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Kai Ming Association Newsletter

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Remember to book for
the Christmas Party
Sunday 19th December



Kai Ming Christmas Party Sunday 19th December

Tin Tin's Chinese Restaurant,
Brindley Place, Bham.

We didn't have a party last year, and it was sadly missed, so you'll be pleased to know its back on.

The price will be £25 per person and **EVERYBODY** is welcome including friends and family.

Tin Tin's told us that if we get 90 or more people they will close the restaurant and make it exclusive for us so lets pull out all the stops and make it a special night to remember!

Secure your place by giving your instructor a £10 per head deposit. If you want to pay them a little each week to make up the balance, that will be fine as it helps spread the cost.

It is a great opportunity to dress up with your tuxedo's and evening gowns. I'm hoping Karen will get Don to dress to impress this year..... I know he has a tux. The karaoke is optional and it is in a separate room so nobody has to do it, but those who do can really let rip!

The grading day for instructors is a week or two before so we will be giving out awards on the night. All in all this special evening brings a great close to the year and is definitely not to be missed.

HOW LONG IS A PIECE OF STRING?



I recently had a long telephone conversation with a nice man who rang to try and get some information on the Martial Elements of Tai Chi and if it would give him the ability to defend himself.

The call had been instigated by him watching a kung fu movie, where the male actor playing the starring role had been supposedly using Tai Chi in the fight scenes.

He said he was very confused by what he saw as there was so much leaping about and high kicks, and the blocks seemed to be very stiff and the use of strength was evident. All of this was the opposite of what he believed was Tai Chi.

We discussed at length the differences between internal and external, which he did understand as he had practised several other martial arts.

He was now interested in Tai Chi as now being in his 50s he felt it was a more realistic art for him.

He also seemed to feel that much of the martial strategies he had learnt from the other Kung Fu he had tried would not be effective for him personally, but was not sure he would be able to relax enough to make Tai Chi work for him either!

He felt he would like to come to our classes but wondered how long it would be before he could leave the beginners class and all the "slow stuff" and begin to feel confident that he could defend himself if attacked!

I tried to explain that everyone has the ability to attain this, but it really did depend as much on how long it took for them to develop as a person with the confidence that Tai Chi **WOULD** work for them, as their ability to learn techniques and forms.

However he kept pushing for a time scale 6 months, 1 year, 2 years, sometime, never.

I had to be very honest with this man, because I feel that it is the right way to be.

Trust is essential and to betray the trust of potential students just to "snare" them for your class is not acceptable, and will only lead to their disappointment of you as a person and of the Kaiming Association.

I told him it would be easy to placate him by giving him a timescale that was very competitive with other arts, but the truth of it was that I had no idea how long his journey would be before he felt confident that he had attained the level of physical and mental ability he sought. It could be never!

He was silent for a while, and then said "I am glad you said that, I would not have believed you if you had have given me an off the cuff answer, as other people I have spoken to have"

This made me think.... How often have I heard "my martial art is better than yours" and "here is the latest new and improve system of effective fighting... quick and easy to learn". Ultimately there is no short cut for dedicated training and the best martial art is the one that suits you.

Marks teachers often stated "martial arts are one family" and this is true to this day, well at least it is to those with true martial spirit and an open mind. As long as we keep striving to understand the essence of what we do, not just follow it blindly by rote, then our chosen art will continue to evolve as all arts have the ability to do. The aim of our newsletters is to encourage an inquisitive mind that can be applied to your training; Tai Chi is a gym for the mind not just the body and these newsletters are a platform to train on. We all need to eat too so lets hope Don will keep writing his great recipes.

By Jenny Peters



What benefit can be derived from doing the form very slowly?

Here is some consideration from the point of view of biomechanics.



Muscle action is commonly classified into three modes:

Concentric contraction – muscle fibre contracts and generates sufficient force greater than the load applied to the muscle to shorten its length and cause movement of body parts and do work externally.

Eccentric contraction – muscle fibre contracts generating force less than the external force acting upon the muscle, so the muscle is lengthened and no external work is done, primary function is in controlling movement. It has been found that training in eccentric contraction is more efficient than the other two in increasing muscle strength.

