



Kai Ming Association Newsletter

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Remember to book for
the Christmas Party
Sunday 14th December



It's that time of year again when we need to be planning the **Kai Ming Christmas Party**. Last year we all went to Flavourz and the feedback was excellent...

It's a buffet restaurant near Junction 2 of M5 and serves 4 regions of food – Indian, Chinese, Italian and Mexican – plus has a fun relaxed atmosphere and is great value at around £15 per head.

The date is Sunday 14th December and the time 2pm. Friends and family welcome.

We need £5 per person minimum deposit ASAP and the balance no later than 30th November. This will enable us to confirm bookings with Flavourz plus organise the seating plan.

30 people booked so far. Please let your instructor know what you would like to do or contact Mark & Jenny on markpeters@kaiming.co.uk or phone 0121 251 6172



I was recently reading a new book by Nigel Sutton and it brought back such fond memories of training with many of the teachers in there. I thought I would share with you a comment from Master Wu Chiang Hsing who taught me both tai chi

and chi-kung, but more importantly to be thoughtful of others. I was so keen to learn the chi-kung sets we practiced each morning in the park that when I asked to train one-to-one in chi-kung he took it to mean I didn't think his tai chi fighting skills were good enough. I apologised and made it clear I wanted both but wanted to share the chi-kung with patients in UK hospitals. He was happier now and taught me some amazing push-hands work plus helped me with my injured knee after I had been training a little too vigorously.

Here is his thought on form practice. Form practice is for relaxation. People often ask "what relationship does form practice have to fighting?" Form is not to learn fighting movements, although the movements are derived from fighting, they are more like illustrations. If you tried to use them as they are, you could be in for a rude awakening; they may not work as anticipated. Learning and fully understanding the form teaches you to relax in action. Then, after you have trained in push-hands for a while (the time depends on the student) – the usage of the movements becomes more apparent. *Extract from 'Wisdom of taiji Masters' by Nigel Sutton*



The Path of a Master.

I started my training when I was 6 years old, with fundamentals that mostly consisted of stance work. The idea behind this is that a tree must have deep roots in order to grow tall. I started out in a kid's class that Wei Hsiao taught. Wei was a close friend of our family. He would come to my house and train me privately so I developed more quickly than my classmates. Every day I woke up and practiced Chi Kung, foundation training and stretching from about 5.00-7.00 am. Then I would eat breakfast and go to school. After school I would eat lunch, do my homework do my homework and start training again from 3.00pm-7.00pm.

Evening training typically consisted of forms, single movements, and new techniques.

Master Wei's requirements for us progressed gradually as we aged. By the time we were all required to do 5000 frog jumps, the class size was very small, and after a while I was the only one left. Master Wei was in his seventies at this time and he was tired of teaching so his requirements bordered on the extreme in his efforts to weed out weak students.

He did this to check for spirit and to see if his students had what it took to reach the next level.

It took all the dedication and self esteem that I had to consistently push myself to the limit and meet his standards.

I was 13 years old when we started to get more into the combat aspects of 8 Step Praying Mantis Form.

From sets we progressed into two-person sets to train body movement and reactions and also mental spontaneity.

Then we moved onto sensitivity sparring (Chi Sau).

Then we gradually separated and started sparring in slow motion.

Eventually we began light contact sparring and finally progressed into full-contact fighting.

At that time my father would hire street kids to be my training partners.

I would practice on one for a few hours, he would attack me in any kind of way and I would defend with the new techniques that I was learning.

Even though I worked hard sometimes Master Wei would get mad at me and talk to me about what I was doing wrong.

He'd tell me, "You can't get good by being lazy." This inspired me to work even harder, he expected much of me and I did everything I could to win his favour. Martial Arts are basically the same, the only differences are their theories and how they apply the techniques.

Don't shop around from style to style. By shopping around, you are getting many versions of the basics.

Every style has its own look and flavour, but the art of combat is basically universal.

The only way to learn if a style is good or not is to learn it from beginning to end. You may ask, “Then how can I know if my teacher is a good teacher or not?” Well that really depends on your luck! Everything is up to chance. Some sifu teach only 3 sets over your whole life and say “You know it all”. Then the students are content. Another teaches his students a lot and tells them there is even more to learn and the students are always demanding more. Every sifu is different, and every system’s approach to teaching is slightly different. It all depends on your luck!

