

european school of t'ai chi

NEWSLETTER JUL 2022

Tao Te Ching No 7

Heaven will last,
earth will endure.
How can they last so long?
They don't exist for themselves
and so can go on and on.

So wise souls
leaving self behind
move forward
and setting self aside
stay centred.
Why let the self go?
To keep what the soul needs.

Ursula K. Le Guin



Heaven and earth
are enduring.
The universe can live for ever,
because it does not live for itself.
And so both last -
outliving themselves.

The sage guides his people
by putting himself last.
Desiring nothing for himself,
he knows how to channel desires.
And is it not because he wants
nothing that he is able to
achieve anything?

Man Ho Kwok, Martin Palmer, Jay Ramsay



Welcome

Another six months has passed since our last newsletter and there is still plenty opportunity to be grateful for the way t'ai chi helps us face what keeps on coming.

It was a great coming together at Springhead with Tew in May, when we had such beautiful weather to relish the grounds there. Tew reminded us of the intrinsic value of regular practice to nourish ourselves and to keep going. The central tenet being founded in compassion and a wider sense of altruism, going beyond our small selves for a larger perspective.

The new committee is now in full harness and we are planning the October retreat at Springhead. The regular Zoom sessions will continue on Wednesdays after a short summer break; evening t'ai chi practice at 6pm and morning chanting at 7.15am (,a time when we send out metta and the aspirational Bodhisattva vows). The website continues to offer a great resource, and platform, for our school - do look at it frequently as things do come and go, such is the nature of all life. Wishing us all well,

Jos Hadfield



Tao Te Ching 7

Following on from the front page - here is another version of the no 7. Looking at the many different translations of this rather enigmatic text can give some further insight on what these characters mean. This one is by Ellen M Chen

Heaven and earth are long lasting (*chiu*).
 The reason why heaven and earth are long lasting:
 Because they do not live for self (*pu tzu sheng*).
 Therefore they last long.

Thus the sage puts his body (*shen*) behind,
 Yet his body is in front.
 He regards his body as external,
 Yet his body remains in existence (*ts'un*).
 Is it not because he is selfless (*wu szu*),
 That he can fulfil himself (*ch'eng ch'i szu*).

All three versions point to the way of compassion, of going beyond our small selves for the greater good of all beings. Metta t'ai chi. A true warrior's path. Thanks to Tew for his guidance on this path.



My first residential course with the European School of Tai Chi Chuan

Gaynor Gaynor



I have to admit, I was a bit nervous, first time away on a course in more than three years, and for four days with people I didn't know except for one, who has been a good friend for the past fifteen years. It was due to this friend that I even knew of the course.

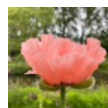
We arrived after a five hour journey, pleasantly surprised by the cleanliness and comfort of the dormitory style stables, great showers and cosy.

It seemed there were many folk catching up with dear friends that they've not seen for years but I never felt excluded. I did feel a great deal of love and this emanated right from the top, the teacher was Tew Bunnag and his teachings were profound yet gentle and are still working on me many days after the course.

I experienced the most warmth, understanding and non-judgment from fellow students that I have ever experienced from any of the schools I've attended in my thirty plus years of training. I thoroughly enjoyed the humour, intelligence and genuine conversations with everyone within the ESTCC. By the end of the four days, we had journeyed through meditations and chants , walked the extensive mature gardens, trained in Tai Chi and Qigong together and learned life skills that will help me for the rest of my lifetime. The vegetarian and vegan meals were plentiful and delicious, the drinking water was straight from the natural springs so I felt nourished and ready to train.

In fact, I was so impressed by the experience, level of skill and knowledge that I have signed up to become a member of the school.

It is with joy in my heart that I feel connected and opened again with the teachers and students of the European School of Tai Chi Chuan and it gives me hope that I've found the support in continuing to grow on my own tai chi journey.





Way of the Bodhisattva

Earlier this year Tew offered an online course looking at the vows that we chant together (the words of which were printed in the last newsletter). Almost immediately as the course finished the war in the Ukraine flared and we were faced with yet another occasion of wanting to offer help but not quite knowing how. Tew reminded us of the amazing power of coming together to chant, to send out our heartfelt wishes for others' wellbeing. Those of us who had already met on the course were keen to keep this going and open it up to others, to send out prayers to all in need. As it happens two zoom rooms were quickly established - on a Wednesday morning at 7.15am and a Friday evening at 6pm, this last with a more direct link with Ukraine. Through his connection with Yaryna Shumska Tew is able to tell us how much this simple act helps. And as you can read below plans are afoot to help more pragmatically. Do join us if you wish - the link is on the website, or from retreats.estcc@gmail.com

Ukrainian Art Project - Sue McAlpine

I work as a curator and exhibition designer at the Migration Museum in Lewisham. I have suggested to my colleagues that we display the work of young Ukrainian artists in our large front windows in the autumn of 2022. I have been in touch with Yaryna Shumska who teaches art in Lviv and who is very keen to work with us. She has asked her students to make art around trying to live a normal life in the midst of war, of facing the possibility of having their dreams of a peaceful and creative life completely shattered, of leaving their country against their will and being forced to migrate as refugees. The aim is to try and get the work out on the convoys, host some of the artists in this country, to promote their work through workshops and possible collaboration with Ukrainian artists who have already reached this country.

The project is in its early stages and a full proposal is yet to be written but we will need funding. We hope to raise at least £10,000 and will shortly set up a fundraising page. Please contact me if you are prepared to donate towards this project or if you have any ideas for fundraising in your own communities. I will keep everyone updated.

Sue McAlpine



