



Tai Chi & Qigong Union for Great Britain

www.taichiunion.com



COVID lockdown easing

The government has announced its plans for lockdown easing across the UK. There are differences across England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland and details are posted on the TCUGB website at:

<https://www.taichiunion.com/coronavirus-covid-19/>

and Facebook Health Committee page at:

<https://www.facebook.com/TCUGB-Health-Committee-103961201747938>

Please remember to always check local guidelines and follow the COVID safety rules.



What's happening with Newsletters and Magazines?

We realise we've been a bit quiet of late, so please accept our apologies for being remiss in keeping our members informed, but be assured we are busy working away in the background to strengthen the values and purpose of the Union.

There have been questions, some in the Facebook groups, asking about income and expenditure of the Union. It is clear that our largest expense is the magazine. The last issue, for example, cost approx. £2000 design and layout, £5500 to print, and £3500 to post. Hopefully you feel the same as us, that this money could be put to better use on: events, research, and public awareness campaigns etc. As a board, the directors offered to continue to work for free and any payments, normally claimed, will be donated back to the Union to strengthen the development plans.

We have constructed a **members' survey** to collect your input on how to best deliver a magazine. Please click and complete. You can also share with your students <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/WKGCNZG>

Additionally, you will shortly receive a sample digital magazine email. Again, feedback will be really helpful.



The TCUGB Health Committee needs YOU!

ANECDOTAL EVIDENCE

We would like to compile a collection of testimonials based on your experience, or your students' experience of Tai Chi & Qigong and Long COVID. As Long COVID is a relatively new phenomenon, we would also be interested in testimonials relating to TC&Q and other similar conditions that have symptoms of chronic pain and fatigue such as MS or Fibromyalgia.

So if you believe that your practice has had an effect on your condition, please let us know! Even a few short sentences would be great. These can be kept anonymous but it would be nice to have a location of where you practice, even if it is kept vague. We want to share your good news more widely and build the positive vibe.

RESEARCH

We all know the innumerable benefits of practising Tai Chi & Qigong and we at the TCUGB Health Committee are keen to see these benefits validated and brought more to the awareness of the general population as well as professional healthcare providers. We call on our members with any existing connections to university researchers, particularly in the medical professional community. It would be good to see what research has already been carried out and to see what gaps there are with a view to creating new research projects.

Please get in touch if you feel you can contribute in any way.

Tina, Health Committee, TCUGB

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Listed below are the current TCUGB Social media channels.
Please access, share and like.

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/tcugb>

Facebook open group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/uktaichiqigongandinternalarartstcugbopenforum>

Facebook members only group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1273194333034852>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/TaiGreat>

Linkedin:

<https://www.linkedin.com/school/11874557/admin/>

Full instructor listing review

The new listings are now live, and we are reviewing them to amend any errors that may have slipped through; please email enquires@taichiunion.com if you have any comments or questions. Based on members' feedback, our next update will be to have three listings categories (1) qigong (2) tai chi for health (3) Tai Chi Chuan whole art. This will enable public enquiries to better find what they are interested in. More details to follow.



Share your skills and build a stronger Union

As we all work together to build the Union, the board realises we need more skills in a number of areas, including social media, legal advice, fund raising, event organising and more, so we are asking you to get more involved. Maybe you have skills you can share or recommendations you can offer. Please let us know by emailing enquires@taichiunion.com



Thank you for taking the time to read this and we hope you find it useful and interesting. Email updates will be sent out periodically. If you do not want to receive these updates, please let us know.

Let's get back to being the key organization for Tai Chi, Qigong and Internal Martial Arts across the UK. I'm sure, with your help, we can do this. All the board are working together and making decisions together to ensure continued growth and success.

