

Chenjiagou Taijiquan GB Newsletter

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Chen Ziqiang's Visit

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Upcoming Events

- ◆ Weekend Workshops
- ◆ Chen Village Trip
- ◆ Grange Residentials

When our school started more than a decade ago, the goal was to bring over the best Chen Taijiquan teachers in China so students can experience the art in its purest form. As well as hosting many seminars with Grandmaster Chen Xiaowang, the 19th generation gatekeeper of Chen Family Taijiquan, the school has facilitated the first European visits of Zhu Tiancai and Chen Xiaoxing. Zhu Tiancai is one of the foremost teachers to emerge from Chenjiagou. Chen Xiaoxing is the principal of the Chenjiagou Taijiquan School, China's most famous Taijiquan school; we also hosted the first UK visit of Chen Ziqiang, Chief Instructor of the Chenjiagou Taijiquan School.

This July was Chen Ziqiang's third visit to the school. As usual his workshops were dynamic, informative and well attended, with participants from Poland, Switzerland, France and Slovakia. Workshops covered the broadsword, silk-reeling and foundation exercises, push hands and applications and two short routines training the soft and hard sides of Chen Taijiquan.

Throughout the workshops, Chen Ziqiang emphasised the importance of patience, precision and perseverance, of not putting limits upon yourself - "Don't say you can't jump because you are an older person, just jump a little lower"!

A consistent theme in his workshops is

the importance of having confidence in the system and not looking for short-cuts.

Thank you to all who supported this event, especially those who travelled a long way. It really is your support that makes these experiences possible. For students who want to develop their Taiji to a higher level, contact with teachers like Chen Ziqiang is a must. Even in China it is not easy to get access to this level of instruction. It should be viewed as a masterclass - much like a tennis enthusiast being coached by Roger Federer.





Upcoming Weekend Workshops: Laojia Erlu - 28th August

Built upon the foundation of Laojia Yilu (first routine), Laojia Erlu/Paocui (Cannon Fist) is the second routine of the Chen traditional handforms. Whilst Laojia Yilu contains both hard and soft movements, but emphasises the soft, the Erlu emphasises the hard. It expresses the relaxed but powerful

whole body movement of Chen taijiquan through the sudden releases of power mixed with the softer spiraling movements of silk reeling energy. This form is an indispensable step for those wanting to develop their taijiquan practice into a powerful martial art.

Birchwood Leisure and Tennis Complex
Benson Road, Birchwood,
Warrington WA3 7PQ
12-4pm Weekend Workshops cost: £25

Sword Form - 25th September

The Chen Sword form is built around the qualities of skill, precision and speed. Practising the sword form helps to develop the ability to project and extend energy in a relaxed manner to the tip of the sword. It also helps to create an efficient Taiji body; repeated practice loosens the large joints such as the hips and shoulders, as well as helping to increase the suppleness of the wrists and hands. Venue to be confirmed



Chenjiagou Training Trip Approaching Fast!

In October, the latest group of students from the school will be travelling to the Chenjiagou Taijiquan School in China's Henan province for an intensive training course.

Since 2003 groups from our school have enjoyed the experience of training with Grandmaster Chen Xiaoxing. This year we will be 15 strong. Some of those joining the trip are old hands who have been to China many times. Many

though, are going to the Chen Village for the first time! Most, if not all the group started Taiji with no idea that they would end up travelling to China to train at the birthplace of the art - it just shows you where life can take you if you let it!

This year, we will be reviewing the old frame and the sword form. For those who have not been on one of the trips - put it on your "bucket list"! The next school group to train in Chenjiagou is planned for the year after next in 2013.

Residential Weekends at The Grange

Next year we are having two residential Taiji weekends at the Grange country house in Shropshire. The event has been running annually since 2004 and has been filling up so quickly that we have decided to add a second date.

The programme will be the same for both weekends - introducing the New Frame First Routine. This form was created by the famous Taiji master Chen Fa-ke (grandfather of the present

generation). It follows the same basic pattern as the old frame first routine, but has more obvious silk-reeling spiral movements and more obvious martial applications.

Cost for the Grange Residential Weekend is £220. Anyone wanting to book a place please do so in class.

Week 1: 18-20 May - (nearly full)

Week 2: 25-27 May



Statue of Chen Wangting, creator of Taijiquan, at the Chen Family Temple.

New International Branches

The first of the school's international branches was established three years ago in Slovakia under the stewardship of Danuse Gelatova. In the next few months two new branches will open in Portugal and France.

The Portuguese branch commences in October headed by Gabriela Morgado. Gabriela began her Taiji journey in 1993 with Yang style before switching to Chen Taijiquan in 2000. She has studied with Grandmaster Chen Xiaowang, his son Chen Yinjun, as well as joining our

trips to Chenjiagou in 2004, 2004 & 2006. Gabriela's classes in Lisbon are run as a department of the Escola Superior de Medicina Tradicional Chinese.

The French branch is being organised by Terry Ryan who needs no introduction to most of you! Terry is a veteran Taiji practitioner who began training in 1974. He has studied under many well known Taijiquan teachers. Terry's classes are scheduled to start on 27th September.

