



# National News

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## Grand Opening a New Dawn

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



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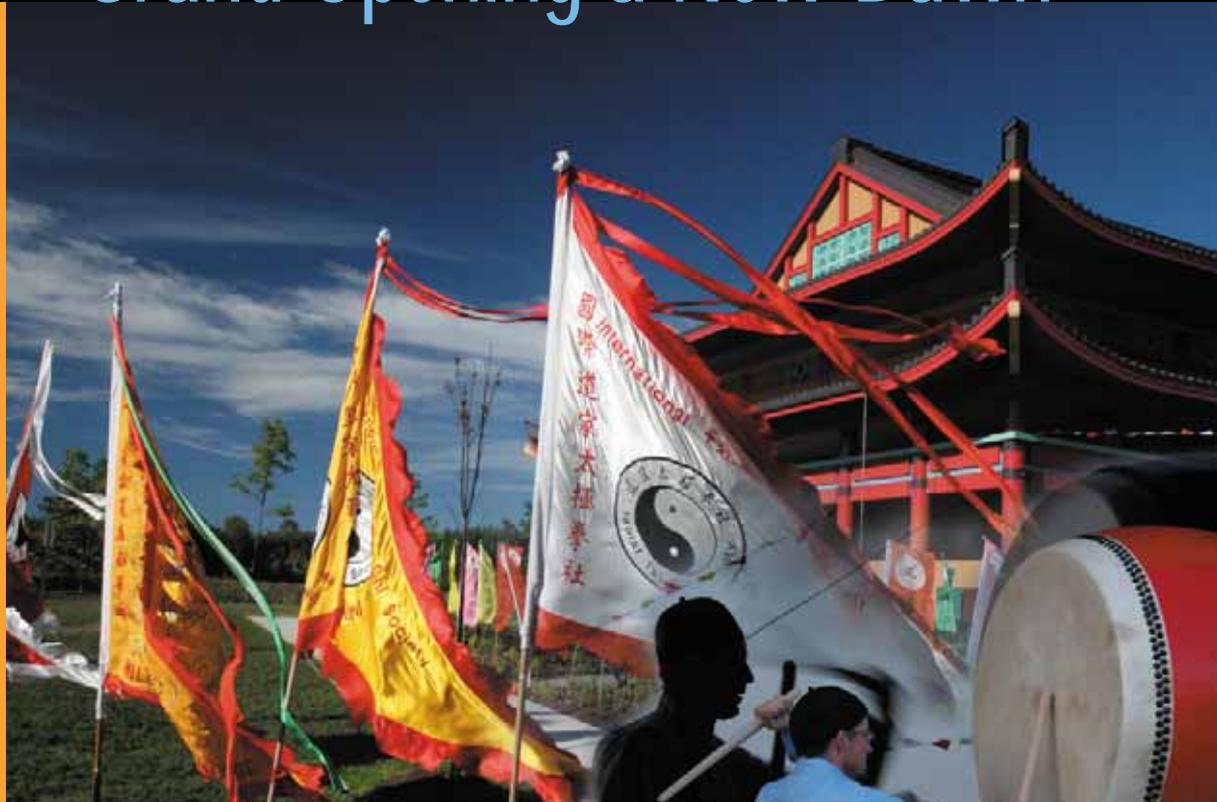
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**It's** dawn on September 6, 2007. A single solemn drum beat followed by the sound of a huge gong rolls across the Canadian countryside. The drum beats again and again, faster and faster – 108 beats in all, signalling the beginning of three days of ceremonies. This is the culmination of the Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism and the International Taoist Tai Chi Society's joint project of more than a decade: the opening of the Three Religions Temple and Quiet Cultivation Centre near Orangeville, Canada.

The International Taoist Tai Chi Centre grounds are mown, mulched, weeded and decorated with hundreds of flags, fairy lights and bunting. Volunteers have worked for days and weeks preparing every detail for the biggest event the Society has ever staged. Forty-two guests from Hong Kong have arrived to assist with the celebrations

and the chanting. Representatives from twenty five countries are there to join in this momentous occasion. On Saturday September 8, around 3,000 people have gathered at the centre: members and their families, the general public, and our guests. The Canadian Prime Minister sends personal greetings. National TV and newspapers are spreading the news...

Along with the formal ceremonies for opening the temple and the associated buildings are traditional lion dancing and a parade by the Society's magnificent 50-person Dragon (well over 50 meters long) and its 25-person offside. Those Society volunteers who were involved in 'parking' these huge beasts a few days earlier are pleased to see them roaming free through the crowds.

