



# SUN SHI TIMES

*"Pride will cause you harm while you will always benefit from humility"*

*- Cheng Ting Hua*



## WELCOME! TO 2007!

I hope this will be a great year for us all and would like to thank everyone for their support over the last twelve months.

## ANNOUNCEMENT

Following a long standing tradition in Chinese Martial Arts I have decided to appoint a Da Ge or Elder Brother within the style and Association. I have chosen Ian Platt to be this person and his role is to basically support Peter and myself and to deputise for me if required. This will only be in my absence due to travel or illness and then only if Pete could not cover for me, though he will be available for help and advice as required and you should seek him out if you want clarification on something you feel he can help with. This does not mean that all your help is not recognised and appreciated, but rather, that you now have someone who can approach me with problems or situations and help remedy them. He will have specific duties and responsibilities set by me.

Following on from this I have made two further appointments within the Association. The first is Dave Pollard: he is to be the General Secretary of the Association. The second is Jane Jackson: she is to be the Association's Events Organiser.

## SEMI PRIVATE LESSONS

The following dates have been booked at Carleton Memorial Hall:

Saturday 20th January 2007

Saturday 24th February 2007

Saturday 24th March 2007

Saturday 21st April 2007

Saturday 19th May 2007

Saturday 16th June 2007

These lessons will be held in the afternoons and are for a maximum of eight people. They will involve training in anything you would like (dependent on your skill level) and will be designed to improve form, Push Hands and applications. (If anyone wishes to use the time to go through the 64 step sword form, then that is fine as long as they understand it may well change once I learn the differences from Lei Laoshi.)

## WORKSHOPS

The next workshop at Blackpool will be on the Saturday 13th January 2007. All are welcome – just bring your legs!!!

This year we will be running regular workshops throughout the year; they are yours to determine what you would like to learn. Personally I will be teaching all who attend Xing Yi, Wu Xing Quan, Taiji Quan and Bagua Quan. This will be taught at a level all can understand and benefit from.

## WEBSITE/FORUM

This will become a private members' site as well as a general information site. Everyone will receive a password to access the site; please see Dave Pollard for timescales and passwords or any problems.

## EVENTS

We are planning some events for the year 2007!

The first event is a trip to London's Chinatown for Chinese New Year on Sunday 18th February. If you are interested then please let us know by filling in the tear-off form at the end of this newsletter and passing it to Jane as soon as possible. The cost will be dependent on the number of people wanting to go.

The second event will be a trip to the Tai Chi Union of Great Britain (TCUGB) championships in Oxford in April (TBC), to look at other forms of Taiji and Push Hands. If you are interested please see Jane.

## INSURANCE

This costs £12 per year for all members and is due on 31st March.

Anyone who would like a membership booklet please contact Bob for cost. The more people who want one, the cheaper they will be. The booklet will contain:

History, List of Movements, Terminology, Rules and space for workshop or gradings information.



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## THE IMPORTANCE OF TRADITION IN KUNG FU

BY PETER FARRELL

Over the years that I have studied Kung Fu I have been very fortunate to meet with and learn from some great teachers. From the time I studied with Rose Li in the early days to being accepted as a student by Master Chu Siu Woon, and more recently to studying Sun Style Tai Chi with Sifu Bob Melia and being introduced by him to Sifu Dave Martin and Master Lei Shi Tai. If I have gleaned one thing during this time it is the importance of tradition if one wishes to be given or understand the deeper teachings and become an effective Kung Fu practitioner.

Although Miss Li's approach to the student/teacher relationship appeared informal and more "Western", she would, in the first instance accept students who wished to learn, but would teach Tai Chi only at a basic level. Then, if people showed interest, they were free to join her more in-depth seminars on the "internal" aspects of Tai Chi. Her warmth and openness heralded a new era in the often jealously-guarded transmission of Kung Fu, in particular the internal arts. Nevertheless, her small stature and approachable demeanour still commanded the traditional respect afforded to earlier Masters of the tradition. Upon reflection, although Miss Li did not have favourites and appeared to give the same teachings to all, individuals who thought of her as an ordinary teacher received only

ordinary teaching, but those who treated her as a teacher who carried the lineage of Yang Style Tai Chi, and appreciated her generosity in passing on her vast knowledge, received the lineage teaching as though it came directly from the founders. Perhaps this was not due to anything particularly esoteric that Miss Li taught, but rather to the humility and consequent openness of the students which allowed them to understand the deeper aspects of the art.

