



Kai Ming Association Newsletter

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Annual Tai Chi Camp August 6th & 7th

Hopwood Community Centre
Hopwood. B48 7TL

Every year we like to celebrate Prof. Cheng Man Ching's life and the great art of tai chi he shared with us.

Saturday 6th: will focus on Tai Chi Broadsword (Dao); you will learn the broadsword form and applications. The application of the broadsword will deepen your understanding of your empty-hand tai chi form. No prior experience is necessary.

Please let us know, in advance, if you would like a broadsword; wooden swords are £18

Peaceful Warrior 和
Seek unity of mind, body & Spirit

Sunday 7th: The day will title "The Peaceful Warrior" and will start with Yang family Chi-kung as taught to Jenny and Mark by Master Liang He Ching. In this workshop we will explore the martial spirit, the art of being, personal interaction and development through Tai Chi and NLP. If you keep doing what you've always done, you'll keep getting what you've always got. Now is the time to explore change. Learn to blend with life rather than fight against it. Our ability

to relax into life reflects our willingness to trust and let go.

Become a Peaceful Warrior - We are all peaceful warriors in training and the most important battles we fight are inside. Each of us strives for a more peaceful heart, but there are times that we also need a warrior's spirit.

The days will run

- 10am to 12.30pm
- Lunch 12.30 to 1.30pm – light lunch provided
- 1.30pm to 4pm

Cost

- The cost per day will be £40 per person (Kai-Ming members) £60 (non-members)
- This includes lunch and refreshments.
- If you have any special dietary needs please bring your own.
- We will provide vegetarian and non-vegetarian options.

Payment options

You can pay £40/£60 per day by cash or cheque to ‘

Kai Ming Martial Arts Association and post to Mark Peters, 3 Middleton Hall road, Birmingham B30 1AB

Deposits required no later than 30th June (£10 per person per day)



Tai Chi and the Five Integrities

Adapted from an article by

Kenneth van Sickle

Senior Student of Prof Cheng Man Ching

The body uses several energies, pneumatic (breath), hydraulic (circulatory), mechanical (muscle & bone), and electromagnetic (nervous system).

Tai Chi, uses these energies in dynamic and subtle ways...

Tai Chi is energy management. Energy needs a channel, if the channel is blocked, the energy cannot flow.

The beginning Tai Chi student runs into tensions that stop energy flow, the master watches them do the form and notices these tensions, points them out to the student and suggests ways to slowly release them.

The first priority of the form is to relax, to get rid of tension.

First the gross energy blocks are handled - shoulder tension blocks energy to the arms, hip tension blocks energy to the knee, knee tension to the feet, stomach tension shallows the breath, these and other energy blocks prevent flow, like a kink in a hose.

Once a block goes away the energy flows through until it hits the next one to be worked on. This constant refinement is at the heart of tai chi development.

As the student progresses in the form, many things are being addressed simultaneously - alignment, centring, rooting, sensitivity, internal massage and martial awareness all come after the relaxation process has started; they are dependent on relaxation.

If, for example, the ankle is pronated (caved in toward the other foot) the knee and the hip will also be out of line. This might all manifest as lower back trouble. When the ankle is corrected the whole

system will realign and that back trouble will be relieved. The Tai Chi form allows for this kind of healing.

The constant repetition of the form achieves many things. It gets the motor running. This generator develops “intrinsic energy”. Internal exercise systems keep gaining energy, and can be continued into advanced age. Tai Chi and Yoga masters do not necessarily live longer than other people, but they are almost always fit and vital up until their last hours.

Tai Chi forms have a very precise choreography. The Yang form as taught by Cheng Man-Ching, has 37 postures. Each follows in the same order every time the form is done, one move flows into the next at the same speed, without interruption. All the moves are always concerned with centring, alignment and balance.

“Lao Tsu” said that we “stiffen and harden” where as in youth we are “tender and pliable”. Tai Chi is a way to replace that hardness with pliability.

