is of help. To get the full benefit of the sessions, a calm mind and a relaxed body are beneficial. In turn, the practise of Tai Chi will increase the calmness and relaxation.

People will notice that as they practise Tai Chi, and for that matter any other self defence art, they will be more aware of what they eat and drink. One hopes that those practising the art will realise the futile habit of smoking. Those who used to attend the summer long weekend training held at Unstone Grange will have noticed the healthy food provided.

Muscles and bones benefit from the exercises and form. The muscle tones well, rather than enlarges, owing to the gentle nature of the form. The bones are rendered firmer and healthier. As a matter of fact, Tai Chi is beneficial for sufferers of osteoporosis, though the exercises in these cases should be carefully monitored by the trainers.

Related to the above point is the help Tai Chi lends to balance. More about this can be found in the dissertation by Mark on the website:

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

Under the title:

“Tai Chi Reduces Falls in the Elderly by Half.”

Master Cheng Man-Ch’ing (who simplified Tai Chi to its present form) was a doctor and professor of Chinese Medicine. He directed many of his patients to take up Tai Chi. He believed that such practice would help his patients in combating their illnesses and enhance their recovery.

The basis of Chinese Medicine is the Ying and Yang, the same has great significance for Tai Chi. There has been much research in Tai Chi and Health and the benefits have been proven through vigorous scientific methodology.

References:

Teach yourself Tai Chi. Robert Parry. Teach Yourself Books, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 2001.

Tai Chi – The Supreme Ultimate. Lawrence Galante. Samuel Weiser, York Beach, Maine, 1981.

We’re trying a new section in the newsletters – **Club Corner.**



Caroline Gibson teaches in Shropshire

A few students from Ellesmere and Welshampton Kai Ming groups enjoyed a session of Tai Chi in the Park to mark the group’s 1 year anniversary.

A beautiful setting next to Ellesmere and a lovely way to celebrate!



As we all know, Tai Chi and Qigong have so many benefits whether physical, mental, emotional or spiritual so when you see your student’s experience and feel what we as instructors know can be gained from doing it, it is definitely worth celebrating our journey together!

Thanks
Caroline



Seeking The Way.

During my Tai Chi journey I have met many teachers and practitioners who have seemed to me “harmony with this earth” personified, and at peace with themselves.

I have also met many like myself who would like to attain this state, and who spend many hours examining how they can achieve it, this Nirvana.

However as I struggle to have “kind feelings” for some of my fellow beings, I believed that it was probably way way beyond my capabilities

In fact upon enquiring of these “peaceful warriors” what their way to enlightenment had been many of them wondered what I meant, they just WHERE!

Now unless there is a superhuman gene out there, I felt that they must have had help from somewhere to guide them to the “right path”

Now to the point.

Chen Man Ching the founder of our style of Tai Chi followed the teachings of Confucius, but as with many things in life until recently that fact had just been there, we had never as a club fully understood how much of an influence it may have had on him, and our form.

Also we had never thought about the fact that maybe we as individuals might benefit by looking into the teachings of this revered man.

Tai Chi is considered a Taoist art, but what does this really mean?

Our Association is lucky enough to have a great scholar and Philosopher as one of our students and trainee instructor This man had spent his whole life, and I quote “Cultivating the mind but neglecting his physical body” and so eventually his body had complained “i.e. and he developed high blood pressure.

Maybe this was due to lack of exercise, stress of preparing and delivering lectures around the world, where good food and good wine could be part of the course.

This may sound quite a nice existence, but eventually the piper has to be paid!

As a nurse I see this all the time.

Whatever job we have and however much we enjoy it some people are always in 5th gear.

When I ask my patients, “do you get any regular exercise?” (Which I see as “time out” for themselves) they invariably reply “oh yes, I’m always running round at work, in the office, factory, building site, supermarket.

They are quite surprised when I tell them this is NOT the exercise I mean.

What they perceive as “good” for them is in fact not.