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### Aims and Objectives of the Taoist Tai Chi Society

- To make *Taoist Tai Chi*™ internal arts and methods available to all
- To promote the health-improving qualities of *Taoist Tai Chi*™ internal arts and methods
- To promote cultural exchange
- To help others

# Grand Opening a New Dawn

Once the ceremonies are over, it is time to party. The practice hall seats 1000 people and another 1000+ are seated under an enormous canopy outdoors under clear skies. The kitchen produces mountains of delicious food that has been prepared over many days by volunteers. Hundreds of volunteers serve the tables and keep everything running smoothly. A fabulous gala featuring salsa, Chinese opera and dancing, French love songs and banjo-pickin' bluegrass delights the crowd well into the evening.

Finally the guests depart or go to bed, the tables are cleared and rolled away, the practice hall floor is mopped and hundreds of volunteers lay down their sleeping bags and enjoy a well-earned sleep.

As Karen Laughlin, President of the International Taoist Tai Chi Society and Marsha Eberhardt, President of Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism said:

*It was truly a wonderful occasion made possible only by the tireless efforts of so many. We stretched beyond what we thought was possible and made it happen. There are so many to thank beginning with Master Moy whose vision set us on this path and whose training in the Taoist arts encompassed so much more than 108 moves. He taught us to be selfless, to work hard, to take care of people and to work together. It is this training and the members who learned that training and who continue to carry the training on to others since Master Moy's death, which made September 8 the inspiring event that it was. Many people have shared their experiences of that day reminding us that the essence of it all is the dual cultivation of body and mind, the hardest vehicle of all. There were so many examples of "eye see, hand do."*

The International Taoist Tai Chi Society 'family' includes people from many backgrounds, cultures and faiths. Some of us may follow another religious practice; some of us are atheists or agnostics. But whatever our particular beliefs, the temple reminds us that *Taoist Tai Chi™* internal arts and methods are founded in the concept of dual cultivation of both



Photos courtesy of Frank Duffy, Barb Groover, Ian Grivois

body and mind. The goal is to develop a healthy physical body as well as quieting the mind and cultivating our good character. Wisdom, holistic health, intelligence and compassion are universal qualities that we can all aspire to develop through our daily interactions with others, as well as through our taijiquan practice.

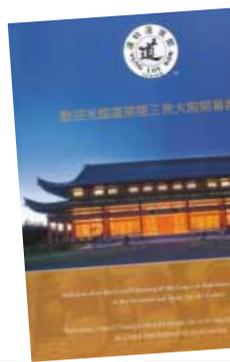
For centuries the Taoists have been teaching us to observe nature, live close to the earth, maintain simplicity and be uplifted by the mystery and wonder of the universe. The Confucians have been teaching us to act ethically and with virtue.

The Buddhists have been teaching us to cultivate a heart of compassion. With the opening of the Three Religions Temple at the heart of our International Centre, we now have a 'home' for these teachings.

### Heath Greville

*A commemorative colour booklet about the Grand Opening has been distributed to branches and is available for sale to members for \$6.00.*

*To see many more photos of the Grand Opening visit [www.taoist.org](http://www.taoist.org)*





LEFT PAGE: Dragon dance and ribbon cutting. THIS PAGE: Ceremonies to enliven the temple and the temple at dusk.

## Dead Trees, Cold Ashes

When a tree is dead there is no flame when you burn it; when ashes are cold there is no warmth when you stir them. What I realize as I observe this is the Tao of transformation of temperament.

When people become temperamental, the harm is very great; the slightest offense sets them off into a rage. It damages nature and injures reason, so that they are unaware of their own greed and passion, they do not understand their own narrowness, they do not care about essential life, they are not mindful of life and death. The troubles this causes are not simple.

If one can master oneself and exercise restraint, turn back from inflexibility and become yielding, sweep away all anger, resentment, and annoyance, get rid of all contentiousness, change the aggressive and violent nature back into a gentle taciturn

nature, concentrate the energy and make it flexible, empty the mind and nurture the spirit, be selfless and impersonal, not discriminate between self and others, view one's own body as having no such body, view one's mind as having no such mind, have no discrimination and no knowledge, and be empty and open, this is like dead wood not flaming when burnt, like cold ashes yielding no warmth when stirred.

One can thereby be in the midst of Creation without being influenced by Creation, be in the midst of yin and yang without being constrained by yin and yang.

From Liu I-ming, *Awakening to the Tao*, trans by Thomas Cleary, Shambhala 2006.



