



Tai Chi Newsletter

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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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Tai Chi & Qigong
2022 Calendar

Learning has no early or late start.
One who has mastered the subject
is the teacher

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Our 2022 desk calendar is now available and any profit goes to a local charity. The calendars are a mix of humour and thoughtful quotes. They are £8 desk (A5) calendar or £10 A4 wall calendars. The image above is the front cover. Please ask your instructor or email:

markpeters@kaiming.co.uk

You can also buy online in more sizes at:

<https://www.askonline.shop/products/ptr-calendar>



Rooting, Chi, and The Mind.

The mind and the spirit must be strong in order to keep Chi from rising, which will destroy the effort of rooting.

The mind must be very centred and controlled.

Many people practice Chan (Zen) exercises, or something similar, in order to accomplish this. This, of course, has a parallel in life since the mind must also be kept centred every day in order to handle all circumstances that may occur.

When practising, one should use imagination so that one can imagine clouds or a river to create evenly flowing movement. One can go fast yet stay quiet.

When travelling in an airplane, one feels very still even though the speed may be 500 mph. Enemies to the mind are

anger, fear, and various other emotions and distractions. They raise the tension in the body, making the muscles and joints tight and again can destroy the root.

All of these requirements to building root support each other and connect to each other in a complimentary fashion.

After a long time you will understand the harmony of the requirements.

The straight plumb line requirement causes the thigh to go in, but when one takes the two points in the hip out the knees move out opening the thighs up properly.

Another example of harmony between the requirements is that when the legs are down and when one sinks, the practitioner can use the whole body as a unit.

What kind of feeling is obtained from rooting? Should we feel something when we root?

The feeling that is derived from rooting is that the upper body is empty and the lower body is full. In push hands or in application where two people are linked together, if one person is rooting and the other is not, the lever principle comes into effect.

One person has the power of his chest and arms versus the other person using their entire body as a unit.

Everything else being equal, the unitary rooted person has three times the leverage. It is like someone who is standing on ice pushing hands with a person on dry ground.

Another feeling derived from rooting is that of smooth movement.

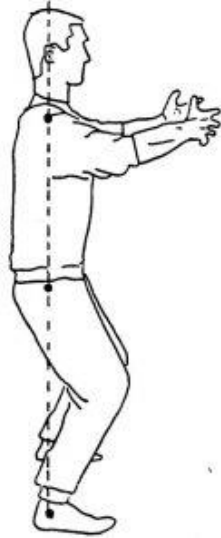
The body turns as a unit; it also gives turning a greater range of motion. The body can turn in any direction.

Whether in fighting application or when interacting with a partner in push hands, one must yield and follow the opponent or the root can be shattered.

Root also allows the body to calm down and feel centred.

The principle of rooting is a product of the principle coming from the TAO TE CHING, the most famous book in China.

The Tao Teh Ching was written by Lao Tzu who described the way of the of the universe. This book told how to control the world. Its conclusion was that you control the world by controlling yourself; that you have more control in this world if you simply learn to control yourself and balance.



As this idea was factored into the internal martial art, it was discovered that when one learns to root, they have a much greater control of their own balance as well as greater potential of power coming from the ground.

It is said Sun Lu Tang the famous internal martial artist who wrote Xing-Yi Quan Xue, (The Study of Form-Mind Boxing) did not think there was any secret way to practice the martial arts. He emphasized returning to the original condition, to return to the innate original energy, **balanced** and not drifting, **neutral** and not leaning.

It is always easier to reach a goal if the goal is very clear. Why be rooted in martial movement? It is because our goal is to be balanced. **Rooting** is most often compared to 'being like a tree' and so can be misinterpreted as strong and fixed but that is not what is meant. Rooting is '**neutral**' and even Prof Cheng Man Ching is quoted as saying "**rooting is natural, you just have to stop resisting gravity**". Rooting is to achieve natural alignment, to be in neutral, with no resistance in an direction just alignment. Rooting enables natural compression to happen.



Stability & Kicks

Jason Yeung likens the Tai Chi form sequence of *SEPARATE AND KICK WITH HEEL* as taking on the look of a circus high wire act!!! Balanced on one leg arms thrust out to the sides for stability he has a good point.

It is one of the most challenging moves you will encounter in the form.

It is just as challenging to the experienced student so beginners should take consolation from this.

Once you are accustomed to this sequence of moves it can be quite enjoyable to practice. Within it is a nice ebb and flow.

When feeling unsure or unfocused, you may start to wobble, become unbalanced, and occasionally calamity! You fall.

We know that the lower one's root, the more stable the posture. This move however, has three limbs making dramatic outward gestures, so it is logical that when moving into this posture, coupled with the nervous anticipation that may accompany a difficult move such as this, your stability may be compromised.

So let's split this into several aspects:

PREPARATION: Is your body in proper alignment and stable from the previous move. Are your feet and joints flexible? Is the mind calm? Is the leg low enough to the ground that it does not disturb your balance too greatly.

LIFTING THE LEG: The weight must be settled deep into the root before lifting the empty leg outward. While the arms are used to counter balance the leg movement as it goes up and out. One must remember that moving the whole outward in this way transfers a great percentage of the body weight away from one's centre of gravity.

