



CELESTIAL TAI CHI COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

Term 1

P.O. Box 1135, Box Hill, 3128

www.celestialtaichi.com.au

www.facebook.com/CelestialTaiChi

March 2017

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Senior Master Chin Min and Grand Master Eng Chor with newly appointed Senior Instructor Belinda Leong, Assistant Instructors Margaret and Martin Bay and Instructor David Brogden at the College Banquet.

Free Park Lessons

Saturday 4 March

Time: 10:00am to noon

Malvern, Central Park Malvern

Cnr Burke & Wattletree Rds

(Melway 59 G10)

Sunday 12 March

Time: 10:00am to noon

Fairfield, Fairfield Park

Cnr Heidelberg Rd & Fairfield Park Dr

(Melway 30 J12)

NEW WEBSITE: www.celestialtaichi.com.au

Welcome to 2017

The Chinese Year of the Rooster

*The **Rooster** is tenth in the Chinese zodiac. Each year is related to an animal sign according to a 12-year cycle. Years of the Rooster include 1933, 1945, 1957, 1969, 1981, 1993, 2005, 2017, and 2029. In Chinese element theory, each zodiac year is associated with one of five elements: Gold (Metal), Wood, Water, Fire, or Earth, which means that a Fire Rooster, for example, comes once every 60-year cycle. This is the year of the **Fire Rooster** and people born during the year are trustworthy, with a strong sense of timekeeping and responsibility at work.*

The College now has a new and improved website which we will be keeping up to date with news of our activities. Please inform your friends and acquaintances who have expressed an interest in your activities. The new website has the “**au**” added to the address.

www.celestialtaichi.com.au

Most of our current students have received a welcome from our Grand Master Eng Chor Khor and Senior Master Chin Min Lian through the e-newsletter sent out in January but they would also like to welcome new students and those not on the College's email list.

The Masters will be running the usual two Park Lessons each term as well as Workshops and a Philosophy Day. The year's program is on the back page so that you are informed well in advance of these activities.

There is a regular e-newsletter linked to the Celestial Tai Chi website to keep you informed of all the College activities and other information related to the practice of Tai Chi. You are encouraged to send these to your friends and acquaintances who have indicated that they are interested in Tai Chi.

Every term a newsletter is produced containing information of all activities and this is available in hard copy and through our Website. Also, sign up to become a friend of the College on our Facebook pages to show your support.

We hope that everyone enjoys the health benefits, experience and comradeship of Tai Chi by participating in the activities of the College.

Margaret Rogers

The 2016 Celestial Tai Chi Annual Banquet

The College's 2016 banquet was again very successful with the 10 course meal - the most delicious ever.

We were again treated to solo performances by Grand Master Eng Chor (Celestial Tai Chi Performance routine and Sun Tai Chi), Senior Master Chin Min (Dayan Qigong and Tai Chi 42), Master Su Rule (Yin Water Form) from Chi Generation Tai Chi and Master Yong Low (Taiji Yangsheng Zhang Stick routine).

Instructor Beng Yan and Senior Master Chin Min performed the 32 Yang Sword routine together.

There was also a group performance of Ba Duan Jin (Eight Brocade Exercise) by Senior Instructors Suzette Hosken, Margie Brett, Margaret Rogers, and Instructors Joy Muir and Bruce Ellis – Senior Instructor Wally Wilkinson composed and provided the music for the group performance.

This showcased the excellent quality and dedication of the Masters and Instructors of the Celestial Tai Chi College.

Again, promotions in the College were announced: Senior Instructor Belinda Leong from the Doncaster and Hawthorn Centres; Instructor David Brogden from the Moonee Ponds and Preston Centres; and Assistant Instructors Margaret and Martin Bay from the Bundoora Centre.

Senior Instructor Snezana Dabic was again the MC and Senior Instructors Suzette Hosken arranged the audio visual display and Noel Schmidt videoed the performances. These can be viewed on our website www.celestialtaichi.com.au.

