



CELESTIAL TAI CHI COLLEGE SPECIAL NEWSLETTER

Term 5
P.O. Box 1135, Box Hill, 3128
www.celestialtaichi.com

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Tel: (03) 9840 2855
www.facebook.com/CelestialTaiChi

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF CELESTIAL TAI CHI COLLEGE!

GRAND MASTER ENG CHOR KHOR

Grand Master Eng Chor Khor began to learn the art of tai chi at an early age. In his school years, he excelled in Chinese culture, sports and martial arts. Like other members of the Khor family, Eng Chor learned tai chi and other forms of martial arts from different masters in his hometown in Malaysia. He fondly remembers those early days:

"When I was a boy, my brother Gary and I learned Chinese kung fu from our uncle who had come from China. He was a highly skilled martial artist who taught us kicking and punching. He particularly emphasized kicking, explaining that the leg can kick harder and reach further. Thus, we learned the Northern Chinese Kicking as well as the Southern Chinese Boxing martial arts from him. As teenagers, we were taught by a teacher or "Sifu", as we say in Chinese. He would come to our house to teach us Dong Pei Chuen, a series of quick movements with kicking, always in attack mode. We loved martial arts and trained very hard so much so that we always sustained bruises and injuries with a brave face.

Looking back at that time, I remember how passionate I was about becoming a martial artist. But as the years went by, I realized that the martial art I really enjoyed most was tai chi. It has always appealed to me because of its meditative nature and balanced posture that combine breathing with slow, steady movements that can relieve stress. I knew that I could practice tai chi at any age as Chinese people have been doing for centuries to keep fit and prevent or treat disease."

In 1981, Grand Master Eng Chor decided to come to Australia and join his brother Gary Khor who had founded the Australian Academy of Tai Chi. Over time, Eng Chor has endlessly studied and researched the beautiful art of tai chi and has released two books. In addition to working with tai chi masters and grand masters throughout South East Asia, he also studied and trained with scholars at Taiwan University and with grand masters from Beijing and Shanghai Institutes of Physical Education and Martial Arts. His expertise and experience have made him a greatly sought after lecturer for the Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation. Grand Master Eng Chor has also presented on national television, featured in

many radio interviews and has been published in newspapers and magazines.

Amongst his countless achievements are taking an Australian team to participate in the National Chinese Tai Chi and Wushu Festival at the invitation of the Wushu Federation of China; being appointed Executive Board Member of the International Martial Arts Games Committee and President of the National Martial Arts Games Committee of Australia in the same year, which he currently holds; leading students from the Celestial Tai Chi College to Korean and Estonian Games to perform and make us all proud, to name just a few.

On a personal note, in Australia Grand Master Eng Chor has raised a beautiful family of three successful children who have all practised tai chi at some time along with their mother Siew Ngoh, who is also an accomplished tai chi practitioner (see photo).



In 2013, the International Martial Arts Games (IMAG) were held in Melbourne and the Celestial Tai Chi College participated in full force, winning scores of medals and gaining valuable exposure and experience for the participants from the College. These success stories are not only a testament to Grand Master Eng Chor's skills and knowledge, but equally of his dedication to teaching many generations of tai chi instructors and students with devotion and love.

REFLECTIONS FROM SENIOR MASTER CHIN MIN LIAN

This year we celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the founding of the Celestial Tai Chi College. It is indeed a milestone to celebrate! It is also a time to look back and to see what we have achieved and to take note of what we have done that brought us to where we are today. It is also a time to set clear directions to chart the course of the College for the years ahead.

The Two Masters

The College is unique in that we have two masters with very different skill sets and character, but with a common thread between them and that is their passion and love for tai chi.

As for myself, I commenced my martial arts training in 1970 as a young 14-year old kid, learning judo to fend off bigger boys in school, but subsequently developed a love for other martial arts. Taekwondo and later Budokan Karate became my obsession, which culminated in my completing a Karate Black Belt grade in 1979. From then on, the attraction of Chinese martial arts pulled me away from karate to dwell on various Chinese martial arts before focussing on tai chi and qigong. In the early 1980s, I began seeking tutelage from various tai chi masters in my native Malaysia, including masters from the renowned Chin Woo Martial Arts School. Later, in the early 1990s, I trained at the Shanghai Institute of Sports in China under the watchful eyes of Professor Chew Ping Xiang.

