



National News

summer edition 05-06



The official Newsletter
of the Taoist Tai Society
of Australia Inc.

International Awareness Day *a heartfelt experience*



Helen Gaunt tells of her experience as Australia's official representative at the International Awareness Day celebrations in Toronto on September 10, 2005.

The range of experiences and emotions one goes through attending an occasion such as this is very hard to totally justify with words. It was an inspirational and totally heartfelt experience. Master Moy's vision and achievement of the Aims and Objectives of the Taoist Tai Chi Society were ever present in every activity and moment that I had the privilege to partake in.

I attended the Festival Taoist Arts Workshop, held at the International Centre the week prior to Awareness Day. There were 25 countries represented in all and many of the participants were unable to speak English. Translators accompanied some.

Thursday the 8th we headed for D'Arcy Street centre, which is the headquarters for the Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism in the Chinatown area of downtown Toronto, for the press conference. The main focus of the press conference was to announce that the work had begun on construction of the Quiet Cultivation Centre (see article on page 2).

Helen Gaunt carries the Australian flag at the Awareness Day procession (left), and the Taoist Tai Chi demonstration in Nathan Phillips Square (above).

Arriving at Nathan Phillips Square in Toronto on Saturday 10 September, the excitement level picked up. The square was full of Tai Chi members all in their Awareness Day T shirts. There were around 1300 members who enjoyed the warm-ups and two Tai Chi sets. The energy was something I have never experienced before – it was great.

Carrying the Australian flag in the parade was a highlight. I felt overjoyed for all of our members and very proud of my country. I know there must have been hundreds of behind the scenes Tai Chi members who put many hours into the organization of such a great day and I thank them one and all. I would like to thank the Taoist Tai Chi Society for choosing me to attend and represent Australia at Awareness Day.

Helen Gaunt

To read more about

Awareness day celebrations go to 'A life-changing event' on page 4



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Aims and Objectives of the Taoist Tai Chi Society

- To make Taoist Tai Chi available to all
- To promote the health-improving qualities of Taoist Tai Chi
- To promote cultural exchange
- To help others

Construction starts on the *Quiet Cultivation Centre*



After 10 years of planning & fund-raising, construction started, on September 6

It was only in the early 20th century that these practices became available outside of the monastic community. The founder of the Taoist Tai Chi Society and Fung Loy Kok, the late Master Moy Lin-Shin, devoted decades of his life to developing these arts of cultivating body, heart and mind in a way that would make them accessible in a lay setting, to benefit everyone. They remain nevertheless rooted in the monastic tradition. Based on their experience of 35 years, both the Society and Fung Loy Kok recognize that a practitioner's progress can be very much enhanced by training in a monastic setting even for a short period.

For that reason, Master Moy devised a plan to expand the current facilities in Orangeville, so as to double the current accommodation for residential programs and to triple the capacity for single-day religious festivals and related events.

After 10 years of planning and fund-raising, construction started, on September 6, on the new facilities, collectively known as the Quiet Cultivation Centre. These include:

- A new wooden-frame, column-free practice hall, large enough to welcome 1,000 Taoist Tai Chi

As construction starts on the Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism's new facilities at the International Taoist Tai Chi Centre, near Orangeville, the Centre is emerging as a unique seminary of learning dedicated to Taoist training. Thanks to the expanded temple, practice hall and residences, participants in programs representing the Three Vehicles of Taoist Training will soon have access in greater numbers to a comprehensive curriculum.

Training in the Three Vehicles is integral to Fung Loy Kok's observance of the unified teachings of the three religions of China—Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism — and to the advancement of its mission to deliver the living and the dead from suffering. It does so in three different, yet interrelated

ways: by promoting acts of compassion to others, by observing religious rituals and ceremonies, and by providing training to facilitate the dual cultivation of the body and the mind. These are the Three Vehicles of Taoist Training.

This training is aimed at cultivating the participant's heart, mind, and body. Individual development is enhanced when it is undertaken in the residential setting of a rural facility like the Orangeville Centre. The reason for this can be traced back to earlier times, when the rituals and ceremonies, and the arts and activities associated with Dual Cultivation techniques were the domain of the priesthood or of monastic practitioners.

Above: Earth moving equipment and gazebo at the International Centre.



Earthworks commences for the Quiet Cultivation Centre in Orangeville, with Health Recovery Centre in the background.

After the Tsunami



For regular photo updates of progress in construction, visit www.taoist.org.

adepts for events such as Dual Cultivation workshops and community banquets.

- A traditional-styled, three-religions-of-China temple and its adjacent exhibition hall and memorial hall, where program participants and the public alike can take part in Buddhist, Confucian and Taoist ceremonies and rituals.
- A new residential wing, that brings the Centre total capacity to 218 beds, in a setting conducive to inner reflection and self-cultivation.

The Taoist Tai Chi Society of Australia has contributed funds to the \$10 million QCC project, including \$50,000 sponsorship (with TTCS New Zealand) of a meditation room, and various contributions made through workshop fundraising.

For more details about the philosophy of Taoist training and its relationship to the Quiet Cultivation Centre, please consult the following article: "Quiet Cultivation Centre within the Taoist Tai Chi Centre: An Integral Path of Physical & Spiritual Development", available at www.taoist.org (click on International Centre and go to the QCC page).



Reconstruction of eight pre-schools in tsunami-affected areas of Sri Lanka is well under way, thanks to an AUD \$56,000 donation from the International Taoist Tai Chi Society.

