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No. 3 - April 2017



April meeting **Taoist Tai Chi - Moving Meditation and Harmony for the Body, Mind and Spirit** Friday, 28 April, 5:30 p.m.



Deb Knapp will give an overview of the background and history of the Taoist Tai Chi Society, talk about the international/national/local Taoist Tai Chi movement and outline the benefits of Tai Chi. A group of six local group members will give a small demonstration, then Friendship Society members will have the opportunity to participate in a fun learning session.

The meeting will be at Hearing House, 354 Trafalgar Square (next to Synagogue Lane). Visitors are welcome.

**To arrange catering, please contact Barbara Markland
by Monday, 24 April
ph. (03)544 4712 text: 021 447 180 e-mail: erm@xtra.co.nz
Please make sure she knows you are coming!**

Last meeting – Unfortunately, due to the late cancellation of his flight (not weather related) Mr Shen Ming could not be present at the meeting. Instead we showed the movie '*When a Peking Family Meets Au Pair*'. This is a light-hearted but thoughtful look at a regimented Chinese upbringing being impacted by the more relaxed lifestyle and expectations of the au-pair. It was well received, judging by the applause at the finish.

New members – We warmly welcome the following who have recently joined our branch:

James Heberd

Su Yunshi (Susie) our new treasurer

Roger Ward

Marie Lindaya - Cultural Advisor, International Student Support, NMIT

Henley School – John Armstrong is Principal

The future for NZCFS – The outgoing president of Wellington Branch, Michael Powles, in his final President's Report, has made some comments about the future of our society in an environment very different from that which led to the formation of NZ China Friendship Society:

Several decades ago, when the Society was founded, both China itself and New Zealand's relations with China were vastly different from the situation today. Then, China had minimal relations with the outside world, especially Western countries like New Zealand. And in NZ itself, earlier prejudices regarding Chinese people were compounded by the post-World War II antipathy towards communism. In many ways, the Society was a lone and often unpopular voice raised against government policies and public antagonism towards China.

The primary Objects of the Society today continue to be to "promote friendship, understanding and goodwill between the peoples of China and New Zealand ..." But the environment in which we seek to pursue those aims has totally changed. Today the Society is one of many voices and even the government now takes broadly the same line. Should we just carry on as if nothing has changed? Surely that wouldn't be sensible.

One option would be to become more involved in the trade and commercial relationship between New Zealand and China. Or perhaps more involved in the official relationship between the two countries. I would argue against both of those options. Already the government and some of our largest trading organisations are putting enormous effort into the economic relationship with China. Similarly, our government puts significant resource into promoting the official or political, bilateral relationship. But successful economic or political relationships can't exist in isolation. "Friendship, understanding and goodwill" are important in their own right but they are also an essential foundation for a successful overall relationship.

I believe therefore that the role of the Society in promoting friendship, understanding and goodwill between the peoples of China and of New Zealand remains relevant and crucial. With so much happening in the relationship, I believe the Society must very carefully judge every possible activity it might pursue against the test whether it would promote '*friendship, understanding and goodwill*'.

Michael Powles was NZ ambassador to Beijing in the early 1990's and later Permanent Representative to UN Headquarters in New York.

NZCFS Conference & AGM – A reminder to those who are considering going to Christchurch, that cheap (early-bird) registration fees end on April 30. The conference is at the New Zealand Chinese Association Hall (22 St. Asaph Street) May 19 & 20 and the AGM is at Rewi Alley Education and Cultural Centre (in the grounds of Wharenui School, Matipo Street) Sunday, May 21. Go to NZCFS website for information – <http://nzchinasociety.org.nz/29507/>.

NZCFS Tours – The Tours Committee have been organising a plan of tours for the next few years. These are educational tours and often go to areas being ignored by many commercial operators. Those listed here are not finalised, but some of the possibilities being considered for future years include:

Central China - Nanjing, Henan, Shaolin monastery, Anhui, Chongqing, Hubei, Three Gorges

South-East China - Fujian, Jiangxi, Zhejiang, and perhaps Taiwan

North-West China – Shandong, Liaoning (Dalian, Shenyang), DPRK border, Heilongjiang (Harbin)

Current Tours – There are two NZCFS tours in China at present, and both have Nelson people on them. Richard Brudvik-Lindner, a teacher at Nelson College, will have left on the 'Prominent Persons and Leaders' tour by the time you read this. He is Lori's husband and has been to China before, but this tour will include his first visit to Beijing.

Another group, currently in China, was open to relatives of Rewi Alley and is visiting places important in his life. Alison Horn, who was a nurse at NMIT, and her partner are on this trip. Rewi's father and Alison's grandfather were cousins, thus Alison and Rewi are 'second cousins once removed' in the terminology of genealogists. This is Alison's first trip to China.

