



CELESTIAL TAI CHI COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

Term 3

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June 2015

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Tai Chi in front of Lao Tze statue during the recent Cultural Tour

Upcoming Events

Philosophy Lesson: Sunday 14th June 3pm-5pm at Beverley Hills Primary School. 2 Cassowary St Doncaster East.

Park Lesson: Saturday 20th June 10am-12pm at Central Park in East Malvern. Cnr Burke & Wattletree Roads.

Park Lesson: Sunday 28th June 10am-12pm at Fairfield Park in Fairfield. Cnr Heidelberg Rd & Fairfield Park Drive.

China and Taiwan Cultural Tour 2015

This was my 12th trip with Grandmaster Eng Chor Khor to China and other countries. Each tour is unique and this time was no different.

We started our tour in Fujian Region. We were enjoying our first Tai Chi session at Xiamen Island, China, overlooking Taiwan, when one of our companions tripped and fell. Luckily, there were no major injuries except for a few bruises and a sprained muscle. Thereafter, the trip to Fujian Region was incident free. Our hotel had hot water from natural hot springs. It was blissful just to soak and relax my aching body after a long trip from Melbourne.

We visited several temples and monasteries: Nanputuo, Mahavira (Lotus), Shaolin, Old Saint, Chung Tai Chan, Eternal Spring and Sao Xin. Each has a fascinating story and impressive architecture.

The highlight was a 700 year old, earth building (Tuluo) of Hakka Village. Hakka means guest. The earth building is a circular edifice, fortified and designed for defence that looks like a nuclear reactor from the sky. Some buildings are still inhabited today. Each building is shared by 5 families. Each family had a supply of water wells: one clear (Yin) and one cloudy (Yang). At the centre of each building is a temple.

We left China for Taiwan on Old Souls Day. Unknown to us, we were booked for the night at the red light district of Taipei. The state of the hotel and rooms were beyond comprehension and none of us wished to stay for the night. Luckily, the Chinese agent managed to locate a new hotel to accommodate 16 people.

Unfortunately, our first guide spoke very little English and was unable to convey and relate to us about Taiwan. Likewise, the group doesn't speak or understand Taiwanese or Mandarin. From that day on, Grandmaster Eng Chor became our interpreter, guide, commentator and historian throughout our tour in Taiwan. We learned the Chinese history from Neolithic age, 4,000 BC until present day Republic of China 2,000. He told us about the relationship of Sun Yat-sen, the father of Republic of China; and Chiang Kai-shek, the first president of Taiwan, through their wives, Ling sisters.

The group practiced Tai Chi whenever and where ever we could. In Taiwan, we learned Zhengmanqing {Cheng Man Ching (CMC)} form and warm up from Master Hong and his wife. They showed us the importance of posture, slow and small movements, with twisting and opening of hips. The warm up has a lot of bending at the waist, squats

and full stretches whilst on the balls of the feet. They showed us the power of pushing hands so that you can push and destabilize an opponent.

In Xiamen, an Old Master allowed us to join him for Yang 40 and demonstrated a Sword Routine with a very long and thick tassel.

As a whole, I thoroughly enjoyed the experiences and will always treasure the memory. I am glad I went back and saw the changes in Taiwan. Should I join the next trip? Time will tell.

Thank you Grandmaster Eng Chor for your commentary and imparting your knowledge to us.

Please note the next trip will be in India for the 6th International Martial Arts Games (IMAG) in December 2015. If interested, contact Grandmaster Eng Chor Khor, email: khorec@bigpond.com

Zenaida Calderon, Instructor Keilor/South Yarra



Tai Chi at Eternal Spring Shrine Taroko Gorge Taiwan

Eltham Centre is Moving Home

There is good news for everyone at the Eltham Centre. At the beginning of Term 4 we will be returning to St Margaret's Church Hall in Peel Street Eltham. The hall is easy to find and has ample parking as it is opposite the Eltham Hotel. Visitors are always welcome.

