



Kai Ming Association Newsletter

call: 07831 743737

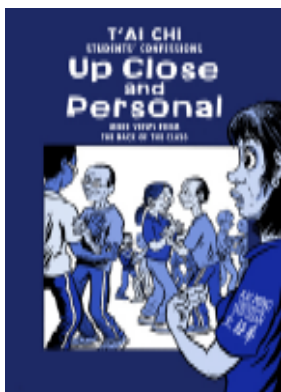
<http://www.kaiming.co.uk>

e-mail us: markpeters@kaiming.co.uk



View From The Back Of The Class now available on Kindle. It's been a long journey but at long last our first tai chi book is now available on Kindle. If you're interested please search on Amazon or email for a sample chapter and index page.

We are now working on volume 2 (**Tai Chi Up Close and Personal, more views from the back of the class**)



which will be available later this year and maybe even volume 3 not to long after that. We'd love to hear from you if you'd like to contribute to the books. The theme is to share experiences from different perspectives (student, teacher and even partner) as we feel this brings tai chi into reality and within the reach of everyone. Our books are not form instruction or technical manuals, but a fun and interesting look at our tai chi journey and experiences.

We're looking for articles, poems, illustrations, both fun and serious, so everybody who's life has been touched by tai chi has something to share.

No Ordinary Days...

There are days in our lives that start out like any other day and then something unexpected happens that turns them into a time to remember and occasionally you end up feeling it was touched by magic.

A day in March around the early 90's was such a time and I thought I would share it with you in the newsletter.

When we moved in to our first house together in the 80's it was quite near a green space where we walked the dogs.

As we were thinking about making a form video we thought why not include a few outdoor scenes as the weather seemed quite sunny and settled.

So the next time we took the dogs for a run the video camera and tripod came with us.

It was a lovely day and as we arrived at the "mini park" we chatted about what good shots we would get.

We set the camera up on the tripod after finding a great backdrop between some trees that we felt would convey a good feeling of space and movement within it. I put the dogs back on their leads and foolishly hooked the end loops under my foot to tether them whilst I was filming. (At this point you are probably ahead of me!!!)

After several false starts I was happy with the opening stances and so we decided that Mark would run through the whole form and video it and then if not happy after we viewed it we would repeat.

After having to stop once when the dogs saw a squirrel and thought they would give it a run for its money up a tree and I ended up with the tripod etc on top of me on the floor! (You knew this was going to happen didn't you, as soon as I said the loop went over my foot) we began a "Take".

I think we had probably got somewhere near the end of the first part of the form when the skies started to darken and a strange breeze came from know where. Mark carried on moving slowly and purposefully lost in the feeling of the outdoors and focusing on his breathing.

As I watched through the view finder I noticed the breeze was increasing and suddenly something that looked like snowflakes!!! drifted down across the lens.

I stood up and looked over to where Mark was, and to my surprise saw that it was indeed SNOWING. !

As I watched, within maybe a few minutes the wind picked up and the snow poured from the skies. It was amazing. From a still, sunny bright day it had become a winter snow scene, and as Mark continued the form I found he could be likened to a figure in a shaken snow globe; almost surreal but certainly "magical".

Although the video would not be suitable for the one we were making, because at times the snowfall was so "gusting" you could hardly see him, Mark decided to continue just for the experience.

When we watched the film later that day it confirmed the strange change of elements within minutes.

Mark likes to believe the strong "Chi" he evoked from his form had some influence on it, and I admit it was very, very strange but "Chi?" who knows.

Whatever it was, whenever it comes into my thoughts it still feels a strange magical occurrence on an otherwise ordinary day.

By Jenny Peters



Following on from our last newsletter, here is an interpretation on a line from the classics by one of our instructors.

"Being able to attract to emptiness, you will be able to use four ounces to deflect a thousand pounds".

A quote from the tai chi classics, but what does it really mean?

Using four ounces to deflect a force of a thousand pounds is a common image in tai chi. It is often used to explain how tai chi works as a martial art.

It evokes the image of some kind of mystical power, Cheng man Ching defeating much bigger opponents with a simple move, or is used to explain how your instructor can apply locks, blocks and strikes with apparent ease.

This means that people focus on the second half of the sentence, but in many ways the first is the key.

The passage is quite clear, it goes on...

“Not being able to attract to emptiness, you will not be able to use four ounces to deflect a thousand pounds”

So, unless you can “attract into emptiness” deflecting a thousand pounds will remain elusive.

This is why I want to focus on the meaning of leading an opponent into emptiness.

