



Kai Ming Association Newsletter

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Tai Chi Camp August 2014

The camp was over two days with the first day focusing on tai chi weapons and the second on form and function. The event started with a minor glitch as the alarm wouldn't turn off and I found a new use for an old t-shirt which I used to block off the alarm sounder....

The plan was to spend as much time as possible outdoors, topping up the tan and training in the fresh air. It was great to see both regular and new students attending, plus people outside of our club including old friends like Cici and new ones like Margaret and Kevin.

With the focus on tai chi weapons function we started with the straight sword using the 13 sword secret form developed by Master Tan Ching Ngee to better understand the key straight sword energies both with the sword and empty-hand in Cheng Man Ching tai chi form. I love sword sparring as does my teacher Master Tan and his teacher Grand-master Cheng so it was wonderful to have the opportunity to practice this in free-play as well as looking at sparring as a vehicle for better understanding the key energies of the sword. I could have spent the whole day just working on that but it seemed a bit selfish on my part so we took it forward into the broad-sword next.

The energy and application of the broad-sword is completely different with its focus on slashing, hacking and coiling rather than the flitting delicate movements of the straight-sword. With lots of opportunity to practice locks and throws, grasping and seizing your opponent. Again practicing applications both with

weapons and empty hand bought more facets to this jewel of tai chi.

As we paused for lunch we had chance to reflect on what we had learnt in the morning before picking up the walking stick and fan in the afternoon.

Jenny excelled herself with the wonderful lunch she organised. There was plenty of choice for both meat eaters and vegetarians; I particularly enjoyed the salmon quiche.

The afternoon opened up with the tai chi walking stick (cane) which I know was Kevin's main reason for attending the day. I initially learnt the form from Nigel Sutton and more recently developed a short form to make it more accessible for students as a modern day weapon. My box of 'loaner' walking sticks are repurposed NHS walking sticks complete with rubber ferrule as not everyone had their own rattan walking stick. As we practiced the form and applications it was truly enjoyable to watch people flowing from move to move, becoming more comfortable with what can be seen as an everyday item. The cane as the flavour of the swords plus striking of stick and staff forms. The bonus prize is using the crook (hook) to lock, trap and hook various parts of the body. How cool must it have been in Victorian times when a cane was often just a fashion accessory yet had such versatility.

The day was bought to a close with fan practice. The fan form we teach was originally developed by Master Tan Ching Ngee and based on the Cheng Man Ching form plus his experience in Hsing-I and tai chi weapons. I developed a short form from this to give an introduction and chance to practice some of the key elements of fan application.

Sundays session was focussed on mindful practice of tai chi and I worked with prof. Cheng's eight exercises for health plus Huang's five loosening exercises as tools

to develop new perspectives on our tai chi form.

It was a lovely sunny day and there was a good mix of abilities and experience. Prof Cheng's eight exercises for health are little known in the UK so it was great to breath new life into this aspect of his work. We also played with martial applications as you can see from the demonstration of embrace tiger return to mountain in the photograph.



Many were amazed at how effortless application could be through the natural application of compression. Playing with this in the form did make our legs ache but paid back ten-fold.

Those who were new to attending the annual camp, and maybe even relatively new to tai chi, found a new vigour and commitment to tai chi which made it all worthwhile.

I'm looking forward to the next advanced Sunday classes on 14th September and 12th October to see how the August camp has impacted levels; maybe even to see some new faces motivated by that great weekend.



Club Membership

What's in it for me?

Like all registered and professional organisations/associations, membership is a requirement for all students and instructors alike. Your membership includes so much more than just insurance and registration, it gives you the confidence that you are part of something real and sustainable. Kai Ming was first formed in 1995 and continues to provide high quality and enjoyable tai chi and chikung training.

