

Kai Ming Association Newsletter

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

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The most important point in Taiji is **RELAX**. Many people can't relax, and when they meet an opponent, they become tense.

A single twist and pull, and they're finished; they've closed their door to learning and stopped progressing. Taiji involves investing in loss, not gaining advantages - advantages come only after you've invested in loss.

This is what I've discovered from my many years of practice.

Cheng Man Ching



Welcome to Bill Dancock and students..

Bill has been my student for a while now and has been running his own Tai Chi School (Sun Swallow) for a number of years.

It is with great pleasure that I would like to announce he will be training as an instructor with Kai Ming, and that his school has amalgamating with ours. He brings a wealth of knowledge from his 12+ years in the art of Taijiquan and has a special interest in the field of Qigong.



UNSTONE GRANGE 2003

25th - 27th July 2003

Back to Basics

The main focus of this years camp will be detailed refinement of the Cheng Man Ching form, at the request of the students. We will work, in detail, through the whole form working through transitional detail, body connection, intrinsic power etc. The weekend is now fully booked (unless you want to camp)

There will also be Qigong sessions (held by Bill Dancock), push-hands training and an open session to work on aspects of the art that are of particular interest to you. There will also be an opportunity to experience the Bowen Technique (see the back page for more details). See below for a full itinerary:

Friday

6pm

Evening meal

7.30 - 9pm

5 loosening exercises & their function

9pm+

Relaxation at the local hostelry

Saturday

7.30 - 8am

Chi-kung with Bill Dancock

8am

Breakfast

9 - 10.15am

Form work - Preparation to Single whip

10.30 - 12pm

Single whip to Cross Hands

12 - 1.30pm

LUNCH

1.30 - 3pm

Cross Hands to Repulse Monkey

3.15 - 5pm

Repulse Monkey to Kicks

5.30pm

Meditation/relaxation session. This will be a guided session applying self-hypnosis and awareness techniques. Try not to fall asleep

6pm

Evening Meal

7 - 8pm

Push Hands 'excuse me' - change partners every 5 minutes for plenty of practice...

9pm

The all important party so bring your glad rags and plenty of booze. There will be **NO** nipping off to the pub and DJ 'Northern Ian' will be your host for the evening. This years party will be in celebration of the anniversary of the Queens coronation (well its as good as excuse as any...)

Sunday

7.30 - 8am

Chi-kung with Bill Dancock

8am

Breakfast

9 - 10.15am

Form work - Kicks to Fair Lady weaves the shuttle to four corners

10.30 - 12pm

Four corners to the end....

12pm

Lunch

1pm

Open session. This is your chance to work on any aspects of Tai Chi training you are interested in, maybe a little push hands, or just lie down and rest in the midday sun, unwinding before your journey home...



sinking is what *you* do, compression is what is *done* to you.

Our challenge is finding a way to use the body so that, without effort, the body is compressed and power is achieved.

But this takes training.....

Peter Ralston



Tai chi self-defence workshop
Saturday 16/3/02.

At last it was time to find out what Tai Chi was originally invented for: a martial art. With the ever impressive Mr. Peters at the helm, along with a host of other instructors, the large turnout of students did not go away disappointed, (Judging by feedback from other attendees).

Having studied Tai chi on and off for approx.. Three years, And having had only rare glimpses of the martial application demonstrated, I was intrigued and in awe of the vast array of techniques that would enable the student to defend themselves in case of physical attack. I personally, found the workshop very useful in it's Simplicity and yet it's effectiveness. Many students, both New and experienced, found themselves sprawling on the floor (much to the amusement of the more sadistic onlookers!), to demonstrate this.

All in all it was worth every minute and every penny, and I hope that everyone who attended enjoyed this valuable workshop to 'round out' their studies of Tai chi. As a final comment, all I can think of is:-lets have some more please!

Richard Haskins

FORM CORRECTION...

We all strive to understand the art of Taiji and improve our health and well-being through it. But in our eagerness to move forward we overlook the simple points and stages. This is the first in a

series of 'Helpers' to highlight essential points.

Three stages to every movement:

There are three clear stages to movement and Taiji's slowness allows us to pay **REAL** attention to them.