One meaning of attracting into emptiness is that no matter how strong your opponent, his power is wasted if it does not reach you.

If you lure your opponent into committing his force, by offering him a target, then remove the target his strike will miss, causing him to lose balance.

Examples in the form are plentiful. Roll back, Pull down and parry being the easiest to accomplish.

There are other examples not related to tai chi. Think of Bugs Bunny, running up a hill straight over a cliff. He is quite literally in emptiness, still running for a moment until he realises his predicament.



Attracting into emptiness could as simple as using a distraction technique. Humour, for example. I have heard of Catherine Tate’s character Lauren Cooper (am I bovvered?) Used to make a school bully laugh, thereby saving the victim.

Alternatively, you could distract someone by asking a question. Muggers sometimes use this, for example, asking their target the time before striking.

Another method of luring an opponent onto your strike range is to feign weakness or injury. Commonly used by Disney villains and therefore seen as a negative trait.

In essence, you are setting a trap and waiting for your opponent to fall into it.

In conclusion, “attract him into emptiness” could be paraphrased as “use all the weapons in your armoury, including dirty tricks and you will be able to defeat a stronger enemy”.

By Josie Upson - Instructor



SIMPLE INTRODUCTION TO TAIJI BOXING

by Xu Zhiyi

[translation by P. Brennan, Aug, 2014]

Part 2.... (continued from Feb issue.)

B. ITS MARTIAL ASPECTS

1. It uses stillness to overcome movement.

The Art of War [chapter 6] talks a great deal about empty versus full. Boxing arts do likewise, but emptiness and fullness in boxing arts have more to do with energy rather than posture. I am already aware of my own state of emptiness and fullness, but if the opponent is storing energy and has not yet expressed it, I have no way of knowing the condition of his emptiness and fullness. It is therefore the worst moment for me to attack. I should be allowed extra room to manoeuvre, and then if I gently advance, I will turn the tables on him and take advantage of the situation. Such is the way in Taiji Boxing. I must allow the opponent to be the first to issue energy, awaiting his approach. Using his moment of coarseness, I respond with smoothness, the technique being that of receiving, drawing him into my trap and thereby gaining control over him. (From song on push-hands: “Guiding him in to land on nothing, I then close on him and send him away.”) Always and with ease he will be made to fall away. As the saying goes: [Art of War, chapter 3] “Knowing both self and opponent, in a hundred battles you will have a hundred victories.” The secret to all this is to use stillness to overcome movement.

2. It uses softness to overcome hardness.

When we begin to discuss energies in boxing arts, we typically try to explain their true meanings. Therefore the distinction between hardness and softness gets explained via the passive and active aspects. But the meaning of those two terms is so broad, indeed utterly general, that beginners rarely have no confusion over their vagueness.

Basically, any kind of energy that has an element of resistance will pay no attention to how large or small the opponent’s energy is, and this should always be considered hard energy. On the other hand, any kind of energy that is able to follow the opponent’s energy flexibly contains no element of resistance, and this should always be considered soft energy. The key to soft energy is elasticity. If you are without this quality when you encounter an opponent, you will have no hope of recovering your position. Such an energy can be called “lifeless”. Hard energy tries to win through strength, and so when it encounters strength, it inevitably breaks down. Although the source of its failure is different from that of lifeless energy, the result is the same. It can be seen that using softness to meet hardness would be comparable to a contest of lively energy [elastic softness] versus lifeless energy [inelastic softness]. In determining victory and defeat, there should be no predicting between them. In Taiji Boxing, “the magic lies in making adjustments based on being receptive to the opponent” (from the Thirteen Dynamics Song). It basically comes down to this principle, but for those who do not practice this art, such words may seem mystical.

3. It uses the smaller to defeat the larger.

When Taiji Boxing is used to defeat opponents, it always uses a smaller force to defeat a larger force. The skill it applies lies in formlessness and is always rooted in the science of mechanics. When issuing, either first make the opponent lose control of his balance or make use of the principle of net force and then seize the opportunity to attack. Therefore you will not need a large force and the opponent will automatically topple away. The subtlety of these things is something

that can only be dreamt of by those who try to win by using hardness in striking and advancing.

4. It uses smoothness to avoid harm.

In Taiji Boxing, there are two ways of applying energy: yielding and sticking. Yielding is for neutralizing the opponent, then sticking is for controlling him. As they both make use of each other, they are able to alternate without limit. Every kind of movement in Taiji Boxing makes a rounded shape. Within one of its curves are infinite occasions for yielding and sticking. Act according to the situation, relying entirely on sensation. The most important principle is to never depart from the concept of smoothness.