We want to ensure that membership is not just a requirement but actually has tangible benefits to everyone so included in your membership fee is the monthly newsletters, discount on workshops, discounts on DVD's, discounts on club clothing and more. In fact as of the 1st April 2014 new members will pay £20 per person which includes a FREE red Kai Ming Tai Chi t-shirt; if you feel you missed out on this offer as you are renewing this year then you can renew for £25 to include the T-shirt (annual renewals without the t-shirt will be £18). Club t-shirts are normally £10 for members and £15 for non-members.



Every new student can attend 4 or 5 classes to ensure you are enjoying tai chi before you commit to paying membership, but please be aware that all students do have to take out membership to continue to attend classes. Once you have signed up you will start to receive the benefits; the discount on DVD's alone or even the annual camp in August makes the membership pay for itself so don't miss out...

I realise that I am repeating information that I have put in the newsletter previously, however some students still seem unclear. If after reading it again you have any further questions or concerns regarding this charge please contact me by phone or e-mail, as although your instructor is only too happy to chat about the membership charge it may take up time in the class which is a little unfair to them and other students, and my wife tells me I have PLENTY of free time (I wish)



RAINBOWS END — PART 2

Continued from last newsletter.

In the old Chinese tradition, he [Master Huang] never demonstrated the full extent of his abilities, especially the more internal ones.

When asked why, he said he didn't demonstrate more of them because many people doubted the things he did show, so the chance of many people being able to appreciate his deeper skills was very small.

He did on occasions, in the presence of small numbers of his old students, show some of these things, but on this subject I will for the same reason say no more. Let those who wish to doubt him do so and those with an open mind investigate further.

Like all genuine teachers who teach from their own experience, his teaching sometimes seemed opposite to other accepted methods, but the results always spoke for themselves. In the form, while most teachers stressed the postures themselves, he stressed the changes that occur in moving from one posture to another and, in later years, said the training method of holding postures went against the principle of constant change and could teach bad habits and interfere with the free flow of ch'i, although holding postures can also produce many good effects and he used it extensively in his younger days.

Taiji tui shou (push hands) was his favourite practice and entertainment. The more subtle and skilful you could be against him, the more he would laugh and return the compliment.

When some people insisted on relying on the external factors of strength and speed, substituting the desire to win for the opportunity to learn, their experience would be a short one and often a painful one.

Throughout the 70 years over which he developed his skills, he constantly sought to refine and internalize them through hours of daily practice and original thought.

Over the last 20 years of his life, I saw the physical movements he used being withdrawn from his legs and arms and then being concentrated and minimized within the centre of his body until at the last, it would appear to all but the most experienced eye that he would yield, neutralize and issue with no visible changes.

This is the stage of pure mind intention (Yi) and all the genuine internal masters have this to some degree.

But at the same time, a more important refinement was taking place un-noticed by most but he attempted to explain it on occasions. It involved REMOVING the intention, or Yi, from the process of issuing energy so that the issuing phase appeared naturally and spontaneously during the sinking and letting go of the mind with the result that it felt both to his mind and the others involved that the receiver of his energy threw themselves. Such was his humour that once he lined us all up and had us marching on the spot and said that was what all people were doing each day, marching toward their own death.

Then he would pull a few people out and move them farther down the line, explaining that these were people who practiced Tai Chi and that while nobody could stop marching toward their death, they could move a little farther back down the queue!!!

Do not stare into the eyes of your opponent; he may mesmerize you.

Do not fix your gaze on his sword: he may intimidate you.

Do not focus on your opponent at all: he may absorb your energy.

The essence of training is to bring your opponent completely into your sphere.

Then you can stand just where YOU like!

Book of Songs, Zhou Dynasty.



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.

We also had Christmas meal at lunchtime rather than in the evening which was really well received so we are planning this year to be a lunchtime event too. The date will be Sunday 14th December and the time 2pm.

