



Newsletter

June 1991

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A Word From Shehan

One of our students suggested that I say something about "brotherhood" in the art. I have found it to be one of the most rewarding aspects of the fellowship we share.

I have always refused to give private lessons to those who are not members of a class. Often karate is more caught than taught. We get it from each other not just from a teacher.

Ours is a fellowship of trust. Practitioners can maim others, as we work with what is potentially dangerous. I will not tolerate students who are reckless with the safety of those who trust them. No other authentic sensei will.

Friendship is always based on trust. I am so happy for the lifelong friends that I trust with my life, my reputation and my sacred honor. I am sure you are too.

Shehan Foster 

From the President

Richard K. Bruno

Now that summer is almost upon us, our thoughts relate to relaxation and a slower pace for our leisure time. One aspect of our practice is that we workout year long - 12 months out of the year. Consequently if we miss a week or two because of illness or vacation, this will not set us back too far in our growth. Some sports such as golf or tennis are seasonal in the midwest and one must supplement with another sport in the winter months.

On July 13th, Saturday, we have our mid - summer get - together to celebrate Shehan Foster's birthday. This year we have reserved the Fireside Restaurant Lounge for our festivities. This is a nice time to visit and renew some friendships that we seldom see during the year. Oh, and we must remember not to always talk karate when we are with our spouses or friends. They may appreciate some other conversation once in awhile. See you this summer at Kemper Center: same day and same time.



Birthday Party for Shehan

We will be celebrating Shehan's birthday this year on July 13, 1991. Make plans to be at the Fireside Restaurant & Lounge, 2801 - 30th av, Kenosha Wisconsin 53142. (414) 551 - 0600. Cocktails at 5:30, dinner at 6:30.

The menu will include Italian Baked Chicken and Meatballs, choice of mashed potatoes & gravy or potato salad, choice of Mostacioli or pasta salad, hot vegetable, tossed salad and dressing, kidney bean salad, green bean salad, cottage cheese, relish tray, cheese tray bread & rolls & butter, fruit tray and coffee. The cost for all of the above is only \$12, which includes tax and tip.

Looking Ahead to the Christmas Party

Mark your calendars for the annual Yin Yang Do Christmas party on December 21, 1991. This year the festivities will be held at the Danish Brotherhood Lodge in Kenosha, Wisconsin. Further information will be included in the fall Newsletter.



Chinese Kung Fu

From: Traditional Chinese Culture in the Republic of China

Martial arts of China go back more than 2,000 years. Nearly everyone has heard of Chinese shadow boxing (T'ai Chi Ch'uan). Such derivatives as Karate and Judo and Taekwondo have been associated with Japan and Korea rather than China and are fairly well known in the West.

But Kung Fu - what is that? What does it have to do with the Chinese martial arts or was it invented by the Hollywood TV and movie star David Carradine or perhaps by the American born Chinese Bruce Lee? Kung Fu, as the term is used in the West, was not widely practiced or even widely known among the Chinese before the television and film craze. Now it is a household word in the Republic of China, Hong Kong and overseas Chinese communities all over the world.

Historically, Chinese bodily contact boxing is said to have originated in a time when warlords roamed China and sought to disarm all but their own private armies. Deprived of weapons, the people resorted to fists and feet and sticks to defend themselves. Tales of magic feats grew up along with the development of "Kung Fu's" (Connoisseurs) of the manly art.

As used popularly today, the term Kung Fu is a misnomer. In its correct and narrow use, Kung Fu means expertise in either of the two great schools of Chinese boxing: Shaolin Ch'uan ("fist") or T'ai Chi Ch'uan. However, it is Shaolin Ch'uan which has come to be identified with what Westerners now call Kung Fu.

Some small truths may be discerned in the Carradine Kung Fu television series. One of these is the Shaolin Temple and the frequent flashbacks to the hero's training in Kung Fu from small boyhood. Shaolin Ch'uan originated at this

temple in Honan province of North Central China. In 519 A.D., in the fourth year of the reign of Hsiao Ming of Northern Wei, Master Ta Mo, a Buddhist monk, came to the temple from the state of Liang. He taught the temple priests the art of self defense. Out of this came the Shaolin Ch'uan school of Chinese boxing. It is referred to as the "outer" or "hard" school of T'ai Chi Ch'uan. "Outer" implies external physical strength and rigidity of movement; "inner" emphasizes the circulation of "ch'i" (life force and energy.)

As the Shaolin school grew and its fame spread, strict rules were adopted and enforced to assure that practitioners with Kung Fu would not go out into the world to misuse their strength and power. There were 12 rules for students. Disobedience was punished with dismissal. Life was intentionally hard so as to develop the body and steel the spirit. Falsehood was beyond the pale. Graduates were to respect and help the people; they were not to violate the law. Errant graduates were to be pursued by the priests and put to death.

Shaolin students were chosen with care. The secrets of the masters could be shared only with those of high moral standard. Vigilance had to be constantly maintained lest the temple admit someone of evil intentions and be corrupted. The Kung Fu masters were said to have kept some secrets in reserve for use against malefactors. The Carradine series repeats recorded history in its flashbacks of the training regimen at Shaolin temple.