To this is added the momentum of the rising leg, also going out away from the body. It can be no surprise then that balance is challenged

BRINGING THE LEG IN: You must try and bring the leg in toward your root rather than let it drop back. Though gravity is the primary force at work as the leg comes back, if the focus is on the gravitational pull, it may create a bounce in the body. If however, you keep the focus on the root, the force will be transferred into the ground and you will remain more stable.

COMPLETION/TRANSACTION: If you feel a sense of relief on completion of the move you were probably anxious about it before you even started; aim for this relaxation before you begin the move. This move above all requires strict adherence to the Tai Chi principles. It is a great chance to hone your skills. Whether the leg is being lifted high or you are stepping out comfortably low, the only difference will be the mechanics and, most importantly, the mind-set. Always have the intention of moving into balance.



A body unbound from unnecessary tension is at liberty to respond to gravity with 'free' support from the ground upwards; to effortlessly 'inflate' in all directions with fluid stability and elastic movement potential

Am I in a Tai Chi Trance?



I was recently rereading a book entitled “My voice will go with you – Teaching tales of Milton Erickson”. When I reached the chapter discussing research into autohypnosis (trances) in Balinese culture; it seems that the use of trance states is part of their culture even to the point where researchers discovered people would go into a deep trance on their way to the market and stay in a trance through the whole shopping experience. It struck a chord for me as I’m fascinated how trance states occur and are used especially if we consider a trance is not just some sort of stage hypnosis trick, but actually just a focused state of attention/intention. My old tai chi teacher Nigel Sutton often discussed the importance of Martial Spirit - having the correct state of mind (spirit) in training and application - as essential in proper development. A friend and exceptional martial artist,

Chris Parker, talked about going into trance whilst he practiced Silat, and there are many more examples I could quote.

With the Balinese research they found that people would start with body-orientation movement that involved closing their hands, attempting to stand on tip-toes etc. to connect to the here and now through getting reacquainted with their body. The movements acted both as awareness exercise and as a trigger for the trance state they wanted to access. It is the same process that is used in mindful meditation and even chi-kung to create/access the relaxed state of awareness.

With all this in mind, am I in a tai chi trance and what does that mean? The first movement in the Cheng Man Ching form is ‘Preparation’ – preparing yourself and becoming body-orientated; from here we move into beginning. At first beginners are more focussed on just remembering the sequence but with practice preparation and beginning set the tone for the sequence to come and the intention set is played through; maybe you practice your form for balance, for flow, for spatial awareness, for connectedness, for martial application or any one of many possibilities and as you do the mindful attention is your developing tai chi trance. Maybe you use your imagination to play with ‘what if’ scenarios of defending against attackers or walking through an uneven terrain or working with the air around you as if you’re swimming in it.

All of this mindful play is your tai chi trance development. What trance do you enter when practicing tai chi weapon forms? What trance do you enter when practicing sword-play? How about push-hands? A push-hands trance can enable you to give up to the flow of the interplay so as to enable your unconscious mind to learn and hone your body skills with your conscious fears and disbeliefs removed. Being in a trance does not mean not paying attention; have you ever considered your daily journey to work which follows virtually the same route every time and how you often don’t even remember making that journey yet you still arrive safely as usual; if some part of you was not aware then how do you do it? Some of you may be aware that I am trained in hypnotherapy, NLP and CBT. Through my training and experience, I have found that its people’s conscious fears and beliefs, in the most, that cause them to have problems. In tai chi it is people’s conscious limiting beliefs that prevent them from learning or progressing as

their inner nay-sayer gets in the way. Yet when we change our focus of attention and develop the tai chi trance, it bypasses cognitive resistance and lets the inner explorer free.

Please practice to develop your tai chi trance and experience new levels of tai chi skill as you suspend conscious disbelief. Your unconscious mind already knows far more than you realise so set it free and enjoy your journey.



Charity Donations 2022

Each year around this time we donate to several charities. There are no administration costs incurred from Mark & Jenny for the running of Kai Ming & Painting the Rainbow, instead they donate in the name of the Association to the very worthwhile charities. This year they have given to

Smile Train

<https://www.smiletrain.org.uk/>

Sight Savers

<https://donate.sightsavers.org>

Guide dogs to the blind

<https://www.guidedogs.org.uk/>

Happy Fields

<https://www.happyfieldsanimalsanctuary.com/>

Salvation Army

<https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/>

Donkeys (SPANAs)

<https://spana.org/>

Bears Asia

<https://www.animalsasia.org/>

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.

Sessions are 9.30-12.30 at £30 per person.

2022 dates are:

Feb 20th

March 6th

April 10th

May 8th

June 12th

September 3rd & 4th (weekend camp)

Oct 9th

Nov. 20th

Dec. 4th

This poem was submitted by Robert Taylor from our Little Aston tai chi class. Never has it been so true as now.

NATURE'S REVENGE

I am nature, I always find some way to restore my gifts
which you try to take away,

My laws are immutable, to many they are inscrutable,

Those that seek them sound dull as they speak them, to
voice a warning of destruction you've been spawning,

I sculpted your world in cycles of wonder, little knowing its
riches you would wish to plunder,

A warning sign was needed to make you stop and think
that between me and life and you there is a fragile link,

I am nature, my laws must have their way; for the cycles to
continue there is a price to pay,

My gifts and treasure you cannot measure in ways that
you would spend,

So live in harmony with my laws and perhaps you'll
comprehend!