In the Western world, and most of the Eastern one also, we are more and more into immediate gratification, “I WANT IT NOW”, “WHERE CAN I BUY IT”, “LIFE, MADE EASY”. Tai chi doesn’t lend itself to that attitude. Tai Chi is slow, gradual and thoughtful, precisely because that is what relaxes and vitalizes. Tai Chi doesn’t “DO IT” for you, you do Tai Chi, and the more *you* do it, the more you benefit.

The form cannot be done simply mechanically, like let’s say painting walls. It must be done with sensitivity and depth, like painting a portrait, and then it will develop deeply and permeate the rest of your life.

Push hands is a physical dialogue wherein the ‘two partners’ take turns trying to break down the very things the student has worked on all that time. In push hands you get to understand how the principles you learnt, while doing the form, do work. All you need to do is keep relaxed, aligned, centred, balanced, rooted and aware of the space you’re working in. After you have gotten the basics of Push hands, and you no longer need to think about the moves, you begin to notice that you automatically/spontaneously do moves from the form. You ‘discover’ the

self-defence application on your own. In this way you really get the idea—then practice.

Tai Chi Ditch Digging

Tai chi is energy efficient. Consider digging with a shovel - most of us who use a shovel push and stomp on it to get it into the ground, then bend and push it down to break the earth; use the strength of our backs to lift it and the muscles of our arms to throw it. This of course, makes it back breaking work.

If you use the principles of Tai Chi, it works like this: You place the shovel’s edge on the ground, step on it using your whole body weight on the handle (creating a lever), and break the earth out. You then reach down with the other hand and using your thighs (the largest muscle) lift straight up. Now take a step in the direction the shovel is pointing, the arms, if relaxed, will swing in that direction, then stop the shovel and the dirt will continue to its destination (momentum/inertia).

Here we have used gravity, leverage, inertia, momentum and the least amount of our muscular energy as possible.

The Ping Pong Ball

It is much harder to submerge a floating Ping Pong ball with the tip of one finger than it is to push a person. However, some parallels do exist. Its buoyancy is due to the fact that it contains air, (Chi). The sphere contains more, relative to its surface, than any other shape. Its ability to move quickly is due to its lightness (relaxation), and its ability to seek the surface so directly is due to its roundness (alignment).

The pushing finger must go in a straight line towards the ball’s centre, as with the Tai Chi push, and the ball rotates towards the direction of least resistance like a good neutralization.

The Cup Returns

If you have ever tried to blow the dust out of a cup, you will recall that you were unpleasantly surprised to find that the dust blew right back in your face. The cup borrowed your energy and returned it to you. If you blew into the right side of the cup, the air went to the bottom, picked up the dust and returned from the

left side. If you blew into the top, it returned from the lower side, etc. If you were advanced enough to blow into the very centre of the cup, the cup would become as advanced and return to you from all sides at once.

The feeling you get when you push someone, and they neutralize it with a simultaneous return, would be as if you threw a medicine ball, and the instant it left your fingers, it hit you in the back.



The Five Integrities

Relating to efficiency and reality in doing Tai Chi form and Push hands: personally, physically, morally, martially, and spiritually.

Personal Integrity

On a personal level, you must be true to yourself, in the beginning, when learning the form, do not compare yourself to others. Many students worry about not getting it fast enough, or appearing clumsy. These concerns show up as tension in the mind and the body.

People start out with many different abilities in memory, suppleness, tension and spatial awareness. All these seem to equalize themselves, and in the long run, it turns out that positive thinking, perseverance, and thoughtfulness, produce the best results.

Give yourself a break, learn at your speed, enjoy the experience, and lighten up!

Physical Integrity

Be heavy and rooted on the bottom, light and supple on top (roots and branches). Don’t move the arms separately from the body, move as one unit, flowing and uninterrupted... No hollows or protrusions, weight down from the coccyx and up from the top of the head.

