



The year is going quickly again and as I look back on the last 12 months since the last newsletter, I can see that an awareness of the benefits of Qigong is growing within the wider Australian community. The September 2007 Study Tour to China was an amazing journey for the entire group and our thoughts are with all of our Chinese friends affected by the recent earthquakes in Sichuan province, an area in which we spent more than a week.

I was back in Beijing during November, attending a meeting of the Executive of the World Academic Society of Medical Qigong (WASMQ). It was good to catch up with my friends from the international Qigong community. I can announce that the Sixth World Conference on Medical Qigong will be held in Beijing June 2009, marking the 20th anniversary of the foundation of WASMQ. I will be attending and giving a demonstration of Guigen Qigong. Anyone can attend and if you are interested, please don't hesitate to contact me. Also, on a sadder note, I learned of the passing of Professor Feng Lida, the founding Chairperson of WASMQ. She will be sadly missed.

I have been busy writing and I'm well into the development of three fully-illustrated books, including theory and benefits, which will serve as companions to my Qigong DVDs and CDs. I have also been writing regular feature articles for Inner Self magazine. Find below an excerpt from a recent issue.

Inner Self

The sound of the gong flows through the air like a wave of loving kindness summoning the next session. The gong itself is a shell casing from an unexploded bomb that was dropped on Vietnam. It was donated to the Sunnataram Forest Monastery, a Thai Buddhist Monastery on the outskirts of the town of Bundanoon in the Southern Highlands, a few hours south of Sydney. Thirty people had come together in January 2008 for our annual five-day residential retreat, to practice Qigong and receive instruction and guidance on loving kindness (Metta Sutta) meditation from Phra Mana, the Abbot of the Monastery.

During the retreat, the group were asked if they felt Qigong were a spiritual practice and, if so, how they experienced its spirituality. Below are a few of the responses.

"Although Qigong began purely as a form of gentle exercise when I was looking for a post-operative activity after a bout of breast cancer, it has become an increasingly spiritual practice for me. Qigong has begun to inform my everyday life, in the way I sit, stand and breathe. As the practice of meditation became more natural, it took on a spiritual dimension. It has begun to affect the way I think. Qigong has helped me to be more peaceful, less stressed more content and more accepting of others."

"For me, Qigong is very spiritual. It provides a space to retreat to from the stress-filled, deadline-driven lives so many of us live. It provides a channel through which I can connect with the natural energy surrounding us and I have personally felt its therapeutic benefits. A stiff back that has been plaguing me for a couple of weeks has eased totally after a day and a half of the exercises. The progression into meditation also gives me the space to connect with another level of my persona, which I find brings me inner peace and contentment and provides a pathway for dealing with situations that are not right in my life."



Sunrise at the Monastery



December 2007 Training Retreat



January 2008 Annual Retreat



April 2008 Training Retreat

Is Qigong a spiritual practice? It's a good question, something that we all can think about. The understanding of spirituality is different for all of us because there are many variables. It depends on our background and culture, even the type of work we do. But what is clear to me is that through the process of work or 'Gong' we are able to refine our energy or 'Qi', clearing the blockages, and this helps calm our emotions, enabling us become aware of ourselves as a living spirit in physical form.

I haven't worked it all out yet, but I get many ideas and positive feedback from students and the people I meet. I'm not sure if we have original ideas or if, when the heart opens and the Qi flows, we are simply all one.

See back page for the program on the upcoming retreats at Sunnataram Forest Monastery

Study tours

The September 2007 Study Tour was the tenth group that I have had the great pleasure of organising and leading to China. There were many highlights. Although, I have been to Xian five times and I'm still totally amazed every time I see the Terracotta Army lined up in formation protecting the First Emperor. We spent three nights at the Monastery on Green City Mountain or Qing Cheng Shan in Sichuan province it was a bit cooler and wet, real mountain weather. We practiced Qigong and meditation, absorbing the precious energy from this sacred Taoist Mountain. Master Tang, the Abbott of the monastery transmits his Qi into paintings and calligraphy, he created another painting for us, 'Black Bamboo', and informs me that this is the second in a set of four, so I will have to go back there at least two more times. While in Sichuan province, we visited a Panda breeding centre, then continued by boat for a three-day cruise down the Yangtze River through the Three Gorges. On leaving the boat, we drove directly to Wuhan for a dinner with my Taoist teacher, Grand Master Cheng Zhen, the Abbott of the Eternal Spring Monastery. We arrived late and all the temples rooms were closed but Master Cheng Zhen had the keys and took us on a personal tour. Our journey finished in Shanghai, taking us from ancient to modern China. All of our experiences and the smiling faces of the Chinese people will be with us for a long time.



