

ADVENTURE IN CHINA

Thunder Bay's Taiji Master Peng You and three of his students recently journeyed to the birthplace of Tai Chi, the Chen Village on the outskirts of Jiaozuo, China for the 2018 Chen Zhenglei Taichi Symposium. There they did advanced level training and joined in the celebration of Grandmaster Chen Zhenglei's 70th birthday.

On arrival in Jiaozuo* the group was given royal treatment by officials of the city, including: Mayor Xu Yixian; the First Deputy Mayor Yang Qingjiu; the Director of Foreign Affairs Li Peng; and several others. Besides travel assistance, accommodation, and treating the travelers to two amazing banquets, the city framed a canvas print of Thunder Bay's Tai Chi Park, 'Jewel of the Marina' by Brian Nieminen, which was brought as a gift for Grandmaster Chen from the Peng You Taiji Quan Association.

At the Chen Village, after registration and accommodations, there was a three day event called the 8th Chenjiagou Kungfu Elite Tournament. Master Peng You's student Brian Nieminen competed in two forms and was awarded a silver and a bronze medal.

Four days of intense training followed, students Bill Climie and Mitch Albert studying Old Frame One and Nieminen Old Frame Two.

Master Peng You received one of the highest possible honours – he became an 'In Chamber Disciple' of the Grandmaster in a rare and very elaborate ceremony.

Although the Tai Chi was the highlight of the trip there was some time for sightseeing and holidaying as well.

It was a once in a lifetime experience for the group and hopefully will help raise the level of Tai Chi practice for Thunder Bay practitioners as Master Peng You and the students share what they've learned!

TAIJI POST



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Brian Nieminen, Bill Climie and Mitch Albert accompanied Master Peng to China where they made presentations, studied Taiji, and Master Peng was formally accepted as an inside student of Grandmaster Chen in an elaborate ceremony.







Rain did not dampen the spirits of these intrepid Taiji players on Canada Day!

Health Friendship and Happiness: A Deeper Look at our Motto

Volume Twenty of The Taiji Post (November 2016) contained an editorial on our Motto: Health Friendship and Happiness which, citing an Oxford University study, suggested that “the ‘friendship’ in our motto ‘Health, Friendship and Happiness’ turns out to be an essential part of pain management while doing Taiji.

Just meeting our Taiji friends at class and often going with them for coffee or lunch afterward has been shown in this study to release endorphins thus increasing happiness, as well as helping to cope with joint pain, which incidentally also increases happiness” (Vol. 20, No 1, p. 1).

We have come across another study, this one published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, which suggests that the happiness associated with friendship may have health benefits that can be seen at the microscopic level, at the genomic level (PNAS August 13, 2013, Vol. 110 No.33, pp.13684-13689. All quotations are from this article unless otherwise specified). The paper, titled “A functional genomic perspec-

tive on human well-being” has generated much discussion both in scientific journals and in the popular press. It was even discussed by science/health writer, Gretchen Reynolds, in The New York Times Magazine.

The study involved drawing blood from 80 healthy volunteers who had filled out extensive questionnaires about what made them happy, satisfied with life. The scientists were able to examine the gene expression profile inside the volunteers’ white blood cells thanks to advances in bio-technology. As Reynolds explains: “Gene expression is the complex process by which genes direct the production of proteins. These proteins jump-start other processes, which in the case of white blood cells control much of the body’s immune system” (August 25, 2013, p. 24).

The results were startling. Those volunteers whose questionnaires showed that their happiness tended to be linked to “social pleasures such as connecting with others,” what we would call friendship, “displayed augmented levels of antibody-producing gene expression and lower levels of pro-inflammatory expression” (Reynolds p. 24). Such strengthened immune systems can lead to a longer and healthier life. But that is not

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The Taiji Statues, a gift from China, unveiled by the Mayor of Jiaozuo, Xu Yixian, and his delegation from China, representatives of Thunder Bay City Council including Mayor Keith Hobbs, members of the Sister Cities Advisory Committee and the Hon. Patty Hajdu MP representing the Canadian Government, Monday May 21, 2018.



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the most surprising result of this study. The majority of the volunteers filling out the questionnaire linked their happiness to the consumption of objects, shopping for shoes or a new car for example. Satisfying such personal desires can of course lead to a kind of happiness, but it is not the same as the other-regarding happiness of friendship. The gene expression in the white blood cells of these volunteers seemed to confirm this. They exhibited unhealthy levels of pro-inflammatory gene expression, which tends to promote higher levels of inflammation throughout the body. As Reynolds explains: "Such inflammation has been linked to the development of cancer, diabetes and cardiovascular disease" (p. 24).

In order to distinguish these different forms of happiness the Study borrowed a couple of terms from Classical Moral Philosophy.

The kind of happiness based on consumption, or self-gratification was labeled "hedonic happiness." A hedonist, for example, is a pleasure-seeker. The more other-regarding form of happiness associated with friendship was called "eudaemonic happiness." If asked to choose between these two forms of happiness, the Study concludes that, "a functional genomic perspective favors eudaimonia" (PNAS Vol. 110 No. 33, p. 13688).

So the next time someone asks you what are the benefits of joining our Peng You Taiji Quan Association you can say a longer life, better health and happiness, and the right kind of happiness as well. Though we would never change the wording, the deeper meaning of our motto is:

"Health, Friendship and Eudaemonic happiness"

We do have a sing-a-long at our Christmas Party

Branch 149 Legion 730 Simpson Street

December 1, 6:00 Symposium 7:00 Dinner

Tickets from instructors, call Wayne at 3452626 or reply to this email