(1) Check the ground - Most have heard the silly joke of an Irish mine sweeper, but the principle is really the same 'Check the ground before you commit to it'. In your classes, you'll practice walking from time to time, and your instructor will point out the importance of stepping clearly (shoulder width) before changing weight. If you look at it logically, if the ground was uneven and you committed too soon, you may twist your ankle or worse... At first we see checking the ground only when we step, but even if our foot is already on the ground, we should sense the floor before we commit to it. This is not only when moving forwards but changing weight backwards as well.

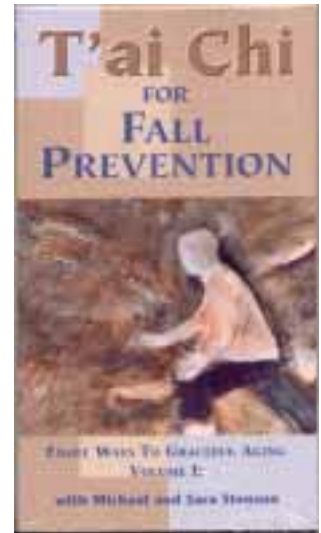
(2) Align with gravity - when we commit our weight, we should align our body allowing the weight to fall naturally to the ground. We give many visualisation to help with this idea for example imagine your body like building blocks (one on top of the other) balanced when correct but easily toppled when out of alignment; or swinging your weight underground to allow you to compress and push up from the ground rather than balancing on it. As you learn to relax, the weight will fall more easily and the legs work harder. We all know it makes your legs hurt...

(3) apply the movement - This third and final stage can be seen as ending one movement and starting the next. For this stage to be effective, stages 1 & 2 must have been completed correctly. We may think this is obvious but that doesn't make it easy... If you turn your waist to end a posture and feel a little off-balance, if you try to push somebody and they can resist you, if you try to move a heavy object and feel it in your back, then you haven't completed 1 & 2 correctly. I chose the term 'apply the movement' because this seems to cover all options whether it be uproot the other person, turn your waist to release or lift something up (mechanical handling) etc. Remember if it doesn't function martially it doesn't function for your health either.

By paying clear attention to these three stages, you will make great progress in your training, what ever your drive may be. Self-defence is more likely needed in defence of things we do to ourselves

than being attacked by others. You will become more sure footed and in turn relaxed. Movements will flow easily from one to the next and your overall feelings of balance and well-being will improve. Trust me.... It is really worth the effort...

Why not subscribe to the BCCMA newsletter as well as ours. Please send an e-mail to:- des.harman@bccma.com and keep up to date.



I have recently received a copy of an excellent video applying Taiji principles specifically to falls prevention and am impressed to say the least.

The instructors, Sara & Michael Stenson, have condensed key aspects of their training in Cheng Man Ching's Taiji into this simple and effective program. The video is clear and easy to follow, giving good background information and key points of focus, ensuring all will gain from it.

Unfortunately at present it is only available in American NTSC format from their website, but fingers crossed, DVD and PAL VHS might be on their way. For more details check out their website listed below.

<http://www.prairiewinds.com>
And follow the link for Falls Prevention

PRIVATE LESSONS

Want to train in other aspects of the art or delve deeper than a regular class?

A limited number of private lessons are available, Call Mark to discuss.

0121 453 0500
mark@kaiming.co.uk

Interpreting the classics....

One confusion people have who've read the T'ai Chi Classics (probably the best works on T'ai Chi to date) comes about by how a certain line has been translated:

*"Power comes from the legs,
is directed by the waist,
and issues out the fingers."*

This may be true, but it draws attention in the wrong direction. Let me restate it a bit:

"Intrinsic power is a function of the hole body compressing into the feet from the point of contact, all necessary motion and alignment is directed by the center, or pelvis."

The point is, that although we get our power from the ground, by starting there in the description we are apt to think of starting there in our efforts, and so push from the ground and into the hands. But really what we want to do is start from the hand (or whatever) and be compressed down into the feet. This is accomplished by moving our whole body (via the center) towards the target, and setting up an alignment that will allow compression to occur throughout the body all the way down to the feet. We don't "do" compression we "get" compressed. This means that the tissues must be squeezed into the foot, and this squeezing should be vertically descending at foot level, otherwise you are using friction, and undoubtedly shoving rather than being compressed.