This is an extract taken from an interview with Master James Sun who was a full contact world champion for Five consecutive years in the 70s and taught in the Military throughout Europe, Asia, Australia, and North America. He settled in America where he standardized the system and he set up a professional sifu programme for individuals to reach their highest potentials through traditional training in Eight Step Praying Mantis and Tai Chi Chuan. I think it shows the level of commitment that makes Grandmaster what they are.



Tai Chi Desk Calendar

£3.50 each (limited stock)

Each year we do a desk calendar for the club but didn’t do one last year. We had lots of request so decided to bring it back this year. Please let your instructor know and get your order in as stock is strictly limited. If you have any questions please contact Jenny or Mark for more information



Fez Chi

Last month – the weekend of 17th to 19th October – I was in Kendal, in the Lake District for the 2nd annual Lakes International Comics Festival. It’s a gathering of comics artists, publishers and enthusiasts from all over the country and several parts of the world, and is a busy, and exciting weekend of full days and late nights for us. I was there with my

publisher, Knockabout Comics, and this year we had a “pop-up shop” – an empty shop premises that we took over, along with Viz comic, for the duration. We filled the shop with our books, with exhibition pieces, a bar, bdxand odd “installations” including a Spirit Photography Booth (where you got your photograph taken and spookily inhabited by comic characters) and a completely daft “Viz Studio”. But we needed more fun and games.

Tony, my friend and publisher, suggested months ago that I should run t’ai chi sessions first thing each morning, and to make it more “comical”, we should announce them as Fez Chi – T’ai Chi in a fez. I foolishly agreed and forgot all about it until the Saturday morning, when I arrived bleary-eyed at the shop at 8-30, to be met by a handful of people expecting t’ai chi – in fezzes. Tony had provided the red hats, so there was nothing for it but to don them and try to do something coherent in the 20 minutes I had available. And it worked a treat! I started with some warm up exercises, explaining that we were doing in five minutes what usually took fifteen. Then I took the assembly through my favourite 13 step Qui Gong set – the one that involves holding up the world, reaching for the stars, and stretching the fingers around the earth. We ran through it three times, and finished with a few moments calm breathing. Not a particularly extensive T’ai Chi session, but it worked wonderfully! Everyone was impressed, happy and relaxed, and went away resolving to find a class somewhere.

Where did the fezzes come in? Not at all, really. I explained that the fez was a device to try and keep people’s heads up and backs straight, so as not to lose the headgear, and that worked to a certain extent, but really the fez was just a gimmick. But the T’ai Chi exercise worked as it always does, as a good start to the day, lifting spirits and helping shake off the previous evening’s excesses. Sunday morning was even better, with more participants – possibly because we started an hour later than Saturday.

The lighting in our shop was poor, and unfortunately I got no usable photos, which is why you have a cartoon here.

Tony and I do quite a few of these comic fairs each year, when we spend all day standing behind a table chatting to people and trying to sell them books. It may not sound like a tough job, and it’s not really

compared to many, but it’s very tiring on the back and legs. I have long ago taught Tony how to shift his weight in the way we do in T’ai Chi, and we both do it constantly. It helps enormously, easing the strain on the back and feet. T’ai Chi wins again!

As for the fezzes – I wonder if we shouldn’t adopt them in Kai-Ming? Well, maybe not.



SOME THINGS DON’T CHANGE OR DO THEY?

When Mark first started teaching and later when KAIMING was formed we were always interested in why people became students of Tai chi, and had questionnaires that were on the back of the insurance forms that had to be completed and this ‘why’ question was asked amongst others.

Obviously back then as now the most recurrent replies were—to help with anxiety, to be able to defend myself without aggression, always liked the ‘look’ of it, heard it might help with balance and was a gentle but healthy exercise.

When asked later when they had been students for a while, why they had continued after the first 10 week block of lessons and what their thoughts were now, a new reason had surfaced.

They found that because of the need for focus on movement and body alignment when learning the form (and later correcting detail after they had finished it), worries and stresses from work, problems at home, busy moms days, and general anxieties from life were all left behind for an hour when they practiced in the class, and they left feeling relaxed and fresh.

