



CHI CHAT

with the Grandmaster

Issue 31

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From the Grandmaster's Desk

Alexandra Centre's **3rd Anniversary Celebrations** on 06 June 2015 promises to be an enjoyable and entertaining evening of camaraderie and I am looking forward to it. It will certainly be an opportune time for me to get to know our newer members better and to thank all our volunteers and sponsors for their unstinting support and contributions.

The highlight of the evening will be **The Butterfly Stretch Challenge** when participants from all our training centres will be vying for top honours. Keen competition is anticipated and I reckon the panel of judges is going to have a very hard time deciding on the winners.

If you have not registered yet and wish to take part in the Challenge, there is still time to do so. Entries close on 27 May 2015. Who knows, you may be crowned the first Chi Dynam-

ics Champion of the Butterfly Stretch Exercise!

The Celebrations will start at 6.30pm sharp with a buffet dinner and I hope you are able to attend. To help us with catering arrangements, kindly RSVP as soon as possible to gmasteranthony@gmail.com or through your centre's instructor/coordinator.

I was hoping that our Malaysian chapter would send a team to participate in the Challenge but unfortunately they're unable to do so in this instance.

However, I am glad that they will be organising a similar Challenge in Malaysia. This is likely to take place at a Retreat which they are planning for the latter part of the year.

Genting Highlands Retreat

The proposed Malaysian Retreat will probably take place over a weekend in September or October at Genting High-

lands. The tentative venue for the 3 days/2 nights event will be at the grounds of the Chin Swee Cave Temple which is located 4,600 feet above sea level on the most scenic site of Genting Highlands.

Shaolin Master Shi De Hong and **Han Yang Ruyi Gong Master Dennis Wang** will be joining me to lead the Retreat.

The highlight of the Genting Highlands Retreat will be the **Chi Dynamics Qigong Challenge**. The criteria for the Challenge is similar to that of **The Butterfly Stretch Challenge** except that competitors may opt for any Chi Dynamics Qigong exercise of their choice. To add creativity and colour to the event, competitors are encouraged to don costumes of their choice for their performance. More details will be announced as soon as they are finalised.

June Workshops

The theme for next month's workshop on **Monday 08 June 2015** at the Alexandra Centre in Singapore is "**Qi Meditation & Stretches**". I will be focusing on how Chi Dynamics' deep breathing and meditation techniques can help to release tensions and boost the immune system to

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This publication is for internal distribution to CDI members only. Should you have any health-related experiences to share with fellow members, please email them to The Editor, c/o gmasteranthony@gmail.com.

combat cancer. The workshop is free and all are welcome.

I will be repeating this workshop for our Malaysian members at Chi Dynamics Malaysia's Main Training Centre in Ara Damansara, Subang on **Saturday, 20 June 2015** from 2.30pm to 5.30pm.

If you wish to attend, please register with **Mary Heng** (Tel: +60-126713823; Email: maryheng2005@hotmail.com) as soon as possible.

Attendance is free but please note that as seats are limited, registration will be accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Grandmaster Anthony Wee



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The Legacy of BODHIDHARMA (a.k.a. Da Mo)

- the father of Zen Buddhism & Shaolin Kung Fu

Bodhidharma, the father of Zen Buddhism and Shaolin Kung Fu, was born some 1,750 years ago in the 5th century. As the third son of an Indian King in South India, he could have had a comfortable and privileged royal lifestyle but instead, he chose to become a Buddhist monk under the tutelage of the famous Buddhist master Prajnatara.

Heeding his Master's advice, Bodhidharma journeyed to China around 527 CE to spread Buddhism. Known as "**Da Mo**" to the Chinese, his fame as a Buddhist master spread far and wide in China. He was also known for his eccentricity and would remain silent for days and even years meditating without saying a word.

Audience with the Emperor

Da Mo was so well known that Emperor Wu, then the ruler of Southern China, asked to meet him. But the meeting did not go off well. He upset the Emperor when he disputed the Emperor's belief that enlightenment could be attained by just doing good works like contributing money and building temples and statues. Such deeds to care for the people should be the Emperor's duty. He further angered the Emperor by implying the Emperor's lack of faith when the latter asked whether Buddha exists.

Years after this incident, the Emperor realised that he did not quite understand what Da Mo was trying to convey to him and regretted he did not have the opportunity to follow up with him again after their first meeting ended so abruptly. His regret was expressed in this inscription which he wrote when he heard about Da Mo's death:

*"Alas, I saw him without seeing him;
I met him without meeting him;
I encountered him without encountering him;
Now, as before I regret this deeply..!"*

