

Why learn Tai Chi?

When asked by a student "What is the most important reason to study *Tai Chi Chuan*?"

Master Cheng replied " The most important reason is that when you finally reach the place where you understand what life is about, you'll have the health to enjoy it."

What is Tai Chi?

Tai Chi literally translates as 'supreme ultimate' and its complete name is tai chi chuan. Most people think of *Tai Chi* as a wonderful relaxing exercise performed in parks throughout China, in the early morning. This is true to some extent. *Tai Chi* is relaxing, but it also strengthens the body, improves circulation and is an effective form of self-defence. To learn the form is to merely scratch the surface. As an exercise it can strengthen you both mentally and physically by improving your levels of relaxation and teaching you about correct body alignment.

As a self-defence it works on redirection of incoming force rather than rigid blocking. This overcomes the need for brawn usually associated with martial arts.

The holistic nature of this ancient martial art makes it suitable for people of all ages and levels of fitness as it adapts itself to suit your abilities.

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What is Kai Ming?

Kai Ming means open minded and this is our ethos in teaching and sharing the art of tai chi chuan.

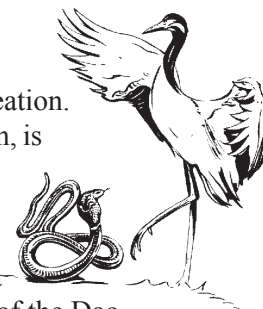
We teach *Tai Chi Chuan* and *Qigong* at regular classes, throughout the Midlands, covering all aspects from gentle exercise and stress management through to the more martial aspects for those interested.

Kai Ming Association students and instructors are encouraged to widen their experiences of tai chi and have previously visited Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan and China.

The holistic nature of Tai Chi makes it an excellent exercise for all and an effective system of self-defence. Whatever you are looking for, it is important to remember the system is based on the interaction of Yin and Yang. This interaction means that to gain any real benefit you must have an appreciation of the whole.

The Origins of Tai Chi

There are many different stories concerning its origins and creation. The most popular legend, which has little factual substantiation, is that of **ZHANG SAN FENG**, a Daoist who, already having mastered Shaolin boxing, caught sight of a crane fighting a snake. Intrigued by the yielding, smooth evasion and darting counter-attacks of both creatures, he was inspired to develop a form of boxing which would embody the natural philosophy of the Dao.



Legend aside, in the middle of the eighteenth century a soft boxing was being taught in the village of Chenjiakou, in Henan province. This soft boxing was finally popularised by **YANGLUCHAN** (1780 - 1873), who, through diligent effort, learnt the Chen family boxing, and then went to Beijing, where he taught the art to the Manchu court. This **YANG** school of boxing was destined to become the most popular form of **TAIJI (Tai Chi)**, with the help of **YANG CHENG FU**, the most widely known descendent of Yang Luchan. It is characterised by large, smooth, flowing movements with an unbroken even tempo, avoiding strenuous over-exertion.

CHENG MAN CHING became a disciple of Yang Cheng Fu after studying Tai Chi with him and his health improving significantly. From his knowledge of Chinese medicine and further research, Cheng Man Ching simplified the form to make *Tai Chi* more accessible. We teach Cheng Man Chings style and approach to tai chi chuan

Having learnt how to control his or her body through the practice of the solo form, the student then goes on to learn **Push-hands** (Tui Shou), a two person exercise, and can progress from there to Tai Chi sword (Jen) and fan (San) forms etc.

Qigong (Chi-Kung)

Qigong literally translates as 'breath exercise' and is included in general classes as well as specific workshops. It focuses on controlling your movement and awareness with relaxed breathing. This improves the efficiency of your respiratory system and oxygenising of the blood.

It is said that correct breathing is the miracle which calls back in a flash our dispersed mind and restores it to wholeness so that we can live each moment of life.

氣功

Tai Chi for health

As an exercise for health, Tai Chi has been proven to help with stress relief, poor circulation, joint damage and respiratory and digestive disorders.

From a Western physiological approach, it improves your balance, posture and general awareness. The abdominal/diaphragm breathing taught increases oxygenation of the blood which in turn aids the function of the internal organs. The slow graceful movements settle both the mind and body.

The Eastern approach is based on the flow of *Chi* through the meridian pathways of the body. Each posture is said to affect specific organs and functions.

Both approaches will be explained more clearly in class.

Tai Chi as a Martial Art

Tai Chi works on relaxation rather than muscular strength and as such is not limited by age or brawn. It works on the use of intrinsic energy (chi) and proper body alignment. Although this may sound a little mystical, it is perfectly obtainable by all who are willing to persevere. On a more accessible level, *Tai Chi* is a close-quarter system which incorporates the use of locks, throws and in-fighting techniques, making it a most realistic form of self-defence. It is a reactive system rather than an aggressive one; the classics say, "They move first but you arrive first".



The principal instructor of Kai Ming, Mark Peters, is the regional officer for **Tai Chi Union For Great Britain** and **British council for Chinese Martial Arts**, vice president of the **World Tai Chi Federation** (head-quarters in Taiwan) and member of **Traditional Wushu Association**.

Institute instructors are always available to run seminars or classes on all aspects of the art.

How to find us..

We can be contacted for details of classes throughout the Midlands

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LEARN THE ANCIENT ART OF

TAI CHI CHUAN

FOR HEALTH, RELAXATION
AND SELF-DEFENCE



KAI MING ASSOCIATION
FOR
TAI CHI CHUAN