In the midst of all these martial arts pursuits, I completed my teaching qualification and went on to become a high school teacher, a position I held for 12 years until my move to Australia in 1987. These teaching skills, honed over many years, as well as the exposure to various masters have all translated into imparting the knowledge and skills of tai chi. Teachers of tai chi are many but good teachers are few!

Birth of Good Tai Chi Teachers

One of the contributing factors to the success of the College is the strategy of nurturing and inspiring people in your care. To succeed, one must help others succeed. Over the years, the Masters have spent time to train and nurture our people and they in turn train and nurture others. This is particularly so not only in passing on knowledge and skills but passion and character. Personally, I do not believe in putting someone who learns tai chi through a weekend instruction course or for that matter a few months of tai

chi instruction course with the view of transforming a tai chi practitioner into a good tai chi teacher. I believe in the old traditional way of grooming a good tai chi teacher. The person follows the teacher, learns and imitates the teacher's every move, observes how the teacher teaches and catches on the passion and dedication of the teacher. Only then will you see the birth of a good tai chi teacher. In our College, I have ensured that all instructors are groomed in such a way. Those who have been mentored in my classes bear witness to this.



From Humble Beginnings....

The Celestial Tai Chi College had a humble beginning. Grand Master Eng Chor and I together with our two families made Melbourne our home in December 1989. We studied the demographics of the city, walked the streets of our suburbs, distributing our tai chi flyers, and by early 1990, four tai chi centres were set up. We were instructors and assistants to each other and by the year's end, new helpers joined the team. In early 1991, two other centres were opened and from then on, Celestial Tai Chi College began to make its presence felt in Victoria. Today we are one of the major reputable tai chi schools in Victoria and Australia.

Here I wish to pay special tribute to my wife, Beng Yan, who for the last 25 years has not only enabled me to do what I have done, but has been working hard behind the scene, providing administrative support to the College and the pleasant voice behind every call that comes to the College office. She is also a skilled and experienced tai chi teacher.

.... to the Road Ahead

For the years ahead, Celestial Tai Chi College is even more committed to bringing the richness of tai chi to all people. To this end we continue to strive for excellence in our teaching, enhance the skill sets of our teachers, improve our communication via social media and the internet, increase interactions with our communities and health organisations as well as active participation in the Wushu, Tai Chi & Qigong communities both locally and internationally. I invite you to join Grand Master Eng Chor and me in tai chi festivities celebrating our 25th College Anniversary.

HAPPY 25th ANNIVERSARY!

25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION DINNER WITH PERFORMANCE!

Date: Sunday, 22 November 2015

Venue: *Happy Receptions*, 199-203 Union Road, Ascot Vale

Time: 6:00pm for 6:30 start

Cost: \$50.00 per person

CELESTIAL TAI CHI COLLEGE 1990 – 2015: THE STORY OF OUR SUCCESS

The Celestial Tai Chi College proudly announces its silver jubilee, marking the occasion with a series of activities and events for its enthusiastic members and the public, ranging from special park lessons, a celebratory dinner, tai chi performances across Melbourne, to demonstrations, workshops, tai chi marathon and much more.



Our tai chi story begins with two exceptional men, who brought the skill and art of the ancient Chinese health discipline to Australia, both accomplished martial artists and the founders of the College, Grand Master

Eng Chor Khor and Senior Master Chin Min Lian. They believed in spreading the word of good health and lifestyle balance by teaching many diverse routines of tai chi and qigong and thus embarked on a journey of sharing their knowledge and skills in Australia.

Since those early days, the College has gone from strength to strength, opening up new centres all over Melbourne and imparting tai chi skills to thousands of people of all ages, abilities and background. The Masters have trained dozens of tai chi teachers over the years, from trainee to senior instructor levels, with expert advice and proficiency, forging a reputable place for the College in the Australian martial arts community and beyond.