Isometric contraction – muscle fibre contracts and generates a force equal to the load and the muscle is neither shortened nor lengthened; primary function is to support the load in a fixed position like holding a posture.

Functionally speaking as related to Tai chi and martial arts:

Concentric contraction is the primary mode of muscle activity when we work, do things, or act/move, which comprise most of our common daily activities.

In all these activities we contract the agonist muscle concentrically, shorten the muscle length, and cause movement of our body parts and the objects that we are working on. Work gets done, by us actively, and by using force/energy generated by the concentric contraction of our muscle.

Isometric contraction happens when we are holding steady postures, like doing standing pile kind of thing. Obviously this mode of muscle action has a lot to do with stability and the skill is in the steadiness of maintaining isometric contraction in various fashions.

Eccentric contraction may occur with other muscles along with the concentric contraction of the agonist muscle and exerts a controlling function. Eccentric contraction can also be the primary muscle function where the body part is

acted upon and moved by external forces and the agonist muscle contract eccentrically exerting a controlling function to achieve a desired result, e.g., determine how fast you want your body or arm to drop. In this case, the movement and the result are not driven by the muscular force and it can be said, at least theoretically correct, that no force is used and that no work is done. So eccentric contraction is the major way muscle is used in the conversion of potential energy to kinetic energy.

Here are my thoughts. It does not matter what kind of understanding one has or which way he practices the form, the slower he “moves” the more his muscle function will bear the characteristics of isometric and eccentric contraction. When moving very slowly, say moving from the left foot to the right foot, what we are really dealing with is no longer one movement of from left foot to right foot, it becomes simply how to move from wherever we are to the next fraction of an inch within the next fraction of a second, and so on, until arriving at the other foot. It is quite clear to me that concentric muscle contraction, which occurs when a person uses his leg’s push to move his body, ceases to be effective in this scenario of “movement”. Since without sufficient training, the concentric contraction of using muscle force to do things is the primary way to do, work and move, practicing the form with slower and slower pace will gradually force a practitioner to adapt to the use of isometric and eccentric muscle contraction and the accompanying feeling of “not using force”, “let it happen”, or “release” is gradually acquired. If a practitioner is not glued too tightly to the believe that slow movement is to build strength and that it is strength that makes his Tai chi effective, then he may have a chance to experience that “not using force” means what it says and actually works. When he gets rid of the habit of using concentric mode of muscle contraction to “move” and gets good at using the eccentric contraction to effect “movement”, he is, by definition, using his body weight to source the kinetic energy without even knowing it.

Show-Hong – Cheng Man Ching Forum

what are your thoughts?

I feel slowness here is a mindful slowness where a slower and slower pace is developed through awareness rather than a blind following of ‘tai chi players do it slowly’.

Dons back...!

Following a sabbatical and peer pressure here is his latest recipe

Mushroom and green pea stroganoff

This is a quick easy recipe; feel free to adjust to suit your taste.

Ingredients

- 6 large flat mushrooms (skinned & chopped into large chunks)
- 1 medium onion finely chopped
- ½ of garden peas (cooked)
- 1 clove of garlic finely chopped
- 150ml of Crème Fraiche
- 5g hot Spanish paprika (plain if you don’t like hot)
- Small handful of chopped flat leaf parley
- Salt & pepper to taste
- 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil

Method

1. Gentry fry the onions for 5mins (add small amount of water if needed to avoid onions burning)
2. Add chopped garlic – cook off for a few minutes
3. Add paprika and keep stirring
4. Add mushrooms and keep stirring
5. Add ¼ tsp of salt, add a splash of water to get the mushrooms to wilt down
6. Continue stirring to cook down the mushrooms and let all the liquid evaporate off
7. Add the cooked garden peas and stir
8. Add the Crème Fraiche and stir
9. Season to taste and continue to cook on a low heat for 3-5 minutes
10. Add the flat leaf parsley and stir in

Serve with boiled rice and enjoy!

Note – meat eaters – try adding cooked poached chicken at the end.