Stretching the spine... Relax, relax, breathe, breathe, breathe.... How many times have we heard these and other principles of Tai Chi? How many times do we hear people saying: Why doesn't Tai Chi work? Or, why aren't I improving? Tai Chi isn't ballroom dancing or flying airplanes. If you forget a few basics of dancing you may look a little clumsy, or at worst step on a few toes. If you forget a few basics of aeronautics you might crash; Tai Chi falls somewhere in the middle. When you forget a few principles in Tai Chi, you are not doing Tai Chi; you're sailing in the mud, surfing in the soup. Link each movement to the next without pausing. Link each movement to the next without hesitation or change of speed.; find the natural swing and return.

Martial Integrity

Each move in the form has multiple martial functions. As you are doing the moves, make sure that these principles are kept in mind. If you are following the basic principles of Tai Chi, you are practicing the martial aspect correctly, and at a certain point in your studies, you can begin to address this aspect more directly.

If you are working on the martial aspect, certain elements need particular attention paid to them. Imagine an opponent in front of you and begin to focus and issue energy to the centre of that opponent. Broaden your awareness of the space around you, and other energy sources. Pay particular attention to the substantial and to the insubstantial in relation to the issue of energy, and to the neutralization of force. Don't get caught up in the dance. Keep your spontaneity and flexibility at all times. Don't anticipate or plan moves ahead of time, be mindful, be in the moment.

Always remain aware and sensitive, spontaneous and flexible.

Moral Integrity

It is possible to study Tai Chi for a while, learn many techniques, use many or most of the principles and use strength to become very good at Pushing hands. Usually, people who do this, have winning as their highest priority. Two things, at least, result from this condition: One is that the practitioner never reaches

the highest level. And the other is that this person's relative success tends to impress others and invalidate the true principles of Tai Chi. It takes a lot of faith to continue to lose day after day to people you know you can beat if you use your strength; to invest in loss.

Many of the female Tai Chi players I have talked to, have expressed a fear to really try and push the males. They say the men get upset and push them back very hard. This is male ego in one of its nastier manifestations. You would think that every Tai Chi player would be happy to see a validation of the principle of the weak overcoming the strong. Yet, when it happens, most of the strong men become children.

We must take care of our partners in Push hands. Its purpose is to learn, teach, practice; not win, the winning is in the learning.

If you are winning at pushing because of double weighting, bracing the legs etc., this will not translate into fighting. Tai Chi doesn't work in the horse stance. At close quarters it leaves one vulnerable. You can push someone if that's all you want to do. By abandoning all your defensive integrity to get the push, will not reach the highest levels.

Spiritual Integrity

At some point, you may want to explore meditation in movement. You cannot meditate while you are thinking outside of the moment you are in.

It helps to do the form slowly. It may seem too difficult to take an hour to do your form, so just start by doing the form at a speed that would take an hour if you did it all. Stop when you must, but that way you will begin to get the feeling, and perhaps you'll find yourself going farther than you thought.

Listen to your breath.

A freely falling body doesn't feel the effect of gravity. A standing body feels the effect of gravity as it resists it. A force can only be received if it is resisted. A body that is tense, is stiff and static. A body that is relaxed, is free and flexible. When a fist meets a small part of a large body that is free, resilient and flexible (meets no resistance), it causes no damage.

Be FREE to flow and feel.



Happiness?

Why the question mark? It's what we all aim for, surely? We can create Shangri-la, can't we?

What say the philosophers? "Ask yourself if you're happy and you cease to be so", warned John Stuart Mill. And our great writers? "The secret of being miserable is to have leisure to bother about whether you are happy or not." George Bernard Shaw. Irish cynic. Moving on: "Happiness is never to be found and each believes it to be possessed by others to keep alive the hope of obtaining it for himself." That's Dr. Johnson for you.

Can we be a little more positive? "Happiness is a butterfly which, when pursued, is always beyond our grasp, but which, if you sit down quietly, may alight on you." That's better. Nathaniel Hawthorne. American romantic. So, where is Shangri-la, natural home to these butterflies?