Tai Chi Classes

The greatest strength of the College is our many tai chi practitioners. They keenly attend classes wherever they are held, occasionally braving the rain and cold weather when exercising outdoors, to learn and practise gentle tai chi movements, different weapon routines, qigong, breathing techniques or walking meditation that brings them joy and wellbeing. Since 1990, the number of centres has grown from a few to more than 25 at different times across Melbourne, Geelong and Tasmania. The age of our learners spans from 6 to over 80! Some of them have joined classes as visitors from as far as Israel, France, South Africa and Serbia. By regularly practising tai chi, the learners have experienced benefits to their health, regardless of their physical ability, occupational or cultural background.

The College has had the privilege of witnessing and receiving testimonials of health improvement, relaxation and energy boosts from numerous learners.

Their inspiring stories regularly appear in the College Term Newsletters, as they want to share the benefits of tai chi to their lives. Many of them have taken their tai chi skills around the world on their travels, practising on seashores, in the mountains, city squares, and even on glaciers or ships.

In addition to classes run in our regular tai chi centres, the College has organised special instruction in educational institutions as well as in the corporate world to assist students with their studies and company employees with their work. They have reported significant benefits and advantages, including de-stressing, relaxation, enhancing memory and study skills, improving working capacity, concentration and learning about traditional Chinese medicine. Occasionally, the College Tai Chi Club was run by senior instructors for long-term learners who wanted to refresh their skills, keep fit and healthy and stay in touch with the College community.

Another important area has been the community sector, which includes neighbourhood houses, nursing homes, hospitals, retirement villages, senior citizen clubs and even a prison at one time where several of our instructors have taught tai chi and other wushu (general Chinese martial arts) skills. All teaching efforts have aimed at allowing the participants to relax and reach their full potential.



Thanks to our Masters and excellently trained instructors, in the last 25 years thousands of people have engaged in the highly effective form of gentle but energising tai chi exercise through the College centres and specially organised activities.

College Instructing Team

The College boasts one of the best-trained and skilled tai chi instructing teams in Australia. For more than two decades, the Masters have dedicated valuable time and effort to designing a teaching curriculum for training the team and teaching diverse wushu and qigong forms. Regular training sessions are held for all those involved in teaching tai chi, from trainees and assistant instructors to instructors and senior instructors.

Ongoing learning as part of continuing professional development is the basis of the College success in having a strong team of 56 instructing practitioners who are successfully passing on their tai chi skills and knowledge to hundreds of students. To become part of the team is an honour and therefore it entails a lengthy process of dedicated practice and gaining experience and knowledge of tai chi disciplines and philosophy, as well as possessing a fine teaching ability.



Our instructing team across the College centres is diverse in every way — gender, age, personal approach, cultural and other background, which is a great advantage, contributing to the wealth of knowledge, instructing methods and communication styles that suit our diverse learners. From an initial handful of instructors in the early days, the College has grown in numbers to include 7 senior instructors, 12 instructors, 10 assistant instructors and 25 trainee instructors today, all of whom run classes independently or assist the Masters in different centres in a professional and dedicated manner.

The instructing team has always been engaged in organising and conducting park lessons and workshops, retreats and demonstrations. Senior instructors support the Masters in managing and running of the College. Some members of the team are in charge of preparing and editing term newsletters, taking photos, making videos, assisting in parks and retreats while others work on updating the College website and the Facebook, ensuring that everybody is well informed. Keeping pace with progress and modern technology, the Masters have designed posters, written books, produced instruction and music CDs and DVDs to assist our students with learning and memorising the movements. Notably, the College has engaged in online communication via its website and social media to spread the word of good health, longevity and general wellbeing.

College Teaching Program

The wealth and breadth of tai chi and related disciplines taught in the College crowns the Australian martial arts community. With the Grand Master Eng Chor, Senior Master Chin Min and a host of instructors engaged in teaching, our students have multiple opportunities across the College Tai Chi Centres to learn the College principal routine, Traditional Yang Style Tai Chi (108 movements). This is followed by other forms, such as Beijing 24, 42 and 48 as

standardised competition routines, as well as Chen, Wudang, Sun and Wu traditional styles, on special occasions. After the completion of the Yang routine, the learners have a choice of weapons, including Yang Style 32 and 42 Sword forms, Classical and Traditional Fan, Broad Sword, Chen Sword, Flute, Carling Sticks, Shaolin Sword and Long Pole with Long Pole sparring.



