



Celestial Tai Chi College Newsletter

Term 5

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Grand Master Eng Chor and Master Tong Low conducting the Seminar on Wu Qin Xi

Upcoming Events:

Workshop with Senior Master Chin Min

Sunday 29th October, 2pm – 6pm

Malvern Park Lesson with Senior Master Chin Min

Saturday 7th October, 10am to noon

Fairfield Park Lesson with Grand Master Eng Chor

Sunday 15th October, 10am to noon

The College Banquet will be held during Chinese New Year in early 2018.

Please refer to the calendar on the back page for other College dates

Special Qigong Seminar Series—Part 2: Wu Qin Xi

Grand Master Eng Chor and Master Tong Low

The second seminar on health Qigong, Wu Qin Xi – often fondly referred to as ‘five animal frolics’ – was conducted with enthusiasm and vigour, eagerly absorbed by the learners. Following Grand Master Eng Chor’s brief introduction on the history and benefits of Qigong and Hua Tuo, the great physician’s design of Wu Qin Xi, according to certain historical records and legend alike, we engaged in the practice of ‘five-animal exercises’ led by Master Tong Low.



Just like with the first seminar on Ba Duan Jin, it was quite a challenge but also great fun to follow the movements and breathing technique taught. As we tried to imitate the behaviour of animals, it felt easier with every move, enjoyable and perhaps closer to the spirit of

animals and birds. No wonder the ancient Chinese civilisation looked for best cures in nature, creating a unique system of exercise in various Qigong and Tai Chi forms, unsurpassed to this day.

Until the next seminar, we hope to keep practising, grateful to the Masters for sharing their exquisite skills and knowledge of Wu Qin Xi Qigong. A big thank you to Zenaida and her assistants, too, for delicious snacks.

Snezana Dabic, Senior Tai Chi Instructor (Box Hill)

Delights of Learning Five-animal Qigong Exercises

I was a tiger, a deer, a bear, a monkey, and finally a bird, all in one afternoon. I was doing my best to follow the instructions from a diminutive and cheerful older gentleman who had most convincingly found the souls of those creatures; his bear-stomping and swaying as it wakes and searches for food is pure delight and such fun to attempt. In a class of around 25 – 30 people it’s interesting to observe how many of us had trouble stamping a foot.

Unlike Tai Chi which is a moving meditation inspired by martial arts, Wu Qin Xi is Qigong – exercises specifically designed to promote good health and wellbeing. Qigong even has its own salutation, distinctive from Tai Chi: hands

held together over the Dantian and bow, left hand on top for women and right for men.

To the casual observer many Qigong routines look simple and easy to do, purely a matter of waving arms around, sometimes in unexpected patterns, but waving arms none-the-less. Let me assure you, four hours spent first watching the rather sly manoeuvrings of a monkey snatching fruit, and then working my way through those deceptively simple movements required far more energy and effort than one would imagine. Then there was the power of the tiger to capture, the delicate delivery of an antlered deer grazing, and the wings of a bird in flight, beautiful, wonderful movements and so different from the way we normally move our limbs. Even fingers, hands and wrists get a workout.



The representation of each creature is explicit and finely considered. The tiger bends in a curious way that stretches the hamstrings. Are my monkey eyes looking at the plum I want to snatch? My deer hoof must be firmly grounded to allow the correct body rotation and the hint of a tail wag. The crane stretches its wings, the chest expands and lungs fill. The movement is liberating!

Weary with a few creaking joints and tender sinews, can I recapture some of those delightful moments?

Judith Michael, Writer and Trainee Instructor
(Camberwell & Doncaster East Day Class)

19th Wushu Tai Chi and Qigong Festival – 27th Aug 2017 Monash University Sports Stadium, Clayton Campus

With the magnificent 2017 WTQA Festival, from the very first bounce of the Hung Gar Yau Shu's Lion Dance to the final presentation of medals and trophies, the Association has once again lived up to its vision of uniting and supporting WTQA community, its commitment to collaboration and continuing learning and equally to the goal of promoting excellence in coaching its athletes in richly diverse schools of traditional and competition disciplines – to the utter delight of all participants.