Either the front or back foot, or both, can be used for compression, yet it depends on the alignment, weight, movement, and function of the technique. If you aren't moving the whole body into the foot, you can't be using compression. Don't get me wrong, I didn't say you have to squat down or even move a great deal, but the direction of movement must be into the compressing foot, which means that most of your weight (generally 60% or above) should be on that foot at the time of compression. If you shift to the other foot in the motion, then the compression should naturally move to that foot as the weight moves onto it.

Peter Ralston

All your Kung Fu DVD's from
www.hongkonglegends.co.uk
postage **FREE!!!**

Strictly Ballroom

An egregious fraud has been perpetuated on countless numbers of sincere taiji (t'ai chi) players over many generations. The true meaning of taiji has been hidden and obscured for centuries. Now it can be told. Meticulous and careful research has finally unearthed the true, and heretofore hidden, function of taiji — dancing for couples. This is not just idle supposition but a verifiable thesis that is entirely supported by the Classics.

That taiji is a couple exercise is revealed by the fact that the original thirteen postures were encapsulated in two two-person exercises. The gender of these couples can be derived from Lao-tzu's admonition "To know the yang but cleave unto the yin." Taiji stresses that the dancers should be light on their feet, i.e., "In motion all parts of the body must be light nimble and strung together". When dancing the footwork should be coordinated, namely, "The feet, legs and waist must act together simultaneously, so that while stepping forward or back the timing and position are correct." One of the basic steps used in taiji dancing is the two-step, namely, "If there is up, there is down; if there is forward, then there is backward; if there is left, then there is right." Taiji as a complete dancing art has strategies for both fast and slow dancing, namely, "In motion it separates; in stillness they fuse." It is important to follow your partner when dancing, the Classics advise, "If the ... movement is quick, then quickly respond; if ... movement is slow, then follow slowly." This ability only comes from practice, i.e., "From familiarity with the correct touch, ..." and "Without long practice one cannot suddenly understand it." Following is a skill that is important to both partners, the Classics advise that the key is "giving up yourself to follow others."

Now on to specifics. The two fundamental postures in taiji are central equilibrium (wardoff) and rollback. "The unified substance and application of Thirteen Postures is built on the appli-

cation of Rollback and the substance of central equilibrium." Even a cursory examination will reveal that rollback is the fundamental posture of couple dancing - - the inside hand to draw close and the outside hand to gave shape to the movement. The theory of change implies that the uses of the hands are infinite. For example, the outside hand can be used to clear way through the crowd (expansion) or to draw in closer (contraction). Hence the use of the hands conform to the theory of yin and yang. Footwork is equally stressed as can be seen from the division of the 13 Postures into the 5 Steps and the 8 Postures.

Taiji dancing as an art and a science is governed by principles. The first principle is to sink and relax; this principle governs individual movement. Relaxation allows the ego to get out of way and lets you perform in the smooth and graceful fashion that characterizes all great dance. Sinking lets you move from the hips; if you can't move from the hips you can forget about the samba. The second principle is to use four ounces to lead a thousand pounds; this principle governs interaction between parties. Four ounces is that force which is sufficient to detect your partner's movement; it is also sufficient to suggest the direction of your intentions without being pushy. Brutish pulling and pushing (and pawing) are severely discouraged at all times.

The first two-person exercise, push hands (t'ui-shou), teaches the fundamentals of the interactions between two people. First, fixed-step interactions and later moving-step interactions. The Classics speak of "giving up yourself to follow others"; it is vitally important in dancing to know following and leading. If you do not know following and leading you cannot tango. The key to "giving up and following others" is given in the rule that there should be "no resistance, no letting go." This is the key to good dancing where two people have to become like one.

The second two-person exercise, big rollback (ta-lu), is the training basis for the more vigorous dances such as the jitterbug and the salsa. Ta-lu teaches footwork, distance appreciation, and how to use momentum and

impudence. The dictate of "No resistance, no letting go" is also critical in the practice of ta-lu. When you consider the momentum generated in some of the more vigorous versions of the jitterbug, such as the lindy, you can see why you should not resist your partner but rather should use their momentum to help both of you perform. Similarly with "no letting go" — letting go of your partner during some of the vigorous moves would certainly not be polite and could be health threatening.

