

S P R I N G 2 0 1 4

The

Immortal's Way

Newsletter of the Golden Rooster School



Blue skies, and Wu Wei.

Blue skies, gentle sun, and tiny birds dart to and fro. This is the kind of Spring morning that promises so much, we feel elated that Winter has all but passed, and thankful it has not been such a difficult one.

A time to plan perhaps, but also a time to let things be, to let the flowers lift our spirits with vivacious colour along with a delicate newness that needs no interference from us. A time to survey rather than disrupt. Non-interference, (Wu Wei) is a principle we use in our practice of Tai Chi, to allow rather than force, our development. Of course there must be an intention to learn, to improve, but the goal is that elusive effortless effort. To learn from nature in it's gentlest, purest form and move naturally and vibrantly upward. What better reason to practice Tai Chi Chuan.

**"Spring comes, and
the grass grows by
itself."**

Lao Tzu



New title, new format

It has been some time (years) since we produced a school newsletter. Moving our base back to the UK, and all which that entailed caused a hiatus, more than somewhat extended by the unexpected health issues I have faced in the last two years. As always it was Gloria who picked up the slack and bore the brunt of keeping our varied interests on track, but something had to give, so no newsletter.

So now we have more students corresponding online, which has lead to the development of our virtual school with both live and recorded classes and much more besides. What better time to reintroduce our new newsletter, in digital format for students of the Golden Rooster School, wherever you are. We think it will be fun for us all.
Keith.

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Noise is not in the market-place,
Nor quiet in the hills...
But in the ever -changing hearts of men

Chinese proverb



Gloria, slowing down to focus in the form

Master's words

Quotes from the masters of then and now.

Sage advice for Tai Chi practice and life.

'Slow Down' to improve your form

One 'secret' which we try to pass on to students is that of slowing down while learning and initially practicing techniques. Slowing down, gives you time to see the details, to check your posture and prepare for the next movement. The more detail you see, the slower you go, and the greater the chances are that you will direct your movement in the right way.

In the words of Lao Tzu:

What is still is easy to hold.

What is not yet manifested is easy to guide.

What is brittle is easy to crack.

What is minute is easy to scatter.

Deal with things before they appear.

Order things before they become confused.

Save the Date!

TCUGB AGM

12th April 2014

The A G M of the Tai Chi Union for Great Britain will be held at Wu's Academy Unit 2a, 1st Floor, 449-453, Bethnal Green Road, London E2 9QH commencing at 3.00pm (doors open at 2.30pm) We recommend joining the TCUGB if you are serious about Tai Chi

Find out more about the TCUGB by clicking on their logo in the footer section of the school website, or visit <http://www.taichiunion.com>

26th BOTC

13th April 2014

26th Festival Of Chinese Martial Arts And British Open Tai Chi Championships

At Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre, Pegasus Rd., Blackbird Leys, Oxford; Sunday, April 13th, 2014 (doors open 9 am for competitors, 10 am for spectators).

One of Britain's most prestigious events, with the opportunity to see many styles at many levels, competing in forms, tui shou, and full contact. Take a packed lunch, the catering can be overwhelming.

World Tai Chi Day

26th April 2014

World Tai Chi & Qigong Day is part of the World Healing Day family of events that wraps our planet in a wave of healing intention each year on the last Saturday of April.

The Golden Rooster School has participated in this event since it began in 1998 in both the UK and Portugal.

If you would like to take part this year have a word with your teachers.