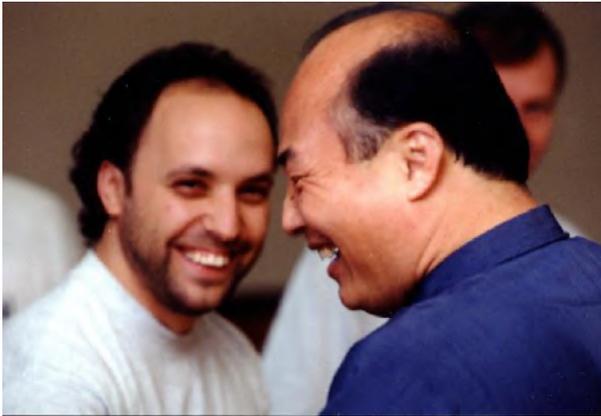
Best regards,

Mark Peters

Chairman

On behalf of the board of TCUGB

Masters Like Chocolate Too



Mark Peters with his teacher

Master Tan Ching Ngee of Singapore

I'm looking through the kitchen window which overlooks our patio. Out in the cold morning air, heralding the onset of winter, my husband Mark Peters is learning the spear form, as he has been 'instructed' to do by his Sifu, Master Tan Ching Ngee of Singapore. The birds seem to be watching with interest from the safety of tall trees scattered around the garden; they are silent.

Sweat rolls down his forehead, despite the chill; Chi seems to defy the elements. Then Master Tan appears at the patio doors, watching intently, sometimes nodding with approval, and then tapping the window to convey corrections. Then, unable it seems to resist his inclinations, he slips on a pair of gloves against the unfamiliar English cold and steps out to join his student. Frost glints in the early morning sun as they begin to train together.

The student is eager to learn and carry on traditions, and the Master perhaps re-lives his own training days with Grandmaster Cheng Man-Ching; days when he, like Mark, could never quench his thirst for he secrets which Tai Chi holds. They move together, sometimes serious and sometimes laughing out loud when Mark makes a silly mistake. I must be getting sentimental, because for a second I am so touched that I feel a surge of emotion and tears well up. Moments such as these are too few. In a back garden in Birmingham, East meets West as student and teacher unite in a love for the art that nourishes them both.

Just as I turn away, I hear a voice which usually speaks very little English vibrate across the patio, "You must train very hard, I no teach crap Kung fu". Perhaps Singapore is not so far away after all.

Arrival

As we waited in the busy arrival hall at Heathrow airport for the passengers from Kuala Lumpur, we wondered what lay ahead during the week to come. We were waiting to meet a Tai Chi Master who is one of the dwindling numbers of disciples of Grandmaster Cheng Man-ching, the diminutive man who could fill a room with the power of his form, and the founder of the style of Tai Chi which we practise.

Our club, Kai Ming, had invited Master Tan Ching Ngee to visit England and pass on some of his vast knowledge of the martial arts, by holding seminars in Scotland and Birmingham. This was January 1997, and at last in October, all the arrangements had borne fruit. Master Tan is a doctor and his clinic in Singapore made it impossible for him to give us more than a week or so of his time. Everyone was determined to make as much of this week as possible.

Second visit

The seminars were fully booked. We had not seen him for four years, and on that occasion his visit had been blemished by the behaviour of a man of no honour, culminating in much bad feeling. We are no longer associated with that individual.

We did not know what to expect when Master Tan arrived, and wondered if this visit would be coloured by the events of his previous visit and cause him to hold back from passing on his knowledge to us. Suddenly we caught sight of a familiar face. He is not a powerfully built man but gives off an undoubted presence. As we began our journey back to Birmingham the conversation was limited; he speaks little English and we do not speak Chinese. But as time passed I believed I could sense a certain distance from us, as if he were wondering if his reception would be the same as before.



Seminar

The weekend seminar was a huge success. There were numerous questions, and as Master Tan worked tirelessly with depth and frankness. He told us that it was the small points, the details, which made the difference and he made sure we understood these. Two days passed, and everyone went home somewhat exhausted but very happy in the knowledge that their understanding of Tai Chi had improved. I know that I speak for all of us all when I say that we felt we had been with a great Master.

As the week moved on it seemed Master Tan as growing more at ease, and it was obvious that he enjoyed being with so many keen Western students. Both his skill and his speed impressed everyone. Where many of us only dream of training with a disciple of Grand-master Cheng, here we were actually with one of them. All who met him fell under his spell. So as he warmed to us he began to try to communicate in broken English that outstripped our Chinese.

