

# South Auckland's Charles Ching is a man who never stops learning

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In 12 weeks, Charles Ching has gone from not knowing much about painting to becoming a master painter, his tutor says.

His Wing Chun grandmaster was Bruce Lee's martial arts teacher, has four university degrees including a Phd, lost his job in the Inland Revenue Department, and now at 61, is learning a whole new skill.

If there's one aspect of Charles Ching's life that has remained constant, it is that he never stops learning. The Manurewa resident even convinced his wife and three children to keep on studying, equipping the Ching family with about 15 university degrees between them.

He says he studied at St Francis Xavier in Hong Kong, the same high school as Bruce Lee.

"I didn't know much English. I studied hard, but, spent too much time practising martial arts. My academics weren't good," he says.

He is proficient in the Wing Chun style of martial arts, "just like what Bruce Lee practised. His teacher, was my grandmaster".

"My form master Brother Edward told me sincerely, he said 'Charles, if you want to change your future, the only way is to study'. That's why now I keep on studying. It doesn't mean get a PhD or Master's degree, he meant keep on learning. In Buddhism, it's the same theory - work hard, learn to improve your wisdom."



Mark Metcalfe

Charles practises the Wing Chung style of martial arts, just like what Bruce Lee practised. 'His teacher, Brother Edward, was my grandmaster.'

Since then, he worked and studied, saved enough to study in the United States. There along with studying he taught martial arts, and worked another job and earned "more than \$400 a month ... when bank clerks earned only \$300. After school, I worked in a restaurant, so I earned more".

"That's why I still come to learn."

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KYMBERLEE FERNANDES/STUFF

Charles Ching sleeps for four to five hours a day. Every day after work, he meditates, which is equivalent to sleeping for almost three or four hours, he says.

After he was restructured out of his IRD job of 20 years, he decided to follow through his interest in painting. So he enrolled at Aspire2 Trades in Wiri, and is halfway through an NZ Certificate in Construction Trades Skills (Allied Trades – Painting, level 3).

"I don't like fooling around. I just do my work, because I like to learn. I can make fun at home." He has even taken one of the classmates with special needs under his wing.

One day, he hopes to run his own painting business. Finding a job at his age can be difficult, so he asks, "why don't you use the aged people to help the society to develop the economy? We still can work, why make me lose my job?".

His tutor Dianne Collier says Ching is an exceptional student.

"When Charles started, he did things so wrong. Over the weeks, I've seen him grow. I put him now in the category of a master painter. When Charles gets a chance, he's the only one watching how to paint."

After the course, students start at \$18/hour and there are 10 steps to becoming a master painter, she says.

**- Stuff**

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