Tai Chi training for falls prevention and rehabilitation

As most of you will be aware, Keith fractured both legs last summer and required extensive surgery. Keith's injury was related to long-term kidney failure, but more typically older adults incur such injuries through falls. Tai Chi is often used in falls prevention programmes as studies such as that by Wolf et al have shown it to be particularly effective (1) here is an extract; General exercise reduced risks of falls by 10%. Specialised training reduces risks by 25%. **Tai Chi reduces risks of falls by 47%⁽¹⁾**

(1) Wolf SL, Barnhart HX, Kutner NG, McNeely E, Coogler C, Xu T: Reducing frailty and falls in older persons: an investigation of Tai Chi and computerized balance training. Atlanta FICSIT Group. Frailty and Injuries: Cooperative Studies of Intervention Techniques. Journal American Geriatric Society 1996,

Did you know? (From help the aged website)

- ☯ · Falls make up over half of the admissions to A&E
- ☯ · 14, 000 died from fractures
- ☯ · 50% fall again· hip fractures cost NHS £1.7 billion
- ☯ · after a fracture 50% no longer live independently
- ☯ · over a third of people of 65 years fall each year
- ☯ · General exercise reduced risks of falls by 10%.
- ☯ Specialised training reduces risks by 25%.
- ☯ Tai Chi reduces risks of falls by 47% ⁽¹⁾

In our classes we use a number of different stratagems to achieve improvements in functional balance control, structural awareness and control, coordination, stamina, and cardiovascular fitness. For example the use of traditional methods of Tui Shou (pushing hands) such as the various 7 Star Step , 4 direction, and 9 palce drills offers tremendous opportunity for multi modality learning, combined with scalable improvements in fitness, balance, reaction time, agility, stamina and postural awareness. Thankfully whether it's performed as a solo exercise, or a paired activity, there are so many variations we can always find ways to raise the bar and make it fun as well.



Share your experience of Seven Star Step with us on our Facebook page: [fref=ts](https://www.facebook.com/fref=ts).
Or by email: office@goldenroosterschool.com.

A Journey remembered

Vintage tales from Keith

Having read master Chee Soo's first book several times, I was delighted to discover that there was a class near me. One sunny Wednesday evening in 1975 I set out to take a look...

As I walked through the swing doors into the large school hall I was surprised to find it relatively silent, silent except for the sound of deep, prolonged breathing, immediately I recognised the similarity to my training in Raja Yoga, and the importance of this practice. I made my way as unobtrusively as possible to a bench where a few other observers waited. Observing the lesson, I recognised several people as former classmates from Judo and Karate. Before long I was treated to the spectacle of 4 of the senior students sparring, first one to one, then one to three etc. while the other 30 or so members practiced techniques at the other end of the hall. Watching the seniors spar I had been impressed at their agility, the speed and sheer variety of techniques. Shortly, the Master joined the sparring seniors; they stopped immediately, and bowed. He took a relaxed stance in the centre of the space and they surrounded him, all was still. The Master nodded his head and his protagonists exploded into action, they moved fast, their limbs blurred, the Master seemed to move slowly, calmly, without hurry, yet he ran rings round them. Where they kicked, he span, they punched he was gone, yet his hand passed across a face softly without harm, a deft sweep of an arm would send one into another, he had all the time in the world This was my first live exposure to the Chinese internal arts, I had read about them, but this was real, this was great and I was hooked. I joined the Thetford Wu Shu Club under that Master, Ted Bird and thrived on it.

As my training progressed and I showed some ability (read 'put in more practice') I was invited to the student section of the central training school in Dunstable, there we would be coached by the Grand-master, Chee Soo.

The price of missing these sessions was driven home to me on one practice night when a fellow student with whom I shared

a friendly rivalry, returned from a session I had been unable to attend.

We had shared many hard battles without clear victory being established, yet in one session he had been transformed from being my equal in sparring; to someone I could not even touch. My kicks were intercepted half way, my hand strikes never landed and not a single technique of my fiendishly contrived combinations got through. Astonished and somewhat demoralised, I questioned my now superior and very pleased training buddy as to how this dramatic improvement was accomplished, generously he shared the secret he had learned at the Master's workshop, and at the next session we were back at it hard as ever and even in skill once more.



A picture of our hero – Keith Roost performing Tai Chi.



Getting the concept

The 'keys' to success in the internal arts



In our classes we often see people 'getting' the idea of Tai Chi or Qigong for the first time, its very rewarding. Tai Chi is a deep practice and it can be easy for new students to lose their way in the beginning. Here are some pointers for beginners.

Learn the fundamental concepts.