Shandan grown hemp could be a building material – An article on the NZCFS website relates the possibilities and bureaucratic challenges in exploring the use of hemp as a building material which could be exported from China. The plant grows in the wild around Shandan and the region has lime which is the other major component needed to produce a lightweight cement alternative. However, there are bureaucratic hurdles ... See <http://nzchinasociety.org.nz/29831/>.

From Nelson Executive, April

- A request for names and email addresses of members had been received from the National Secretary. It was decided the present practice of emails being sent to members through the Branch Executive committee be continued.
- Susie was congratulated on her first Treasurer's report. She advised her focus will be on finances and Royden will continue to manage membership.
- National conference: Ferry and Sally represent the branch as delegates. There is a possibility that Christine will speak at conference.
- Library: A volunteer will be requested at the next branch meeting to act as Librarian.
- Bill had been invited to a function in Christchurch with the Governor of Hubei Province. It was interesting to note the relationship between Huangshi and Nelson being recognised along with the Christchurch/Wuhan relationship.
- Dyann informed the meeting she is now on the Board of the Multicultural Society which is to be renamed to include Tasman.
- China Week: Yet to be approved by NCC but probably 1st or 2nd week in November and will include a performance by a group of children from China.
Suggestions: The branch starts planning a contribution to China Week; it be used as an opportunity to again showcase NZ/China art; The Refinery be booked for 2 weeks; NMIT students in the Art and Design programme be included.

One Belt, One Road - Following the recent visit to New Zealand by Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, we may well be hearing more about the 'One Belt One Road' (OBOR) Initiative – also known as the 'Belt Road Initiative' (BRI). This involves, in part, the development of infrastructure to assist the distribution of Chinese goods, particularly by rail and sea.

One result of this is the arrival of direct trains from Chinese cities to cities in Europe; the first to London arrived in mid-January having taken 17 days from the terminal in Yiwu, a trading centre 300km south of Shanghai. The longest of these routes, Yiwu to Madrid, was opened in December 2014.

Although regarded as direct services, there are a number of other countries to cross and changes in railway gauges which mean the containers are unloaded from one wagon and loaded onto another, more than once. It is expected that there will be one train each way per week.

Rewi Alley Poem of the Month

Forty years ago this month Rewi Alley was in Sichuan Province. Since returning from a series of overseas trips he had been commissioned to tour provincial China and record his observations of progress being made. Some of the poems he wrote during his travels in 1975-1977 were published by the New Zealand China Friendship Society in the collection '*Snow over the Pines*'. In the poem below, from that collection (page 134 -135), Rewi Alley contemplates the giant Buddha near Lo Shan, which has been watching the land and the people for more than twelve centuries. Rewi canvasses his common themes: workers' struggling, rulers exploiting and, more happily, the progress able to be made when people work together in harmony.

There is an interesting connection between Nelson and the area of Leshan, where Rewi Wrote this poem. A song and dance troupe from Leshan performed the ballet *Fault Lines* at the Theatre Royal on October 16th 2013. Many of our members were entranced that evening by the ballet, choreographed by Sara Brodie with music by Gareth Farr. It was a most moving commemoration of the catastrophic 2008 Sichuan earthquake which had been experienced by all the dancers. It has been performed all around the world in places where fault lines are part of life.

STRAY THOUGHTS ON LIN YUIN SHAN

The giant Buddha of Lin Yuin Shan
at today's Lo Shan, looks out from
the red rock from which he is carved,
seventy-one metres high, serenely
over the confluence of three great rivers
as he has done for the past twelve
or more centuries, calmly waiting.
The afternoon sun lights up his figure,
evening mists put a gossamer blanket
around his feet, early summer leaves
sweep over his head. A bold conception
by some bygone artist, which he has
left succeeding generations; and looking
at his face one wonders just what
he is trying to say. Maybe that people
can only gain understanding by struggling
for it; all are learners; teachers
cannot do more than give method, tell of
experience, both positive and negative.

That it matters not whether a person
is naked or prettily tailored, ragged
or bemedalled, it is his thinking
that matters; has he developed character
or does he just live to grab? Can
he live and work with other workers
regardless of race or colour, or is
he content to be tied down to an exploiting
class? Does he live by values
insidiously indoctrinated by that
society, which can have but one ending?
Are peoples to inherit the earth
and all therein, or are they to go on
as did petty chieftains of primitive
days? Soon any country can use
fast breeding to produce enough
plutonium to disintegrate the world.

Just stray thoughts on a Lo Shan evening,
looking across the rivers at the image
that seems to ponder so deeply. A fresh
breeze springs up, sails fill, boats
glide past; and a friend comes to tell
of what can be done when people
work in harmony together.

Lo Shan, Szechuan, 17 April, 1977