

Taoist Arts Organisation



Li Family Style

As taught by Prof. Li Kam Chan and Prof. Chee Soo

The Taoist Arts Organisation is dedicated to promoting and preserving the purity, quality, and completeness of the Li Family System of Health and Martial Arts

TAO NEWSLETTER – AUGUST 2019

IN THIS ISSUE:

We start with a message from our Technical Director Tony Swanson.

We then hear from one of our members about living out the Taoist principles of change and balance, the constant interplay between yin and yang, in our approach to training. Two further members then share their personal experiences of TAO courses attended- the German summer school and the Welsh Course.

Testimonials from Tui Na recipients follow, providing insight into their experiences and its benefits. We round off with competition news from the UK, France and Germany; news on the TAO Community project; and information on the forthcoming 2020 TAO Course Calendar.

Happy reading!

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FROM THE TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

As you will see later on in the newsletter again TAO members have achieved in competitions in all 3 countries. I'd like to say a big thank you to the competitors and their coaches for striving hard to maintain the high standards that we have always strived to maintain. Our profile in the Martial arts community is always high.



I am pleased that some members are working hard to learn the health aspects of the art, especially the Tui Na. We have a group of people now that are very competent

practitioners and again keep the profile of the TAO and its teachings high.

As other information has said, we have started a project to support a homeless young people's project in Swansea to show that our ideals are not just contained within the membership group but for all parts of society. We have for many years supported a charity that sends volunteers

into old people's homes to support them and give them company. Hopefully there will be many more projects in the future to show a diversity in the way the TAO supports the community in general

I look forward to seeing you at courses in the future. Thank you to all members for their support and continued dedication to learning.

Tony Swanson

There is a possibility of a new Tui Na course starting and if anyone is interested please contact Marie Hartshorn on mariehartshorn@btinternet.com

CHANGE AND BALANCE 1.0

By James Lumsden

If you read much Taoist philosophy you will sometimes come across this saying- "One gave birth to two, two to three, three to five, and five to the ten thousand things" (or some version thereof). One is "wuchi"- the original, unformed, beginning. Two is yin-yang, dark-light, positive-negative, heavy-light. Three is yin-yang and Tai Chi which is the balance between yin and yang. Five is the five phases-elements-processes. The ten thousand things means everything in the universe, infinity. And then eventually everything returns to "wuchi", and then the cycle repeats again. So we can infer that if this saying is correct, that

everything is changing, if not now, later. Or it is changing but slowly enough that you don't notice it. You may now ask, what has this to do with balance?

Balance is a dynamic state of constant change; it is not static or still. If you don't believe this, stand on one leg and then close your eyes. Has your 'stationary' one legged stance moved-changed-wobbled? QED [quod erat demonstrandum]. So what changes with Tai Chi? What changes with doing the Tai Chi Form? Do the number of moves and sequences of the form change? No. Does the way we do the 'Form' change? Yes. Does this mean it is a different form?

That depends on who you ask and what you, or they, are using to judge what stays constant, and what changes. Personally I would answer that the 'Form' doesn't change at all, you are the one that changes. As you change, and grow, and adapt, you become able to express and manifest more of the 'Form' and of yourself with more detail/depth. It's a bit like getting an update for your computer program. As you practice and learn, the way you think about it changes and the way you do it changes; from Tai Chi 1.0 you have upgraded to Tai Chi 2.0, then to Tai Chi 3.0, and if you spend regular quality time in practice maybe even it will upgrade to 'Premium'. Your Form changes from a static, two dimensional copy of someone else (usually your teacher), to an ever changing balancing and rebalancing series of changes of posture and technique. You are relaxing, breathing naturally. You have better postural alignment during the moves and transitions; to quote Dr Frankenstein, "It's Alive!"

For what is Tai Chi but interplay of Yin and Yang? First you stand in Eagle stance ("wuchi"), then you step off to the side into Bear stance (preparation). You have now changed from passive to active (yin to yang). Your mind and body (another yin and yang) are awake, energised, and ready to go (outwardly yin but inwardly yang). Then you start to move through the form (movement yang, inwardly relaxed yin); forwards, backwards, turning right, turning left (taichi, the constant interplay between yin and yang). Yet with all this movement, you are not practising a different 'Form'. It is the same one that you started learning at your first lesson, but the way you are doing it is different from that first lesson, however long in the past that was.

Sometimes when you practice you might be a bit tired and run down, however with the practice, as you relax, and flow with the movements, along with your fellow classmates, you may find like me that your energy starts to recharge (I always find at the end of the class I have more energy than I started, this is a change from lesser yin to lesser yang). Some days you come into the class with loads of energy and settling down is more of a problem, but you go through the class and do the 'Form' and by the end of the class you will be more centred within yourself, and the exuberance of energy will be channelled, and stored or released (this is lesser yang to lesser yin). Of course what you call it is secondary to the actual experience.