In later times, Shaolin Ch'uan came to have Southern and Northern sects and these were subdivided into many branches. The Southerners

have emphasized the use of fists, while the Northerners placed stress on legs and feet.

Until the arrival of Kung Fu movies, T'ai Chi Ch'uan was much better known outside China than Shaolin Ch'uan. T'ai Chi refers to the universe, which is to be understood in terms of the interaction of Yin and Yang. The feminine Yin is represented by the moon, the earth and the female. The masculine Yang is exemplified in sun, heaven and the male. The eight principal movements of T'ai Chi Ch'uan are consonant with Yin and Yang and also with the Five Elements of water, fire, wood, metal and earth.

Chang San-feng, the Taoist master and creator of T'ai chi Ch'uan, was watching as snake stalk a bird. Hopping here and there and chirping excitedly, the bird exhausted itself. The snake waited, poised for attack, then struck. Some of the snake's technique was incorporated in T'ai Chi Ch'uan.

The "shadow boxing," which supposedly can fell a man without touching him, develops maximum circulation of the inner energy or "ch'i". Muscles are flexible and breathing natural. The movements are gentle and flowing, the rhythm slow but as continuous as the cycles of the earth. There is no forcing. The boxer with Kung Fu takes advantage of the opponent's strength to reinforce his own. This is often stressed in the Kung Fu movies, although they owe more to Shaolin Ch'uan than T'ai Chi Ch'uan.

According to the adepts, the T'ai Chi Ch'uan boxer must be calm of mind and devoid of tensions - a refuge of quiet in the midst of movement and even conflict. This calm is reputed to be a force in itself, enabling the T'ai Chi Ch'uan

exponent to overcome mere might and muscle.

As practiced by most Chinese of today, T'ai Chi Ch'uan is a health-giving exercise rather than a means of self-defense. The muscles are toned up and the flow of "ch'i" enhanced by the gentle and graceful movements. Young or old, male or female, anyone can learn T'ai Chi Ch'uan and derive benefit not only from the use of nerves and muscles but also from the development of abdominal breathing. Tan T'ien, the spot just below the navel, is said to be a reservoir of vigor and vitality.

Classical T'ai Chi Ch'uan movements have descriptive names. They include such colorful appellations as "Brush the Tail of the Sparrow," "Golden Cock Stands on One Leg," "Embrace the Tiger to Return to the Mountain" and "The White Crane Spreads Its Wings." All these and many more must be mastered by the boxer attaining Kung Fu. Although the connoisseur may reach his status of excellence in various ways-as through the development of "ch'i" by acquiring Buddhist or Taoist breathing skills as well as through exercise - he is the only practitioner of the unarmed martial arts who is competent to kill. Although Shaolin priests were not supposed to take life, not all who attained Kung Fu rank were good men.

These are some of the legendary feats of the Shaolin Ch'uan Kung Fu:

Ch'ing Kung. This is the Kung Fu of lightening one's body in order to make prodigious leaps. Learning should begin before the age of 10 and requires a minimum of 10 years of daily practice. Adepts believe they are able to control the "ch'i" and thus go sailing over walls or walk upon the waters. Leaps of 20 feet would have to be seen to be believed. The stars of Kung Fu movies have the assistance of catapults and other

mechanical devices. Practice must be carried out with weights attached to the body. The legs may be bound to prevent them from bending.

Tieh Sha Chang (hands of iron sand). The hands are soaked in herb preparations and treated with iron dust daily for as long as three years. The palms are gradually toughened until the barest touch will break a walnut shell and a blow can fell an ox. The hands of a Karate master must be similarly toughened until he can break dozens of tiles or a plank with the side of his hand.

Ta Ching (beating the well). The student stand above a well at dawn and "beats" the waters from a distance. After several years he will be able to fell an opponent at a distance of a hundred paces - or so the old tales claims.

The Shaolin Ch'uan Kung Fu and other masters of the Chinese martial arts have many weapons at their disposal - spears and swords, axes and halberds, staves and bludgeons, whips and chains. The nunchaku consists of two 12 inch chunks of polished wood strung on each end of a chain. Whirled around the hero's head, the blocks fly off at 180 miles an hour to crack the villain's head. The wood blocks may be joined by a thong with which the opponent can be garrotted. Sharp pointed sticks used instead of blocks may come in handy for jabbing and stabbing.

The Carradine series has shown some of the training of the Shaolin Ch'uan Kung Fu. It was arduous. There can be no doubt that even with the mystique removed, this school as well as those of T'ai Chi Ch'uan produced hardy battlers who performed remarkable feats.

Kung Fu movies grew out of the swordsman film of the 1960's. These catsup bottle epics were based on knight errantry tales of troubled times in China. Bandits were not always

bad guys. Some Robin Hood types stole from the powerful and unjust and protected the weak and the good.