We need £5 per person minimum deposit ASAP and the balance no later than 30th November

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



THE SKILLS & ESSENTIALS OF YANG STYLE TAIJI BOXING
and
MARTIAL ARTS DISCUSSIONS
by Huang Wenshu [Yuanxiu]
[published by Martial Arts United Monthly Magazine Society, June 15, 1936]
[translation by Paul Brennan, June, 2014]

PUSHING HANDS

Pushing hands is the testing ground of Taiji Boxing. This has already been explained, but here are three further things to pay attention to in the course of it:

1. You must not be competitive. People who are of a similar mentality will naturally improve each other in a friendly way. They will slightly frustrate each other's movements as they go back and forth, but as there is no winner or loser,

triumph or disgrace, to speak of, there will not be any sense of dispute or envy.

2. You must not be reckless. The marvels of Taiji lie in skillfulness rather than ferocity. It says in the Taiji classics [Wang Zongyue]: "Examine the phrase 'four ounces moves a thousand pounds', which is clearly not a victory obtained through strength." If ferocity is being relied on, the way of Taiji Boxing is not being studied.

3. You must not seek to embarrass others. People who are of a similar mentality should all love each other and help each other. Toward one who is my superior, I should politely seek his guidance. Toward one who is my inferior, I should cordially offer him pointers. There is a saying [Book of Poetry, Poem 184]: "The stones from other mountains can carve just as well." And so I will not bully one who is weaker than



Sunscreen for the sensitive soul

David Jones recently sent me this recipe for homemade sunscreen for people with sensitive skin so I thought I'd would share his email with you

"I've found an excellent liquid soap called Dr Bronners Magic Soap- interesting stuff. A little goes a long way. There is at least one commercially available sunscreen, at about £14 a tube. However I found a recipe to make your own from simple ingredients, all of which are available on eBay.

I've made some up; the recipe makes three 60 ml tubs. It seems fine but rather on the solid side. If I make any more I'd add more coconut oil to make it easier to apply. I thought you might find the recipe useful to share".

The recipe and 'how to' guide can be found at: <http://bit.ly/humblesunscreen>

Troubleshooting:

You may find it easier to apply this sunscreen if you pour it into a tube (such as an empty deodorant tube or lip balm tube).

If you live in colder climates you may want to add less beeswax and more coconut oil.

If you live in hotter climates you may want to add more beeswax and less coconut oil.

If you don't like the consistency of this sunscreen, you can remelt it and add either more beeswax (to make it harder) or coconut oil (to make it softer).

There you have it—your very own homemade DIY natural sunscreen!

Not up for another DIY project? You can purchase this sunscreen, along with all of our other natural homemade skin products, in their online store!



CZERWONA KAPUSTA (Russian red cabbage casserole) for 4-5 people

Ingredients

- 1 small red cabbage 2 large onions.
- 12 oz streaky bacon
- 4 dessert apples. (unpeeled)
- 1-2 tablespoons vinegar or lemon juice (depending on personal taste)
- 1-2 oz brown sugar depending on taste.
- 3 oz butter
- Seasoning
- 1 pint water.

Put the vinegar and a little seasoning into the pan of boiling water

Shred cabbage, discarding outer leaves and core, and add gradually to the boiling water, then cook until just tender. It is better to undercook this at this stage , as cabbage loses colour and flavour if too soft.

Meanwhile peel and cut the onions into rings, fry in half the butter until just tender, lift out of the pan.

Add another ½ oz butter and fry the chopped bacon until tender, together with the cored, sliced apples, do not peel them.

Recipe continued....

You can then either blend the cabbage with the onions, bacon, apples, extra butter, sugar and more seasoning and continue cooking until very tender, lifting lid so extra liquid evaporates.

OR

Put the strained cabbage in layers in a casserole with onions etc, then top with extra butter and sugar, cover and cook for approx 45 minutes.

Makes a great autumn warmer and you could add some nice crusty garlic bread on the table to eat with it.

Training Dates

We hold monthly advanced training session in South Birmingham.

9.30 to 12.30 (3 hours) - £25

Dates for 2014

14th Sept

12th Oct

9th Nov

7th December.

