



National News

summer edition

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

transformation

In this issue members share their experiences from recent International Workshops in Perth and Brisbane. The recurrent theme is 'workshops are the place where transformations happen'. The longer time for practice which these workshops allow, the input we get from workshop leader Tony Kwong, and the energy created by all working together, all combine to transform body, mind and spirit.



www.facebook.com/taoistaichiaustralia

Compassion is the Foundation

I joined the society in August 2014 and after attending my very first National Workshop in September 2014, I was completely captivated. I have since decided to devote my available time and energy to training, learning what I can about the Society, and to help the ACT branch in any capacity that I possibly can. Attending the Brisbane International Workshop in 2014 was an invaluable learning experience in my journey so far.

I learnt that Taoist Tai Chi™ arts are so much more than just skills acquisition and honing them. My most cherished and satisfying experiences from the workshop has been the examination of my value systems, priorities and aspirations. Over the five days, I had some very meaningful and authentic interactions with many different members from various parts of Australia; new and well-seasoned alike. So whilst the practice of tai chi involves a lot of connecting: mind to body connections, move to move connections and body connections, such as hands to feet, another

Compassion is an attitude that requires action. We express this to others through kindness, respect, sharing and serving others.

connection that I learnt was the connection that we all have with each other.

The Society operates very much like a large family, with sincere love and care for one another. There was one day when I became quite ill and I had not anticipated the support and genuine interest in my wellbeing that I received. This very human and social aspect that I experienced in Brisbane demonstrated what I believe is the true nature of the Society's teachings: compassion.

Compassion is an attitude that requires action. We express this to others through kindness, respect, sharing and serving others. This was also clearly seen in all the work that went into organising the workshop. For example, administration, fundraising, funding assistance, accommodation, transport,

catering arrangements (including the addition of fruit to morning and afternoon tea in response to our dietary needs), all completed and offered freely by everyday people.

Through their generosity, these volunteers made the workshop truly available to all. Those with special or additional needs, whether physical, financial, devoid of transport or accommodation, no one was left behind nor forgotten. Taoist Tai Chi™ arts are for all. The idea of 'one coat, many pockets' seems applicable to more than just how the finance is governed by the society.

The Taoist values of selflessness and service to others became much more meaningful to me after being fully immersed in it for the five days. The Society's charitable orientation was very apparent through the many people who demonstrated true concern for others and by sharing, including guidance, and their own personal stories and experiences. I am certainly giving more thought as to what it is that I desire from Taoist Tai Chi™ arts and why. It also prompted me to examine what

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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

When the body is ready it will happen – compassion, in a sense, for one's own body.

I can contribute back to tai chi and to the Society; loyalty, hard work (time and effort), trustworthiness, thoroughness, respect, creativity, sharing, caring and support of others.

I look forward to learning more about the Society especially by listening to and observing members who have been involved with the Society for a long time. This I value highly, and I am grateful that I had the opportunity to do this over the length of the workshop.

In respect to my own tai chi practice, I became aware that the spiralling movements of tai chi was just like a tai chi journey. You do not start at one end and finish at the other and tick the box and then move on. I have learnt that there is no end. There are different levels of understanding, different levels of refinement and different levels of progress, and this changes over time as one's level of awareness undergoes change, as well as bodily transformations, whether

through ageing, injury, illness, or the building of strength and stamina or muscle memory.

I was also given a real insight into the subtlety of the foundation exercises, their importance and to how intention affects one's movements. Regular practice is necessary to get the memory of the movements into the body rather than it being a purely cognitive process. This way, the body will naturally recognise the movements in the set which correspond to the exercises and the muscle memory will see that they are incorporated. I have always found the *tor yus* and *don yus* a real challenge and I am more aware now that they require more time and discipline on my part. I have gained a deeper respect for these exercises and subsequently, increased motivation for their practise.