There will be changes of some sort, but by doing the 'Form', according to the principles, with mindful awareness and focus, the change will be in a positive and

desired direction. Perfection is an ideal that is never attained, but becoming a little bit more relaxed, a little more spacious inside, a little more energetic, a little more centred, all desirable (at least by me) are easy to achieve, with only a little effort and focus. As the old saying goes "The longest journey in the world begins with a single step." So one step at a time, one repetition of the form (as far as you currently know), one K'ai Men exercise, one five minute session of sticky hands, one warm up; that is all it takes; one small step at a time.

Each little step, each little practice session, all of them add up. Each little change, each re-balance of posture (whether 'moving' or 'stationary'), each little bit of tension released as you breathe out. Until you find it becomes natural and habitual. It happens in class and out of it. That is one of the great living benefits, of the practise of Tai Chi. When the slow, relaxed and joyous accumulation of practice sinks into your body-mind-being and you realise that both in class and in your day to day living, you are relaxing more into the activity and your body. You are maintaining a better centre with an improving posture. You are being more efficient with using your energy and time. When things upset your balance, you are more aware of it. You find it easier to let go. You re-balance a little quicker and easier as a continuous process (just like doing sticky hands). This awareness builds so slowly and so gradually that it is quite common for other people to notice it first rather than yourself. The more aware you become, the more you do in a gentle way to encourage and facilitate the process. Just remember that every time you notice your balance is going or has been lost is a

moment of awareness and a sign that your sensitivity is improving.

I cannot emphasise enough that ***the increasing awareness of your 'mistakes' is a sign that you are succeeding and improving.*** Before you were still making these mistakes, but you did not realise. Now you are noticing things that you didn't before. It shows that your awareness and sensitivity are increasing, and the opportunity to improve your situation-posture-breathing is also increasing. Notice your mistakes, revel in them. Pat yourself on the back as a reward (preferably without dislocating your arm). Then breathe more easily. Relax and re-balance your posture (whether walking, standing, sitting, or lying down). Enjoy just 'being you'. The new improved 'you', the You 2.0. The You that is more relaxed than before and able to cope with upsets better. The person that notices (the change) when you are going too fast and chooses to slow down (re-balancing). The person that notices (the change) when you are going too slowly and chooses to speed up a little (re-balancing). Or the person who does both.

The You 3.0, that now relaxes more and re-balances as a continuous, easier and more enjoyable way to relate to yourself, to relate to others, to relate to the whole world (the ten thousand things). The idea of "wu wei", of non-action is achieved by action. Those little continuous, enjoyable, relaxing, letting go, and re balancing until the adaption becomes a natural expression of what you do and who you are. Be it the You 3.0, the You 4.0, *the new super-doooper premium ultra version "YOU"*, now available in the app store and

on amazon.co.uk and all good stockists and shops!

However it is your choice, each little step, each little change, each little re-balancing. Do you choose to be a little bit more relaxed in your body? Do you choose to be a little bit relaxed in your posture? Do you choose to breathe a little softer, and slower, and easier when resting? Do you chose to change a little, and re-balance a little, and be a little (or a lot, your choice) more you? All it takes is one step at a time, one breath at a time. If you notice that you are feeling off, just accept it and let go. It is all part of the process. It shows that your standards are rising. Just relax a little more and sooner or later it will happen naturally. Enjoy the process, the ups and downs. One step at a time, if you keep taking steps, it is merely a matter of time until you reach your destination.

See you on the 'way' (Tao).

WELSH COURSE JULY 2019

By Sue-Rose Martin

This year the course was held in Berriew village hall. It was well attended with folk from South Wales up to the Newcastle area, the London contingent and of course our local clubs. I rather think that Janet has about six clubs at present. Again it was a treat to have Tony teach us, and right on our doorstep.

Training started on Friday evening with in-depth input to learning a new K'ai Men. On the Saturday and Sunday we learnt two

further K'ai Men in detail. We had to work on maintaining good Tai Chi Principles whilst opening different parts of our bodies, shoulders and hips in different postures. We learnt the three K'ai Men worked as a set and with a number of health benefits.

For me the highlight of the weekend was working with Jane Frew. We had been split into groups of one black jacket plus two or three red shirts. Then we were asked to work on a section of the form and apply what we had been doing during that day- 9 points, 6 harmonies, and putting feeling into the moves, and more.... Jane's approach to the form was to analyse the section we were doing with regards to the fighting application. For me this was perfect and I found learning the sequence easier, but more importantly, I recognised that the accuracy of the move was essential if it was to be effective. So, in my practice each move had an invisible opponent in contact with me, and every tiny movement I made either worked or didn't, depending on my accuracy. By this time we were practising with a partner so feedback was instant.