When dealing with an opponent, if you are not being soft, then you are being hard. If you are being hard, then you will be acting with coarseness against the opponent's energy rather than using smoothness to go along with it. If your energy is not smooth, you will have no way to yield. If you do not yield, you will have no way to neutralize. If you do not neutralize, you will have no way to stick. If you do not stick, you will have no way to sense the opponent's changes. If you carelessly advance, you are not examining the status of the opponent and are liable to be deflected away or suddenly crushed by a large force, and those who have not happened to be injured through such circumstances often do not quite grasp that it is by use of smooth energy that harm is prevented.

C. ITS OTHER ASPECTS

1. Everyone can practice it.

The reasons Taiji Boxing can be practiced by everyone are outlined below:

I. All of its postures are natural, balanced, simple, and do not require any effort. Therefore it can be practiced even by women and children, or by the old and weak.

II. Its martial applications focus entirely on suppleness and yielding, never seeking to win through strength. Therefore it can be practiced even by those who have a martial ambition but are embarrassed by an inadequate physical strength.

III. It is particularly effective at treating illness. Therefore it can be practiced

even by the physically weak, chronically ill, and those who are worried they have a disease that may be incurable.

IV. As it emphasizes intention rather than what it looks like, it can be practiced alongside other boxing arts without creating any hindrance.

Therefore it can be practiced even by those who also love practicing external styles, although the order of practice during a session has to be: external arts first, followed by Taiji.

V. It emphasizes gradual progress. To practice it each morning and evening is really not very time-consuming. (If your ambition is self-cultivation, you only need to go through the solo set once each morning and evening, and the set only takes about ten minutes. If you are training for fighting, doing pushing hands for thirty minutes every day will give you no small benefit.) Therefore it can be practiced even by those who do not have much free time.

VI. As its movements are very quiet, it will not disturb other people when practiced, and it also does not use very much space. Therefore it can be practiced even while travelling.

2. It is easier to practice.

Typically when practicing martial arts, what is most emphasized is drilling the techniques. Training in other boxing arts involves two people being unyielding with each other. This very easily gives rise to dangerous situations in which the more timid person can no longer stand it and falls down in pain. This kind of thing is not what we want. Taiji Boxing has its pushing hands methods for drilling how to deal with an opponent. These methods focus on training awareness and emphasize neutralizing rather than attacking. Since the movements are not rash actions and the power is not ferocious, it assuredly lacks the risk of becoming dangerous. And therefore it is the easiest to practice.

3. It is highly enjoyable.

Since every kind of movement in Taiji Boxing makes a rounded shape, there is everywhere within one of its curves a switching between emptiness and fullness.

In the beginning of the training, you will not comprehend these transformations and will naturally be without any sense of emptiness or fullness. But after you have practiced over a long period, your alternating between emptiness and fullness will naturally be able to fit every situation.

Tai Chi Summer Camp 1 & 2 August

Hopwood Community Centre, Redditch Road. Hopwood (J2, M42)

Following the success of last year's tai chi camp, I'm planning to follow the same format of *themed days* and pricing. Speak to your instructor or contact Mark on 0121 251 6172 for more details and to book.

Current plans are outlined below, but I'm always open to suggestions and requests.



Saturday will focus on Tai Chi walking stick; you will learn the walking stick form and applications. The walking stick is an excellent and practical weapon for our modern times, it is both graceful and practical.

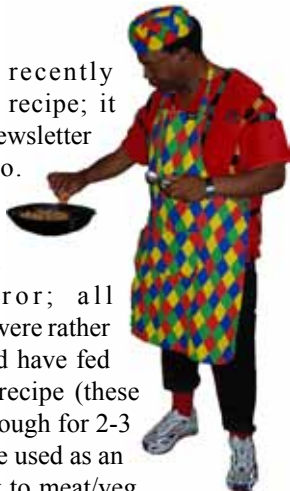


Sunday will be form to function where you will have the opportunity to review the 'wheres and whys' the Cheng Man Ching form is structured the way it is, professor Cheng's focus on being upright and Sung (relaxed). I will apply the concept of 'teaching by inches' to highlight whole-body connection, plus the ripple and role effect of 'one part moves all must move' from the classics. Form to Function will give you the opportunity to explore the applications of both stillness and movement in practical self-defence, be that in daily life or against an opponent.

Rice & Peas (using Aduki Beans)

by Don Craig

I have been recently asked for this recipe; it was in a past newsletter some time ago. For those who remember, there was a slight error; all measurements were rather large and would have fed an army. This recipe (these measures) is enough for 2-3 people. It can be used as an accompaniment to meat/veg with a sauce or on its own.