To conclude, this workshop experience has been enriching and rewarding. I learnt the need to let go, not just of physical and emotional tensions, but also of conventional expectations. I have seen that growth cannot be forced. Patience is needed in spite of the frustration and impatience that I inevitably feel in my practice. When the body is ready it will happen - compassion, in a sense, for one's own body. I would like to use what I have learnt to improve my own tai chi practice, and to improve my awareness and understanding of how the various moves affects my own body and mind, so that one day I can help others. I also expect to use what I have learnt to deepen my understanding and support for the Society and its goals. I will continue helping and giving back as much as I can.

Sharon Francis, is a member of the Australian Capital Territory branch

Brisbane International Workshop



The International workshop held recently in Brisbane Queensland had the highest number of attendees so far at an Australian workshop. Over five days there were 191 participants doing Taoist Tai Chi, creating an atmosphere of gentle, calming purpose.....**No Hurry!!**

Our worldwide membership was evident with people attending from New Zealand, Canada, Costa Rica and most parts of Australia. Many conversations involved personal health benefits, physical, emotional/ or spiritual. Cultural exchange abounded with various accents but we all spoke Taoist Tai Chi™ arts. Regardless of level of experience all were helped during the instruction and practice sessions.

Tony Kwong our international instructor and his team of experienced group leaders guided us through some of the moves of the set. Refining and lots of practise was encouraged and appreciated by all. Foundation exercises really are the pillars of our training. Donyus/ Toryus and the hand/arm exercises ARE THE SET...**that was my light bulb moment!!**

As a beginner instructor I will continue to focus on the basics including alignment and angles. Social interaction, enjoyment and a sense of belonging will, I believe, continue Master Moy's legacy. Learning in a friendly, supportive environment hopefully will encourage our beginners to continue on to a deeper and broader experience on

their journey in Taoist Tai Chi™ arts. Knowledge gained and shared is a gift for all.

Terry Feltus, is a Beginning instructor Adelaide branch.

Brisbane International Workshop 2016

9–13 MARCH

Includes Brisbane 20th Anniversary!

REGISTER ONLINE



Toowoomba Celebrates Anniversaries

The Toowoomba branch of the Taoist Tai Chi Society of Australia celebrated its 25th anniversary, plus 20th anniversary of its Taoist shrine, at a weekend workshop and High Tea held on 20-21 June 2015.



We were delighted to have special guests at the High Tea on Saturday afternoon: Councillor Paul Antonio, Mayor, Toowoomba Regional Council;

the Hon John McVeigh MP, Member for Toowoomba South; Mr John Dornbusch, Chancellor of the University of Southern Queensland; and Ms Gitie House, President, Toowoomba International Multicultural Society.



Some 150 participants and guests attended the High Tea, and there were 88 participants in the weekend program. There was a special chanting session on Saturday morning which attracted around 50 participants.



My First International Workshop

The 2014 Bayswater international workshop yielded a lot of 'firsts' for me: first time being billeted, first visit to the national centre, first time speaking in front of so many people, first Taoist ceremony, first Jai banquet, first time being totally awestruck by Taoist Tai Chi.



The first day opened with a Taoist ceremony for the first year anniversary of the shrine. Conducted by Jim Nicholson and an official party dressed in traditional robes, it was a pleasure to be there and a part of it all. This was followed by a Jai Banquet with local and regional dignitaries in attendance. In true Taoist Tai Chi style, I was advised (just before the banquet started) that I would be part of the demonstration team! It was an honor to be considered for the demo. I was extremely nervous and hope that I did ok.



After the banquet we did a set and foundation exercises and then started working on the toryu. We broke out into smaller groups and I was assigned to a group led by the amazingly resilient and inspiring Helen Gaunt.

I received corrections from Helen and was refining the connection with my hands and feet for some time when Tony Kwong noticed that I needed some structural corrections. Tony began to lightly tap various parts of my body and I felt little jolts of energy flow through and I sensed what I

needed to correct. This continued for quite some time and challenged my self-observation and awareness skills. As this was going on I became aware that others in the workshop were gathering around us and began to observe the corrections I was receiving. When this progressed to what seemed like most of the workshop I started to become very nervous, which challenged my concentration and focus even more. I remembered a little piece of the wisdom in the instructor's manual from Master Moy, *to forget yourself*, and this allowed me to get through that barrier.