The warm up exercises loosened tense muscles in the neck, back, hips and legs; it gave people the chance to relax and

have a friendly chat with the student next to them, and a feeling of camaraderie built up over the weeks.

When learning the postures audio, visual and kinaesthetic senses became acute and focus moved to each new area that was being worked on that week.

However this did not mean that there was no time to laugh with each other over attempts to master a difficult posture or even maybe feel a little glow of pride when the instructor passed by and congratulated you on "having got it". Even if you weren't sure what 'it' was! Then as time passed and they began to feel more confident with their form and ability, and mastery of the art seemed to be on the horizon, suddenly a posture felt not quite right, or a knee or shoulder ached and that could mean only one thing, loss of focus and a little bit of complacency.

If you lose correct alignment your muscles and joints will let you know and you need to go back to the 'drawing board' or should I say basics. I remember when I used to teach a class at the local gym a lot of the people who came to 'have a go' where more used to pumping up muscles than relaxing them off, so really did not move correctly when slowed down.

Their mind set was very different and because of this the movement of the skeleton on a different scale. They didn't sink the hips to turn, the neck turned independently of the rest of the body, and so did their knees very often.

After a session of showing them what they were doing wrong by demonstrating several movements a few times, I can remember the next day I had neck and knee ache, the class however reported back the week after a general improvement of their aches and pains!!! If you ask me what I think has been the reason I kept on the Tai Chi path (apart from the fact I wouldn't have seen much of Mark if I hadn't) I would say two things really.

(1) I feel there is always something to learn or improve on, and sometimes as strange as it may seem it is a "new recruit" to the class who brings something to your attention with a simple question.

(2) The other reason is simply the fact I have learnt so much about my own 'body problems' after years of nursing, and how to find the answers to put them right that I am now in a much better place than I would be if Tai Chi had not been in my life.

I hope all our students and Instructors continue to enjoy their journey and find the commitment to continue reaping it's benefits.

by Jenny Peters



PUMPKIN & CHEESE SCONES

As we have just had Halloween and there are an abundance of pumpkins around thought maybe this recipe may be appropriate so that all those pumpkins left in the shops or home may not have been picked in vain!

MAKES 12

Ingredients

250g Pumpkin peeled, deseeded, and cut into 5mm cubes (to give about 175g flesh)
175g wholemeal flour
100g self-raising flour
1 tbsp fresh thyme leaves, roughly chopped
1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
1 tsp baking powder
Pinch of salt
2 medium eggs
225ml semi-skimmed milk
75ml vegetable oil
150ml natural yoghurt
50g mature cheddar cheese, grated.

Preheat the oven to 220C/fan200C/425F/gas mark 7.

Line a 12-hole muffin tin with paper muffin cases and set aside.

Put the pumpkin, flours, thyme, bicarb, baking powder and salt in a large bowl. Give them a quick stir together and then make a hole in the centre.

Lightly beat the eggs in a medium bowl, then mix in the milk, oil and yoghurt until combined.

Pour the wet mixture into the centre of the dry ingredients and mix together using as few stirs as possible (otherwise you will make the muffins too dense and heavy). The mixture will be quite wet.

Divide the mixture evenly among the muffin cases. Sprinkle over the grated cheddar and bake in the centre of the oven for 20-25 minutes or until a skewer inserted in the centre of a muffin comes out clean.

Once cooked, remove from the oven and set aside to cool just a little, as these muffins are best eaten warm.

However they are easier to remove from the cases when cooler as they will not stick to the base of the case so much then.

(You can substitute sweet potato for the pumpkin but the resulting muffin will be heavier)

Painting The Rainbow Instructor Training

You may or may not be aware that Painting The Rainbow CIC is part of Kai Ming and was formed to make tai chi and chi-kung more accessible to individuals and groups who can benefit from Tai Chi for health and well-being but did not have access to it. This includes Special needs groups, care homes, schools and hospitals, among others. The instructors and trainee instructors may have even initially attended as patients. All the sessions are run in the daytime and many are free.

Tai Chi in the Park started as part of the Painting the Rainbow program and has expanded all across Birmingham. Mark also trains staff in hospitals so they can run sessions for patients. These patients are then sign-posted to Painting the Rainbow classes so they can continue when they leave the hospital.