Although Miss Li freely accepted Western students, without having them prove their determination with some physical feat, students still had to show their dedication and resolve by becoming proficient in aspects of Tai Chi before she would teach Bagua. To proceed further, students would need to become proficient in both Tai Chi and Bagua before learning Hsing Yi.

During the time I studied with Rose Li, I was also studying Wing Chun Kung Fu, accompanied by my brother, with Sifu Alan Lamb. Around this period my brother John heard about Master Chu, and after much investigation located him and requested to be accepted as his student. Master Chu accepted John as a student and only after many years of traditional training, hard work and dedication was he given permission to teach the system on his own (John now has

the honour of being Master Chu's senior student). Later, having seen my brother practising I was enthused by this powerful style of Kung Fu and wrote to Master Chu asking if he would accept me as a student. On the day I went to meet with Master Chu I was greeted by one of his students who asked me who I was etc., and reported back to Master Chu. Without a glance in my direction, Master Chu instructed his student who came to me and showed me how to stand in a low horse riding posture with the instructions: "Mr Chu wants you to see you do this" which I did for 30 minutes (I had to keep resting – I'm not that good!). Eventually, seeing my extreme discomfort, and following a conversation with Master Chu, the student came back to me and said: "Mr Chu says you can lean against the wall", which I gratefully did – for another 30 minutes! During that time I desperately wanted to sneak out, never to be heard of again, but my brother John was practising in the hall and had I left he would never have let me forget it!

Eventually, Master Chu came over with his student and, with a look of disdain (or was it pathos?) indicated to me to rest and, via the translator, asked me some questions about my martial experience to date. In desperation, and realising I might not be accepted, I played my trump card and swiftly told him I was John's brother; that clinched it! However, that was not the end of it. My time with Master Chu continued to be interspersed with such tests (essential if one wished to prove oneself and

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proceed along the path – definitely not for the faint-hearted!).

During my time with Miss Li and Master Chu therefore, in addition to the art itself, I learned the importance of tradition both in the mechanisms of practice and relationships with the teacher and other students. Although Miss Li's approach was perhaps more gentle and informal than that of Master Chu, each in their own way exemplified the importance of tradition if a student wished to move forward. Without tradition we get to the stage we are at today where anybody (*with* a couple of years' training!) can take on the mantle of a teacher and begin to teach a misinformed, misunderstood and watered-down version of their chosen system. For me, the old ways are particularly important in these days of gigantic egos, easily accessible mind and body therapies and disposable coffee table books on how important you are (I'm sure they have a place). Tradition ensures the correct passing on of a system of Kung Fu by knowledgeable, suitably disciplined and, hopefully, humbled individuals

(that doesn't mean to say you can't have pride in your knowledge and system). Without tradition, students will be taught a style of Kung Fu that reflects the lack of knowledge and egotistical (and deluded) notions of teachers with little grounding.

Rightly or wrongly, as a result of traditional training I try to apply the following tenets to my Kung Fu training:

- ◆ Show gratitude to the teacher for his/her openness in teaching the art.
- ◆ Respectfully request teachings, assistance and continued observation until such a time as I am told I am good enough to do it on my own.
- ◆ Accept teaching with humility and respect. If something is confusing or doesn't correlate with what I know or think I know, I will ask for clarification in a polite and non-threatening manner.
- ◆ Never try to defeat the teacher (that's not to say we cannot eagerly test our development).
- ◆ Practise to the best of my ability and capability.

◆ When offering the teacher payment or gifts, do so in a respectful manner.

◆ Respect my fellow students and never try to defeat them (again, that's not to say we cannot test our development).

These days we are used to demanding value for money and our ego may drive us to say: "Why shouldn't I do this..." or "I am paying for lessons and I can decide what I do or don't do..." etc., but we should try to realise that none of these things we are taught or are asked to do are for the benefit of the teacher – they are all for our own benefit, hopefully helping us to to develop the knowledge and the qualities of a true Kung Fu practitioner.



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I AM INTERESTED IN GOING ON THE TRIP TO LONDON CHINATOWN  
ON SUNDAY 18TH FEBRUARY 2007 FOR CHINESE NEW YEAR:

Name: .....

I would like to bring ..... guests.

If you would like to discuss the trip beforehand, then please feel free to contact Jane at [jane@sunshitaiji.com](mailto:jane@sunshitaiji.com)  
or Bob on tel: 07888 709 736 or at [bob@sunshitaiji.com](mailto:bob@sunshitaiji.com)