To round things off we worked in two large groups bringing together what we had learnt over the weekend and focusing on some of the finer details of the form.

So there ended another great weekend. Thanks to Tony and all the black jackets whose endless patience was most appreciated.

GERMAN SUMMER SCHOOL 2019

By David Howarth

Wednesday 28th May was the day three Brits made the trip to Rüsselsheim near Frankfurt Germany. For some the day started with a 6:00 a.m. flight followed by a four hour lay-over at a hub airport whilst others made the direct connection to Frankfurt. Of course Tony was en-route from London as were several native Germans from London.

After meeting up in Rüsselsheim we took the chance to visit the local castle/museum although it turned out to be more of a drinks and cake visit to the castle cafe-restaurant, mainly due to the museum closing time. After spending some time relaxing on a warm afternoon we were unexpectedly joined by several German instructors as the castle is in close proximity to the training hall. This raised our spirits and we spent quite some time chatting and drinking until it was time for training.

Inside the local school hall at a session aimed at instructor grades we experienced the depth and diligence of Tony Swanson's teaching, as we experienced a couple of hours observing demonstrations of a Tao Yin exercise followed by practice and detailed evaluations with a partner. The Brits got a first chance to experience the skill and attainment of our German Tai Ji brothers and sisters by sharing openly with them.

Training was pretty intense and that would be an understatement for many. After this, a well deserved break allowed us to have a drink, reflection and say some hellos to some friends during a warm spring evening.

The rest of the evening concentrated on push hands practice which gave us further chances to work at posture and technique whilst giving our minds a different focus so tiredness wasn't so prevalent.

After training we set off with our allocated hosts who were kind enough to provide accommodations for the next few nights during our German training excursion.

The next day we followed the same pattern for the next few days, i.e. a good breakfast with our hosts and a journey in a sunny summer's morning to the training hall in a large village close to Rüsselsheim called Bausheim.



The training hall is a bright and airy establishment and as the weather in the next few days was hot and sunny the ventilation in this building was definitely needed. The sports hall also has a balcony area which has an open plan kitchen and seating area with tables - this is where the course participants eat at lunch and in the evening. For many years Hubert has arranged for an excellent catering facility, where a good variety of hot and cold food of a good standard is provided for both daily meals. This is included in the cost of the reasonable training fees. Hubert also makes sure that there are cold drinks

available to buy (cheaply) and inclusive hot drinks at all breaks.

Once we were ready the days started with the ubiquitous warm up and then either a K'ai Men or a Tao Yin. It was heartening to see five young children on first morning warm up with parents warming up behind them and watching. Several teenagers were also training and all the youngsters then trained in Feng Shou, whilst the adults continued with their Tai Ji. The three K'ai Men covered were challenging for the many levels of students as they worked until tea break and beyond to improve their skills. I might have said perfect their skills but I would have to face Tony after he reads this article :-)

Tony was on good form as we know he will always be, and the first exercise involved bending forward in leopard but then wait a while once you're parallel to the floor and rotate the straight leg so that the toes point up. Once we thought that we might be seeing some progression the extension was shown to test us further. Opening joints, getting balance, easy natural breathing with good posture were bed fellows we aspired to make. As usual we all had a partner to keep each of us on track with their humble reflections. The other exercises involved stretching vertically in dragon with a central rotation then added in, opening four points in leg triangle with slow drop to get the thighs parallel to the floor, and finally, a Tao Yin on the last day called 'Ring the Alarm Bells' - although truth be told that we had tried something like that for early tea breaks on previous days.

Late mornings and afternoons were spent on push hands practices and form

development. During this we got more chances to meet and work with a variety of partners from many different places in Germany. There was a lot of sharing of ideas and reflections and a few doors sometimes swung open and sometimes creaked open in our heads.

After our evening meal our hosts were often gracious enough to take us out for some sightseeing or cultural experiences. This time experiences included a visit to an old tavern which was a central part of the community and a great place to plug into the gossip. There was a walk on a hot summers evening to see the Rhine. One evening there was a local festival at a neighbouring village next to the Rhine which included the possibility of trying lots of different types of food and trying various wines and beers should one wish

to. Of course during this we were sharing conversation and making new friends and deepening older relationships

Whilst most of us trained in the disciplines of Tai Ji alongside us there was competition training taking place for a competition much further north in Germany - lots and lots of medals were won there, but that is a report that deserves to be told by our German competitors and their trainers.

At end of Sunday training it was time for goodbyes and the return of grading books. One of number got to go home to blighty with a promotion to their first Teng Chi grade and a nice black tee-shirt to show it off!



TAO Community Support

Further to our last Newsletter, we are pleased to announce that following TAO committee decision, we are now supporting the **Swansea Young Single Homeless Project**. This charitable organisation supports young people who have faced many challenges, providing practical and emotional support, tailored to each individual's needs to help them gain control of their lives. Further information can be found at www.syshp.org.uk.