Nine Years of Wall Gazing

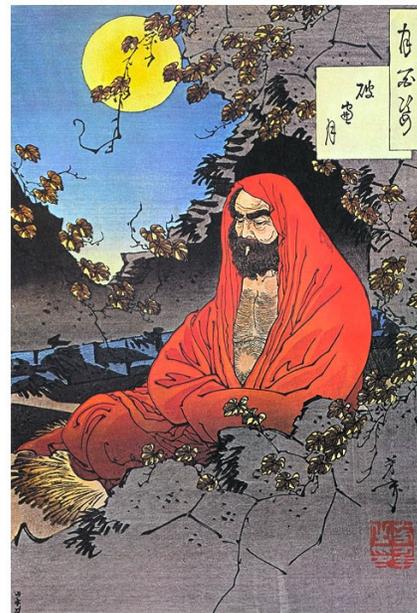
Following the encounter with the Emperor, Da Mo retreated to the Shaolin Temple where he had differences with the Abbot over the path to enlightenment. Da Mo advocated Zen meditation whilst the Abbot supported the study of the sutras to achieve the goal. Both parties were uncompromising and eventually Da Mo left in disgust and spent nine years facing a wall in a small cave meditating.

The cave, known as the "**Da Mo Cave**", have since become a shrine for true Shaolin followers. It is located on top of one of the five Breast Mountains (*the shape of the mountains resembles breasts*) behind the Shaolin Temple, and is large enough to accommodate only one person. There are claims that Da Mo's meditation concentration was so intense that his image was engraved into the stone of the wall before him.

Da Mo at the Shaolin Temple

When Da Mo eventually took over the Shaolin Temple after the Abbot passed on, he was disheartened by the poor health conditions of the monks which were the result of their strict vegetarian diet and the sedentary task of spending hours translating Buddhist scriptures from the ancient Indian language, Sanskrit into Chinese. They were so weak and sickly that some would fall asleep during meditation. Da Mo had to do something to improve the state of the monks' poor health as he believed that one needs to cultivate health, vitality and mental clarity in order to achieve enlightenment.

So what he did was to introduce a set of three forms of exercises to transform the monks physically, mentally and spiritually. This move brought positive results as the monks soon became robust and mentally fit. Testimony of this was when 500 of them, against all odds, defeated over 5,000 ban-



Bodhidharma (woodblock print by Tsukioka Yoshitoshi, 1887)

dits in a battle during the Sung Dynasty!

Since that famous victory, it was decreed that the monks in the Shaolin Temple are allowed to have meat in their diet. Till this day, it is still the only Buddhist temple where meat is allowed.

Da Mo's Legacy

The set of exercises that Da Mo introduced deserves mention as it is his legacy to many qigong and martial art disciplines.

The first, "**Shi Ba Lohan Shou**" (or "**18 Hands of the Enlightened One**") is designed to strengthen the body; it also increases one's flexibility, coordination and focus. The second is "**Yi Jin Jing**" (or "**Muscle & Tendon Conditioning**") for the development of external strength and the health of internal organs. And the third is "**Shi Sui Jing**" (or "**Bone Marrow & Brain Cleansing**") for spiritual cultivation.

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"The ignorant mind, with its infinite afflictions, passions and evils, is rooted in the three poisons: GREED, ANGER and DELUSION."
- Bodhidharma

Another significant legacy Da Mo left behind is the *Art of Zen Meditation* [or *Zazen*] which transcends beyond Buddhism for ordinary folks to experience introspective moments alone or as a group. This Art is widely practiced in Japan, more than in China, and is now part of the Japanese culture.

Da Mo's teachings, meditation and combat techniques have evolved over centuries and are now shared by millions of people around the world in various forms of martial arts like Kung Fu, Karate and Silat. They are also inherent in Grandmaster Anthony Wee's *Chi Dynamics Qigong*.

Da Mo Legends

Many stories about Da Mo have been immortalised on scrolls, paintings and wood block prints. Although they all depict him unflatteringly as a "*ferociously ugly and ill-tempered man with piercing blue eyes, thick bushy eyebrows and wild curly hair*", he was revered for his teachings which were full of wisdom and cultivation.

Among the legends is the story of how Da Mo introduced tea to China. Whilst deep in concentration meditating in the cave, Da Mo once dozed off. Disgusted with his moment of weakness, he tore off his eyelids which miraculously sprouted into tea plants on reaching the ground. On seeing this, Da Mo plucked and chewed on a few leaves which cleared his mind and resumed his meditation.

Another popular folklore handed down through the centuries is that he crossed the Yangtze River on a single reed.

Surviving 6 assassination attempts

Being rather outspoken, Da Mo was not at all popular with the Chinese scholars who were jealous of his celebrity status and not surprisingly, six attempts were made to poison him. In one such attempt, he knowingly ate a meal mixed with poison and threw it out as a pile of wriggling snakes on to a tray. In another, the poison he spat out caused a huge boulder he was sitting on to crumble into a pile of dust.

Hui Ke — disciple & successor

Another interesting story is about a disciple who for years was hounding Da Mo to teach him but Da Mo refused to do so until "*red snow fell from the sky*".

So what the disciple did one cold winter day was to cut off his own left arm and whirled it above his head. On seeing the blood from the arm freezing and falling like red snow, Da Mo agreed to teach the disciple since he had demonstrated his sincerity. This disciple was Hui Ke who eventually took over from Da Mo as Abbot of the Shaolin Temple. To honour the sacrifice Hui Ke made, it is customary for disciples and monks of the Shaolin Temple to greet each other only with the right hand.

