



## Kai Ming Association Newsletter

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### THE ULTIMATE SENSITIVITY

We all know that in push hands sensitivity is the key factor, along with “investing in loss”

Yes, we may all know this, but do we, or in fact can we relax enough, to let our will to win and ego go, and just touch, feel, sense.

I watched a programme on television called “On the edge of Life” which is about the surgeons who daily perform amazingly difficult operations.

Having worked in hospitals for 18 yrs at the start of my nursing career, some of that time spent in A&E and operating theatres I was aware of the great work that takes place there, and don’t usually make a point of viewing anything to do with the NHS (it’s not the NHS I remember and generally makes me lose my relaxation!!!) but the episode I randomly started watching blew me away and restored a lot of my faith in the service and it’s people we often forget is still one of the best in the world.

Now to my point

Some of the operations in the programme where taking between 8 and 12 hours and as time progressed the surgeons dealt with unexpected problems and complications and their work became more intricate and delicate.

This is when I noticed their hands. Always soft always relaxed.

As the operation progressed and they reached the critical point of removing

unwanted tissue from a main artery, they stopped for a few seconds.

They had been operating for 8 hours and knew they were tired and beginning to anticipate the ultimate challenge. Enough you may think to make anyone a little tense.

The specialist in charge turned and asked the team, anaesthetist, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> surgeons, plus specialist nurses, “Are you all ready? Then let’s take a deep breath and relax”.

It took a few seconds, but you could almost feel the natural energy change (even sat watching them)

“OK here we go” he said, “lets do it guys” I watched him re-commence. His hands where so relaxed, any tension at this stage I knew could cause major problems. He was feeling every movement from the wrist to the tips of his fingers. As the artery pulsated, he combined sight and feeling to assess the right moments to strip the offending paper thin tissue away, small piece at a time.

You could see the concentration and the pauses when he felt he needed to take stock of the progress.

However no tension, just awareness and softness, and wonderful hands.

Now I thought if only we could use our hands like this when we are practicing (or playing) with push hands, how good would that be?

After all, we do have the term “Fair Maidens Hand” within our art. Which I always thought of as softness, but it does not just have to apply to women; men are equally able to attain it.

Next time you do “play”, focus on keeping the tension in the hands down so that you can try to feel every move so your partner intends to make. If the

tension (or ego) begins to rise think of that surgeon, stop breathe, relax. Let go. Re-focus on the softness.

You have nothing to lose by giving it a try.

I watch practitioners all the time being sucked into using too much force, being drawn into the “I won’t let them get me” mind set. We have all done it, and not even noticed that they “get you” anyway!



### IT ALL MATTERS

By Peter Jagger.

In August 1973 Bruce Lee’s Enter The Dragon premiered in the USA, but it was after the films UK premier in January 74 that the “Bruce Lee/Kung Fu “craze really took off in this country, a time when “Every Body Was Kung Fu Fighting”. This was when as an impressionable eleven year old lad I became involved with the Bruce Lee phenomenon, the main attraction for me, being his fighting skills (although his intensity even brightly shone out from the big screen in between the fight scenes). I believed he was unbeatable and imagined how great it would be to be able to beat anybody in the world! I was only eleven after all.

So my interest in the martial arts began with a focus on the “fighting” aspects, and that’s where it stayed for many years. Bruce Lee stated— “Absorb what is useful, reject what is useless”

Taking his word as the gospel truth, I was quick (too quick) to reject anything that I considered did not relate to fighting.

Something I did not realise at the time was that many of the things I rejected DO relate to fighting, their purpose being to fight the aging process as well as (I now see) having other benefits.

During those years, I did not realise some of the problems that I was creating for myself, I did not understand the underlying principle of Yin/Yang, which is a relationship of balance and harmony. In later years there has been a change in my way of thinking. Since June 2016 I have been attending regular "Painting the Rainbow" community based Tai Chi in the park sessions. This has inspired me to research and further develop my understanding of the philosophy behind the art.

I have made past mistakes and know that it is best not to attempt to cover these up or make false excuses.

Those mistakes have become part of the learning process, leading to the realization that it is important to balance the external training i.e. fighting, with the internal training – Chi-Kung (Qigong or Neigong).

In earlier years I mistakenly believed the external training to be a "better" alternative to the internal, not understanding that they actually complement one another, as part of the same "whole".

The imbalance did indeed eventually cause me problems.