However, those who prefer tai chi to weapons have a great variety of qigong sets of exercises to choose from, such as Shibashi 1-3, Warrior Lohan Qigong, Lotus, Baduanjin (Eight Brocade Qigong), Shaolin Chan Yuan Gong, Tao Yin and Wild Goose Qigong. Some of the qigong sets are practised regularly in every class and others in workshops and retreats. The Program focuses on balanced exercising that emphasises flexibility, correct posture and breathing techniques, walking meditation and relaxation. Improved fitness and enjoyment are essential parts of wellbeing within a positive environment that the College Teaching Program promotes.

Park Lessons

There is nothing more invigorating than practising tai chi outdoors, exposed to fresh air and the elements, enjoying nature. That is why every College Tai Chi Term ends with two double park lessons as a bonus for all learners. Since its inception, the College has always organised park lessons across Melbourne in different suburbs to give students extra practice and allow newcomers to join them for free and have a taste of gentle but energising tai chi exercise.



However, the two main park lessons are now conducted in the Central Park Malvern and the Fairfield Park over the last two end-of-term weekends, followed by scrumptious biscuits and aromatic Chinese tea, prepared by the instructors.

In addition to these lessons, some of our instructors generously give their time to organise and run free tai chi sessions in their local parks on Saturdays or Sundays to offer their learners time and space to reinforce what they have learned in regular classes. Weekly park lessons are held in the Camberwell, Moonee Ponds and Werribee areas, to mention a few.

The College park lessons are great opportunities to meet the Masters, instructors and practitioners from other centres, work with them to further develop or refine tai chi skills, learn a new movement or style in fresh air on green grass and be inspired by a demonstration of different forms that the College teaches.

College Workshops

Specialist Tai Chi Workshops have been a permanent feature of the College Teaching Program. For a couple of decades now the Masters have run regular workshops twice a year to pass on their expertise and experience in soft martial arts to keen learners. The major advantage of attending workshops is in polishing different styles of tai chi, honing the basic principles of posture and movement and learning new exercise routines that regular class time does not allow. In the workshops, our learners have the opportunity to practise a wide range of skills, starting with the College's traditional Yang form, a variety of qigong, Tao Yin, sword and fan weapons to Pa Kua, San Sou and Xing Yi styles. The unique aspects of the workshops have been the practice of flow patterns, structural alignment, the application of movements, push hands exercises, learning about specific health benefits and harmonising the internal energy (chi), all the areas in which our Masters specialise.

Over time, the program and content of instruction have changed, continuously adding new skills and knowledge to focus on what the participants need to practise and learn for their overall health and fitness. The workshops are equally popular amongst the instructors and their students, well-attended and fun socialising activities, as there is always something new to learn or refine, enjoy or benefit from, including a laugh and a chat with other learners and instructors.

Grand Master Eng Chor's high international standing brought him an invitation to conduct a series of workshops overseas, in Israel, where a Physical Education University Professor gathered a group of keen staff and students to train in qigong, tai chi and other wushu skills while exploring their benefits. With great interest, the participants initiated a study of the tai chi discipline that would include a translation of the Master's books and audio texts for learning and practising independently.

Outside Melbourne, in beautiful Tasmania, Senior Master Chin Min conducted a special Tai Chi Clinic for a growing number of practitioners and their instructor. The Master took the tai chi learners through a sequence of relaxing qigong and tai chi exercises, allowing them to reinforce and polish their movements, acquire new skills and improve their balance and breathing, coordination and mental focus. The students were delighted to learn from the Master himself and grateful for the opportunity.



With the fame of the College spreading, our instructors have been invited to run workshops at special events, both in Melbourne and overseas, such as school fetes, conferences and professional gatherings in different organisations and communities to show the benefits of tai chi and train the participants in de-stressing and relaxing. Also, to teach them how to enhance their stamina, health and fitness by understanding their body and mind through gentle tai chi exercise.

