

VALE OF YORK T'AI CHI QIGONG ASSOCIATION



NEWSLETTER AUTUMN/WINTER 2008



Grading

Our autumn grading was held in Thirsk Town Hall on 18th October. Although only four candidates came forward, they were each at a different level, so there was a lot to see. As usual our Qigong Master, Alan Box, conducted the grading and gave individual feedback afterwards.

Ann graded for the first time, and performed with composure and elegance to gain her yellow sash. Next, **Pat T**, who repeated the earlier exercises as well as adding the new ones, moved on to her green sash. Her performance was serious and reflective. Further up the gradings, **Judith** won a well deserved purple sash for her account of the Snake and the dreaded Snake Eats Plum Blossom. Finally, **Sue** performed for her red sash. She achieved it with distinction with a masterly performance of The Snake, Tiger Enters the Forest and Yang Style. Congratulations to all four, who did both themselves and the association credit through their hard work and commitment, as well as through their performances on the day. Sue is now within striking distance of the coveted black sash. The photograph of the four successful candidates was taken by Judith's husband, Woody. Thank you, Woody; they are charming anyway but you brought out the best in them!

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We are always pleased to welcome friends, family and anyone interested, to watch the grading, so please encourage spectators to come and make it an even more special event. As you will see on the bookmark and the list of events for 2009, the next grading will

be on March 21st in Thirsk Town Hall.

I would like to stress that membership does not mean that you are expected to grade. It does mean that grading is open to you, but each person makes their own decision about whether or when they grade, and if you are unsure, please talk to any of the senior members. Your class teacher will always be able to advise you and will not encourage you to grade until you are ready.

Membership

Membership is open to anyone who attends a class locally. We do not encourage people to attend the Wednesday association evenings until they have had some experience, as the structure is looser with less direction. However, membership means that you can attend the regular monthly training with Master Alan Box. From January these will mostly be held in St. James's Green Methodist Church on Saturday mornings. If you want to practise a particular exercise or form, or find out more about any aspect of the practice, Master Box is always willing to help. Just let him know in reasonable time before a training. The class lasts for four hours but if you think that is too much to begin with you can opt to come for a shorter period. Membership also gives you discount on fees for workshops, as well as giving you access to a very friendly, mutually supportive group of friends who share a common interest. Please encourage friends and class mates to consider joining. It really isn't scary – well, not very!!! When you join you should receive a ring binder in which to store handouts etc. Due to the chair person getting discouraged by the Viking website we

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are currently waiting for supplies, but they should be here soon. For people who want to try out the Wednesday class and who haven't yet joined, we have a scheme whereby you can join for a taster period of three months at half price (£3). Obviously this is a one off, and at the end you either join the association in the usual way, or decide to leave it for the time being.

Membership renewal

With the newsletter you will find your renewal form, as membership runs from January. A new scheme has been agreed whereby you can pay by standing order, either for the whole year, at £24, or in four quarterly instalments of £6. We hope this will prove popular and easier for all. The form is also enclosed.

Plans for next year

We have planned the programme for the year so that people have plenty of notice of dates and times. A list is attached. Also attached is the list of Harmony dates for 2009. We have a close association with Harmony, which is our Qigong master's Derbyshire organisation. Associate membership is open to Vale of York members, and gives us access to these trainings. Harmony members can become associate members of the Vale of York with similar access.

You will see that as well as regular training we have workshops and grading practices.

AGM

The next AGM will be held on Saturday 14th February after the regular training, around 1p.m. Please come if you can, as it's a good chance to give the committee your opinions and ideas about what we do and how you would like to see the association develop.

Library

As you know, we have a small (but heavy) library of books and DVDs which Pat Brooks takes care of. If you want any titles bought please let her know. We have quite a few basic level texts and need to expand at a slightly more advanced level. A suggestion has been made that we also have audio CDs but so far no titles. If

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you have read, seen or heard any material which you like and want to share, let Pat know. For this newsletter Judith has written a book review. The book is in the library if you want to try it. Or if you like a book or a DVD or CD, please write a review for the next newsletter. Or if you think it's worth warning us off something, equally a review is worth writing.

Book Review

The Inner Path of Tai Chi – A Spiritual Journey by Caroline Demoise

Unlike most of the Tai Chi and Qigong books in the Vale of York library, there are no exercises or forms to be found here. Instead, the author describes very well the changes within her as she took up Tai Chi and eventually became a pupil of Dr Paul Lam. Finally she finds the confidence to become a teacher of his system in her own right and discusses methods of teaching and the benefits it brings not just to the students but to her as the teacher. She has somehow managed to put the intangible into words and, if you can ignore the slight irritation caused by the American spelling, has produced an interesting and different book which is well worth reading.

Contributions

All contributions to the newsletter are welcome. They can be about your own experience, or about anything connected with the practice of T'ai Chi Qigong, or related subjects. As already mentioned, reviews are always interesting. Any articles can be sent to Pat Brooks, who edits the newsletter.