羊 猴 鷄

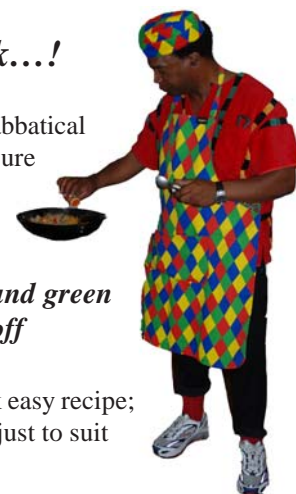
Ram

Monkey

Rooster

Here are three more Chinese Zodiac animals.

SHEEP—Characteristically sheep people are not renowned for their



leadership skills. They are however artistic, creative, and passionate, with elegant tastes, and have a gentle wisdom. They should be aware of the fact that to achieve all their goals they must strive to overcome their natural timidity.

MONKEY—Monkey people are skilful diplomat's maybe because they are clever talkers. However their love of talking can go too far sometimes driving friends away. They are clever and active and generally successful in any endeavour they undertake.

ROOSTER—Sure of themselves, forthright, and adventurous, roosters sometimes set themselves, high unrealistic goals and may at times appear reckless. They must be aware of their quick temper as they are said to prefer provoking conflict rather than avoid it.



We need you to tell us what you want from your club in 2011. The classes continue to develop and below are the workshops currently planned based on feedback from your instructors.

February 27th – **Tai Chi Cane short form** – there has been a great deal of interest in the tai chi cane (walking stick) but some worry that it is too long to remember and practice. With this in mind we have developed a shorter form that keeps to the essence of the original plus makes learning and applying more accessible. Spaces will be strictly limited so book and pay you deposit as soon as possible. 10am to 4pm £70 members and £90 non-members

March 12th – **Painting the Rainbow training** – this session continues the development of the painting the rainbow program which specifically focuses on the application of tai chi and chi-kung for rehabilitation. It is a teacher training program, take a look at www.paintingtherainbow.co.uk for more details. This session will focus on Mindfulness based chi-kung.

June 5th – **Fan Short form** – this form was developed from the long form as taught by Master Tan Ching Ngee. The form holds to the essence of the original but enables the learner to apply the skills in a shorter time. It is open to all; if you need a fan please order in advance. Wood and silk fans are £15, Metal and silk fans are £20. Please ask your instructor if you'd like to see a fan beforehand. Spaces will be strictly limited so book and pay you deposit as soon as possible. 10am to 4pm £70 members and £90 non-members

July 23rd to 25th – **Tai Chi camp** – Last years camp was a great success with people attending from other clubs as well as ours. The focus will continue to be deepening our application of Cheng Man Ching's approach to tai chi chuan. Other areas covered will include mindful walking and form, tai chi short stick, key principles (e.g. dong-dang and use of 4 ounces). More details to follow; again please ask your instructor as booking forms will be available in the New Year.

September 25th – **event TBA** – this day is yet to be finalised so you can choose...! At the moment favourites are push-hands and two person San Shou. We have never taught two person San Shou so this could be a real opportunity.

Advanced Sundays

For a number of years we have run monthly instructor and trainee instructor Sunday morning sessions. This has been to focus their development outside of regular class where they spend most of their time helping and teaching you. All things develop or stagnate, so 2011 will see a new format to enable some of you, interested in more advanced training, to access it in these monthly 3 hour sessions.

Instructors and trainees will continue to attend to ensure their grading requirements are met, but these sessions may also be available to others on an 'invitation only' basis. If you are interested please speak to your instructor for more information..

The sessions will be £20 per person.

Dates:

January 16th

February 13th

March 20th

April 17th

May 15th

June 26th

NO sessions in July or August

September 11th

October 23rd

November 20th

December 11th (instructor grading day)

Workshops are held in Hopwood Village Hall, Hopwood, South Birmingham unless otherwise stated.

As with all our workshops **we offer a £5 discount if paid in full** at least a month in advance. Places are limited and a £10 deposit is required to book your place.



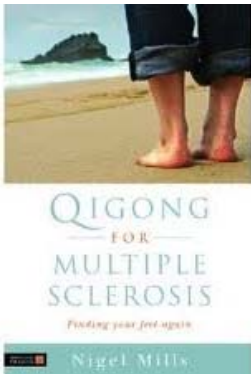
Some of you know Charlie, Ron and Clive. For those who don't, they started at a cardiac rehab tai chi class and improved so much they now run their own group on a Friday in Kings Heath. Charlie is also training to be a full Kai Ming instructor and currently runs sessions for age concern following his Painting the Rainbow training.