Judy Grant, Instructor Eltham



The Delight of Teaching at Eltham

I would like to say a big “thank you” to our students, especially those from Eltham. Like any of the centres, our students are a diverse bunch. Because we are a day time group, we tend to attract more mature students. This can have its challenges with mental and physical disabilities. And it can be a bit daunting for a younger person to accept all of this. However, a noticeable feature of this group is an ability to laugh at themselves and get on with the learning of Tai Chi. Learning your left from your right and how to do butterfly flaps is a challenge for all age groups to begin with; getting students over this hurdle is the beginning of a satisfying and fruitful journey with Tai Chi. It is a privilege to be part of that journey as an instructor, as not only are we teaching, but we are also learning from our students. Our Eltham students have a wide range of interests, a major one being travel. Many have told us how they have played Tai Chi with their tour group while in some distant place. What a joy! As instructors of this

wandering group, we must be patient and accommodating, ready to welcome the travellers back into classes to catch up. So often, students take a bit longer to go through the six levels. This doesn't matter, as friends are made along the Tai Chi journey. There is always a lovely buzz of chatter at the beginning and end of each session and one cannot help but walk away feeling good.

Linda Samson, Assistant Instructor Eltham

Why would you want to teach Tai Chi?

Where would you begin; what would be your motivation? This motivation will be the most probing question that challenges your mind. But with the passing of time, it will become crystal clear to you and it will set your course on whether to teach or not.

So to begin, we could consult a manual, spend hours browsing the internet, or ask others for direction on how to do this or that movement correctly, and how we should react to challenging questions.

How should we interact with all the different personalities and varied physical attributes of each individual? All students are unique in their own way, and all have come with one common thread in mind, and that is an inquiring mind. Every person has his or her own personal reasons for investigating the world of Tai Chi and Qigong (and we may never know what they are and that's okay).

And so where do I, the teacher, stand in all this wonderful madness? Along the way questions arise in the mind as to your own reliability and credibility to be a leader, which automatically makes you the teacher. You ask yourself, why do I do it? Am I doing it to feed the craving of a long ago subdued ego that craves to be re-born again? Contemplate this question at length for the benefit of all.

Take heart now, because here is the answer to this conundrum.

In time, with measured practice in the integration of Tai Chi and Qigong, the mind becomes clear, open and transparent. The mind paves the way to practice loving kindness to all and to freely share the knowledge given by the Masters and the Universe. Leave those feelings of self consciousness behind.

So, throw away the conventional rule book. Be yourself, not too tight, not too loose, be an open book, find the middle way, relax and be happy and all will flow as it should.

Gill Berry, Instructor Eltham

The following article is a reprint due to a formatting error in the last newsletter

Stop Being a Square

Who me? Yes it is easy to slip into square habits. You have no doubt been told on numerous occasions that one major principle of the Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan is circular movements. This exhibits on many levels, most of which are clearly apparent.

Why is this principle so important?

It harks back to Yang Cheng Fu's second point from his 10 essential points for Tai Chi Chuan.

“Lower the Chest, Raise the Back”

This essential point is often ignored and so the clavicle remains engaged (White Crane Spreads its Wings) or is misunderstood and the student stoops with unnaturally rounded shoulders and a compressed chest.

The best way to approach this point is to practice holding the ball in front of the chest. In Tai Chi Chuan the clavicle must be disengaged and the scapula must be engaged.

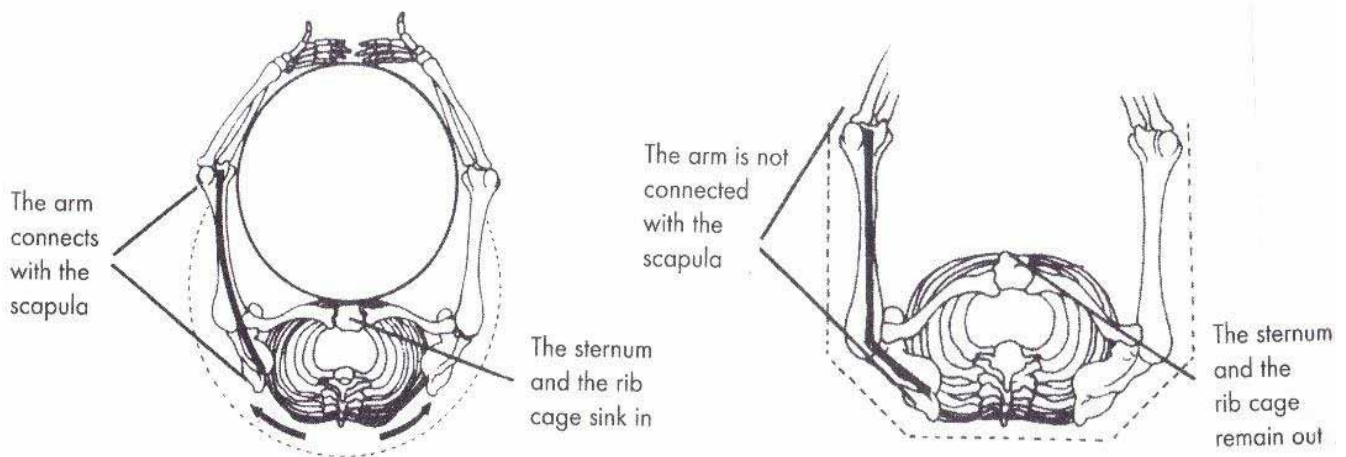
This ensures the correct function of the thymus gland. It also correctly positions the sternum within the rib cage.