# Annual Report 2006-07

## Letter from the National President

### A Momentous Year

The past year has seen some momentous changes for our organisation in

Australia, as we successfully completed our integration from five associations into a single national organisation. I want to thank everyone for their contributions to making this transition so successful and, despite a few inevitable challenges, relatively pain-free.

A good sign is that our total membership at 30 June 2007 was around 2100 members, which is an increase of approximately 200 members over last year. The overall financial position of our newly integrated society is sound.

We have had good attendances at many of our workshops, including 2 international workshops led by visiting international instructors Mun Fong Woon (November 2006) and Serge Ferland (March 2007). For the first time a National Instructors Workshop was held at the National Centre in May 2007, led jointly by members from the Australian National Instruction Coordination Committee (NICC) and the New Zealand NICC. With 88 attendees, this event was rated as very successful.

Over the past year we have taken a number of steps to improve the administrative and

promotional infrastructure for the Society. Many administrative and financial processes have been updated, improved and consolidated. Our ResourceNet system using the Internet is proving to be useful for everyone who needs to access documents, procedures and forms. Sub-committees are also reviewing our policies, strategies and procedures in a number of areas including document control (how to archive our important documents), our communication with the public (how to promote the Society more effectively) and our internal reporting between branch, regional and national levels.

As part of becoming a single Australian Society, the national Management Committee believed that it was important to look at standardising membership dues categories and applicable fees across Australia. Previously we have had four different sets of dues categories and fees in operation across the country, inherited from our old organisational structure. Over the past year we undertook a dues review. Following lengthy discussions and consultation with the Eastern and Western Regional Councils and with branches, a new membership dues structure has been adopted, to be implemented from 1 January 2008 (please see your club notice board for details).

We are continuing to improve our promotion, both when advertising new classes and for general awareness and promotion of the society. In 2006 a new four-fold colour brochure was produced and

circulated, promoting the *Taoist Tai Chi*™ internal arts and methods. New advertising designs were also created and supplied to a number of interested branches.

The National Finance Office has now been set up and operates from our National Centre in Bayswater, Western Australia. Some modification work was carried out at the National Centre to accommodate the new office. The National Centre is now also our official national address in Australia. Based in that office is Sandra Wilson, appointed as our new full-time Manager of Finance and Development from January 2007. Sandra Wilson joins Peter Cook (Executive Director, based in Brisbane) as our second full-time employee.

Looking outwards to our membership in the larger International Taoist Tai Chi Society, TTCS Australia provided workshop leadership to our near neighbour, the Taoist Tai Chi Society of Malaysia. And six Australian members were sponsored to attend major celebrations and workshops in Canada, helping maintain and strengthen our international ties.

It's been a busy and successful year and I wish all members a safe holiday season and a happy and healthy 2008.

**Elisabeth Clevers-Schatten**  
President – Taoist Tai Chi Society  
of Australia Inc

## my learnings from Tai Chi

“I have not even thought of feeling!” **Pauline's journey to reduced back pain**

In 2003 I was diagnosed with degeneration of the lower spine and faced a dim future of pain killers and physiotherapy treatments for pain relief. That was one of the reasons for my joining the Taoist Tai Chi Society of Australia. By the end of my first beginner's course, pain was less intense and visits to the physio were not as frequent.

I still couldn't do the set by myself and used all the memory prompts I knew: picture prompts, putting myself in the middle of the group at classes, learning the names of the movements off by heart and finally, I resorted to writing prompts on the white board on my fridge. I was determined to reach the stage of doing the set without any support

mechanisms. I also decided to do some extra beginner classes.

This year I attended four beginner classes, along with one or two continuing classes each week. I also experienced the benefits of three workshops and I asked for help with ways to relieve the back. Dan yu's were prescribed: at the bar (rail), the sink, or the cupboards – as often as possible and stopping when the pain started. This has worked very well.

An instructor will often say after we do something. “What did you feel?” My reaction up till now has been, “I'm concentrating on the movement, timing, form, feet, arms, knees, hips, head, and direction. I have not even thought of feeling.” But this is something that I am going

to develop. Already I do feel I have more energy and I am calmer and not worried about expecting perfection when I do the set. My balance is improving and I can relax more into the stretching of the moves. I now find it easier to watch the instructor's movements very closely and to not rely on spoken words, and to keep pace with the group. I am relying more on the body knowing what to do and when.

And the back pain! I don't take pain killers and there is tightness at times but the next day I'm fine. My physiotherapist is a lot poorer these days.

**Pauline Booyesen**  
BRISBANE BRANCH