

Kidd places

His name is Ming Chew, and he is a trained physical therapist and strength coach and soft tissue specialist, and works out of an office in the Ansonia Hotel up on 73rd and Broadway. And if Jason Kidd's left knee feels as good and strong next week as he thinks it will, maybe all Chew has done is save the Nets' season. Last night Kidd was telling his new soft tissue specialist on the telephone that he wants to play for the Nets next week.

"He thinks he's just about good to go," Chew said.

A friend of mine who has been working regularly with Chew for years told Kidd's agent, Jeff Schwartz, about him. This was a couple of weeks ago, and already, there was talk that Kidd might need knee surgery after the season. And talk that Kidd might be through for the season

already. Which meant that the Nets were through, too, whether Kenyon Martin got better or not. By now, we have seen all we need to from Jason Kidd, one of the handful of best point guards to ever play the game.

Schwartz got Ming Chew's phone number and called him.

"Can you fix Jason's knee?" Schwartz said.

"Probably," Chew said.

While the Knicks are sending Allan Houston off to use some kind of swim therapist in Massachusetts, Jason Kidd makes four trips to the Ansonia Hotel, about three hours' worth of work over the last couple of weeks, and by yesterday is making cuts and getting putbacks in practice with some of the Nets.

"In four sessions with Jason," Chew said. "I barely touched his knee at all."

You should know that Chew is

faith & knee in hands of healer

the opponent of most team doctors in sports, starting with the ones who cut first and ask questions later. He can make laymen dizzy with conversation about myofascial release techniques and cranio-sacral release techniques and active release technique, known as ART. And he makes use of philosophies of Chinese medicine, including chi work. What he mostly does is get you better. He has no use for basic sports medicine. He feels that most of the time his sports medicine, alternative sports medicine, works better.

If Jason Kidd is healthy again for the playoffs in a couple of weeks, and he believes he will be healthy, he will be the first to agree. You go away sore some-

times from the Ansonia Hotel, but already you are starting to heal.

"He came to me with a left bruised knee," Chew was saying last night. "After I examined him, I felt his problem was with

his neck, his right hip, his left lower back. And we worked

on his right shoulder, which has been bothering him for a while. You can never predict these things with any certainty, obviously. But unless something else happens, I believe he really is good to go."

Kidd has brought his wife Jou-

mana to watch Ming Chew work, and the Nets' conditioning coach. This was after the first session, from which Kidd walked away saying he already felt 70% better. When he showed up for that session, this is what he told Chew:

"My left knee hurts like hell. I can't run. I can't jump. If I get off the floor at all, it hurts when I land. And I feel like I've got no power in my left quad."

When Chew explains the work he's done with Kidd, he talks about breaking down adhesions and scar tissue, normalizing non-firing nerves. He does not talk about anti-inflammatory drugs, which is what Kidd was getting, or electro-stimulation. Or ice.

"In my opinion, electro-stimulation doesn't work," Chew said. "And ice does not fix non-firing muscles and adhesions. It just

gives temporary, symptomatic relief."

Kidd isn't expected to play tonight against the Knicks at the Meadowlands. But he really does feel as if he can be scrimmaging by next week, then play 15 or 20 minutes in a game after that. And be completely ready for the playoffs. Of course there are no sure things with injured knees in sports. He could make the wrong cut, land wrong, the next time he is playing hard, and that's that. But it seems as if it was just a few minutes ago that there was no good news about Jason Kidd's left knee. Now there could be plenty. Martin is supposed to see Chew next. If the two of them get up and running with each other soon, maybe the Nets have a chance after all.

Chew was asked if he really thinks he could do something

with Allan Houston, who has all Knicks fans wondering if he is going to be back for the playoffs, provided the Knicks make it.

"I'd need six sessions with him, tops," Chew said.

Then he was talking about chi work. It is not acupuncture, but uses the principles of acupuncture: Increasing the flow of energy to an injured area, opening up blocked passages in the body. You can still try to laugh off alternative therapy and medicine if you want to. It has helped way too many people to be some kind of joke. None of this is a joke to Jason Kidd. He tried conventional ways. Now maybe an ex-body-builder from the upper West Side has given him, and the Nets, their season back.

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