



## Kai Ming Association Newsletter

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### The Journey of the Patient Warrior!



So you're in position! Poised and ready with your opponents all around you!

You initiate contact and push forward. Meeting resistance you assert your centreline a little more; trying to fill that space. You know the one? the space you need to get into in order to get the outcome you want, the outcome you have already planned. But your opponent blocks you!

You get frustrated so you roll back a little and (looking right to move left), try to move round, splitting the oncoming attacking 'limbs', which verbally protest to your presence. Your fixed gaze blinded by flashes of their lightening attacks.

Your "fair ladies hand" provides a gesture in return and reflects your inner turmoil. Your opponent starts off first but you know you can get there first and smile when you see the glint of annoyance in their eyes!!

~~~ And once your journey to work is complete you are again a Tai chi patience boxer (leaving your Porsche Boxter waiting for round two)~~~

Sound Familiar? Is this you? Apart from the Porsche maybe!

Do you marvel at how well you roll back and send your classmate onto tentative toes, accelerating them off into the nearest pile of chairs?

But then get annoyed and frustrated when you jump into your car after class (or walk in busy areas) and drive to work, home or friends. Insisting on where you want to go, who should have right of way and stopping and starting all the way?

OK then! this article is all about my views on how, by reflecting on Tai Chi principles and their use in everyday life, we can extend our practice. Cheng Man Ching said that one of the most important steps you can take is the one after you finish the form. One of Yang Chen Fu's moral codes was to have "a strong finish".

So to keep it simple I want to look at how relaxation, structure, mindfulness and yielding (not doing too much or just doing enough) can be placed into real life scenarios. I have chosen riding/driving and generally moving through human traffic in its usual guises; we all do it in some form or another.

### Some thoughts about riding / driving / walking then?

As a Police driver and daily commuter motorcyclist the use of relaxation and mindfulness is critical.

The use of the word relax is a constant running theme throughout all areas where skill is identified as being of a high level. From darts to riding, golf to running, snooker to . . . well just about anything! Commentators can be heard to say "he/she is so relaxed, it's all flowing" or "what a natural relaxed movement" etc etc.

It's not an easy thing to do; years ago, when I was learning the police system of driving: chasing a 'limit point' round a bend (the furthest distance you can see on the road where two fixed edges converge i.e. kerb) at high speed and being told to relax is about as natural as being told to breath underwater. What helped was years of martial arts training where breathing naturally (deeply) was the key to natural movement and achieving a calm state... The term 'defensive driving' is, in Tai Chi terms, simply a way of yielding (planning), adhering (mentally), relaxing and moving

to the most advantageous position; limiting the danger to you and others.

How involved are you when driving or even walking about? How far and wide do you look?

Do you walk as if "wearing the moon like a cap"?

Try this then... how about relaxing when you get in your car? and being mindful about your actions. Try using your alignment to get in or out even by intrinsic strength and not hanging on to doors or the roof. Aligning foot, ankle, knee, waist allows you to allow your upper body (head suspended) to pour your weight into the car. This sinking into the seat (car or bike) creates a connection with the forces transmitted through the structure and through you.

As in preparation, I breath and sink, and I become aware of thoughts that are NOT directly related to what I am about to undertake. We all carry transferred stress from arguments, work, partner, and children. These nagging stresses try to steal control at all levels.

Concentration does not (should not) have to be all consuming. I have a friend, who, when learning to ride a motorcycle used to concentrate so hard he looked like the "CRAZY FROG", eyes bulging. He tried too hard! When he did "life savers" (a turn of the head to look round into the blind spot) he threw his head towards on-coming traffic with a sacrificial passion. Amazingly, when he passed his test he RELAXED! And stopped!.

If I am in a state of confusion or anger or frustration, how can I possibly anticipate what the other driver (who may be just as riled or un-attentive) is going to do? How can I leave a gap for them to make their mistake and drive on by as they make it? Not bumping into me! How can I peripherally view the ball which bounces into the road and the child who runs after it? How can I respond softly at the

inconsiderate person who is neither bothered about me nor even aware I exist? As in Martial application, health work or mindful practice, there is a flow to this interaction (a being present but not attached) which requires a calm, assertive yet yielding nature.

This applies as much to walking within a crowd. I don't like crowds at the best of times but I do like to practice what I call "extended walking or walk as if no-one is present". My girlfriend and I did this in Birmingham as an experiment and as we approached three lads walking towards us my thoughts were only of extension. I was simply walking into their space without hesitation or fear or tension as the gap closed the lad nearest me suddenly acted as if he had walked into me??? or that I had suddenly appeared in front of them and he apologised. I do admit that it's easier for me to try this as I can make a big apology or arrest if it goes wrong... only joking!!!!!!