To rebuild and reequip the schools, the Society is collaborating with the World University Service of Canada (WUSC), an Ottawa-based international non-government organization (NGO), and one of its partners in Sri Lanka, the Social Welfare Organization of Ampara District (SWOAD). The Taoist Tai Chi Society of Australia contributed \$4000 to this fundraising and assistance effort.

WUSC is coordinating the rehabilitation and reconstruction of eight pre-schools with its partner in Ampara district, along the eastern coast of Sri Lanka. This area of the country was the most affected by the tsunami. This district has significant populations of three ethnic groups -- Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim.

The funds are being used to provide materials needed to construct the buildings and to provide appropriate furniture and early childhood education equipment (learning materials, toys, etc). Construction will be carried out by trainees from

Pre-school under construction at the village of Munaieur in eastern Sri Lanka. Construction is taking place at a primary school adjacent to where the people were relocated after the tsunami.



Local aid workers at the new school under construction in the village of Munaieur.

WUSC's vocational training program.

The pre-schools will be fairly basic, but will offer a safe environment for learning and playing. The schools will be built on a 20' x 40' slab, with a 10' x 10' room within. Outside walls will be "half walls" in brick and cement with mesh to allow fresh air into the building. Each pre-school will have a toilet and hand washing facilities. In order to allow for play, a designated play area will be created.



"I've finished learning the Taoist Tai Chi set, what do I do now?"

A common enough question, so what's the answer?

Well, to a certain extent it depends on what you want from Taoist Tai Chi – what's your motivation? What's taught in the beginners class is very basic – where to put your hands and feet, where does the weight go, which move comes next, etc. This is a sort of apprenticeship, a few months of initial training in order to arrive at a base level. What comes next is up to you, but what's available is a continual development of the form, of learning how to maintain, improve or regain your health, and develop your mental and spiritual well-being.

Learning the set is just the beginning. Taoist Tai Chi is a lifetime business of developing your body and mind, which the Taoists call dual cultivation of body and mind. It needs practice, lots of practice, and for that you need time, it's a gradual process.

Initially you will probably want to keep practising and reviewing the set, to fill in the blanks and to work more explicitly on the basic principles that you have started to assimilate. All this time you are practising, and it is the constant repetition that will teach your body how to do the set.

Many people are happy to come along once a week for some

gentle exercise, pleasant company and a nice cup of tea. This enables them to keep supple, improve their circulation and have a relaxing break from their normal routine, all of which is going to help maintain their health, delaying or preventing the onset of diseases relating to ageing and degeneration.

There is even more than this on offer, but it involves a commitment to work harder and longer to achieve it. Taoist Tai Chi changes the body, and a lot of Taoist Tai Chi changes it a lot. Developing greater strength and flexibility enables the Tai Chi to work deeper into the body. The basic 'external' form that we first work on has a primary effect on the joints, muscles and tendons. Beyond this the form begins to have a much more profound effect on the spine (and therefore the central nervous and circulatory systems) and the internal organs. There are ever deeper levels to penetrate to, the ultimate goal being to cultivate and circulate the internal energies known as Chi, Jing and Shen (what the Taoists call these 'three treasures').

If you want to work hard and develop your Tai Chi then you should go along to a continuing class (your instructor can tell you about these), and try to attend workshops. Workshops are an opportunity to learn from experienced workshop leaders. The longer duration of a workshop

enables our bodies to loosen up and our minds to relax so we are more open to experiencing major beneficial changes. And if you want to learn more about other Taoist arts such as meditation, chanting, or Lok Hup Ba Fa, workshops are a great way to do this.

What else? A lot! If you are familiar with the aims and objectives of the Society you will know that we are an organisation dedicated to helping others through our Tai Chi, and run almost totally by volunteers. So help out however you can – anything from making tea to volunteering your skills or serving on a committee, there's lots of work to be done. If you feel that you have benefited from Taoist Tai Chi don't keep it to yourself, tell people about it. Maybe you could assist as a set leader in a new beginner class, helping show the form and reassuring those who are thinking that they will never be able to learn all this (sound familiar?). And where do you think we get our instructors from?

So really it's up to you what happens next, but you have only begun to tap an endless resource. The benefits can be enormous, but it involves effort. Tai Chi is like school, it ranges from kindergarten to post-graduate studies. How far do you want to go?

By **Mike Usher (Great Britain)**
with additional material by **Peter Cook**



A life-changing event

Cheryl Fuller from Canberra also attended Awareness Day in Toronto

To put into a few words such an enlightening experience, is difficult. There is a warmth and calmness across the whole 99 acres of the International Centre, with its lush landscapes, trees, walkways, bridges and gazeboes.

There was so much to do, see, experience and share throughout the week, both during the workshop and the International Awareness Day celebrations. I feel that not only has my Tai Chi improved, but so has my understanding of Master Moy's objectives.

I felt humbled to be a participant in the Temple ceremonies and the chanting, particularly the blessing of the grounds for the commencement of the construction of the Quiet Cultivation Centre.

On Awareness Day the excitement was fully evident as we stepped off the bus from Orangeville. With the sea of green t-shirts before us, it was an awesome sight. From the demonstration sets in Nathan Phillips Square, to the march through the streets to D'Arcy Street and witnessing and partaking of the Jai Banquet – this day was the highlight of the week. I am extremely grateful to the Taoist Tai Chi Society of Australia for the sponsorship of my travel to this event.

Cheryl Fuller