The Celestial team was equally well presented by taking part in organising the event, competing, judging, filming, applauding, taking photos, pushing hands in Master Class, performing Beijing 24 and supporting each other. The beauty of all the forms displayed and demonstrated made it easier to endure the Siberian-like cold we felt while engaging in action across the three arenas – for Tai Chi, Qigong and Wushu routines. The standard was high hence the highlights are many, from various, stunning Yang, Wudang, Chen, Wu and Hao barehands to contemporary and traditional weapons like Fan, Sword, Flute, all beautifully performed; from individual and group performances of a vast variety of Qigong styles, including Wu Qin Xi, Ba Duan Jin and Liu Zi Jue to vigorous and dynamic Wushu such as Chang Quan, Nan Quan, Gunshu, Jianshu and Daoshu forms.



It was wonderful to see Senior Master Chin Min in our cheering squad and Instructor Beng Yan taking part in Tai Chi 24 form. Several Tai Chi students supported us as well, while in awe of superb performances by guest masters, competitors and overall joyful spirit of the Festival.

Here is what our team has happily shared – in their own, individual voices:

Rita Sullivan (Tai Chi Instructor & Competitor):

'It was a great day! Thanks for all your contributions on the day. The months before the games are full of anticipation, a consistent training program and lots of mental preparation.

Although I was very excited and nervous on the day, I was happy with my preparation for my four events. By the end of the day I was exhausted, but



also very proud of my achievements: a silver medal and two bronze medals. The challenge I had given myself was well worth it. I was never a competitive person in the past, so if anyone is thinking about entering the games in the future, I would truly recommend this as a way of improving your Tai Chi skills and confidence. Give it a go!'

Noel Schmidt (Senior Tai Chi Instructor):

'Having attended several previous competitions, I was invited this year to join the Judging Panel. In preparation, prospective judges were invited to a workshop hosted by Master Tong Low two weeks before the event where he covered standard rules and scoring methods. He and several other local Masters also highlighted some of the more subtle points and differences between moves, particularly near similar moves when expressed in a Tai Chi routine versus a Qigong or Wushu routine. Issues highlighted included correct position, the distinction and harmony of movements as well as mental concentration, mobility and rhythm. This greatly assisted with interpreting varying styles, the flow of energy and ultimately scoring different routines. Overall, for me, both as an observer and a judge, the entire competition event was a great and enriching experience to watch and enjoy the great commitment and talent on display in so many different forms and routines.'

Joy Muir (Tai Chi Instructor & WTQA Member):

'As a WTQA Committee Member, I would like to acknowledge Masters, Su Rule and Tara Brayshaw (President and Vice-President) in particular, for all the hard work that goes into planning the event, supporting judges and competitors, and trying to improve it every year. All went smoothly.

The Committee is very grateful to all who volunteer their time to be judges, timekeepers, marshalls etc. and hope that they manage to enjoy themselves as well. As a member of Celestial TCC I was very proud that we were such a presence on the day as judges, floor crew and spectators.

Personally, I love the colour and excitement of the Hung Gar Lion Dance and Drumming, specially composed for the Festival to help 'lift the spirits' of everyone present. The Wushu competition in the morning was very exciting, watching the incredible athleticism and technical skills of the competitors and how they support each other (often very loudly!) is so inspiring.

Master Li's Swimming Dragon demonstration was amazing. It is absolutely inspiring to see how much Tai Chi and Qigong are being practised, loved and nurtured by people in Australia – people of all ages and levels of fitness.'

Suzette Hosken (Senior Tai Chi Instructor):

'This was my fifth WTQA Festival, but my first as a spectator only. The previous four events I have been a competitor, but this year circumstances happily conspired to ensure I got to watch. I loved catching up with new and older friends, and watching people overcome their nerves to produce beautiful performances.

One of the highlights was the all-in Tai Chi 24 where the audience, competitors, judges and volunteers all got together for this popular form (see our Facebook page for a video). I positioned myself between Master Su Rule and David Pinder, multiple winner of the overall Tai Chi and Qigong trophies. It was a delight to do Tai Chi with this group. As the emcee mentioned, all of us who got up to join the mob should enter the competition next year! I think I'll

embark on a little arm-twisting over the coming year to ensure we have a good quota of Celestial students who are willing to jump in there and have a go. Hats off to Rita Sullivan, wonderful instructor at Werribee Centre for being the sole Celestial competitor this year. Hats also off to all of the other Celestial members who were hardworking volunteers, judges and audience members.'