When I ride my motorcycle if a car pulls out I imagine that there is a huge sponge round me and it pushes me away or stops me getting too close or speeds me up. This makes me more in tune with my environment at that time. The alternative to go 'hell for leather', without any consideration for anything else. This creates a game of risk where I may well run out of luck. A good saying is that I need to fill my bag of experience before my bag of luck runs out.

Abrupt movement should be avoided because tai chi application gestates in the process of gradual change - yield! stick! connect! release!

In police response driving the aim is to be fluid, not forcing ahead but creating and following a path that allows others to become aware and move, without startling or causing alarm. However, I once drove to a 999 call in a marked police

car and as I slowed down in-between two cars to turn right. I had lights and sirens on and it was a sunny day. I stopped ahead of the driver to my left and made eye contact. That car stopped. The car to my right front stopped; the driver to my left promptly smiled and then drove into the side of my car!

As in partner work, if I place myself in the correct position with a feeling of expansion, without, any relationship feeling or sensitivity then I can become double weighted, fixed and easily moved. If, however, I expand constantly and maintain my relationship, changing position/energy appropriately, I leave no holes or hollows or hard bits to hit.

The alternative is to drive everywhere like Jeremy Clarkson (Top Gear job suspended)... stop! go fast! stop! .. go fast .. turn, stop! Ben Collins (the Stig) says that Clarkson is a fast driver but he is saved by the quality of car he gets to drive; however, not a comfortable experience if you know anyone who does drive like that.

And yes! It's totally an ego thing!

So there is a mind-body connection with an endless variety of outcomes. Bodily wise how do you sit? Where are your hands? , Where do you look? , How do you turn the steering wheel? Are you comfortable and relaxed or tense and fearful?

For me Tai chi can and should infiltrate all our activities, assisting in the connection between mind and body. Driving is another opportunity to practise planning where you want to go but being flexible constantly and going with the flow. If you don't drive then see what happens when you walk through a crowded shopping centre i.e. the Bull Ring, or through your local supermarket or pub.

Can you own and create your own space but yield to avoid the oncoming 'shopping bag to the shin' attack. I like the phrase "don't resist, don't insist".

On the subject of deciding what to do prior to anything happening (i.e. if she punches me I'm going to do 1,2 or 3 !!) instead of being in honest relationship with what is actually happening all round. While working on 'falling away'

movements, my girlfriend was attacking me in a local nature spot! (Yes I know how it sounds!!!) And I decided to drop into Snake Creeps down (worse now!), but because I did it for me, my expectation that she would have to be stopped from flying over my head was destroyed when she simply stopped and looked at me, with that "What the hell are you doing?" look. My feeling of stupidity was compounded when a couple walking their dog appeared round the corner and I looked like I had just fallen out of a tree!!

In summary, the next time you finish playing your form, what is going to be your next step? and be honest with your training.

Article by Ian Anderson



## Married to The Mob!

I am not insinuating by the title of this chapter that Mark is a gangster, in fact the nearest he gets to any sort of violence is to occasionally repulse a monkey or two, creep down with snakes, and regularly returns tigers to assorted mountains, but sometimes being married to a Tai Chi Practitioner who is besotted with the art can bring the wife to perfect low punch early on in the marriage

During one of our monthly training sessions for Instructors and advanced students within the club, Mark talked about his early training in Malaysia, Singapore, and Taiwan, and this brought back lots of memories from years ago. It also made me realise that Tai Chi had been part of our lives for some 30 years.

After finding a teacher who he believed had the background and skills in the Tai Chi style he had chosen, he began travelling to Manchester most weekends to train with him. He advanced quickly because of his dedication and thirst for knowledge, and when the chance to travel to Asia to train with the crème de la crème

of Chen Man Ching style tai chi chuan he couldn't resist.

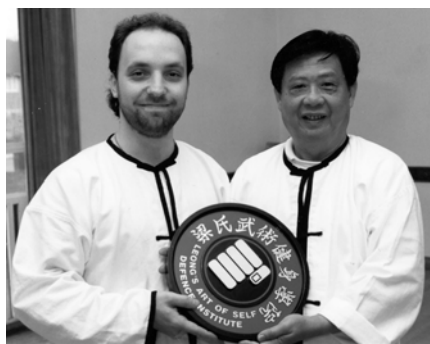
I think the first time he went training with a group of friends, from his then club, he was away for 3 weeks and I would get letters telling me how much he was enjoying spending time with Masters of the art and the interesting things he was learning. The training was very intense. Rising early and practising for hours before the heat of the sun made them retreat indoors for a meal and maybe afternoon sleep. Then back outside when the sun had gone down to continue. 5 hours at a time was not unusual, nor was 10 hours a day.