In between teaching, we took him on a quest for Chinese antiques and as luck would have it the 'Big-Brum' antiques fair took place during his Visit, starting at 6.30 a.m.! There were one thousand two hundred stalls and I am sure that Master Tan saw them all. His knowledge was impressive and much heated bargaining went on that day. Here was

someone who could tell the dealers a few things, no mistake.

I warmed to Master Tan as the days passed, and we shared many a joke. The Cadbury World visit showed us that even Tai Chi Masters like chocolate and there were, when he returned to Singapore, quite a few bars of it in his luggage.

Dignity

Throughout his visit, whether teaching, reminiscing about his days with Cheng Man-ching, or laughing uproariously when Mark dropped he supermarket bag and smashed his beer bottles, there was an air of dignity about him. There was the feeling that this Master not only taught 'Good Kung fu' but if necessary would be able to use it very effectively.

There are many self-proclaimed 'Masters' around the world but I learn that week that it takes much more than a martial skill to command respect and loyalty. A good heart is needed in a teacher, and if this no present you will learn precious little. The teacher will keep things to themselves, afraid to pass on too much in case one day you are equal to them. Such a teacher will treat you badly and bask in their own glory, self centred at the expense of the pupils. But a good heart radiates from Master Tan and those who treated him badly did him a great injustice.

As his plane soared upwards, bound for Singapore, I hope he took back with him a very different impression of British students and martial artists. I remembered his inscription on a fan which he gave me: "Money cannot buy you a good heart, but Tai Chi can." Zai Jian Master Tan may we meet again soon.

Article by Jenny Peters

A NOTE OF CLARIFICATION

Master Tan's approach to the art was that slow movement can be to slow and develop listening skills (ting jing) to decide the appropriate speed of both practice and application. He said Master Cheng often practiced his 37 step form at a quicker pace to develop free-flowing movement and balance. The ability to flow from quick to slow is not restricted to Cheng style alone and should apply

to all styles. Following step training helps with moving push-hands to enhance the flow.

Master Cheng has been quoted as saying that all the skill (Gong Fu) is in the transition from one movement/posture to another and Master Tan said this meant that it is easy to stand still but great skilfulness and personal awareness are required to move with balance and awareness from one form posture to the next; to maintain the natural ebb and flow or swing and return (Dong Dang). To move from form to natural push-hands requires a keen sense of this ebb and flow to enable us to naturally find the openings and apply the art freely.

To practice tai chi without any understanding of its application makes no sense at all. Both its application in fighting and its application for life are essential. Too many people just say that they practice tai chi but practice is not enough to gain any real benefits, you have to live it in all aspects of your life.

Master Tan says that tai chi is a natural art and as such flows and evolves as does a river; it should not stagnate like a still pond. If Master Cheng had rigidly stuck to Yang Cheng Fu's teachings he would have failed his teacher and the art. We should all strive to continue the development of tai chi chuan whilst maintaining its core principle. We should all look to the classics for help with this.

静坐

Oh... to sit quietly

I would love to sit quietly, but the world is such a noisy place

As I still my mind the world screams "listen to me"

As I strive for peace, the world nudges me

As I try to shut it all out, the world bags on the door.

h how I wish all could be quiet so I could just sit quietly

But as I do I realise the beauty of it all

The beauty of the flow of life...

Maybe if I stopped resisting life and flowed with it

I could enjoy the peace within the noise and just sit quietly.....

Tai chi's health benefits for body and mind



The TCUGB gets a plug in this SAGA magazine article. Click the link below to read it all.

Why practising the gentle martial art tai chi could help improve your physical fitness as well as your mind.

If pounding the pavement or spinning the wheels of a stationary bicycle aren't the kinds of exercise that appeal to you, tai chi may offer you a less frenetic alternative. But although tai chi may look as though its less effective as an exercise – people rarely break into a sweat or grunt with effort – it has many health benefits, and can easily be done in the comfort of your own home or garden....

<https://www.saga.co.uk/magazine/health-wellbeing/exercise-fitness/tai-chi-health-benefits>