



# Tai Chi Newsletter

<https://www.paintingtherainbow.co.uk>

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



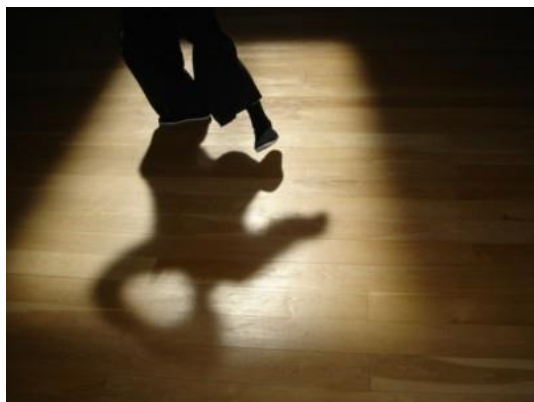
## Community Based Tai Chi & Chi-Kung for everyone

*Improvement cannot always be measured, it is something you feel*

call: 0121 251 6172

<https://www.taichinewsletters.co.uk/>

e-mail us: [markpeters@kaiming.co.uk](mailto:markpeters@kaiming.co.uk)



### The Form

by Mark Carter - Tamworth Student

We stand poised and begin to think  
Thumbs at our thigh sides as we begin to sink  
Our elbows go wide as we begin to flow  
The answer here is to take it slow.

Turn to the right and then to the other way  
Feet shoulders width we begin to sway  
Up and down are arms out wide  
Protecting ourselves from the front and side

Breathe in and out and regulate  
The slower the better makes you feel great  
Ward off left and then to the right  
Roll back, push hands, make them take flight

Remember to root yourself to the ground  
Adopt single whip as you go round  
Hands high and shoulder strike  
Step back white crane in flight

Brush knee to the left and play guitar  
Brush knee to the left well done so far  
Close up parry, punch and push double

Cross hands, tiger to the mountain your opponents in  
trouble

Roll back and push with single whip  
We've done this before I hear you quip  
Fist under elbow, monkeys to feed  
Step back, pull down to stop their greed

Round we go cloud hands a must  
Step out, step in it's the slowness we lust  
Step out wide and get your feet right  
Step up, to golden cock, a kick is in sight

Three kicks in all at this vital stage  
Brush left and right a low blow I'll wage  
Roll back double push single whip once more  
Four corners now to even the score

Ward off left, again to the right  
The end of the form is now in sight  
Snake creeps down, to seven stars  
Ride the tiger feel the scars

Once around and touch the heel  
Bend that bow prepare to peel  
Off to the left to hide your punch  
Apparent closing is my hunch

As we bring it to a close  
We strike a proud and standing pose  
Hands back to the side we've done it right  
All that's left is to say good night.



## Not Forgetting the Women

*"My painful knees have improved so much."*

*"The mobility in my aching neck is unbelievably better."*

*"I realised that I wasn't using my inhaler as much."*

*"My stomach problems seem to have subsided."*

*"I can cope with the stress in my life now."*

These remarks all came from people who do Tai Chi. The origins of the expression "the thinking man's martial art" may be the same as that Tai Chi has an inherent softness of movement. It is said that the art originated among the ranks of monks and scholars, rather than from fighting men and warriors. Be that as it may, it uses an energy which is very different from that of the fighting man. The monks and scholars possibly wanted to defend themselves in a less violent way, and so searched for such a method, eventually producing the idea of moving more from inside, from the internal energy, and so not damaging one's own body in the process.

### Patience

Such men appreciated the importance of patience. Patience is not in plentiful supply in our society, and the old saying "that if something is worth having it is worth waiting for" goes unobserved. When I had been studying Tai Chi for five years I looked back and realised that I had come a long way, relatively speaking, both martial and health wise. My life seemed broader somehow, and my general awareness improved. Students of the art usually are quite social, in my experience, and if they are not, at the outset, they soon become so. I feel this is because they are looking for more than an hour of instruction.

Those who stay after the first few months seem to find that the art becomes an integral part of everyday life. They train the body in the physical and the mind in the mental aspects and slowly the two come together.