In the evenings sometime the group would be taken to large eating places where food, drink, and stories abounded. The only downside to this was that one evening he was told "as it's your birthday today you will be expected to pay the bill for the entire group". Having little money to spare at the time after trying to make a quick body count Mark realised that there must be at least 15 people eating and drinking their own body weight at the long table, and wondered what was the worst they could do to him (apart from the embarrassment) if he could not stump up the money. Deciding it would be best not to find out, and that the exits were not an option he was very relieved to find that the bill for all only came to £20!!!

I think maybe Mark should continue the story from here as he was actually there. I heard about the humidity on his first trip and decided it was not for me. After all it was a boy's trip and I would have cramped their style somewhat.

### **Malingering in Malaysia? (no chance)**

When people think of Malaysia they generally think of Penang and beaches. We did have a couple days in Tanjong Kling, Malacca which was beautiful and great fun (I'm not going to share the drunken stories), but I went there to train and Nigel Sutton ensured that's what we did. Nigel lived in Muar with his family. His wife's family lived there along with teachers' Liang He Qing and Tan Seow Theng.



Master Liang was a gentle man, a dentist and an amazing martial artist with lineage to Wong Fei Hong, Yang Cheng Fu and the Jing Wu school. We trained with Master Liang both by the Muar river (5am) and in the courtyard of his senior student. He taught genuinely and openly; I learnt Kwai Taiji, cane form, Chin-Na and Qigong from him. His Chin-Na skills were powerful as he practiced by lifting and turning a shot-put every day for grip. He went to bed early and rose early at 3am to commence his morning practice. When he first taught a westerner he was warned not to so he openly accepted challenges which put an end to that. He believed martial arts are one family and should be shared openly to anyone with good character.

Master Tan is quite a scary man and he likes to present himself that way. He is a master of Fujian Yongchun Wuzuquan (5 Ancestors boxing), Traditional Chinese Medicine, taijiquan and qigong. I remember pushing hands with him, trying my luck and suffering the consequences. I tried to apply a wrist lock and his face changed; he threw me around the room but then was benevolent enough to treat me for my injuries (ha-ha). I wanted to train weapons with him and gained a 1st degree black belt. I also learnt Xiang Gong when assisting him at a public class; the class was held in a playground and he stood on a concrete pillar. I remember asking if it was for balance practice and so people could see easier; he said it was because there were a lot of snakes around that area (ha-ha).

About an hour away was Batu Pahat where I trained with Master Wu Chiang Hsing. He was a calm man, devout Buddhist and ran a clothes shop which reminded me of Fosters Menswear. He taught Tai Chi and I once offended him

when it seemed like I just wanted to learn qigong from him. Nigel said he thought I didn't believe he could fight; truth was I respected him massively and nobody else taught what he did. He accepted this and I trained with him 1-2-1 as well as assisted him to run his 5am qigong classes in a local park. He would arrive in his Proton car with the aircon on 14°C which quite a shock in the 30+°C heat. I set up the huge cassette player and attached it to a car battery. As the music started, students would start to appear as if from the bushes. We would teach for a few hours working through various qigong sets, tai chi forms and weapons. When I went back home I ran a qigong shibashi workshop which was new to the UK and actually funded my next trip to Malaysia.



Nigel accepted an invitation by the Malaysian national push-hands team for us to meet and train. I was relatively new to push-hands but my dedicated practice must have paid off as I was winning matches. Unfortunately, every time I won they just sent out a bigger guy! The last one was so big and I was so tired that I lost a point for leaning on him. In the end I conceded and bowed out; I needed rest and wanted to watch the others for a while.

When not training with Nigel's teachers, he trained us hard and we slept on mattresses on the floor. One day Fong (his wife) said to go into their bedroom and speak to him; I was amazed to find he had a proper bed, a shower and a proper sit-down toilet on-suite. We'd been using the house squat toilet and traditional bathing of throw a bowl of water over yourself!! Great times



We ventured up to Kaula Lumpa, which was a 2 hour drive, to train with Koh At Tee (Xu Shu Song). He opened his home to us including giving us accommodation. He invited us to join him at the prestigious Royal Selangor Golf Club for a class before returning home to practice in his courtyard. He demonstrated his internal strength skills by letting us punch him as hard as we could with no effect. We trained at his night class for hours practicing push-hands until our legs gave out. We were even interviewed on Malaysian TV and featured in local newspapers due to the dedication to travel and train. Master Koh focused on the relaxation (song) emphasised by Grand-Master Cheng Man Ching

