



# Kai Ming Association Newsletter

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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 £16 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 17th Dcemeber and the time 2pm.**

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

Please let your instructor know how many places you would like to book or contact Mark & Jenny on [markpeters@kaiming.co.uk](mailto:markpeters@kaiming.co.uk) or phone **0121 251 6172**



## WE NEED YOU!



### Tai Chi Instructors needed

Are you interested in taking your tai chi training to the next level? Are you truly interested in developing your tai chi skills and abilities? Do you really enjoy your classes and practicing tai chi? Have you ever considered training as a tai chi instructor?

There is an old saying “the teacher is the taught” which really means to truly understand a skill you should look to teach it to others.

Kai Ming has now been teaching tai chi for some 25+ years with most of the instructors being there from the very beginning. We are always looking to encourage new students through the ranks and maybe that could be you.

We hold monthly advanced classes to help you develop your understanding and application of tai chi, plus this is the route to becoming an instructor. The first steps are to attend, then help out in class, then take your instructor grading which we hold every December.

If you're not sure, or even if you decide being an instructor isn't for you, you can still gain such a lot from the advanced classes as we have more time to explore specific elements of this wonderful art, so come along and have a go... Later in this newsletter there is an article by Graham Lambert who never planned to be an instructor but has been amazed

where the journey has taken him; you may even be interested to know that every instructor in our club never thought they could be or even had any interest at first. When you find something you truly enjoy it can be a natural progression to share that enjoyment with others; passion is contagious. Attend the Sundays and see where it can lead for you...

Ask you instructor for more details or call Mark on 0121 251 6172 to discuss. The sooner you start the better.

Sundays sessions are 9.30am to 12.30pm (3hrs) for £25

**The address is:** Weoley Hill Village Hall, Bournville. B29 4AD

#### Dates 2017:

- October 15th,
- November 12th
- December 10<sup>th</sup>

Dates for 2018 will be announced soon..



### Tai Chi Tensegrity

I have often referred to tai chi as a muscular-skeletal rehabilitation system, but *tensegrity* replaces the age-old idea that the skeleton is a frame upon which soft-tissue is draped by updating it with the concept of an integrated fascial mesh/web. This concept of tensegrity also known as **Biotensegrity** is a phrase coined by the designer Buckminster Fuller. Tensegrity structures, such as the human body, distribute forces and movement throughout the system via the spring-like fascial web rather than being dealt with locally as they are in lever systems:

*“The word ‘tensegrity’ is an invention: a contraction of ‘tensional integrity’. Tensegrity describes a structural-relationship principle in which structural shape is guaranteed by the finitely closed, comprehensively continuous, tensional behaviours of the system and not by the discontinuous and exclusively local compressional member behaviours. Tensegrity provides the ability to yield increasingly without ultimately breaking or coming asunder”*

R. Buckminster Fuller (1895-1983)



Tai Chi is a system of whole body integrity that we work to refine through mindful practice. Grand-Master Huang Sheng Shyan developed his five loosening exercises, which are a great gift to us all, to aid development of this integrity. I have used the terms **proprioception** and **kinesthesia** (*kinesthetic awareness*) when discussing awareness and integrity as they describe feedback through the body and spatial awareness but to truly develop, tensegrity is the key.

Developing this ‘tensional integrity’ enables us to connect and brings new dimensions to form practice and push-hands. The ability to use the facial web enables small changes at one point to affect any other point on the whole body.

When I have used a fit-ball to demonstrate compression, I hadn’t considered compressing or stretching the skin of the ball actually affected all of the skin of the ball until researching our body’s facial web. Please be aware

tensional integrity is not to be confused with tension, in fact I would equate it with ‘**sung**’ which Prof Cheng Man Ching said is essential to tai chi development.

Some of you may know that I am interested in and teach NLP (Neuro-linguistic programming). One of the key presuppositions is ‘**the map is not the territory**’ or ‘the word is not the thing’. Yet it is so easy to get caught up with chasing a concept that is limited by the constraints of that word; so I don’t mind if you call this stage of tai chi development: tensegrity, sung, ting-jing or anything. I love the endless journey of an art without limits.

Practice mindful-awareness of whole body integrity and if you’d like to discuss/develop this more, please let me know.

The tai chi classics state “**when one part moves, all must move**”; those masters were clearly on to something...



Christmas is racing towards us at a ridiculous speed so its time to start planning and making your Christmas cake. Below is a different take on tradition and I love it so give it a go...

### Jamaican Christmas Cake

Traditionally the fruit in this Jamaican Christmas cake is steeped in port and rum for at least 24 hours, or longer if you can. Enjoy its glorious flavour.