Now my opinion has changed from believing the external training (fighting), as being the most important, to turning my focus on the internal training with all the health aspects and gaining the benefits that will enable me to develop different kinds of fighting skills based on softness and relaxation.

When I first became interested in the Martial Arts I used to get involved in lengthy debates/discussions based around the question "Could Bruce Lee be beaten in a fight?" Now I respond differently to that question, I simply say, "Who cares?"

Because that is not what Martial Arts are all about.

They are about becoming the best you can be not on a particular day or time, but the best you can be in every aspect of your life, constantly striving towards achieving the highest standard in whatever art or profession you choose. It's about development of character, looking at ourselves and asking, "what's the best version of me I can be?" Fighting is a inconsequential part of Martial Arts, we can all be beaten in a fight given the right circumstances, in the street or in our mind, but changing your view on things and how to deal with them is what they can give you.

Developing awareness skills in previous martial art styles that I have been involved with has been for the purpose of detecting and avoiding potential dangers with the ultimate intention being to KEEP SAFE! Scanning my surroundings, looking out for suspicious behaviour, checking out where the fire exits are located when entering an unfamiliar building, those type of things. In comparison the awareness I am developing from Tai Chi is not restricted to the martial aspects; it is an awareness that enables us to see much of the natural beauty and wonder that is all around us – an awareness that we, human beings, are part of a greater whole, meaning anything and everything that we do, no matter how small, matters — it all matters.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to Mark Peters and his team of instructors, especially Perry Bennett & Steve Taylor for their willingness to share their knowledge with me, always in a friendly and professional manner, creating so much positive energy and pointing me in the right direction towards further development.

My martial arts journey continues and the path is clearer.



One supreme fact which I have discovered is that it is not willpower, but imagination that creates. Imagination is the creature force. Imagination creates reality.  
John Keats

## Why Cayenne Works for Muscle Pain

Capsaicin, one of cayenne's active constituents stimulates the release of something known as "substance P" in the body. Substance P is released from nerve cells and the inflammatory cells of the immune system. Substance P is most noted for its role in helping the body perceive pain and in stimulating the release of various cytokines to induce a healthy inflammatory response.

Cayenne also dilates blood vessels, which allows for more anti-inflammatory cells to make their way to the affected area. When substance P is released and subsequently depleted, as is the case when you repeatedly apply cayenne, the threshold of pain in that area increases. This is also known as pain desensitization. 1,2

What happens is the area actually feels less painful. This allows you to take some much needed steps to helping that part of the body heal. Whether it be walking, stretching, exercises or physical therapy, with the assistance of cayenne, you can help your body heal a lot sooner!

## Beyond the Cayenne

This rub is full of additional ingredients that will help your tired, achy muscles relax and maybe even heal some!!

**Coconut oil** is a wonderful oil that nourishes the skin. It is antimicrobial so is a perfect base for this rub. Coconut oil has been shown to have its own pain reducing and anti-inflammatory properties. 3

**Raw cocoa butter** is nourishing to the skin. It contains a high amount of antioxidants (just like chocolate) and will be nicely absorbed by the skin along with the beneficial herbs to help penetrate the muscles below.

**Ginger** is an spice with a long history of use in both Ayurvedic and Traditional Chinese Medicine. It is naturally anti-inflammatory and warming. When used in a muscle rub it will help stimulate the movement of blood flow. This allows for new blood to come into the area bringing with it new immune cells and helps push along old blood containing inflammatory cells that have done their job at the site of pain. 4

**Turmeric**, similar to ginger, is a spice with a very long history of use for its anti-inflammatory and healing effects. Turmeric will help to reduce swelling and

keep the body's inflammation in check. Remember inflammation is good for the healing process. But not when the body is chronically inflamed. 5

**Peppermint Essential Oil** has menthol in it. This is another common compound used for muscle soreness as it will reduce pain and relax the muscles. Peppermint cools an area providing similar relief as ice. 6 There is a nice balance here with the ginger and the peppermint. The former is working to warm the area and bring new blood flow and immune cells, while the later is constricting the muscles and moving the blood along to get rid of waste.

It is a really wonderful combination!