This correct posturing allows energy to flow unimpeded through several meridian channels, aiding well-being.

Sometimes you find it difficult to establish the correct upper body posture. Look towards your groin area and check that your sacrum has articulated from the hip bones enough for the coccyx to sit correctly.

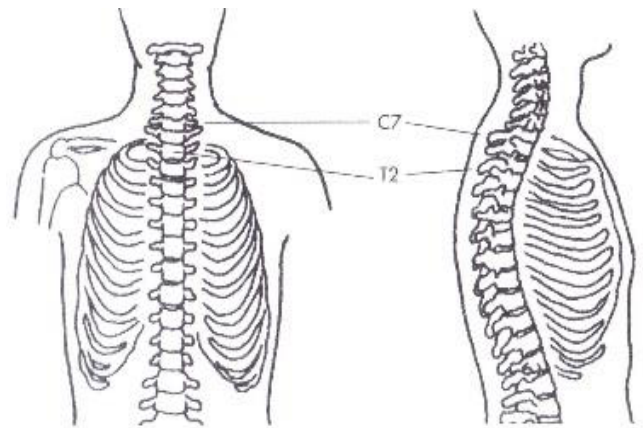
Check that your weight is evenly distributed on both legs and that your thighs are holding the weight of the upper body. The groin area (The sacrum, groin, hip joints and flexors – known collectively as ‘the kua’), should sink. Once the lower body is seated properly then holding the ball correctly feels natural.

Study the two diagrams below:



You can see in the above left diagram a continuum from the arm through the shoulder and continuing through the scapula. Note also that the chest is naturally sunk. Energy flows up to the T2/C7 point and then is transmitted through the scapula to the arms.

The top right diagram shows a 'squaring off'. The sternum is no longer engaged. The force that is generated in your form cannot exit through the arms. The sternum and the rib cage are protruding outwards. Energy will be blocked and the form becomes hollow.



A classic move where this issue is likely to present itself is "Cloud Hands". Practise this movement outside of your regular lessons to ensure that you do not square off, but remain connected. Use the lower body and the hip.

Wally Wilkinson – Senior Instructor Brighton

Pictures from: The Inner Structure of Tai Chi – Mastering the Classic Forms of Tai Chi Chi Kung by Mantak Chia and Juan Li.

College Dates 2015

Term 3: May 11 to June 28

June 14	Philosophy Lesson
June 20	Park Lesson Malvern (10am to noon)
June 28	Park Lesson Fairfield (10am to noon)
June 29 to July 5	College Break

Term 4: July 6 to August 23

August 15	Park Lesson Malvern (10am to noon)
August 23	Park Lesson Fairfield (10am to noon)

Term 5: August 24 to October 18

August 30	WTQA Wushu & Taijiquan Competition
September 13	Tai Chi Workshop with Grandmaster Eng Chor
Sept 28 to Oct 4	College break
October 10	Park Lesson Malvern (10am to noon)
October 18	Park Lesson Fairfield (10am to noon)

Term 6: October 19 to December 6

November 21	College 25 th Anniversary Dinner
November 28	Park Lesson Malvern (10am to noon)
December 6	Park Lesson Fairfield (10am to noon)
December 7	International Martial Arts Games - India