The heroes and heroines of these movies depended primarily on weapons in combat, although a lot of magic trickery soon began to creep in. Popular in Taiwan and overseas Chinese communities, swordsmanship didn't catch on in the West. Kung Fu didn't bring anything new to the martial arts but made the physical feats more interesting. The worst Kung Fu films are phony and unbelievable. The best have utilized camera techniques, slow motion and increased characterization to produce a movie resembling a better grade Western.

Little boys and young men of Taiwan play at Kung Fu without excessive violence, injury or damage. There are probably any number of reasons, including the lower content of parental permissiveness. Films are not "Restricted." Anything that's too bad is not shown. The slashing of theater seats would not be tolerated. Neither would gang fighting in the aisles.

Whether of Shaolin Ch'uan or T'ai Chi Ch'uan, the spirit of Kung Fu is ancient, knight errant, honorable and respected - not unnecessarily violent and never destructive of life. Those who have made Kung Fu otherwise are departing from both Chinese culture and history. If the extremism is removed from the presentation of Kung Fu, there is no reason why as entertainment, at least, this martial art of flying fists, nimble feet and the transfixing of an opponent with a look shouldn't remain on the film maker's production schedule along with the Western. There is a need for victorious good guys and a return to the hero who defends what is right. Kung Fu began as such a vehicle and could be again.



Slow Kata

Tom Mellonig

One of the first lessons I learned in the art was "karate is kata". On the surface the statement is rather simple - learn the moves of a kata, and one begins to master the basics that are absolutely essential to even rudimentary competence. However, it is also true that only after one masters the moves can one begin to learn a kata.

Not long ago I worked on Ten Sho katas. I then did Go Pei Sho in the manner of Ten Sho, and I came to the dual realization that 1) differentiating emphasis was a fallacious assumption on my part and 2) I had stumbled on to a key that has opened a new avenue for my understanding any kata.

When I returned to Ten Sho, I began to visualize what I felt the kata had been trying to teach me. Since the deliberate pace of the kata suggested to me that visualizing opponents and their strikes was of minor concern, the visualization must be of chi, I began to feel more than just the concentration of power. I began to apply it. For example, in the last sequence of breaths, I found myself building and extending an umbrella of chi around me like a suit of armor. From my center it circled and then began to extend upward and downward simultaneously. The sensation was one invulnerability as if any attack from behind would be thwarted whether or not I attempted to block or evade. This discovery is hardly revolutionary, but it illustrates my point. Kata evolves with the practitioner. Since then, I have become enthralled with the potential of doing kata slowly - as if under 20 feet of water. For me, this has been an opportunity to discover nuance

inside of nuance. (Something I have never been able to do blurring through a kata. The power and snap are there, but those alone are no longer sufficient.) If one has learned the moves of the katas, one can go mushin and feel the exact location of the chi in relationship to how one envisions an opponent's attack - forearm to ridge hand to palm to finger tip. Moreover, one can always repeat a move that doesn't feel just right without interrupting either the flow or the harmony of the kata, and the variations are endless - from no power to the utter tension and every degree in between. Plus any element or series of elements can be quickened to personal taste.

The benefits are also multiple. For example, the katas are always fresh, the kinetic repetition increases precision and helps eliminate undesirable habits which are often the residue of over-emphasis on speed, and slow kata helps develop a more extensive command over one's chi. Finally, slow kata does wonders for sense of center, focus and breathing.

If you are inclined to give slow kata a try, begin with a kata you know well. Don't think about what you are doing; just do it as smoothly and effortlessly as you can at a speed that would not trip a cheap motion detector. Over emphasize the slowness in the beginning until you find a pace that is right for you. Then feel, see and savor what whizzes past at normal speed. Perhaps this will open new windows and provide new avenues of exploration for you as it has for me.



Ruthlessness: A Place of Caring and Not Caring

William F. Penca

Tao Shaung Society Newsletter
Rhineland, Wisconsin.

There exists a spot in our awareness that is called "no pity". From this spot a person will act with sheer ruthlessness to accomplish what is to be taught or what is to be learned.

In this place of our awareness we will not allow ourselves to feel sorry for anyone or anything, including ourselves; even if we or they are hurting tremendously, because we know, without a shadow of a doubt, that that person or persons need no pity or condolence to correct what is wrong -- but instead, needs ruthless guidance from someone who knows how to teach with uncaring deliberateness. Only then can a person learn to crawl out of the pit and stay out. A teacher will teach, but nothing will be learned until both the teacher and the student reach this place of awareness together. When that happens, all their lessons and learnings will be realized, and called up from memory to become part of what they will call their knowledge.

A teacher who cares for his students is a good teacher, but a teacher who feels sorry for them is himself weak and does his students a great injustice. A teacher must learn to care without caring, so that he/she may teach with true freedom.

The students must learn not to feel sorry for themselves, no matter what happens. In doing so, one will be on the right road to doing away with self-importance and in turn allow themselves the freedom to not only have stored knowledge, but be able to make it usable knowledge.

My advice to teachers is to care without caring and to students to quit feeling sorry for themselves.

"Let's be ruthless in learning our lesson so that we might someday truly be called a martial artist with knowledge".