Special Mission

At the end of the 2007 Study Tour, I stayed on for a few days. Abbott Phra Mana at the Sunnatram Monastery had asked me to go to Puto Shan, a sacred Buddhist Mountain, and to the temple of Guan Yin, worshipped throughout the East and South East Asia for her unconditional love, compassion and mercy. Puto Shan, or 'Buddha Mountain', is situated on an island south of Shanghai. There are many temples and monasteries and a large 30m statue of Guan Yin where she sends her love and kindness energy across the waters to benefit all human beings. I had a letter of introduction from Phra Mana asking if I could take back with me the sacred ash from the incense burnt while the monks are chanting. The ash would be entombed in the Gratitude Pagoda at Bundanoon and form an energetic link between the two Monasteries. We found our way to the Puji Temple, the main temple on the island, and sought out the Abbott.

Grand Master Shi Jia Jie Ren had just returned from a World Religious Conference in Sydney and welcomed us like old friends. We drank green tea grown on the island and I told him about the Sunnataram Monastery and of the work that I do and the journeys that have taken me to China, he congratulated us on our efforts and was happy to help. The next morning, the Monks gave a special chant and presented me with the ashes from this ceremony. I safely escorted them home and presented them to Phra Mana, and they have been entombed in the Gratitude Pagoda. Now, Guan Yin's love and kindness flows all the way from Puto Shan to Bundanoon.



Puji Temple



Guan Yin



Presenting the sacred ash to Phra Mana

September 2008 Study Tour

This year's Tour is fast approaching and I'm looking forward to returning to Beijing after the Olympic Games to see this great city in all its glory, as it's been a bit of a construction site over the last few years. We will return to Xian and again see the Terracotta Army, and then journey along the legendary Silk Road experiencing the historical towns on this ancient trade route between East and West. Over 13 different ethnic groups live in this region. We arrive in Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang province in the outer reaches of China bordering Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Urumqi lies further from any ocean than any other city in the world.

Our travels return us to Shanghai before flying home.

April 2009 Training Tour

This is a new 'bridge' that I'm building and I'm committed to taking future training groups here at this same time of year to learn and absorb these ancient healing practices. This special tour is designed for the true Qigong enthusiast or anyone wanting to learn the famous Wild Goose Qigong directly from family lineage holder Grand Master Chen Chuan Gang, the elder son of the late Grand Master Yang Mei Jun. We will also receive Taoist instruction from Grand Master Wu Cheng Zhen, the Abbott of the Eternal Spring Monastery in Wuhan.

We arrive in Beijing staying at our regular base the Peony Hotel where we will be sampling a wide variety of Chinese cuisine at local restaurants. Vegetarian meals will be available. An official visit to the Beijing University of Traditional Chinese Medicine meeting professors from the World Academic Society of Medical Qigong is also on the itinerary.

Our journey takes us by overnight train to Wudang Mountain, a sacred Taoist Mountain. Throughout its long history, scholars and spiritual seekers have travelled here to learn and develop their Qi. This will be the sixth group that I have lead here, and find it an amazingly beautiful, energetic place. We proceed to Wuhan, capital of Hubei province, where we will stay eight days learning Wild Goose Qigong and Taoist meditation. The Tour finishes in Shanghai.

I have met with Grand Master Chen. He is looking forward to teaching us and giving us the authority to share the Wild Goose Qigong. Grand Master Cheng Zhen, my Taoist teacher, is also looking forward to teaching us. Daily Qigong and meditation practice forms an important part of your training. **The knowledge and the experience gained on this Tour will always be with you and help transform your life.**

There will be no Study Tour in September 2009 but the tours will resume from 2010 with two trips each year, both focusing on Qigong training and touring the sacred mountains and experiencing the rich culture of the Chinese people. All tours consist of nineteen days away. The April tours will spend one week in Wuhan studying Wild Goose Qigong and Taoism, and the September tours spend time in Beijing studying Guigen Qigong with Dr Xu. If you are interested, please feel free to contact me.

Workshops

I have been travelling to regional areas and interstate for many years now, conducting half-day, one-day and weekend workshops. Since I spent part of my life living in the country, it's great for me to leave the city and get out on the road. I have met many fantastic people on these trips. Some have gone on to attend retreats at Sunnataram, some join the tours to China and others have become Qigong teachers. I was recently in Hervey Bay, Queensland, and will return there in November. If you are interested in helping to organise a workshop in your area, again, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Petrea King, Quest for Life Centre

I'm proud to announce that I will be facilitating weekend workshops at the Quest for Life centre in Bundanoon during August and November 2008. These life-changing programs offer practical strategies for people living with significant challenges in their lives, as well as those who want to deepen their connections with other people. Together with a dedicated team of health professionals, they have been providing services for people living with serious, chronic and life-threatening illness, grief, loss, depression and trauma since 1985. The NSW Health Department financially supports these nationally acclaimed programs and endeavours to make them available to everyone in need of their services. Qigong will now be apart of the services offered at this inspiring centre.