Belinda Leong (Senior Tai Chi Instructor):

'I have competed in the past at WTQA, but being a judge gave me a special opportunity to enjoy watching and appreciate a wide range of different Qigong and Tai Chi routines performed by passionate practitioners from across Australia. I admire the effort and diligence of each competitor to perform as a united team or as an individual. Some performances were so mesmerising that it made me feel relaxed watching them. I look forward to judging again next year!'

Zenaida Calderon (Tai Chi Instructor & WTQA Treasurer):

'Monash Sports Centre ambience was extremely cold this year, requiring layers upon layers of clothing and yet the spirit of the 19th WTQA Festival continued with the public participation in mass Beijing 24 demonstration and push hands. Celestial Tai Chi College Snr Instructors' presence spread across the three key disciplines as judges, reading of judges' pledge, volunteering by Instructors and sponsorship.

On behalf of the WTQA Committee, our warmest thanks to the Celestial judges, Wally Wilkinson, Snezana Dabic, Noel Schmidt and Belinda Leong, and to Instructor Joy Muir. Congratulations to Rita Sullivan!



Wally Wilkinson (Senior Tai Chi Instructor)

Commenting on great Wushu competitors: 'I look out at them and imagine "yes, I could do that...", but then I think of leaping in the air and completing a full 360 degree turn without the aid of a hand or leg and think again "maybe I could just leave that move out...oops and that move...oops and that move".'

In the end, I am safe at the judges' desk, reflecting that any Wushu performance I give including the salutations at commencement and end would take less than 10 seconds!

It was fantastic to have Tyler Rowe as our head judge. He was brilliant as head judge with us at the Arnold Schwarzenegger event and his performance of the 12 Animals Qigong at this event was a pleasure to watch.

It is fantastic that Rita has chosen to perform - it takes some courage and it improves formwork at a rapid rate. Well done Rita!

Andrew Hollows (Tai Chi Student, Box Hill):

'I had the great pleasure to attend the 19th WTQA Festival along with my 8-year old daughter. We braved the cold at the Monash University Sports Stadium, and were treated to wonderful performances of Tai Chi, Wushu and Qigong. Following the opening ceremony and the much anticipated Hung Gar Lion Dance, we were especially enthusiastic about the pace and grace of the Wushu competition. My daughter was particularly impressed by the young female competitors and, who knows, it may have planted a seed for her future interest! We were treated to masterful performances by Master Li Yong, Xingda Chen and Master Tyler Rowe. But the definite highlight for me was Master Ji Zhou's demonstration of Wu Style Push Hands. This was a first for me and fascinating to observe. I would strongly recommend the Festival.'

Graham Sullivan (Trainee Instructor)

'As a spectator over the past five festivals, I have really enjoyed observing the many and varied forms of Tai Chi & Qigong. It has certainly developed my broader appreciation for the spectrum of the discipline. I also admire the competitors who have participated and seek to develop their Tai Chi form. While I understand this is not for everyone, it is a wonderful forum where one can challenge oneself, observe and learn from others and unite together with the like-minded people in what is truly a Festival for all lovers of Wushu, Tai Chi & Qigong.'

I whole-heartedly agree with everything our team has said above and invite the Celestial community to join us next year for the 20th anniversary of WTQA Festival. Thank you all and kudos to Rita for making us proud!

Snezana Dabic (Senior Tai Chi Instructor)

College Dates 2017

Term 5 – August 21 to October 15

October 29, 2pm–6pm	Tai Chi Workshop with SM Chin Min
Sept 25 to Oct 1	College Break
October 7	Park Lesson at Malvern (10am to noon)
October 15	Park Lesson at Fairfield (10am to noon)

Term 6 – October 16 to December 3

November 25	Park Lesson at Malvern (10am to noon)
December 3	Park Lesson at Fairfield (10am to noon)
Nov 21–Dec 4	Belarus & Russia Tour incorporating the International Martial Arts Games in Minsk, Belarus