Many thanks for your kind and generous donations to this Community project helping improve others' lives.

Tui Na - Testimonials from recipients

✚ "Utter magic." Martin

✚ "Every household should have a Tui Na practitioner!" Scott

✚ "I felt so comfortable I fell asleep, and afterwards I could walk much lighter and more easily!" Mattis

✚ "I've received Tui Na a couple of times now and really enjoy the different ways to massage the body." Alison

✚ "Straightened me up so much, I then had to adjust my bra strap on one side, to balance me out." Gillian

✚ "Tui Na for me means my body gets a feeling of pleasure which it has always longed for." Katerina

✚ "Amazing discovery. I had pain in my shoulder and Tui Na showed me I also had a problem with my neck with stiffness and pain! Now I can move much more easily, and afterwards it seemed to improve further." Maryvonne

✚ "Very good, and so gentle- the releases helped with the pain of injury. Practitioner was really in tune with my body." Jane

✚ "Interesting changes - wasn't sure what was happening but I felt better afterwards." James

✚ "Subtle, smooth, space. Thanks." David

✚ "Entirely relaxing, the massage lengthened and opened my body and eased my pain." Elizabeth

If you are interested in learning Tui Na please contact Marie Hartshorn on mariehartshorn@btinternet.com

COMPETITION NEWS

FRENCH FAEMC NATIONAL Tai Chi Championships – 9th-10th March 2019

7 competitors entered.

Medals won:

Li Style Traditional Open Hand Form

- 1 Gold
- 2 Silver
- 1 bronze

All styles all schools Openhand

- 1 Silver

Synchronised Jiti

- Silver (group of 6)

The full medal list can be found on our website at www.taoistarts.org/tao-news



North-West GERMAN REGIONAL Championships

1st June 2019

Medals won:

Adults

Weapon Forms:

Gold 3
Silver 3
Weapons Group – Silver 1

Tai Chi Hand form

Gold 2
Silver 3
Bronze 1

Qinda

Gold 1
Silver 1

Sanshou

Gold 2
Silver 2

Children

Qinda

Gold 1
Silver 4
Bronze 4

Forms

Kung-Fu – Silver 1
Weapons – Silver 1

The full medal list can be found on our website at www.taoistarts.org/tao-news



UK BCCMA NATIONAL championships

7th July 2019

5 competitors entered:

Medals won:

The full medal list can be found on our website at www.taoistarts.org/tao-news

Sanshou

- 2 Gold 2 Silver

Qinda

- 3 Gold

Push Hands

- 3 Silver

Shua Jiao

- 1 Silver



TAO 2020 COURSE CALENDAR

The full 2020 calendar will be AVAILABLE on www.taoistarts.org later this year.
Please check back there for updates!

Courses include:

- UK regional courses
- UK residential Easter School Course
- UK residential Summer School Course
- Instructor Training Courses
- French and German open weekends and summer schools

Confirmed 2020 dates:

- **Twyford Instructor training**
- **Easter School**
- **Easter Tui Na Course**

Date (2020)	Course	Location	Details
26-27 January	Instructor training	Twyford	Instructors and invitees
14-15 March	Instructor training	Twyford	Instructors and invitees
5-9 April	Easter Tui Na Course	Bloxham	Contact Marie Hartshorn mariehartshorn@btinternet.com
10-12 April	Easter School	Bloxham	Contact James Lumsden, jhlumsden@btinternet.com
16-17 May	Instructor training	Twyford	Instructors and invitees
13-14 June	Instructor training	Twyford	Instructors and invitees
26-27 September	Instructor training	Twyford	Instructors and invitees
24-25 October	Instructor training	Twyford	Instructors and invitees
5-6 December	Instructor training	Twyford	Instructors and invitees

General Course booking information:

- For booking of UK regional courses (except residential) contact Marina (marina.de.vos.bath@gmail.com)

- For Residential courses contact James (jhlumsden@btinternet.com)
- For Tui Na weekend courses contact Marie (mariehartshorn@btinternet.com)
- For French and German course contact the course contact
- For all course information (hotels, parking, locations) contact the local course organisers via their email addresses.

Course Fees	1 day	2 days
T.A.O. Members before early booking deadline	£45	£70
T.A.O. Members booking after early booking	£55	£80
Non Members	£60	£85
Friday night where appropriate	£10	£10
£10 concession for senior citizens and those on means tested benefits		

Early booking requires a £20 deposit given to your instructor or posted to Marina De Vos before the early registration deadline.

PLEASE CHECK on www.taoistarts.org FOR THE MOST UP-TO-DATE COURSE INFORMATION

Thank-you to all contributors to this issue of the TAO Newsletter.

Please send contributions for the next issue to Renee Pryce, Editor, at moonwillow75@gmail.com by latest 1st November 2019.