Without any words I seemed to be able to interpret the sensation I was receiving from the tap of Tony's stick and as soon as I felt I had understood and executed the correction another one would come. Whilst I know firsthand that our tai chi is always a work in progress, I feel that there is so much for me to work on with my toryu I hope I don't disappoint anyone with my progress.

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National

A message from the President

It is pleasing to see that our organization is continuing to grow steadily, with an increase of 100 members over the 2014-15 financial year, to a total of 3400 members as at June 2014. This was also reflected in a continuing strong financial position, which enabled us to offer donations to assist with various international projects of our sister organizations, including the development of the new International Centre at the Fenway Hotel in Dunedin, Florida

Over the year we have had a number of significant events, in terms of workshops and accompanying milestone anniversaries, which served to enrich and deepen our practice of the Taoist arts which Master Moy passed on to us.

In November 2014 we celebrated the 1st Anniversary of the Dedication of the Fung Loy Kok shrine at our National Centre in Bayswater. Visiting international instructors Tony Kwong and Jim Nicholson from Canada led the celebration, which included chanting ceremonies, a *jai* vegetarian lunch with VIPs from all levels of government, tai chi demonstrations and speeches. The celebration took part during a five day international workshop led by Tony Kwong that was attended by 146 members from Australia and New Zealand.

In March 2015 Australia hosted a five day International Workshop in Brisbane which was led by visiting international instructor Tony Kwong from Canada and attended by 191 members from Australia, New Zealand, and even Costa Rica! It was the biggest workshop so far held in Australia.



The Toowoomba Branch of the TTCSA celebrated its 25th Anniversary as a branch and the 20th Anniversary of its Fung Loy Kok shrine in June 2015 with a weekend National workshop led by Sandra Wilson, with 88 members attending.

On the Saturday morning

a chanting session at the shrine was attended by approximately 50 members. In the afternoon the branch had its official celebration with an afternoon tea, attended by politicians and community leaders, and of course members and their families and friends. Altogether some 150 people attended the afternoon event.

Across Australia we now have 185 instructors, of which 88 are Continuing Instructors in-Training. For the 2015 calendar year the National Instruction Coordination Committee (NICC) scheduled some 80 workshops across Australia. These include a variety of tai chi workshops at regional and local levels, instructor forums, How to teach Beginners workshops, and workshops on the teachings of the Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism, Lok Hup and other arts.

We thank the international board of directors of the Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism for their continued support in sending international instructors to Australia to improve our understanding of Taoist Tai Chi™ arts, and for providing ongoing guidance in all aspects of our activities.

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



Once this was concluded I was immensely challenged again, this time verbalising what had just happened in front of 160 people. Again I just tried to forget myself and share the experience I had as best I could.

I should challenge myself to focus and concentrate as intently in class. Instructions I receive there shouldn't be taken for granted.

On day 2 I again found it challenging to speak in front of everyone about the previous day's toryu, but having spent most of the evening reflecting on what I had experienced and due to the welcoming and friendly nature of TTCS members on day 1, I found it a little less stressful.

Overall it was a fantastic experience. I really enjoyed my billet Carol Lee's hospitality. The workshop was very well organized and run by wonderful people. I made some really good connections with a number of the tai chi community and everyone I came in contact with was genuinely kind and caring.

I love going to workshops and experiencing different instructors' styles. It's a refreshing change from regular classes but it also serves as a reminder that it is easy to get stuck in a comfort zone and that I should challenge myself to focus and concentrate as intently in class. Instructions I receive there shouldn't be taken for granted.

Simon Matters, is a member of the Melbourne Branch



Life is what it is – nothing more, nothing less, full and empty at the same time.

Alan Clements