

# Newsletter

July 2009

Well, it's certainly been a hectic month with the visit of two outstanding teachers to our school – Grandmaster Chen Xiaowang, the 19<sup>th</sup> Generation “Gatekeeper” of Chen Taijiquan and his nephew Chen Ziqiang of the 20<sup>th</sup> Generation. People sometimes get confused as to how this idea of generations is calculated.

Chen Taijiquan has a long history stretching back almost 400 years to its creation in the seventeenth century by Chen Wangting, a warrior General who lived during the tumultuous fall of China's Ming dynasty. He took the existing family martial system and used it as a base for his new kind of martial art. Chen Wangting himself was of the 8<sup>th</sup> Generation of the Chen clan, the 1<sup>st</sup> Generation Patriarch being a warrior called Chen Pu who first established the Chenjiagou village. So Chen Xiaowang is from the 19<sup>th</sup> generation counting back to Chen Pu. All students should have a basic knowledge of the background to the system they practise.

## Grandmaster Chen Xiaowang Seminar

On June 9&10<sup>th</sup> Grandmaster Chen Xiaowang returned for his annual visit to our school. This year we held the seminar at the Daresbury Park Hotel. One positive benefit of the economic downturn was that we could get a good venue at a far better rate than usual.

The topic of the seminar was the Old Frame First Form (Laojia Yilu), the

foundation form we practise in class. As usual the Grandmaster stressed the importance of precision of movement allied to the complete mental calmness necessary to do Taijiquan correctly.

Grandmaster Chen is also a renowned calligrapher and he showed some of his work which he has been selling as part of his “Chen Village Restoration Project”. This is a fund designed to rebuild many of the historical monuments in Chenjiagou that have fallen into disrepair through the poverty of the village and the effects of events such as the Cultural Revolution (where many cultural sites and artefacts were damaged or destroyed completely). Up to now he has raised roughly \$100,000 which has funded the rebuilding of the Chen Family Temple. Next in line is the planned restoration of the house where Chen Changxin (14<sup>th</sup> Generation) lived and taught.



At the close of the seminar Grandmaster Chen presented Duan Grade certificates to four students who graded with the Chinese Wushu Association in December last year. Well done to Andrew Hesketh (3 duan grade), and Mary McGregor, Clive Howells and Lee Davis-Conchie (2<sup>nd</sup> duan grade)!

## An Intensive Week with Chen Ziqiang

Chen Ziqiang is the chief coach of the Chen Village Taijiquan School and one of the new generation of emerging masters from the Chen Village in China. This was his first visit to the UK where he conducted a series of workshops from 24-28<sup>th</sup> June. In a varied programme Chen Ziqiang brought to life the dynamism and martial side of Chen Taijiquan.



The first workshop looked at Silk Reeling and Foundation work, finishing with a range of silk reeling exercises done on one leg to enhance strength and balance alongside developing the system's characteristic spiral movements.



The next two days we worked on Push Hands & Applications. Chen Ziqiang introduced lots of joint locking techniques which could be applied smoothly and naturally from the circular patterns of the various push hands drills.

The weekend concentrated on the Laojia Yilu form. Throughout he stressed the need for intelligent training rather than just blindly following – understanding the rationale behind each movement.

The workshops of Grandmaster Chen Xiaowang and Chen Ziqiang were well attended with practitioners coming from London, Hereford, and also France and Slovakia - so thank you everyone for your support.



Training the Chen Taiji 13 Long Pole Form with Chen Ziqiang, one of the system's oldest weapons and methods of body conditioning. In the past the spears used in battle were usually much longer and heavier than those used in practice today. By simply adding a spear head to the long pole you have the traditional Chen 13 Long Spear Form.

## Upcoming Events

### Taijiquan International Seminar in Bratislava 14-17<sup>th</sup> August

Davidine and David will be conducting a 4-day Taiji Camp in Bratislava, the historical capital of Slovakia. Topics covered to include: Laojia Yilu, Chansigong & Foundation Exercises, 38 Form and an Intro to Push Hands. Cost for the entire programme is 150 Euros. We will be staying in Bratislava for a week so there will be time for some local sightseeing. Accommodation is inexpensive ( approx. 12 Euro/person/night based on two sharing).



### Broadsword (Sabre) Workshop Sun 6<sup>th</sup> September venue etc details to follow

The Broadsword is one of Chen Taiji's short weapons. Originally consisting of 13 movements, Chen Zhaopi added nine movements in the 1930s when he was teaching at the famous Nanjing Academy to create the form practised today in Chenjiagou. The form is short and dynamic, often likened to a fierce tiger with each movement being more direct and obvious than the straight sword.



### China Trip 11-27<sup>th</sup> October 2009

10 days training with Grandmaster Chen Xiaoxing in the Chen Village Taijiquan School. As well as the chance to take in some sites including the Shaolin Temple, Longmen Grottoes (a wonderful Buddhist site where many thousands of Buddha figures, from several inches tall to many metres high, have been carved from rockfaces, the Great Wall etc.

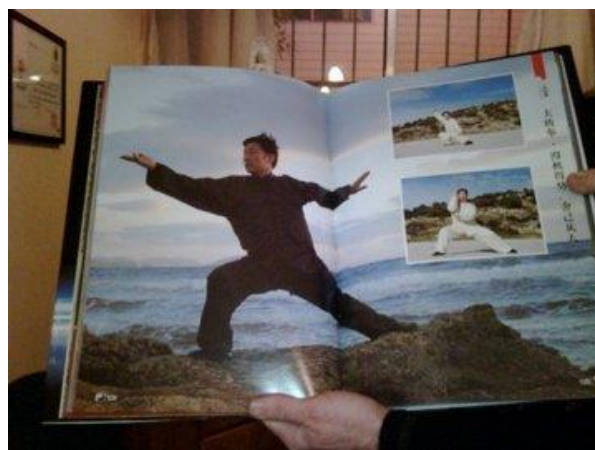
### Malaysia Tai Chi Trip October 2010

We will be leading a group to exotic Malaysia for a trip combining a week of Taiji in the foothills of Mount Kinabalu, SE Asia's highest mountain and a week of holidaying by the South China Sea. In 2007 the group experienced activities such as a boat trip searching for probiscus monkeys and fireflies, snorkelling over beautiful coral reefs off one of the regions most beautiful off-shore islands, visiting the Monsopiad Cultural Village – a site dedicated to one of Borneo's most famous headhunters etc.

**Please register your interest for any of the above events**

### BOOK RELEASE

**Grandmaster Chen Xiaowang's monumental new book *Chen Family Taijiquan* is now available. Almost 350 pages and in large format, this beautiful hardcover limited edition presents a dramatic visual portrayal of Chen family Taijiquan.**



**The books are available for purchase at £79. 40% of the proceeds go to the Chen Village Restoration Project.**