We are always looking for new potential instructors, as demand is growing, so please let us know if you are interested in training by contacting Jenny or Mark on **0121 251 6172**. If you are unsure as to your suitability please speak to your instructor. Personality is key as we can always correct your form. In addition to training in tai chi and chi-kung we also provide CPR and condition awareness training.

The next training update will be Sunday 11th January 1-3pm

Areas covered will be:

Working with anxiety, chronic pain, fibromyalgia, ME/CFE and allied conditions.

TRAINING METHOD FOR TAIJIQUAN (Tai Chi Chuan)

Yang Ban Hou (1875), son of Yang Cheng Fu.

The eight trigrams and five elements are innate within us. You must first understand that they are based in these four terms: perception, realization, activation, action. [These four terms amount to "moving with awareness". Once you have achieved moving with awareness, then you will be able to identify energies.

Once you can identify energies, then you will be able to be miraculous (natural and free). But in the beginning of training, you should understand moving with awareness. Although it is innate, it is nevertheless hard to achieve within oneself.

In your own training of each posture, once you have learned them all, they are joined together to make a long routine, flowing on and on without interruption, one posture after another, and thus it is called Long Boxing. It is crucial for the set of postures to be performed consistently, otherwise it may after a while turn instead into either "slippery boxing" or "stiff boxing". You assuredly must not lose your pliability, and the movement of your whole body should be grounded upon mind and spirit. After practicing over a long period of time, you will naturally have a breakthrough and attain everything you have been working toward, and nothing will be strong enough to stand up against you.

When working with a partner, the four techniques of ward-off, rollback, press, and push are the first of the thirteen dynamics to work on. Stand in one place and do the four techniques rolling in circles, then do them advancing and retreating, doing them at a middle height. Then do them higher and lower as well, practicing at all three heights. Starting with the basics, work your way through the solo set. Then begin working with the four techniques, larger gross movements at first, then focusing on the finer details until the skill of extending and contracting is fluent, and you will have ascended through the midway of attainment, and then will continue to the top.

Work first at training gross movements, then finer details. When the gross movements are obtained, then the finer movements can be talked of. When the finer movements are obtained, then measures of a foot and below can be

talked of. When your skill has progressed to the level of a foot, then you can progress to the level of an inch, then to a tenth of an inch, then to the width of a hair. This is what is meant by the principle of reducing measurements. Pay attention to detail but detail in stages.

Monthly Training Dates

We hold monthly advanced training sessions in South Birmingham. If you are interested in attending or even considering training as an instructor, please ask *your* instructor.

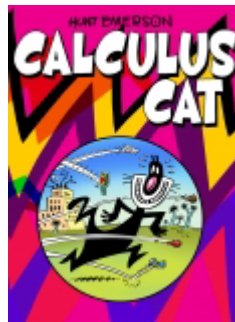
9.30 to 12.30 (3 hours) - £25

Dates for 2014

9th Nov
7th December.

2015 dates

11th Jan
15th Feb,
15th March,
12th April,
17th May,
14th June,
1st & 2nd August - Summer Camp
13th Sept,
11th Oct,
8th Nov,
6th Dec.



The Cat Who Hates Television is back!

This book is published by Hunt Emerson who teaches tai chi in Handsworth Wood.

He's an amazing artist and musician so we thought we would share this with you.

The original 1987 book republished with 22 New Pages and a Gallery Section featuring drawings of Calculus Cat by 40 other cartoonists

visit

<http://largecow.com/shop/books/calculus-cat>



GRADING DAY SUNDAY 7th DECEMBER ALL WELCOME LIGHT LUNCH PROVIDED

Come along and support your instructor at this year's grading day on 7th December. The event will be at Hopwood Village Hall, Redditch Road, Hopwood from 1-3pm.

A light lunch will be provided from 12.30. If you just want to come for the lunch and to support (even assist) your instructor the price is £5. If you are planning to grade the price is £45.

For anyone training, the training session will be 9.30-12.30 and the price is £25 and the focus of the training session will be push-hands.

Please let us know if you are planning to attend so we can plan for numbers and food etc.



They say there is a book in everyone...

We're not asking for a book just an article, poem, thoughts, illustration or photo. Please share your thoughts and ideas with your fellow tai chi enthusiasts. YOUR NEWSLETTER NEEDS YOU..!!