Margaret Rogers



Margaret Rogers, Suzette Hosken and Marge Brett - Ba Duan Jin performance.



Master Tong Low - Taiji Yangsheng Zhang Stick routine

Master Su Rule, from Chi Generation Tai Chi - Yin Water Form.



ADDING 'SUBSTANCE' TO YANG-STYLE TAI CHI

Introduction

Yang-style Tai Chi had its roots in the successful martial art routine developed by Yang for training competitors in hand-to-hand fighting. The routine is performed as a gentle, slow and graceful routine, found to be excellent exercise because it uses every joint and muscle in the body together with providing excellent exercise for the brain via the learning process. While there is no intention of teaching 'hard' martial arts in this discussion, it is useful to refer here to the significance of the hard martial art movements to maximise the exercise benefits.

Learning and practising the routine of the Tai Chi *form* offers major health benefits. Just doing Tai Chi will give some benefits and it is not fundamental that students perform the movements precisely - everyone will differ to some extent in how they perform it. For those with more Tai Chi experience, adding *substance* is the next step towards refining their Tai Chi and gaining more of the potential exercise benefits together with mental satisfaction from the continuous flow. Experienced students are able to begin to refine their tai chi.

What is Substance? Senior Master Chi Min says learning Tai Chi is in two stages:

1. *The form: This comprises the basic movements and their sequence.*
At Celestial, the Yang-style Tai Chi *form* with its 108 movements is taught in six levels spread over a year. This is to give students time to learn the basic movements and their sequence in the routine. Learning the routine requires significant mental and physical focus and offers the realistic prospect of health benefits.
2. *The substance: This is refinement of the manner in which the movements are done - not what is done but how it should be done. Incorporating substance into one's Tai Chi is 3-fold:*
 - Cultivation of Qi (energy)
 - Cultivation of Qing (strength)
 - Cultivation of Shen (Spirit)

Key principles of Tai Chi substance. When Grand Master Eng Chor was appointed an international Tai Chi judge, I asked him what were the main factors to be considered in assessing competitors. His reply was along the following lines: -

1. *Slow, continuous and **flowing** movements with no posturing.*
2. *Each movement must go **through** the final posture of the respective martial art movement.*
3. *The finish of each movement should be **readily visible**, clean and not blurred into the next.*
4. ***Energy is applied** ('focussing the chi').*
5. *The energy input should **not be visible** to the observer.*

Implementation of Tai Chi Substance

1. *Continuous*: There must be no pause or posturing between movements. This links the sequential movements into one smooth, graceful and flowing routine. This is a new and beneficial challenge for the brain, adding a feeling of satisfaction in performance of the routine.
2. *Tempo and flow*: The pace of each component of the movement must be slow, gradual, steady and controlled by the brain, not by the normal reflexes, i.e.
 - arm movements generally dictate the steady tempo and continuity of flow
 - weight transfer occurs gradually and only with both feet in contact with the ground
 - stepping and kicking of the feet are slow and deliberate
 - turning/bending of the body is controlled
 - twisting of the spine brings the core strength muscles into play
 - the gradual re-orientation and strengthening/relaxing of the hands is so gradual it is hardly noticeable, but the position and orientation of the hands generally signify the finish of the movement, its martial basis and giving much expression to it.
3. *Show the final posture of the martial art movement*: Going through the final posture of the martial art movement is a key factor in maximising benefits from the exercise while still maintaining continuity and tempo.
4. *Co-ordination*: The various components of the movement must be co-ordinated to reflect the purpose of the martial art movement, e.g. the 'Brushed Knee' movement represents one hand blocking a kick and a strike to the front with the other hand. The relative timing of the components is crucial for coordination and reflecting development of maximum power in the martial movement.
5. *The visible finish*: The finish of the movement must be clearly visible. At first glance this appears to present a conundrum – how can the finish of each movement be shown clearly if there is continuous flow? The answer lies mainly in timing and coordination of the components of the movement to reflect the final instant of the martial art movement, e.g. consider the final posture for a push/strike to the face as in the 'Brushed knee' and the relativity to a martial art strike and delivery of maximum power at the instant of impact by coinciding finish of:
 - the turn of shoulders, hips, head and body
 - weight transfer
 - straightening of the striking arm to off-lock
 - positioning of the arms, hands, fingers in particular
 - strengthening of muscles throughout – right from the back heel
 - exhaling.