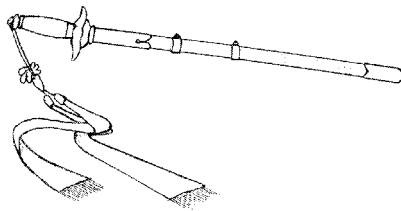
Ingredients

100g Aduki beans
200g basmati rice
½ tsp dried thyme or 4 sprigs of fresh
1 bay leaf
¼ tsp or more of chilli powder
¼ tsp black pepper
40g coconut cream from a block
1 tsp salt
400ml of aduki bean liquid (made up with water)

Instructions

Wash the aduki beans, add water, and leave to soak overnight
Add more water and bring to the boil in a saucepan; reduce heat and simmer for about an hour until the beans are tender (not mushy). Keep topping up with water as required.
Measure 200mg Basmati rice (1 cup) and rinse.
Drain the aduki bean liquid into a measuring jug or cup and put the beans to one side.
Make up the aduki bean liquid to 400mls equivalent to two cups or twice the volume of the basmati rice.
Put the liquid back into the saucepan, add the thyme, bay leaf, chilli powder, black pepper and coconut cream; bring to the boil.
Taste – to your liking, remember to allow enough extra salt to accommodate the rice.
Add the basmati rice, cover, bring to the boil
Add the aduki beans, stir, cover and bring to the boil.
Reduce the heat to very low.
After 15/20 minutes remove from the heat and let it stand for a few minutes. Remove lid and fluff up.
Have a go, play around with the amount of coconut cream, chilli and thyme to suit

your taste. Don't be put off if you make an error... Enjoy
I'll do my best to bring you more recipes in future issues so please do remind me as I know Mark will.



Sharing a story from a fellow tai chi player and students of our Tamworth class

Tamworth Branch – RNLI Award

A big 'Hi' to all fellow Tai Chi enthusiasts, just wanted to let everyone know of my recent Bronze Badge award, the certificate presented to me states that I received the award in recognition of my valuable support of the lifeboat service. For which I was delighted and very proud to receive.

I have always supported the RNLI by popping a £1 here and there whenever visiting the coast. Then to my surprise I found out that there are local RNLI Branches throughout the country, not just by the sea. So I joined the Tamworth Branch in 2008 as secretary and committee member. For the last 3 years I have held the position of Members Secretary looking after our branches members database and keeping head office up to date with changes. The Tamworth Branch is very active and we have a number of fund raising events each year. As an inland branch our associated coastal lifeboat station is Barrow-in-Furness. In 2011 following a successful local fund-raising appeal, we provided Barrow with a £31,000 D class lifeboat named 'Vision of Tamworth'

In July last year another branch member and I did the Morecombe Bay Walk, it was amazing and fortunately the weather was on our side. With sponsorship from family, friends and of course generosity of John, Lynne and my Tai Chi buddies in Tamworth I personally raised £250.

I know I should have taken a picture of me doing tai chi in Morecombe Bay but it slipped my mind this time. With regard to the Tai Chi Walking, I used the technique when I was walking on a very

slippery tiled footpath in Rhodes last year. The tiles were treacherous and I was continuously losing my footing, then I remembered Tai Chi Walking and found that the tiles didn't bother me again, it was really good.

I am the happy person on the left in the photograph.

Jean Arnold



Training tips

Many think of *double-weightedness* as having your weight in both legs rather than being 'single-weighted' with the majority of your weight in one leg, creating a sound axis. Well this is true, but not the whole picture; we need to overcome double weighted in the mind as well. An easy example of this would be having a conversation with somebody where you are both talking regardless of what the other is saying ie both having your own mind/conversation; you must have experienced this at some time...

Another example would be in martial practice when we decide the application we will use regardless of the attach applied; generally we fudge it with a little brute force and good luck. Listening is an essential skill in life and as we practice a life art, why should it be any different. 'Giving up to follow others' is a good example of listening as is my old favourite, "Shut up, I'm talking". Well, OK, I am the instructor...

How many times do you try to push with no output except losing balance yourself; maybe try again and listen to the other person first. Build an interaction, blend with your partner, take part in the interaction and DO NOT impose yourself in anyway on the other party. Train to be single-weighted, open, adaptable and balance (both physically and mentally). Learn to understand what and who we are.

I realise this can sound a little heavy, but no need for it to be. Make it fun; by playing games of interaction on class you'll find it filters into your everyday life; maybe you'll even become a better conversationalist.