The great thing about these three guys is that they make tai chi fun! As you can see from the t-shirts. This all started because when Ron leads the group he keeps changing the order of the chi-kung movements and adds in from other sets.... He says its to keep us on our toes but we all think he just forgets....

Anyway we starting calling it Ronigong tai chi and Charlie had some t-shirts made. If you want to be in Ron's gang you need to attend their class in Kings Heath, you'll love it. Ask him to stand on one leg!



Ron wrote a piece for the next book about how tai chi helped him recover from his heart condition, COPD and other health problems; in fact he enjoys it so much that he actually taught himself the whole 37 tai chi form, tai chi fan and sword. Some of us struggle just to turn up each week so lets take Ron (who is in his 70's) as a great inspiration. Long live Ronigong
By Mark Peters (Ron's student)



Qigong for Multiple Sclerosis
Finding your feet again
by Nigel Mills

I gave this book to two students who were living with MS (multiple sclerosis) to find out what they thought. Both Linda and Vanessa are in the new seated tai chi DVD.

To quote Linda, "Having had MS for more than 30 years, a heart attack 2 years ago and attending a qigong/tai chi group, I was most interested to read this book". What a great start I thought, until she told me that she was disappointed there was such a lot to read before the actual exercises appeared. Linda continued to say that although the writer explained the meaning of qigong and how chi is viewed from an MS point of view, the initial focus was quite negative as he kept stating how difficult tai chi would be for people suffering from MS; ultimately MS effects people in different ways and at different levels and being told what you can't do

isn't very helpful. Also suggesting doing exercises barefooted first thing in the morning and last thing at night is a complete no-no..!

Following this poor start though, both Linda and Vanessa agreed that the book was easy to read and the images clear. The qigong exercises are designed to make you aware of your entire body, calming your body and mind through concentration on breathing. the author does mention some of the typical MS responses to exercises eg head shaking when rolling shoulders, which helps to alleviate worries.

It is worth giving this book a chance and see if it helps you. Vanessa really liked it and said she would recommend it to friends



A WARNING....

From Beryl Price
at the Shenstone Class

There is a bug that's rarely seen
That gives a serious bite.
It's got two heads, two tails, two eyes
And it's half black and white.

There is no cure for the bite it gives.
The symptoms are a curse.
The more you learn about it
The symptoms just get worse.

You can try to fight it
With a fan, a sword or a stick
But if you find you're travelling east
You really know you're sick!

Tigers and Swimming Dragons,
They'll haunt you through the night.
And Bears and Monkeys need all your wits
To ward off, left and right.

You'll find that you'll be standing
In a very funny form,
But the experts say 'Don't worry
This symptom is the norm.'

You'll hear 'plinky plonky' music
In your head so loud.
And your hands will suddenly float up
and down
Just like a fluffy cloud.

So heed this warning that I give
Though it comes too late for me.
For I have been bitten very hard by this
Bug they call TAI CHI



A view from the back of the class is our own book and a must for ALL instructors and students. Joe Samon, an instructor from another club recently sent an e-mail which said:

"I've Just been given a copy of the view from the back of the class. As a tai chi player of fifteen years I have to say that I absolutely love it and think that all tai chi practitioners should read it! I'm going to see if I can add it to our recommended reading list for our trainee teachers. Thanks for publishing."

With this feedback we know we're onto something great. There is no other book like ours on the market and we are currently working on volume two so please contribute.

The illustrations are done by Hunt Emerson, our instructor from the Handsworth Wood class; the articles, poems etc are done by your classmates and instructors.

To get your copy please buy on-line at the kaiming shop or ask your instructor. Get it on your Christmas present list!



Kai Ming Clothing

We have a range of Tai chi tops from t-shirts to fleeces. Please ask your instructor to see a sample and order. Available in various sizes and colours.

Item	Member	non-member
T-shirts	£10.00	£15.00
Pole-shirts	£12.50	£18.00
Hoodies	£20.00	£25.00
Fleeces	from £20.00	£POA

Club membership is £15pa. Please note all members are entitled to a free Kai Ming Key ring and/or car sticker if you want one.