There is indeed a tiny Himalayan kingdom, a population of only a few hundred thousand, where happiness, or 'Gross National Happiness' to be more precise, is enshrined in the constitution. Some travellers have claimed that Bhutan, nestling, not far from Everest, between Nepal, India and Tibet, is the closest we now have to Shangri-la. The kingdom of the Thunder Dragon has never been conquered in recorded history, in spite of its tiny size and the often aggressive posturing of giant neighbours.

The Tibetans came closest to conquest in the seventeenth century with half a dozen invasions, the last three backed by the dreaded Mongol horde. They were decisively repulsed. The dragons were

not on their side. In the nineteenth century, the British Empire, thinly disguised as the East India Company, also made a few botched attempts at bullying the Bhutanese, fearing that they may take the wrong side in 'The Great Game' for empire with the Russians. The award of a British Indian knighthood to the first king of Bhutan, after he'd seen the British off but before he was crowned, reflects just who won that particular round.

As spectacular as its Himalayan peaks are Bhutan's towering monastic forts, some positioned and built to suppress the pointy anatomical bits of a vast supine demoness, overcome, exorcised and subsequently pole-axed by llamas in the seventh century. Most famous of all is the Tiger's Nest monastery, arrival point of llama No 1, who glided in on the back of a winged tiger (so the clue's in the title). After climbing up to 10,000ft to look and gasp at it, I was similarly and characteristically supine.

In modern times, monarchy replaced theocracy (1907), and the fourth king, not so long ago, began to try and codify, with his government, the foundations of his ideas on happiness for each and every one of his loyal subjects. His throw-away line to outsiders in 1979 that Gross National Happiness is more important than Gross National Product is now the essence of the United Nations' latest World Development Plan.

So, although Bhutan waited until just fifty years ago for its first road, it now leads the world on the subject of happiness. Only four years ago it rejected membership of the World Trade Organisation because that would have heralded the appearance of international junk food outlets on a landscape three-quarters of which is still protected forest. Gross National Happiness was erected, in 1998, on the four pillars of the Bhutanese way of life: good governance, sustainable socio-economic development, cultural preservation and environmental conservation. These precepts were subsequently humanised into sub-categories which include psychological well-being, balanced time-

use and community vitality. Every couple of years the ordinary citizen in the street and the forest is asked by the government to rate his and her personal happiness. In 2008, Bhutan had its first general election. Now, parliament is charged with weighing every law against a grid of one hundred and forty happiness criteria before it can be passed. Today, over forty per cent of the Bhutanese people rate themselves as happy, twice the proportion in Britain. But will the latest invasion through cyberspace of western materialism, consumerism and insatiable consumption erode their shining ambition which argues that happiness is not getting what you want, but wanting what you have?

Is there a Shangri-la? Maybe not yet. But the Bhutanese's happy determination to create one must take them closer to that fabled earthly paradise. It's rather like the perfect exposition of the Tai Chi form that we strive for week by week at the back of the class. We too aim for that lost horizon, which asks for mindfulness and beckons us on to happiness.

Julian Day –student at Don's class



HOMEMADE HEALTHY ROSEMARY SALAD DRESSING

You will need—some sprigs of rosemary, trim to about the size of a jam jar or container you will be using.

Rinse under the tap and pat dry. Then place in chosen screw top container.

Fill the jam jar with half olive oil and half pine nut oil.

Shake and put in fridge to infuse for a week.

Then sieve contents until clear and put into your oil jar.

T'ai Chi

In this story poem of movement
we listen to universal spirit
In this story poem of breath
we attune to the single thread
that unites all

It tells of the rich varied vastness of
the Universal Tao Creation

It tells of the simplicity of the One

If we bring our attention
wholeheartedly
to the eye centre

And still our mind with the sword
of devotion

We will begin the journey
of Tao
to our true home

In this story poem of movement
is hidden an ancient map
of cultivating the qi

In this story poem of surrender
If we listen to the ancient wisdom
of the true adepts

We are given a treasure house
of calmness

A pearl of clarity
a wave of ceaseless joy

- Marilyn Allysum



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