For more details please visit www.petreaking.com Phone (02) 4883 6599

I am also starting a new program sponsored by the YWCA, where I will be conducting one-day workshops in regional areas for people affected by the drought, starting in July 2008 in the Goulburn NSW area. I have been giving regular talks and Qigong sessions over the past seven years at the YWCA Encore program in Sydney. Encore is a national program provided free for women who have had breast cancer surgery, I also helped produce the Encore relaxation CD, providing two of the voice tracks. **For more details, please phone 1800 305 150 or visit www.encore.net.au**



Retreats at Sunnataram Forest Monastery, Bundanoon.

Annual Five Day Residential Qigong and Meditation Retreat- Cost \$350

with Qigong Master Simon Blow

Sunday 18th to Friday 23rd January 2009

During this five day retreat you will learn and practise the standing, moving and sitting forms of Qigong.

The styles of Qigong covered will be Ba Duan Jin (Eight Method Essence) standing and sitting forms Tai Chi Qigong Shibashi, Six Healing Sounds Qigong and Guigen-Chinese Medical Qigong

The retreat will include Dhamma talks, which is wisdom as discussed by the Buddha. The monks will give Dhamma talks concerning knowledge, experience about meditation, health and how to lead a

peaceful way of life. We will take bush walks to meditate at sacred places and enjoy Thai vegetarian cooking lessons.

All retreats include all meals (Thai Vegetarian) and comfortable accommodation in separate male and female dormitories (or bring your own tent). Please send a deposit of \$100, cheque made payable to Simon Blow, PO Box 446, Summer Hill, NSW 2130, Australia to reserve your place. Please book early as there will be limited places available and also please indicate which retreat you wish to attend.



Five Day Residential Qigong and Meditation Training Retreat with Phra Mana and Qigong Master Simon Blow

These special retreats are designed for anyone wanting a deeper understanding of the Qigong methods Simon Blow teaches. Simon will give detailed instruction and share teaching skills he has developed over the last 20 years. A certificate of Qigong training will be issued to those attending.

Phra Mana Viriyarampo is a gifted teacher who radiates love, peace and compassion. He is the Abbott of Sunnataram Monastery and has been a Buddhist Monk in the Thai Forest Tradition since 1986. He regularly conducts meditation retreats in the USA, Australia and Thailand and was an official meditation teacher for the Sydney Olympic and Paralympics games. He will give a session each day on meditation and how to teach meditation.

Sunday 7th to Friday 12th December 2008 - Cost \$450

The Great Stork and the Six Healing Sounds Qigong

These styles of Qigong were taught to me by Grand Master Jack Lim who has given me authority to share the healing benefits of these techniques. The Great Stork is a beautiful set that represent the flight of the stork as it bathes in the radiance of the universe. The Six Healing Sounds Qigong is one of the classic sets from China with a history of over 2,000 years.

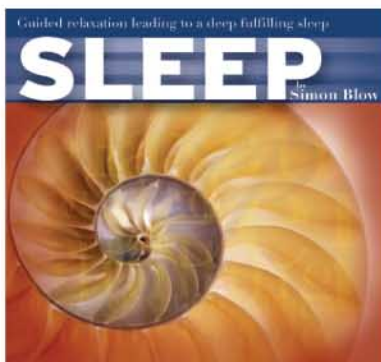
Sunday 27th September to Friday 2nd October 2009 - Cost \$450

The Wild Goose Qigong

64 movements, first set. This famous style of Qigong was taught to me directly by family lineage holder Grand Master Chen Chuan Gang in Wuhan, China. Master Chen has given me the authority to share these practices. The Wild Goose Qigong also has a long history of over 2,000 years.

"I have done qi gong training with a number of different masters in US, UK, and Australia. Simon's teaching is totally authentic and intensely enjoyable. After one of Simon's retreats you will be between heaven and earth, spiritually alive and completely earthed. One could not ask for more." Tony

"As a Zen monk I found Simon Blows Qigong retreat excellent. The gentle movements not only allowed me to relax the body and mind on the surface but to enter deeper meditation and experience a centeredness that is not only helpful to my health but allowed me to look deeper into my true enlightened nature. I believe Simon's retreats would be of great benefit to anyone especially those who find it difficult to do sitting meditation. Try it. I think you will be pleasantly surprised". Bul Hae Sunim, Zen Monk



A NEW CD BY SIMON BLOW

The lack of a good night's sleep is a major problem for many people, of all ages.

Let Simon Blow's soothing voice along with Dale Nougher's beautiful piano music and the natural sound of the ocean help guide you to release the tension of the day and enable you to enter a deep fulfilling sleep.

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email: info@simonblowqigong.com
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Simon Blow. A near fatal accident at the age of 19 led Simon to investigate various methods of healing and regeneration - a path he has followed for over 25 years. He has been a fulltime professional Qigong teacher (Laoshi) for over 15 years. He has received training and certification from Traditional Hospitals and Taoist Monasteries in China. He has World Health Organisation certification in Medical Qigong clinical practice from the Xiyuan Hospital, Beijing, and been initiated into Dragon Gate Taoism and given the name Xin Si, meaning Genuine Wisdom. He is also a Standing Council Member of the World Academic Society of Medical Qigong, Beijing.

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