They are generally racing round to meet time schedules, get more done, finish something that is urgent before they leave work, catch up with something they had forgotten to do earlier. This is not good for you it is Adrenaline induced “exercise” which can be the worst kind.

Heart racing, mind racing stress stress stress.

I like this definition of Stress——DOING MORE, BUT ACHIEVING LESS.

I look on regular exercise as going to a gym, swimming, sports or yes, TAI CHI

But I digress

This professor came to our club to try and find healing for his neglected body, but he was such a learned man and so interesting to chat to we then thought maybe others in the Association would like to learn more about Taoism, and we were lucky enough to have the ideal teacher right here with us.

Although he is quite a humble man and was sceptical as to what format he could present for a workshop/discussion etc on this subject he finally agreed to go away and research further into this vast area.



He came back to Mark with the outline for 3 seminars. These were

- TAOISM
- CONFUSHIONISM.
- BUDDHISM.

In that order

Included in each was a meditation session that related to that workshop.

We have now run these twice within our club.

What began as a simple idea turned out to be a wonderful learning experience, which was so much more than any of us expected.

It has allowed many of us to believe that maybe we can, or already are, leading a way of life we believed we would never attain.

It has bought so much into our lives and I think a greater understanding of just “being”

Before completing these seminars, I had listened to a recording of an interview with the Dali Llama who said one of the teachings of Buddhism was to accept that we are put on this earth to be happy and should strive to attain this.

At the time I did not understand the relevance of this statement and thought surely this is a selfish introverted attitude.

During the Buddhism seminar discussions within our club the reason for this was explained.

Happy people spread happiness, being unhappy may be the selfish element within us, for we can be so focused on our own unhappy state they we drag others down with us!

Think about it.

By the end of our workshops, I felt that TAOISM led into Confucianism and Confucianism blended into Buddhism.

Threads can link them all.



You need to put yourself right, TAOISM, before you can help the whole, CONFUSIONISM and then spread the happiness BUDDHISM.

This of course is my own simplified understanding of what I believe to be the essence of living a more contented life.

Obviously not everyone wants to delve further than a weekly Tai-Chi class, but for all of us within KAI-MING who took part in these days there was a huge consensus of their great value as a club and as individuals.

Thank you David. - by Jenny Peters

*Confucianism is about relationships.
Buddhism is about release.
Taoism is about balance.
If your life is in turmoil and conflict,
you're not living in the Tao.*

Thought this piece may amuse you

*You don't always have to do "stuff."
Or achieve "stuff".*

*You don't have to spend your free time productively.
You don't have to be doing Tai Chi and DIY and bread-making.*

Sometimes you can just "be" and feel things and get through and eat crisps and survive, and that is more than enough.

Taken from The Comfort Book by Matt Haig.



Tai Chi Weekend September 2023

Each year we have a focus for the weekend camp and this years theme is "Breathing life into your tai chi"

Saturday 2nd - The day will cover the 32 step Yang family broadsword (dao) form, applications and partner-work

Sunday 3rd You will be learning qigong (chi-kung). We will focus on the three refinements of mind, body, and breath.

The days will run

- 9.30 for 10am start
- 10am to 12.30pm with a 10 minute break about 11.30am.
- Lunch 12.30 to 1.30pm – lunch
- 1.30pm to 4pm with a 10 minute break about 2.45pm

Cost

The cost per day will be £40 per person (Kai-Ming members)
£60 (non-members)

More details at <https://shorturl.at/gtz06>

Venue:

Weoley Hill Village Hall, Bournville. B29 4AR.

Advanced monthly training sessions.

Sessions are held each month for 3 hours at Weoley Hill Village Hall, Bournville, to enable instructors time for their own training and for more advanced students to gain the time to develop a deeper understanding of the application of tai chi chuan.

Sessions are Sunday's 9.30-12.30 at £30 per person.

Below are training dates for 2023

Aug 13th

Sept 2nd & 3rd – annual weekend camp – 9.30am to 4.00pm

October 8th

Nov 5th

