Members celebrate 20th Anniversary of Fremantle Shrine

The Fung Loy Kok shrine at our Fremantle branch in Western Australia was inaugurated in 1993. On 8th of September 2013, one hundred and forty members joined a joyous celebration of the shrine’s 20th anniversary. Activities included chanting, a talk about the meaning of the shrine and its components, a tai chi set in the car park, and a complementary lesson in the first move of Lok Hup. Then the anniversary cake was cut and everyone enjoyed a delicious high tea (albeit in the morning!) prepared by Fremantle members. Following this, members offered incense at the shrine.

Waking up with Taoist Tai Chi™

Since starting tai chi two and a half years ago, I have been steadily gaining benefits from the practice, but have recently noticed a distinctive waking up that I thought worth sharing. When I went to my first beginner class I decided I would let my body learn what it needed to in its own time. Though I still might not be able to tell you which move comes next, my body often seems to know, and is gradually awakening my mind, allowing it to trust the body’s own inherent wisdom.

Having chronic bursitis in my right shoulder I wasn’t sure if I would be able to do some of the moves when I first started tai chi, but I would faithfully do them to the limit where pain would cut in. Happily, this limit has gradually extended, and I wonder if it’s because I’ve begun to use the whole shoulder girdle instead of just bunching up the muscles between my neck and shoulder.

Gaining flexibility in my hips has always been a challenge; even years of Pilates and yoga didn’t improve this much. Once the notion of ‘sitting’ sank in I felt a new connection beginning to grow, and this developed further as I saw how the danyus, toryus, snakes and many of the moves incorporated this action. As I learn to gently challenge the restricted areas of movement in a balanced way, I am rewarded with surprises of increased relaxation and strength along with a more flexible hip joint.

Hands have a much more significant role in tai chi than I first realised, requiring the tiger to be very much awake with its mouth wide open! I believe the greater ease I have noticed with the flow of the set is partly attributable to this heightened awareness, which has benefits for my shoulders as well. As we are so often reminded – it is all connected. Feet help with this connection too, both within my body, its centre, and to the floor, for balance and grounding.

My blood has certainly been waking up with tai chi! After having poor circulation all my life, I have been enjoying warmer fingers,

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Aims and Objectives

1. Make Taoist Tai Chi™ arts of health available to all
2. Promote the health benefits
3. Promote cultural exchange
4. Help others

cont »
Do not be surprised by praise or blame;  
Look peacefully in the garden as flowers bloom and flowers fall.  
Give no regard to either leaving or staying;  
Ramble along after the sky as clouds fold up and clouds stretch away.

My wife, Joan, encouraged me to attend a beginner Taoist Tai Chi™ course in February this year. Unfortunately, as we were away quite a lot, I missed a lot of sessions. Encouraged by Joan and instructor Sandra, I decided to go on to continuing classes and I am really glad I did. Joan and Sandra said I would find the foundation exercises extremely beneficial, and I can honestly say I have. For many years I have suffered from a chronic back problem, caused by falls from mad horses and too much heavy lifting -- showing off when I was a young bloke. Just after starting the continuing sessions, I took part in the “dan yu challenge”. I now do a minimum of 20 dan yus every morning plus other foundation exercises. My back HAS IMPROVED SO MUCH. I can play golf or drive a car all day with no ill effects. The other benefit I have from tai chi is that I am a lot more relaxed. Thank you to you all.

Jim Kennedy, Toowoomba branch

I had the pleasure of attending Continuing Instructor in-Training (CIT) Week this August in Orangewville, Canada. This year was the largest attended CIT Week ever with around 740 people attending and it was with some trepidation I awaited the arrival of “all these people”. However, what was one of the most amazing things about the whole week was that at no point did it feel like there was that many people there. At the start of the week we were all allocated into groups and each day the groups were allocated tasks from chopping vegetables, to cleaning bathrooms, to setting up for lunch, to preparing the tea for breaktimes, and for some lucky groups to making up a new dragon!

This working together was also most evident during the International Awareness Day in Toronto where I was lucky enough to be one of the 24 dragon legs on the small dragon. Each leg holds up a vertebra and the legs need to work together to maintain the structure of the dragon's backbone and to undertake the various tricks that the dragon performs. If the legs don't work together the dragon becomes cumbersome and heavy but when working together the dragon takes on its own life and becomes much more manageable and of course great fun (especially when there is a samba band there to play with)! So, if you get the chance I encourage you to visit the International Centre and see for yourself what can be achieved by volunteers when we all work together.