Da Mo reappears after his death

Da Mo died around the middle of the 6th century between 536 CE to 554 CE, but legend has it that he re-appeared again three years later after his death.

A man named Songyun saw him walking and holding on to one shoe and asked him where he was going. Da Mo replied that he was going home. When asked why he was holding on to one shoe, he answered "*You will know when you reach the Shaolin monastery but don't tell anyone you saw me or you will meet with disaster*". But Songyun could not resist reporting what he witnessed to the Emperor and as Da Mo predicted, he was promptly arrested and put in prison for lying since everyone knew that Da Mo had already passed away. Later on when Da Mo's grave was exhumed by the Shaolin monks, they found only one shoe in the grave!

Zen-Qi Meditation

As the progenitor of Zen-Qi Meditation, Bodhidharma asserted that Zen Meditation and Qigong movements go hand-in-hand and are two sides of a coin, and that neither one is complete without the other. This is the foundation *Chi Dynamics Qigong* is built on when Grand-master Anthony Wee converged the two components with his proprietary deep diaphragmatic breathing techniques for self-healing of the body and mind.

The Zen-Qi meditation component adopted by Chi Dynamics is all about bringing body, breath and mind together as one for self-healing, *without any Buddhist or religious connotations*. It trains practitioners to achieve a state of tranquility by clearing their minds of distractions in order to facilitate wellness and self-healing by harnessing Qi to flow freely through the meridians of the body.

Scientists have only recently confirmed that meditation is a good way to relax the body and mind when they discovered that brain wave frequencies vary according to different circumstances and activities. They established that the best range for meditation is between 7.5 to 14 Hz (the Alpha State) when the brain is calm and relaxed. In this meditative state, the heart beat slows down and allows the body time to regenerate and the brain to function at its optimal level. This tranquil state may also alleviate pain, discomfort, stress and anxiety. *Credit to the scientists who discovered this but Bodhidharma already knew about it thousands of years ago!*

Do you know that there are no living Zen Masters ever?

This is because the 'Master' title is conferred posthumously.

Eye Care for Better Vision Workshop —04 May'15

Grandmaster Anthony Wee started the workshop by sharing the experience of one of his trainees. Although blind, this trainee had a habit of switching on the television to listen to the news.

After about a week of performing the eye acupoint massages and exercises that Grandmaster taught him, he was astounded one evening when he could see what was on the television screen! That vision lasted for about two hours and then it went off again.

He got so excited that he continued practising the acupoint massages and exercises even more diligently and more regularly. After about three months, his vision improved to the extent that he was able to see for up to 8 hours at a stretch.

Grandmaster then proceed to explain the touch and non-touch methods of doing the Qigong massage/exercises for the eyes. The non-touch method involves generating the electro-magnetic energy by rubbing the hands together or against our clothes and guiding the index and middle fingers to the acupoint to direct energy towards these points. We can also create a



Qi ball by holding our palms facing each other with the corresponding fingers and thumbs pointing at one another. Once the Qi ball is activated, we then direct the Qi ball to the acupoints.

Grandmaster went on to identify the acupoints to massage for the relief of dry eyes, teary eyes, sinus and tinnitus. As for glaucoma which results in the build-up of pressure on the eyes, the treatment method is to draw out the stagnant Qi from the eyes instead of massaging it.



The participants then broke up into smaller groups to practise what they have learned under the guidance of the senior instructors.

By *Royston Tan*

Ask Grandmaster

Question: I was told that our Plank exercise, which is also a popular exercise taught in gyms and Pilates classes, may cause injuries to the body. Is this true?

Answer: All forms of exercises may have some degree of side effects if they are done incorrectly or excessively. For example, jogging, which seems to be a relatively simple and harmless form of exercise, may wear out knee joints if it is done excessively.

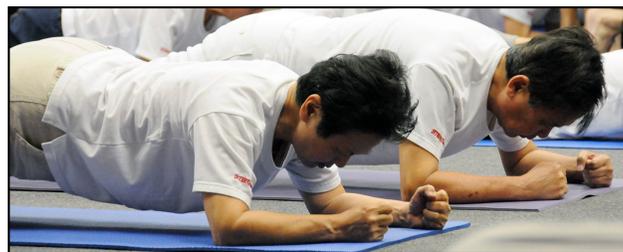
The Plank exercise should be performed with the fire element "Pi" breathing technique.

It is particularly useful for stimulating the Triple Warmers, toning up the core muscles and building bone density. The "Pi" breathing technique also helps to burn off blood sugar, cholesterol and other toxins from the lymphatic system.

As this exercise requires muscle strength and coordination, shoulder and/or back strain may be experienced if you go beyond what your body is able to take.

You should do the exercise only up to your optimum ability and stop whenever you feel you have reached your limit.

Whatever exercise you do, please remember the Chi Dynamics mantra "... **always the optimum and not the maximum!**"!



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