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Massachusetts Lawmakers Honor Tai Chi Gala

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A workshop at the Tai Chi Gala

Violet Li

Saturday June 2, [Master Donald Wang](#), a State Representative of Massachusetts, represented the State House of Representatives and presented two proclamations to Shifu Loretta Wollering. One proclamation is recognizing the contribution of [Grandmaster Jou Tsung Hwa](#) who created the "Zhang San Feng Festival" and the other is for [Shifu Loretta Wollering](#) for her effort to maintain Grandmaster Jous' legacy and host [Tai Chi](#) Gala in promoting ancient [martial arts](#) and healing power.



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Grandmaster Jou founded the Zhang San Feng Festival in America in the 1970's to honor Tai Chi legend Daoist Zhang San Feng and to promote Tai Chi and other internal martial arts. In the 80's, he moved it to the **Tai Chi Farm** of Warwick NY, which has 103 acres with fields, forests, cabins, and buildings. At its height, the Festival grew to about 500 people attending from the U.S., Canada, Europe and other countries. Grandmaster Jou passed away in a car accident in 1998. As a close disciple of Grandmaster Jou, Shifu Wollering renamed the event "The Tai Chi Gala: An Internal Arts Convention in Memory of Jou Tsung Hwa & Zhang San Feng," to appropriately give Grandmaster Jou the recognition. This year the Tai Chi Gala was held in Albany, New York with a great success on 6/3 – 6/5. Masters **Sharif Bey**, **Robert Castaldo**, **Richard Clear**, Dale Dugas, **John Green**, **Jianye Jiang**, Angel Chan, **Ken Lo**, **Yuzhi Lu**, **Dr. John Painter**, **David Ritchie**, **Ren-Gang Wang**, and Loretta Wollering hosted 26 different workshops with a wide spectrum of topics on Tai Chi, **Qigong**, Meditation, Bagua, massage, and self-healing. Dr. John Painter gave a memorable opening speech in which he shared many anecdotes and fun memories of Grandmaster Jou with the attendees. His goal is to pass Grandmaster Jou's philosophy to everyone that practicing Tai Chi is a 24x7 act. Dr. Painter emphasized the importance of good posture (including sleeping posture), good deeds (martial arts ethics), and good thoughts.

Shifu Loretta stated that the Tai Chi Gala joins all Chinese Internal Arts (Tai Chi, Bagua, Xing Yi, etc.) teachers, students and enthusiasts in a spirit of sharing and fun. Everyone's lineage and styles are welcome. It was a warm feeling to see many masters attending others' workshops when they were not teaching. It is even more amazing to witness that masters pushed hands with each other without thinking about winning or losing. They were playing and learning from each other with no concern of

being judged by the students. The atmosphere was totally carefree, and everyone was eager to learn and share. Actually, many of the Gala attendees are instructors themselves. They felt great to exchange their knowledge with the masters and their fellow participants.

The Gala offered rare opportunities to learn some techniques that have nearly been lost over time. Shifu Green shared the Yang Style San Shou form. With guidance from Master Wang, attendees tested Da Cheng Quan's principles and had a little taste of the mental power. Shifu Bey illustrated how small and grand circulations are done in the Hung Ga system to de-mystify the misconception that Hung Ga is only an external martial art style. Shifu Dugas shared a profound method of Daoist circles in Qigong and self-defense, which is called *Lian Huan Wan* (Continuous Circles). Dr. Painter provided Yi Xing Gong (intent, heart, and skill) from the Li Family to help practitioners focus on their intention and heart to gain the most internal force. Master Lo explained how Wu Mai Pai uses the lower Dan Tian energy (yin) to elicit the middle Dan Tian energy (yang) to help people with small body frame/mass to overcome a stronger and bigger opponent. Shifu Dugas shared the secrete Iron Palm training methods.

Besides learning martial art skills in Push Hands, saber, and self-defense, attendees also gained knowledge in self-healing. Shifu Wollering shared techniques that help people with digestive problems and knee pain. Master Yuzhi Lu's self-massage and self-healing methods are great for travelers, commuters, desk workers, or bed-ridden individuals. Shifu David Ritchie taught Tai Chi Qigong 18 Form, which is proven to have multitude of health benefits. Dr. Painter explained Five Circles Qigong and its applications. Shifu Angel Lo taught a simple Wu Mei health routine as a holistic system specially designed for women. Master Jiang taught Chinese Yoga, which he created by combining elements of Tai Chi, Qigong, Daoyin stretching, balancing, and mind/body/spirit connection. Master Painter's Red Bat palm exercise is great for tranquility, balance, and overall health.

Master Lo generously shared his precious collection of prized teas during the Gala. He talked about how to appreciate the quality of various teas and shared his poems reflecting his tea drinking experience. A good tea is like internal martial arts and has layers of distinct qualities, subtle but rich. Only connoisseurs can understand its value. Since the teas are hard to get, there was a limited seating in the tea tasting session. It was interesting to see 20 people sitting around quietly sipping and sniffing teas, exchanging their thoughts about tea, internal arts, and life in general.

Shifu Wollering explained about the two types of Daoism in China. One was created by Lao Zhi more than 2500 years ago, and it is a philosophy that Tai Chi and other internal martial arts are based on. The other one is a religion that was inspired by Lao Zhi's Daoism. According to Shifu Wollering, the Daoism temples in China are very accommodating and inclusive. They welcome and respect all religions, and many even display crucifixes and the Star of David. In the Gala closing ceremony, a simple-yet-sincere Daoist ritual was performed to show appreciation to Zhang San Feng, Grandmaster Jou, past Tai Chi masters, heaven, earth, family, and friends. The little Daoist bells rang, bringing peace

and harmony to everyone.

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