Helen Robson, Sunshine Coast branch
Australia and New Zealand attendees at CIT Week 2013
(from left): Teresa Yang, Shona Hayles, Terry Bayliss, Denise Courtney, Tracy Truong, Peter Cook, Sandra Wilson, Rob Hayles, Catherine Ross, Petrina Hendry, Tony Kwong, Premodaya, Helen Robson, Sue Lightfoot, Paul Harker, Theo Bowering, Anne Stephens, Christopher Deeble, Anne Aikman
Fundraising builds our global and local strength

As a charitable organization, the mission of the Taoist Tai Chi Society of Australia is to make Taoist arts of dual cultivation, such as tai chi, more widely available. This is our primary ‘charitable act’ – to bring good health and peace of mind to an ever-growing proportion of the community. Unlike many charitable organizations we do not seek external funding from government or philanthropic bodies.

A large proportion of our income is spent on hire of halls and advertising. Sometimes we also lease permanent premises, and occasionally we even purchase a property for a permanent national or regional centre. Master Moy taught us the importance of having good training facilities where we can keep building the level of skill and understanding of all members. In Australia, we have two centres which we own: our national centre in Bayswater, and our regional centre in Toowoomba.

Purchasing a centre is a major commitment in terms of the initial outlay and the ongoing maintenance and care-taking that is required. Fundraising from workshops helps us to purchase these centres. Our strength comes from the fact that we have branches in 27 countries – together we can pool resources and, step-by-step, establish training centres in key locations around the world. This then is the broad scope of our strength comes from the fact that we have branches in 27 countries – together we can pool resources and, step-by-step, establish training centres in key locations around the world.

Another use of our fundraising is to support further training of your instructors. Although instructors usually pay for their own training through workshop attendance, sometimes when there is financial need instructors can get assistance with the cost of travel.

Finally, we also do fundraising to assist other worthy charitable causes in the community. For example we have over the years done fundraising for fire, flood and earthquake relief; housing for young disabled people; women’s refuges; and many others. Branches sometimes chose one particular cause each year, for which they undertake a specific fundraising activity, and donate the proceeds.

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The Taoist Tai Chi™ internal arts of health come from the tradition of Taoist ‘dual cultivation’ practices, which aim to develop a healthy body and a calm, open mind and heart. Traditionally, Chinese used the same word xin (心) to mean both mind and heart.

Taoist dual cultivation training combines transformation of the physical body with quieting the mind/heart. When the physical body is healthy and strong, and thoughts and feelings (or the mind/heart) are tranquil, then the transformation of internal energies can occur. The tai chi that we practise is the result of centuries of Taoist experience and knowledge of transforming the body and mind to a healthier state. Quieting thoughts and feelings begins with concentrating in a relaxed way on the movements of the body when we learn the tai chi set. This quieting is also achieved by practices such as meditation and chanting.

Helping others (the fourth Aim and Objective) is another way to train our mind/heart to be more aware of the needs of others and less focused on our own worries and concerns. We can help with the activities of the Society, become a volunteer instructor, and help in myriad other ways. Study and application of the Eight Virtues in daily life develops our character and helps us learn how to work harmoniously with others. Opening our hearts to others and to the world develops a spirit of generosity and openness. As Taoist training progresses, the different aspects are impossible to separate: nurturing the body must also involve cultivating the mind/heart and spirit, and vice versa. All of these methods combine to ‘tame the heart’, cultivate peace of mind, and ultimately harmonize with the Tao. Thus it is said that in Taoism, both human nature and life are cultivated – returning to our Original Nature of goodness and to the Original Body of perfect health.

Notice of Dues Increase

In 2011 the National Management Committee decided to regularly review our membership dues to allow for small but regular increases in dues to cover changes in CPI and our costs and revenues, rather than less regular but larger increases.

After the regular review, the NMC has approved an increase in dues to take effect from 1 January 2014. It has been 2 years since the last dues adjustment. Members can continue to pay dues at the old rates until 31 December 2013. See your local branch notice board for the new dues rates. The registration fee is unchanged at $35.