Sometimes when we're practicing and teaching Huang's five exercises in class, exercise number five can seem a little less clear than the others. I tracked down this article and thought I'd share it with you.

"True Transmission of Taiji Principles"

by Master Li Ya-Hsuan (Student of Yang Cheng-Fu).

Here he argues for the vertical lifting and sinking which produces the vertical circle and the true 3 dimensional circularity of movement. (Unedited translation).



1. Although there are hundreds of styles of boxing, in fact, they are all different ways of exercising according to a few key principles. Of the key principles, the most valuable is agility. The more agile the boxer, the more capable the boxer, yet agility is not a term often considered in taiji.

2. In the writings about Taijiquan (Tai Chi Chuan), many authors emphasize that a

boxing set must be performed from start to finish at a fixed higher or lower. Continuously performing a set at a fixed height forces the three large joints of the leg to operate in an extremely unnatural position, to the extent that it becomes impossible to develop the legs to their full potential. This kind of practice makes it easy for the leg to develop a kind of rigid strength, but it becomes impossible to develop natural elasticity. Therefore, when issuing energy, one can only push forward with the back leg. The resultant force is deliberate and unnatural, so the speed of movement will be slow and the result will seldom be satisfactory. This is the reason so many people practice so many years and are still unable to issue energy of the effect of the energy issued is poor.

3. Of those who advocate doing forms at a fixed height, most believe this is the only way to keep the centre from floating up, and of sinking the chi to the tan tien, in order to stabilize the body. What must be made clear is that the chi sinking to the tan is a natural occurrence, and not the result of purposely forcing the air down. In regard to stability, this must be "stability in agility". Through relaxation of the whole body, the centre will naturally sink and the whole body will be stable. This "stability in agility" is not the same as forcing the centre down. If one forces the centre to sink in order to be stable, then the elasticity of the legs will be lost.

4. The theory of practicing a boxing set at a fixed height, without moving higher or lower, has no basis in the boxing classics.

5. Tai Chi Chuan is circular in form. This circularity is three dimensional. Seen from any angle, the movements are curves. If a set is performed at a fixed height, without moving higher or lower, then the movements of the waist and hip will be limited to two-dimensional (flat) movement.

6. The boxing classics say "as soon as one moves, every part of the body must be light and agile." If one performs a boxing contraction of the upper and lower body, and elasticity is completely lost; then can one be light and agile? Besides this, it has been observed that performing sets at a fixed height with no variation has led to varying degrees of knee injuries. This is in opposition to the results of being naturally relaxed.

7. A boxing set should be performed with the head continuously floating up while the body continuously sinks. The first half of every posture lifts (during inhalation) while the second part sinks (during exhalation). Moreover, this sinking of the body comes about naturally due to the sinking of the chi internally. During the sinking of the chi, the opening or rounding of the "tang" (crotch area) causes the energy to sink to the soles of the feet. The soles of the feet will feel tightly compressed to the ground and the energy will be able to pass between the feet. The kung fu produced will be natural and relaxed and when issuing energy, the legs will have tremendous power, speed and the force generated will be sudden and crisp. This force will be much greater than the force generated by pushing forward with the back leg.

8. Pushing forward with the back produces an indirect force and is deliberate and thus unnatural. This kind of force is out of harmony with principles of nature. On the other hand, the energy obtained by sinking is a direct force, produced by elasticity and rebound power. In addition, the energy produced by sinking can be issued instantaneously with only a thought.



Tai chi in the Park.

The program is growing so quickly we can hardly keep up. We now have 16 sessions running for FREE in parks across the city and more to roll out as the work spreads. Although some programs may close in October, Tai Chi seems to breed more hardy people and we've never closed except for a Christmas break and one week of heavy snow.

One-to-one Private lessons

- ◆ Are you interested in more indepth training?
- ◆ Want to work on specific aspects?
- ◆ develop a deeper understanding?

Maybe one-to-one sessions are for you. Call Mark for details on

07831 743737