In addition to using the rub for sore muscles, remember to:

1. Rest the area. One of the worst things most people do is to not sufficiently rest an area that chronically has pain. Rest is paramount to healing! With low back pain, lying down or sitting with legs up is often helpful.
2. Drink plenty of water. Water is needed to carry your blood around and in that blood there are immune cells just waiting to help reduce inflammation. Adequate water is paramount to healing. Be sure to drink ½ your body weight in ounces of water a day. If you are dealing with an injured area, another 15-20 ounces will go a long way.
3. Consider taking Turmeric capsules for arthritis pain reduction and healing. Turmeric capsules, 1500mg/day, has been shown to be just as effective as NSAIDs for reducing pain in folks with knee osteoarthritis, and without the side effects like NSAIDS (one of which is delayed healing). 5

#### **Cayenne Muscle & Joint Rub Recipe:**

- ¼ cup coconut oil
- ¼ cup raw cocoa butter (if you can't find this, then just use all coconut oil)
- ¼ cup beeswax (grated to facilitate melting process)
- 2 tsp organic Cayenne powder
- 1 tsp organic Turmeric powder
- 1 tsp organic Ginger powder

- 10 drops of peppermint essential oil
- 4 oz. glass jar

#### **Instructions:**

1. Place the coconut oil, cocoa butter and beeswax into a pyrex glass container and place that into a sauce pan that contains 2-3 inches of water (the pyrex will be resting in the water).
2. Bring the water to a simmer. Continually stir the mixture until the cocoa butter and beeswax are completely melted, along with the coconut oil.
3. Add the cayenne, turmeric and ginger powder and stir until they are completely moistened (roughly a minute).
4. Remove from heat and add the peppermint essential oil.
5. Pour the mixture into a glass jar immediately and allow to cool before placing a lid on top.
6. Use liberally on affected area.

Storage: best stored in the fridge due to the fact it does not have preservatives in it. Lasts approximately 6-8 weeks.

CAUTION: be sure to wash your hands after you apply to affected area, as both cayenne and peppermint EO can be very strong. Also, turmeric may cause mild skin yellowing which is normal.



#### **Tai Chi: A newcomer's reflections on a journey started far too late ...**

Bob Price

After a lifetime spent working too hard and, in all probability, playing too hard as well, retirement came a few months earlier than intended, when my doctor insisted that "you either stop now or you look forward to an old age characterised by serious physical and mental illness". And so, at 64 years of age, I found myself with time on my hands and, after 18 months of slow, gradual recuperation, looking for non-work activities with which to fill my new-found leisure.

Sequence dancing, French conversation classes and learning to play the tenor saxophone were all enthusiastically embraced, but I have always been a sportsman (rugby, basketball, squash ...

even Shotokan Karate at one point) and so I was also keen to find an "age appropriate" physical activity. At the time, I was living near the coast and, as a local tai chi club was recruiting new members, I thought I would give it a go.

Sadly, this first experience turned out to be rather disappointing and reminiscent of what Shifu Lau Kim Hong, in an interview with Nigel Sutton, described as a "blind alley". I will not dwell upon this here, but suffice it to say that a club, which does no pushing hands, makes no mention of martial or self-defence applications and does not practise any recognised form (students are required to make up their own "mini forms") is probably not in the mainstream of tai chi practice.

My suspicions were confirmed (and my eyes opened) when, in the summer of 2014, I attended the annual Tai Chi Caledonia workshop in central Scotland. This was a true revelation and sparked an interest in and an enthusiasm for tai chi, which seems to know no bounds. This summer, I will be making the trek up to Stirling for the fourth time and, although I have recently turned 70, I hope that my health and fitness levels will enable me to return for many years to come.

However, the most significant "epiphany" moment in my tai chi career to date came a year later when I first travelled across to Birmingham for a one-day introduction to the "walking stick" form with Mark Peters. Now I am not seeking to embarrass Mark here ... well, maybe just a little ... but his approach to the practice and teaching of tai chi has been truly inspirational. Although Birmingham is a long way from home, I have returned again and again ... for August camps, monthly "instructor sessions", the "tai chi for rehabilitation" course and an ongoing sequence of "one-to-one" lessons. If he will have me, this will not stop until old age (or something much more final) brings it to a natural end.

Having mentioned the Kai Ming "instructor sessions" which Mark leads once a month on a Sunday morning, I should probably add that I do not consider myself to have anything like the depth or breadth of understanding of the theory and practice of tai chi to justify my use of the title "instructor" ... but, occasionally, events overtake one and

things move on at a faster pace than might otherwise seem appropriate.