When explaining what certain movements are for, we aim provide a balance between traditional concepts (The Yi leading the Qi, Zhong Ding or central equilibrium, and silk reeling energy) and very tangible benefits (developing balance, improving posture, boosting circulation) These concepts, principles, and benefits are given to develop your understanding and help you remember the lessons more easily, so that you can apply the concepts etc. in practice.

Practice the concepts

In Square form,

We work on alignment and control, learning to separate weight, open and close hips and shoulders in unison, learning to turn the feet to the best angle for the next move.

In Round form,

Aim for slow flowing movements, with good alignment, weight separation and focus. Make your postures large and relaxed; yet explore the expansion and contraction, the spirals and circles.

Deepen your understanding

Make your practice deeper, by developing your ability to see the subtle nuances, watch others to identify good practice principles. Control your action and composure to reproduce them in your practice.



Take your time.

Tai Chi is a life long process and every step along the way is enjoyable. It's better to deeply know a couple of postures from the form and train them several times a day than to superficially know a whole form. You will have a much more satisfying experience from the deeper practice.

The Golden Rooster Schools Key concepts

The 1st principle of Tai Chi Chuan, is- Tai Chi

Tai Chi Chuan is the boxing system based upon the principle of Tai Chi thus the interaction of Yin and Yang the opposite and complimentary phases of anything. It is crucial that one understands the terms are relative Thus our school teaches the (relatively) yang style of WuDang Tai Chi Chuan, alongside the (relatively) yin approach of Chee Soo's Li style. Both can be seen to have a common ancestry, and it does not require too much examination to see the similarities in the sequence if you ignore the names. In the Li style we use small movements and a short sequence, but a detailed and mentally intense focus on the coordination of the mind, body and breath with the actions. In the Wu Dang, the structure and order are emphasised before the mind and in time the breath are united with the movements.

Further more, both styles require the separation of weight, (Yin and Yang) in the steps and stances, in the hands, and the body.

Eventually both styles end up at the same destination, but by slightly different routes.

The 2nd principle - Wei Wu Wei

Here is another of the concepts (or principles) that we teach early on, because if followed it will prevent injury through over exertion and improper alignment.

Wei wu wei: often simply translated as "action without action" or "effortless doing" there is a slightly different connotation for martial arts, which is the one we mainly use,



"Action which does not involve struggle or excessive effort". In this instance, *Wu* means "without" and *Wei* means "effort". The concept of "effortless action" is a part of the Daoist Internal martial arts such as Tai Chi Chuan, (Supreme Ultimate Boxing) Bagua zhang (Eight Trigram Palm) and Xing Yi Quan (Mind-Form Boxing). It follows that wu wei complies with the main feature and distinguishing characteristic of Daoism, that of being natural. To apply wu wei to any situation is to take natural action. Therefore your training and practice sessions should reflect your current level of fitness and health.

New Syllabus and Fee Structure

Our syllabus is under review to provide grading opportunities to those who are not on the martial or teacher training syllabi. Accordingly the main syllabus will be divided in to *Wen (Civil)* and *Wu (Martial)* categories and re formatted to reflect appropriate goals and grades. Look out for your new syllabus in your next newsletter

With effect from April 1st 2014 public class prices in Norfolk will return to a uniform structure as follows:

Monthly fees 1 class per week £25.00 per month
2 classes per week £35.00 per month

You may attend at the regular Hindolveston or Trowse classes. The monthly fee is not refundable, or transferable if you miss any classes,

Drop in fees will be increased to £7.50 per class.,

Beginners will be encouraged to join periodic foundation courses to minimize disruption to existing students.

Virtual School: This will be available to all and will include free resources, as well as paid resources and live training sessions

Follow Us

Some major re-jigging has been required to achieve this, but you can now follow us on your favourite social media.

There may be a few hiccups for a couple of days(weeks?) as the search engines adjust. All being well we will add more options in future. Don't forget you can simply go to the school website and use the resources and contact form if you prefer.



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www.goldenroosterschool.com