Performances and Demonstrations

The College has become well known in Victoria for its numerous tai chi classes conducted across its many centres, but also for taking part in many performances around Melbourne. Since the early 1990s, we have regularly celebrated important community and cultural events such as Moomba Parade and Chinese New Year, and have played a significant part in various festivals and fiestas, notably Werribee Weerama, Melbourne Fringe, Moonee Valley, Ashburton, Glenferrie Road, Kew, Eltham Community, Richmond Multicultural and Oakley International Festivals, Body Mind Spirit, to name a few. On top of that, our instructing team has participated in a variety of tai chi demonstrations in parks and gardens, city trams and shopping malls, for example, Maranoa Gardens, Ringwood Reserve, Brighton Park, Bowen Gardens and many others. Since 2006 World Tai Chi and Qigong Day has also been regularly celebrated by our students and instructors across Melbourne. In all these events, they have performed different styles of tai chi, qigong and weapon routines, delighting the spectators who have often joined in to experience the magic of graceful movements and rhythmic breathing.

One of the most impressive performances usually takes place at Tai Chi Annual Banquets, to mark the end of tai chi year, when the Masters show their

superb skills by individually demonstrating special forms with beauty and flair. Occasionally, the instructors join them to perform in a group and delight the audience with their own subtle tai chi skills and competence.

Over the years, the College has invited Chinese masters to visit Australia several times. Most notably, the two of them stand out as experts and gold medallists, almost rivalling the accomplishments of our own College Masters. They are Master Peng Ying and Master Yan Gen Lai, both Chinese champions in wushu. Master Peng Ying demonstrated her exquisite skills in a performance organised by the College for over 200 guests in 1997. Her specialty was a beautiful 42 Pa Kua Form. Our own Masters and instructors also took part in performing individual and group tai chi and weapon routines, demonstrating a great wealth of talent and proficiency.

Other important occasions included workshops, demonstrations and classes, and particularly a weekend retreat in 2007, with Master Yan Gen Lai who specialises in a brisk Chen Style of tai chi. Both visiting Masters have significantly added to our learning, experience and deeper understanding of tai chi as an internal martial art and its benefits.



Over the last quarter of a century, our students, the instructing team and many other Australians have been exposed to the diversity and abundance of soft martial arts through all the College and special public events that have enriched their awareness and appreciation of one of the best relaxation and exercise systems today.

Competitions

In the last decade, the College has been invited to take part in Wushu Tai Chi and Qigong Australia (WTQA) competitions as well as at the 5th International Martial Arts Games (IMAG) in Melbourne in 2013. The Grand Master Eng Chor's reputation as the President of the Australian National Martial Arts Games Committee and Senior Master Chin Min's high standing as an International Wushu Judge have enhanced the position of the College within the Australian martial arts community.

The College competition teams included instructors of all levels, competing in various tai chi, qigong and weapon forms, individually and in groups, and winning scores of medals from bronze to gold, making us proud. We also had senior students involved, which clearly demonstrates the strength of our teaching. It was an honour to have a group of senior instructors invited to serve as referees at IMAG. Senior Master Chin Min was a special guest performer at WTQA in 2014 and 2015 as well as a valued judge.

As an Executive Board Member of the IMAG Committee, Grand Master Eng Chor participated in organising the 2013 IMAG in Melbourne prior to which he had been invited to attend Korean and Estonian Games, taking several tai chi students with him to perform, thus further strengthening the position of the College within the international martial arts community.



Many of our instructors and students have been back a dozen times if not more as each trip is different and exciting, offering new places to see, tai chi skills to learn, delicious food to taste and people to meet. Occasionally, the itinerary would include a special visit to Tibet, Vietnam, Malaysia, Japan, Hong Kong or Taiwan, adding to the experience, cultural richness and the understanding of how soft martial arts are practised in those parts of Asia.

These exclusive journeys have taken the tai chi travellers across the gigantic Chinese land, from the southern Guangdong Province to Beijing and the Great Wall in the north or from Terracotta Warriors in Shaanxi Province to a bustling Shanghai metropolis on the Yangtze River, and much further.