Fifty years ago, I trained as a PE teacher so, even if I had no intention of ever running my own tai chi club, it was obvious to me from the start that one of the best ways to improve my own tai chi performance would be to learn how to teach it. Hence my attendance at Mark's Sunday morning sessions, my ongoing gratitude to the "real" instructors who attend with me, for their patience and their willingness to help, and my decision, guided by Mark, to pursue the Kai Ming instructors syllabus.

And that would probably be all there was to say about my tai chi journey to date, were it not for the fact that, a few months ago, I moved house. Almost immediately, several of my new neighbours took note of my enthusiasm for tai chi and began asking questions. Within a very short space of time, this grew into an expression of interest in some sort of "beginners group" and this, in turn, led to a coffee morning and an exchange of views, interests and aspirations. I made it clear from the outset that I was little more than a novice myself, but, if they were willing to bear with me, that I would be happy to provide a weekly, one-hour introduction to qigong and the Cheng Man Ching 37-step form.

The "lesson plan" is pretty standard (I don't know enough to be imaginative), beginning with a head-to-toe warm-up and a few minutes on balance and weight transference, moving on to a gentle introduction to Shibashi One and finishing with the first few "figures" of the form. Last Sunday, we met for the fifth time; we have covered the first 12 moves of Shibashi One and up to Ward Off Right in the form; and, so far, their enthusiasm is proving contagious. So much so that, on Sunday, in addition to eleven "regulars", we were also joined by five guests ... visitors to one of the group who had stayed overnight after a 21st birthday celebration!

What is down the road, only time will tell, but my intention today is to persevere for as long as I can. I came to tai chi at a time when I was looking for "sport". Little did I realise that it was more "life style" than "sport", more "philosophy" than "activity" and more of a "way of life" than I could ever have imagined. It is already obvious to me, even at this early stage in my tai chi career, that its pursuit is a journey that has no destination; but, as I

have always loved travelling, I know that I can look forward to the next however many years with eager anticipation. There is so much to learn; if only I could have found it earlier ...



This month's recipe is an old favourite we thought we'd share.

### Welsh Rarebit

When you're cold, tired and hungry, nothing beats this posh cheese on toast.

### Ingredients

- 25g/1oz butter
- 25g/1oz plain flour
- 100ml/3½ fl oz strong, dark beer
- 150g/5oz mature Cheddar cheese, grated
- 1 free-range egg yolk
- 1 tsp English mustard
- 4 tsp Worcestershire sauce
- pinch cayenne pepper
- 4 thick slices wholemeal or granary bread
- freshly ground black pepper

### Method

Preheat the grill to high.

Melt the butter in a non-stick saucepan and stir in the flour. Cook over a low heat for 30 seconds, stirring constantly. Slowly add the beer. Simmer for 2-3 minutes, stirring constantly until the sauce is thick and smooth.

Add the cheese, egg yolk, mustard, Worcestershire sauce and cayenne pepper, if using. Cook until the cheese melts, stirring constantly. Season with freshly ground black pepper and set aside to cool.

## Tai Chi Camp

August 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> 2018

Weoley Hill Village Hall, Bournville

£40 members £60 non-members

Each year we have a focus for the weekend camp and this year is Professor Cheng Man Ching's three levels – Heaven, Man and Earth. I briefly explored the Heaven level in this newsletter but the camp will give us the time to explore each element in more detail through mindfulness, exercises and applications.

**Saturday** will start with chi-kung and mindfulness and build gradually throughout the day. It will be suitable for all levels and is intended to deepen our love and understanding of Prof. Cheng's unique approach to tai chi.

**Sunday** Will be Weapons Day. I will be teaching tai chi Fan form and applications for balance and footwork. The form is relatively simple to learn and was taught to me by Grand-Master Tan Ching Ngee of Singapore. DVD's will be available at £20 and fans (by order) at £15.



I look forward to hearing from you. Contact details at the top of the newsletter.

### PLEASE NOTE:

Please send your Newsletter contributions for future issues to [markpeters@kaiming.co.uk](mailto:markpeters@kaiming.co.uk)

Advanced Sunday training sessions 2018  
Below are the dates for 2018. Sessions run 9.30 to 12.30 and are £30

Please ask your instructor if you are unsure about attending or call Mark on 0121 251 6172

August 4th & 5th – camp  
Sept 9th  
Oct 14th  
Nov 11th  
Dec 9th – grading day