#### Ingredients

- 250g (9oz) dried ready to eat prunes
- 200g (7oz) dried ready to eat dates
- 450g (1lb) raisins
- 250g (9oz) sultanas
- 200ml (7froz) port
- 6 tbsp rum or brandy
- 100g (4oz) unrefined cherries

#### For the cake mixture:

- 250g (9oz) butter
- 250g (9oz) dark muscovado sugar

- 5 size 3 eggs, beaten
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 250g (9oz) self raising flour
- 1 tbsp mixed spice
- 1 tbsp ground cinnamon
- 100g (4oz) glace cherries to decorate if liked

#### You will need:

- 9in 23cm round , deep cake tin, greased and lined with baking parchment

#### Preparation

1. Chop the prunes and dates with scissors and place in a mixing bowl with the raisins and sultanas. Pour over the port and rum or brandy and cover with cling film. Leave for 1 day or up to a week to soak, stirring occasionally. Do not soak the cherries.
2. Set the oven to 160c, 140c, fan, gas 3. Place the butter and sugar in a large mixing bowl and beat with an electric mixer until light and creamy, then gradually beat in the eggs until smooth, adding a little flour if the mixture curdles. Stir the flour, spices and 100g glace cherries into the creamed mixture with the soaked fruit. Mix well, then spoon into the cake tin and level the top
3. Bake for 30 mins, then reduce the oven temperature to 150c, 130c fan, gas 2 for a further 1 1/2 – 1 3/4 hours until a skewer comes out clean. Allow to cool for 1 hour then turn out and cool on a wire rack. Decorate with extra cherries if liked. This cake will keep for 2 weeks in a cake tin, but as it is very moist should not be kept for any longer.

If you enjoy it as much as we do its best to slice and freeze it; helps preserve it longer plus helps you ration it haha...



## Who Knows

### Where a Journey Can Take You

Let me start with the comment when I set out on my journey “Teaching Tai Chi was NOT what I wanted to do”. It was just a hobby that I enjoyed and felt better for doing.

I just couldn't understand why people wanted to take on the responsibility of teaching. Why not just enjoy being a student.

I thought they must get something from it, but what I just couldn't see.

Then one evening the teacher needed someone to help out in a session, and as I was one of the senior students in the class I was asked if I would do this.

Well that was it, I was hooked. I enjoyed it so much, partly because I learned a lot about myself and my own ability to help others, and answer questions about the form etc that I had no idea I knew the answers to.

I started training with other teachers to get a broader outlook on the art. This had great benefits because I found there was something to learn from each one, that gave me a different view to work on.

Gradually I trained up and became a teacher myself and now believe the most important thing that teaching Tai Chi should be based on is how to relax.

They say **“everything comes from the form”** and so I put great emphasis in my class on this.

However the form is very precise and for students sometimes hard to understand at first. So I began including Master Huang's five loosening exercises (He was a senior disciple of Master Cheng Man Ching) at the beginning of the class to help line up the body and loosen muscles before they began practising.

Then by putting some emphasis on the relaxed breathing that is naturally within the postures, the students relaxed much easier and began to really “feel” the movement and transition from one posture to another.

Since training and teaching with Kai Ming I feel I have been able to be a bit of a **“free spirit”** and teach in a way that I feel I was meant to.

A tip I would pass on to anyone learning the art is - practice, practice, practice on your own until you feel the posture or exercise feels right and you are happy with it. Checking with your instructor that you are doing it correctly is always a good idea and may save you getting into a bad habit before it is one!

Growing up, I did a lot of different sports some of which entailed me training on my own a lot, boxing being one of them. Shadow boxing requires a lot of focus and I was able to use this focus I had developed within my teaching.

Maybe coach is a better word than teacher as we both learn together, exchange views, sort out problems, and all the while develop as people.

Tai Chi should be enjoyed; a time when you can relax your mind and body and focus on its benefits as you “tune out” the stresses of your day.

On a personal note, recently my Tai Chi has helped me get through the shock of finding out I had developed Prostate Cancer.

I was able to relax during hospital blood tests and biopsy, and then the ultimate fear of an MRI Scan which entailed having to lie perfectly still for an hour and a half and control my claustrophobic feelings. Scans of my bones followed which thankfully showed it had not spread to my bones and lymph nodes.

Without Tai Chi and the support of Kai-Ming I am sure I would not be in such a good place now.

Teaching has changed me in many ways. I am a more confident, positive person and have found the elusive quality of self-worth.

So this is why people become teachers I guess, and the only way to find out if this is true is to try it yourself. Don't just take my word for it!

Graham Lambert – Tai Chi Instructor



### Meditation Part 3

What is the point of Meditation? – Parts 1 & 2 are in our book **‘Up Close and Personal’**

There are three main areas to look at: Physical, Psychological and Spiritual.

#### Physical & Psychological

Stress – the ‘S’ word – is a major problem in the west today. Some medics and scientists believe that up to 80% of illness (presented at GP surgeries) is stress related – often chronic. Illnesses such as Hypertension, Cardiac disease, Ulcers, Skin disorders, Diabetes and even some Cancers are linked to stress and our habitual ways of coping with it.