You need to *feel* Tai Chi, and this is what comes to the dedicated student. At times I have become something of an evangelist when extolling the virtues of the art. As a general rule, women are in a minority in the world of martial arts. In my view it is better for women to learn a 'soft' or internal martial art such as Tai Chi, because it is a fact that men are basically much stronger than women and when it comes to

the crunch in real combat they are likely to come off worse. Even if a woman learns a tough external art, her body is not as a rule capable of withstanding a hard onslaught from a man. Women are fundamentally softer than men and can, in Tai Chi, take advantage of this fact, since in a sense the art lends itself to that quality.

### Balance

In my view, we can use the softness, in Push Hands for example, to draw men in and cause them to lose their balance. Cheng Man-ching himself said that women are more naturally gifted in Tai Chi, so we should use this to help ourselves in confronting men. Not to oppose force with force but with a degree of yielding softness. It usually takes men much longer than women to learn this aspect, the yielding, but of course it has to be learned and incorporated by women also when it comes to the Push Hands aspect of the art.

Applying the virtues of softness is frustrating and difficult and all sincere push hands students, men and women, must confront this problem. Recently during a push hands session we changed partners and I found myself facing a 'young buck' who had recently come from hard external martial arts to Tai Chi. During that session he had been pushing with only male students. As we began to 'play' and he had to invest in loss, he suddenly exclaimed, "Just what I need, I'm actually using my waist again instead of having to pile straight through with brute force." Obviously I thrashed him regardless, but who am I to show off...

### Investing in loss

It becomes clear that to reap the benefits of health from Tai Chi, relaxation and softness are essential and this is the great gift which women can bring to the class. Over my years of training in push hands, many times women students have complained to me that they dislike pushing with men because the man's ego sometimes gets in the way. Though it is hard for a man to learn investing in loss, for women it is sometimes, paradoxically harder, because in spite of having an inherent softness, as soon as a woman gains some advantage, then a male partner comes out with brute force, because he is losing his balance. A more experienced woman knows that as a man increases in hardness, ego threatened, the easier it becomes to unbalance him further. But the less experienced woman

does not know this, feels threatened, and begins to resort to force, herself.

For this reason, at Kai Ming, we do not introduce push hands until a student has had at least three months of regular training. Students need to know one another and their teacher, for confidence to build. During this period the students begin to know their own space, feel at ease, and this enables them to meet push hands in a much more favourable atmosphere when they begin it.

It must be difficult for the external martial artist to understand why the Tai Chi Chuan student sees his art as a serious self defence method. It is not unknown for us to be the butt of the odd joke or two as the slow, graceful movements are observed. But as the years go by and external martial arts produce muscle strain, broken bones and tension, the Tai Chi student continues to be able to move with ease, with almost no injury results present in the body. Perhaps a case of the tortoise beating the hare.

### Practical problems

We sometimes forget that as our fellow students progress there is no realistic prospect of emulating a true to life fighting situation to test their abilities in that direction. So how do we solve this problem? I personally practise any new technique on my son who is six feet four inches tall. Due to my success in eluding his grabs, throttlings and lunges plus his frequent requests for cold compresses we both have to accept that the methods do work.

It is a sad fact that in this day and age we cannot escape the reality of violence in our society. An unprovoked attack is particularly important to women. I strongly suggest that Tai Chi is a very good first step in protecting oneself from such attacks. As a registered nurse I can say that a large percentage, perhaps fifty per cent, of problems I see in patients are either caused by stress or are stress related. To some extent, external martial arts increase stress, both physical and mental, accelerating the adrenalin output with all its consequences. I realise that some people enjoy the tough training methods, and find that 'hard' sessions release their stress and aggressions. But I feel these people are the exception rather than the rule. Ultimately their joints will remind them in later life of their earlier training days.

When asked the question, "Why learn Tai Chi?", Cheng Man-ching replied, "When you get to that point in your life when you know what you want, Tai Chi will provide you with the strength to enjoy it." How can we argue with that?

By Jenny Peters



SNAKE CREEPS DOWN

## Tai chi's health benefits for body and mind



Tai chi gets a plug in this SAGA magazine article. Click the link below to read it all.

Why practising the gentle martial art tai chi could help improve your physical fitness as well as your mind.

If pounding the pavement or spinning the wheels of a stationary bicycle aren't the kinds of exercise that appeal to you, tai chi may offer you a less frenetic alternative. But although tai chi may look as though its less effective as an exercise – people rarely break into a sweat or grunt with effort – it has many health benefits, and can easily be done in the comfort of your own home or garden....

<https://www.saga.co.uk/magazine/health-wellbeing/exercise-fitness/tai-chi-health-benefits>