Congratulations and good luck to Terry and Gabriela.

Around the Clubs

Well done to the students in the Culcheth (Mon) and Lymm (Wed) classes who have recently completed the Old Frame First Form. This is the first milestone in traditional Chen style Taijiquan syllabus. Now you have to train until you can do the form yourself!

Under the watchful eye of Lee Davis-Conchie, the Blackpool club's "Taiji in the Park" has now become a regular monthly event in Stanley Park. The

nominal charge collected for the event goes to local charities.

The Chinese conversation class is going well in preparation for the China training trip in October. At this rate the Saturday class will soon be a Chinese only class ☺

If there is anything (Taiji related) that you would like us to bring back from China in October, tell us in class and we will do our best: T-shirts, DVDs, training trousers, weapons, books etc

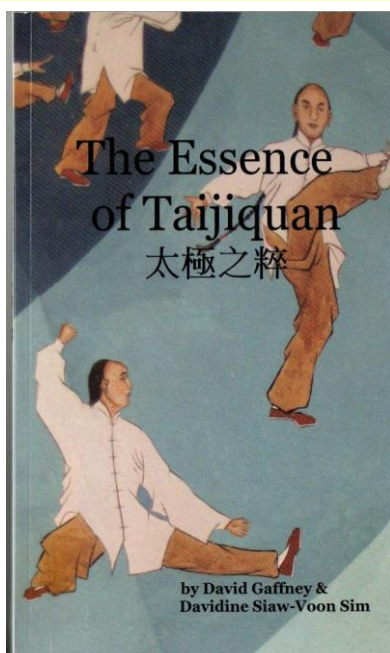


*Gabriela Morgado
Portugal*



*Terry Ryan
France*

The Essence of Taijiquan soon available in Portuguese and Italian!



As we speak David & Davidine's second book, **The Essence of Taijiquan** is being translated into Portuguese and Italian. The Italian version is being translated by Rome-based Chen Taiji teacher Amanda Carloni. The Portuguese version is being done by Gabriela Morgado who was introduced above. Both are exciting projects.

There are many Chen Taijiquan enthusiasts around the world, the numbers increasing particularly in countries in South America (eg Brazil, a Portuguese speaking country) and in the Middle East.

For a deeper understanding of the history and theory of the art you practice, read this book.

The book can be ordered in class and costs just £14.99



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“Promoting
traditional Chen
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We're on the Web!
www.chentaijigb.co.uk

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Chen Taijiquan World

Follow our blog “Talking Chen Taijiquan with David Gaffney” at <http://chentaijiquanworld.blogspot.com>

For people who don't have internet access here is the latest blog posting.

this consistency and persistence that gave him his great skill!

You can't force the fruit to ripen!

A saying that is often repeated in Chenjiagou is that "you can't force the fruit to ripen". There are no shortcuts and wishful thinking is just that. The students I like the best are the ones who quietly show up week after week, year after year and just get on with it. No hurry, no impatience to get on to the next thing. Just consistent honest effort... What we are trying to achieve in Taijiquan is much more than just learning a few sets of movements or a few push hands tricks. Instead what is asked for is the development of complete physical and energetic coordination. But what does that mean in real terms? It means striving to follow a set of rules that have been passed down for many generations. Chen Zhaopi said that without striving for beauty in your Taijiquan you could never hope to achieve high skill. Today people often mistake this as a license for their own individuality. However, to those of Chen Zhaopi's generation beauty was synonymous with conforming to nature - to following the rules!

All those instructions handed down in Taijiquan lead the seriously interested on a path back to their innate physical and psychological nature. This is achieved through consistency, not unsustainable short bursts of enthusiasm. In his excellent book *Chen: Living Taijiquan in the Classical Style*, German Chen Taijiquan teacher Jan Silberstorff amusingly likens this to boiling an egg. "After I've heated the stove and placed a pot on it, brought the water to boil and added an egg, I still have to wait four or five minutes until the egg is boiled and ready. Just like the egg is being boiled slowly, the body and mind will slowly develop by continuous training".

A guy I met in Chenjiagou disputed the stories handed down about Chen Fake practicing an almost inhuman amount of repetitions per day. The truth [he said] was that Chen Fake did not miss a day's practice in over thirty years and it was



I like the following parable by the Daoist Chuang Tzu (pictured above): "Chi Hsing Tzu was a trainer of fighting cocks for King Hsuan. He was training a fine bird. The King kept asking him if the bird were ready for combat. "Not yet", said the trainer. "He is full of fire. He is ready to pick a fight with every other bird. He is vain and confident of his own strength". After ten days, he answered again: "Not yet. He flares up when he hears another bird crow". After ten more days: "Not yet. He still gets that angry look and ruffles his feathers". Again ten days: The trainer said, "Now he is nearly ready. When another bird crows, his eye does not even flicker. He stands immobile like a cock of wood. He is a mature fighter. Other birds will take one look at him and run".



L-R Jan Silberstorff, Davidine Sim, David Gaffney



Two of the old timers - Clive Howells & Tim Drummond