All competitions have multiple purposes in refining skills and winning, as they require compelling motivation, genuine effort and rigorous discipline, essential for the highest achievement.

Cultural Tai Chi Study Tours

In the past two decades, Grand Master Eng Chor has led countless of tai chi enthusiasts to China. They wanted to learn about the culture and people who had created the unique health and exercise system that we enjoy today and often refer to as tai chi even though it covers a wide range of wushu style martial arts. One of the main goals of these cultural tours is to practise tai chi with Chinese masters from different martial arts schools, including the famous Shaolin Temple in Henan Province. There were many happy occasions on these tours to demonstrate how well Australians can train with their Chinese counterparts. Our students and instructors, led by the Grand Master Eng Chor, would often impress their hosts. Eng Chor has not only been the guide of the tour, but also a skilled interpreter who would gladly impart his vast knowledge of Chinese culture and history to all. A two-week total cultural immersion would always stir feelings of admiration and awe, amongst the travellers, for the ancient civilization and its incredible diversity of space, peoples, customs, beliefs and architecture.

Tai Chi Weekend Retreats

An exceptional way of enhancing tai chi skills in a pleasant and safe environment is the College Tai Chi Retreat. For over twenty years, annual weekend tai chi retreats have been organised away from Melbourne in secluded and serene places like Kallista in the Dandenong Ranges or in the Lake Dewar Lodge, near Myrning, surrounded by a tranquil forest.



For tai chi enthusiasts a retreat is a real treat as they follow a rich and diverse program with the Masters, assisted by the instructors, refining what they have learned, but also learning new skills, styles, movements and postures.

The training focuses on exploring tai chi skills in traditional and competition routines such as Yang, Beijing 24, 42 and 48, various qigong and tao yin sets that incorporate breathing practice, weapon forms like fan, flute and swords and the application of tai chi movements. The participants enjoy a relaxing pace and fresh air with striking bushland and lake views. There is time to explore Chinese philosophy, the human body and mind or discuss how tai chi could improve immune system, pain management or defy aging. On occasions, the students also have a unique opportunity to learn Chinese, spoken phrases and beautiful characters, calligraphy, Chinese brush painting, the principles and practice of traditional Chinese massage, acupressure and much more. The Masters generously share their knowledge of martial arts and Chinese culture while socialising over tasty meals. All this makes the experience a treasured adventure, bursting with positive feelings of wellness.

Philosophy Lessons

Our College has been privileged to have two Masters, highly respected for their skills and expertise in the martial arts world, who are always pleased to bestow their knowledge of philosophy and ideas that underpin the art and skill of tai chi.



For many years now, the students have had unique opportunities to attend free philosophy sessions run by the Grand Master Eng Chor and occasionally by the Senior Master Chin Min. These sessions cover the origins of wushu and philosophical ideas behind it, in particular tai chi, the explanation of the key Chinese

concepts in English, often a fun quiz to test the learner knowledge and a lot more.

Presentations focus on Taoist philosophy from a historical perspective, the five vital elements in nature, the balancing of yin and yang flow and their relationship to our practice of tai chi and related exercise disciplines. The talk is always followed by a Q & A time, a tai chi demonstration by the Master, which is a rare delight, and a discussion of specific movements or aspects of different styles. The philosophy is presented in depth and with clarity, but in an engaging manner that invites the audience to participate, relax and learn while enjoying refreshing and fragrant Chinese tea and cake.

This story of the College success does not end here because it is the story of all of us, lifelong tai chi learners, who continue to spread the message of good health and wellbeing through the enchanting and revitalising beauty of tai chi.

Snezana Dabic, Senior Instructor

Important College Dates 2015

Term 5: August 24 to October 18

Sept 28 – Oct 4 College break
 October 4 Park Lesson (10am to noon)

Term 6: October 19 to December 6

November 22 College 25th 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

25TH ANNIVERSARY COMBINED PARK LESSON

Sunday, 4 October, 10:00am–Noon
Ruffey Lake Park, Entry via The Boulevard
(off George Street) Doncaster
Melway 33 F10

Note: A picnic lunch will follow the Park Lesson.

Please, bring a plate to share.

The College will provide Chinese tea and some finger food.