Then continuing through the movement into the next without pause, gradually relaxing the muscles.

6. *Energy input:* Energy should be applied gently and gradually up to the key point of the movement, e.g. the imaginary contact of the strike in 'brushed knee', and applied in all parts of the body where the muscles are used for that martial application - right from the back heel through the legs, back, shoulders, arms and hands, but not enough energy to be obvious to the observer. Then continue on through, relaxing all the muscles and flowing into the next movement. This is good, gentle toning and stretching exercise for muscles, joints, ligaments and attachments, and it also assists greatly in showing the finish of the movement. Continue without pause and flow into the next movement.

To get a feel of the application of energy, in practice put more energy into it – imagine you are striking hard *through* a suspended basketball, and feel all the muscles in use in doing it!

Bob Maver (Retired Executive Instructor)
Celestial Tai Chi College

Age is no Barrier to Practicing Tai Chi

Edna Neubecker turned 99 last July, and is now in her 100th year.

The first time she did Tai Chi was during a trip to China on a Shanghai street in 1983. She remembers a group of ladies being instructed by another wearing white gloves. The exercise looked beautiful so she and her friend joined in and enjoyed the session. In the park off the street they noticed



different groups of men performing with swords and sticks and other weapons, and also various styles of Tai Chi and other martial arts.

When they arrived back in Australia, Edna and her friend started Tai Chi and it is only the last few years that Edna has had to sit down in class.

Around her 99th Birthday 3AW (who she often talks to in the late evening) presented her with a gift, and asked her what has been her secret to longevity. To which she answered that her doctor has always told her to keep doing Tai Chi.

Edna has been in Yvonne's Hawthorn community class and has said she is always so proud in claiming to be a student of the Celestial Tai Chi College.

Yvonne Schmidt

2017 COLLEGE DATES

January 23 to March 12: TERM 1

March 4: PARK LESSON at Malvern* 10 am to noon
March 12: PARK LESSON at Fairfield** 10 am to noon

March 13 to May 7: TERM 2

March 17/18 **ARNOLD CLASSIC FESTIVAL**
April 13 to April 19: COLLEGE BREAK (Easter)
April 23 **TAI CHI WORKSHOP**
April 29 **WORLD TAI CHI AND QIGONG DAY**
April 29: PARK LESSON at Malvern* 10 am to noon
May 7 PARK LESSON at Fairfield** 10 am to noon

May 8 to June 25: TERM 3

June 4 **PHILOSOPHY LESSON**
June 17: PARK LESSON at Malvern* 10 am to noon
June 25: PARK LESSON at Fairfield** 10 am to noon
June 26 to July 2: COLLEGE BREAK

July 3 to August 20: TERM 4

August 12: PARK LESSON at Malvern* 10 am to noon
August 20: PARK LESSON at Fairfield** 10 am to noon

August 21 to October 15: TERM 5

August 27: **WTQA COMPETITION**
September 10 **TAI CHI WORKSHOP**
September 25 to Oct. 1: COLLEGE BREAK
October 7: PARK LESSON at Malvern* 10 am to noon
October 15: PARK LESSON at Fairfield** 10 am to noon

October 16 to December 3: TERM 6

November 25: PARK LESSON at Malvern* 10 am to noon
December 2: **COLLEGE BANQUET**
December 3: PARK LESSON at Fairfield** 10 am to noon

***PARK LESSON AT CENTRAL PARK, MALVERN:**

Corner Burke & Wattletree Rds, East Malvern: Melway 59 G10

**** PARK LESSON AT FAIRFIELD PARK:**

Corner Heidelberg Rd & Fairfield Park Dr, Fairfield: Melway 30 J12