There are numerous psychological conditions linked to stress too, Depression, Panic Disorder, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Alcoholism etc. All of these are caused by and/or exacerbated by stress.

Stress is normal. Unavoidable. It is a part of life but if it is not managed well, can lead to the above. The ‘stress response’ occurs as a consequence of our Autonomic Nervous System (ANS) being activated. Briefly, when we are threatened, our bodies prepare for fight, flight or freeze via activation of the sympathetic nervous system (one branch of the ANS). This is a survival strategy left over from our mammalian days when, before conscious thought or awareness, we had to act, we had to stay safe. So, this was useful if a sabre tooth tiger jumps at you! Today, it may be a street attack, car accident, or more commonly, an argument at home, difficult boss, deadline to meet etc. Our brain, at the level of biochemistry, bioelectricity and hormones does not discriminate – it doesn't know the difference. So, if we are constantly becoming activated (for fight or flight or

freeze), we are releasing many different chemicals into our bloodstream, and unchecked, these cause the problems. We do naturally 'calm down' via the activation of the parasympathetic nervous system (the second branch of the ANS) – but we leave this largely to chance – often too late, causing us to cycle round, stop and start in a circle of panic activation or low level irritability. And that's the problem, we have our feet on the accelerator and the break at the same time – sometimes using drugs, alcohol, bad foods etc to try and cope or manage.

We know from research that the breath has a major effect on our bodies. Slow, regular, diaphragmatic breathing, and a calm mental focus, can activate the parasympathetic nervous system and facilitate the release of calming, feel good chemicals and help us back into a state of ease. This relaxes our bodies, and helps focus our thoughts and has innumerable benefits for our immune system and psychological functioning.



### Spiritual

This is where we have to think about the world's great 'religions' and 'spiritual' systems. Each have meditation in different forms; in Catholicism and some other Christian systems you have petitionary prayer, contemplative prayer and other ritual – sometimes profound visualisations and spoken pieces.

In Hinduism, Buddhism and Daoism you have ritual also, but also other forms of meditation – some including movement and forms such as Indian Yoga and Chinese Qigong. The spiritual point, above and beyond the Physical and Psychological (arguably prerequisites) is the attainment of 'Insight', 'Awakening', 'Liberation', 'Mastery', 'at oneness', 'Merger' etc and these concepts are

firmly rooted in the philosophy of the spiritual systems.

In Christianity it may be about communion with God, achieving 'Christ Consciousness'.

In Buddhism, it is mainly about the cessation of suffering and the achievement of Nirvana, an escape from the endless cycles of death and rebirth. Being 'Awakened' means seeing reality as it is. Without Ego, grasping and categorizing. Sometimes, we meditate on certain forms; invoke qualities of these forms or deities for our own development or to support us through difficulties (similar to petitionary prayer). This is similar in Hinduism and Jainism, India's other great spiritual systems.

In Daoism, it is about 'the Way' – following nature, our human nature, the world, being in harmony and 'flow' with all that is. Inter-connected. Daoism is often called the 'Watercourse way'.

There are different emphases on Physical or Psychological health and mastery within these (The legendary Bodhidharma, first Zen Patriarch teaching movement forms to Chinese Shaolin – eventually becoming Buddhist Qigong? Given our interests in Tai chi and Qigong, we have to acknowledge that both Buddhism and Daoism heavily influenced the development of what we do and why we do it. Some Qigong sets are evolved from Buddhist origin (Yi Jin Jing, Ba Duan Jin), others from Daoist (Microcosmic Orbit, Five Animal Play etc).

Please note that meditation and mindfulness have seen a resurgence due partly to the changing demands of the world around us; social media and accessibility to everything and everywhere in an instant. The value of stillness can be felt regardless of faith, belief or interest.

# 寂靜

### **John Wood poem for Everyman**

I will present you Parts Of  
My Self Slowly  
If you are patient and tender  
I will open drawers  
That mostly stay closed  
And bring out places and  
people and things  
Bits and pieces of three  
decades of my life  
That have been grabbed off  
In chunks  
And found lying in my  
hands  
They have eaten  
Their way into my Heart  
Altogether - you or I will  
never see them  
They are me  
If you regard them lightly  
Deny that they are important  
Or worse, judge them  
I will quietly, slowly  
begin to wrap them up  
In small pieces of velvet  
Like worn silver and gold  
jewellery  
Tuck them away  
In a small wooden chest of  
drawers  
And close

### *Holiday in Cornwall?*



If any club members are interested in a holiday near Bude, Cornwall, we have a two bedroom bungalow (sleeps 6) and can offer a great price out of season. Please contact Jenny and Mark on **0121 251 6172** for details.