The assiduous practice of these exercises leads to the ability to "attract to emptiness" and to t'i-fang (the most efficient way of lifting your partner). It is important to remember that the hidden keyword in t'i-fang (lift let-go) is catch. After you have thrown your partner up it important to catch them again. The key to t'i-fang is knowing how to "attract to emptiness". If you can attract to emptiness then you can use four ounces to move a thousand pounds. This skill is critical in the more vigorous dances. In order to attract to emptiness you must know yourself and your partner. In order to know your partner you must be able to follow; everyone (especially men) always want to lead, but following must be learned first. (Incidentally, this is why Ginger Rogers was a better dancer than Fred Astaire.) Li I-yu advises that if you want to know yourself and others, you must give up yourself to follow others. Following requires correct timing and positioning, which in turn requires that you make your body one unit. Moving as one unit demands first that you pay attention (mutual attraction aids attention), and second that you have strong legs and relaxed shoulders.

Read these words carefully and discern their true meanings. The Classics warn that, because "Missing it by a little will lead many miles astray." The practitioner must carefully study.."
Yes, it does take two to tango.
e-mailed by the Taiji forum...



Bowen Technique

This year Bill Dancock will be offering Bowen sessions for small groups of up to 10 people. All you need is a pillow, a blanket and an open mind... I'll leave the rest up to you....

Simply stated, the Bowen Technique allows the body to reset and heal itself. A Bowen treatment consists of a series of gentle moves on skin (or through light clothing), using the thumbs & fingers on precise points of the body which aim to disturb the muscles, soft tissues and energy within the body. A treatment session usually lasts from half an hour to an hour and frequently results in a deep sense of overall relaxation, allowing the body to recharge and balance itself.

Recent studies have shown the beneficial effects of deep levels of relaxation on our immune and hormonal systems. However, the Bowen Technique can also be extremely effective for musculo-skeletal problems such as back pain, sports injuries and many other ailments and discomforts. There are many theories as to how the Bowen Technique works, but none that completely explain its holistic effect and often outstanding results.

The body is a highly complex unit dependent upon the balance of all its aspects. Whilst the orthodox medical profession still tend to take a symptomatic view of disease, Bowen is truly holistic in its approach. One Bowen move may address the entire system producing maximum results with minimal intervention. Unlike some other hands-on disciplines, the Bowen Technique does not impose a particular approach on the client. Instead, it encourages a gentle response which empowers the body's own resources to heal itself.

Bowen moves are, in themselves, a study in delicacy, being light, gentle and very precise. Frequent pauses between moves give the body time to respond and benefit.



Proposed courses for 2003

Taiji Appreciation: the morning will cover body alignment and a practical appreciation of Taiji in relation to the stresses and strains of everyday life; we will cover efficient movement and energy usage plus awareness and relaxation. The afternoon will focus on Martial appreciation to include effortless throwing and intrinsic power.

Chi-kung day: the morning will be Fragrant Buddha Chi-Kung with Mark Peters and the afternoon will be 5 element Chi-Kung with Bill Dancock. Date & price to be confirmed.

Tai Chi Fan, Weapons appreciation, Qigong, Taiji Boxing, Hsing I etc.....

Remember this is your club so if there are areas you are specifically interested in, please tell your instructor or contact Mark directly on (0121) 453 0500 or mark@kaiming.co.uk



Holiday Home for rent in near Bude, North Cornwall.
call Mark & Jenny for details.

0121 453 0500
or
mark@kaiming.co.uk

We have a two bedroom property (pictured) at Penstowe Park near Bude. Penstowe as all the usual facilities ie indoor & outdoor pool, restaurants, cabaret, sports facilities etc.

Views out to sea from the patio. Watch dusk fall and the sun disappear into the sea while sipping on a glass of great wine, and just feel the stress ebb away...

If you are interested in renting and would like more pictures and details, please contact us.

Pets and Children welcome, but no smokers....