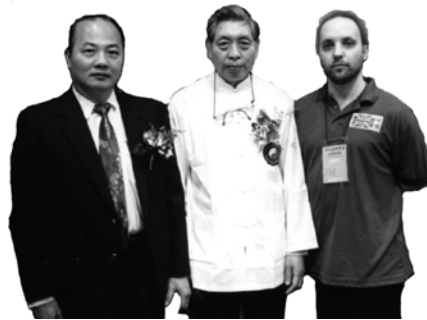
### Segueing in Singapore.

A long 3 hour drive from Muar took me to Grand-Master Tan Ching Ngee in Singapore. Master Tan became a disciple of Grand-Master Cheng Man Ching following an introduction by Ong Zi Chuan. His skills in push-hands are amazing and he is so quick Nigel even secretly nicknamed him 'Swiftly Tan'. I remember pushing-hands with him in his apartment, which is a few floors up. He slid the patio door open, which had no protective rail, and proceeded to push me towards the opening with a big smile on his face; it was a quick exercise on relaxation and footwork and I survived. There are many more stories if you are ever interested but I think that's enough for now.

### Toiling in Taiwan.

I was due to take a group to China when I received a call from Master Tan Ching Ngee asking me to accompany him to Taiwan. I could not refuse as he is my

teacher, and to be honest I was really excited to visit Prof. Cheng's homeland. As it was the World games, I took some students with me and we became the British Team. The opening ceremony was like the Olympics and pretty amazing. Master Tan took me to meet many people and even officially introduced me to William Chen who he was impressed to find that we already knew each other after I caught his attention in America. One meeting of masters I really remember was when we sat around a table and no two people seemed to speak the same language; a great game of pass the message. Master Tan has boundless energy and I just couldn't keep up. He took me to meet his tailor and I was measured for a suit before I knew it. \$50 later and it all seemed a blur until it arrived 2 months later in the UK. As a fantastic bonus I got to practice tai chi in Chiang Kai-Shek Park.



### Back to Jenny for a look at Masters in your Home.

Over the years we have had various Martial Art Masters return the visits Mark made to them, for training, and it is an accepted courtesy to open up your home to them as they did for you plus fulfil any requests they may have, if possible. However I expect you have heard that there are some closely guarded secrets within the world of Martial Arts and this is one of them!

Maybe in the next book...



Well here we are again only a year or so after our 2<sup>nd</sup> book "**Up Close And Personal**" was let loose on an unsuspecting public. The time between the first and second book was seven years, but you know the old saying "You wait for ages for a bus and then 2 come along together" well that seems to be true about our books.

When we where compiling the chapters for UCAP we found we had twice as many

as was sensible to inflict on you in one go.

It has been said that Tai Chi is the "thinking man's Martial Art" but it may have been just too much thinking to do in one book, hence "**Slowly Slowly Catch the Monkey**" was born. The two articles you have just read are from this new book.

Once again we have put together an eclectic mix of peoples stories about their Tai Chi experiences, training methods, and other valuable insights into this age old art.

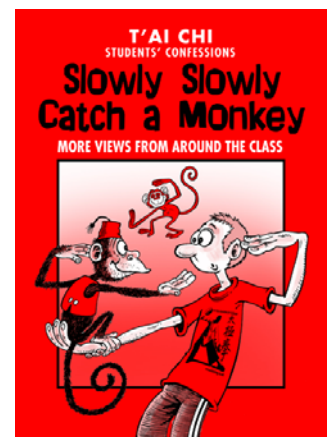
Sometimes it has been hard to convince people that their contribution to the "Confessions" books would be of any interest to others,

Some who felt unable to put things down on paper themselves, told us their stories and Mark and I wrote some of our pieces based around their experiences.

Sometimes life takes over and you may have to take a break from attending classes for a while.

Whether you have practiced Tai Chi for 6 weeks, 6 months, or 6 years you will take away with you something that remains within.

The door will always be open for you to resume your practice, and you know the old saying about "once you've ridden a bike". The difference is you won't fall off.



### Advanced training dates 2017

Hopwood Village Hall  
9.30-12.30pm £25

April 9<sup>th</sup> - San Shou

May 21<sup>st</sup>

June 4<sup>th</sup>

August 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> - Tai Chi Camp

September 17<sup>th</sup>

October 15<sup>th</sup>

November 12<sup>th</sup>

December 10<sup>th</sup>

