



Question and Answer Series
The Legacy of Ho Fatt Nam
by Grandmaster Wong Kiew Kit

Question 1:

What are the different levels of skills that derive from One Finger Shooting Zen, Taming Tiger and Thirty Punches? How long does it take Shaolin Wahnam students to reach the skills (assumed they practice as they are supposed to)? How to test the skills? And how is each one of them useful in combat and daily life?

Sifu Anton Schmick

Answer

If I were asked to name the one exercise that led to my kungfu “enlightenment”, including in combat application, it would be “One-Finger Shooting Zen”.

By itself, “One-Finger Shooting Zen” is for force development, and not for combat application. But, of course, the internal force developed in “One-Finger Shooting Zen” is excellent for combat. Moreover, the two arts trained in “One-Finger Shooting Zen”, namely One-Finger Zen and Tiger Claw, are employed in the two of the highest combative arts, namely dim-mak and chin-na.

More importantly, the techniques required to apply One-Finger Zen and Tiger Claw for dim-mak and chin-na are actually very simple.; it is the skills that are crucial in implementing dim-mak and chin-na, the two highest levels of combat. This kungfu “enlightenment” opened up “enlightenment” in many areas of daily living. Whether a salesman earns 2,000 euros a month or 20,00 euros a month depends on his skills, not on his techniques, which are probably the same in both cases.

The skills acquired in the three different arts - One-Finger Shooting Zen, Taming Tiger and Thirty Puches – are quite different.

In One-Finger Shooting Zen, the skills are letting energy to flow and consolidating energy into internal force. In Taming Tiger the skill is to strengthen the fingers, in a more physical way, to use as tiger-claws in chin-na. In Thirty Punches the skill is to explode force from the dan tian.

For most people, it will take a few years for them to acquire the respective skills – if they even do. Only a few of them will succeed. Even when they have the skills, they may not realize it. In Thirty Punches, for example, they only know that their punches are powerful with internal force. They may not know that they have the skill of channeling their internal force to flow from their dan tian to their fists. Many would not acquire the skills and therefore do not have the result of internal force when they punch.

I took a much shorter time to acquire the skills because I was a good student and my sifu was an excellent teacher. I took only a few months to acquire the skills. This was also due to my earlier kungfu training with Uncle Righteousness before I met Sifu Ho Fatt Nam.

But at the time I did not realize I had the skills. I only knew from direct experience that my One-Finger Zen, tiger-claws and punches were powerful with internal force. It was much later after I had taught for many years that I realized with hindsight that I had the skills to let energy flow, to consolidate energy, and to explode force from my dan tian.

The result of having strong fingers for tiger-claws from training Taming Tiger was quite obvious. It was not so much as skills in the case of One-Finger Shooting Zen and Thirty Punches; it was more of conditioning. Anyway, I did not spend a lot of time in Taming Tiger because soon my sifu taught me “Fierce Tiger Cleanses Claws”, which was internal and more powerful.

As I benefited much from my sifu's teaching methodology, our students in Shaolin Wahnam also need only a few months to develop the desired skills. Moreover, our students have the advantage that the underlying philosophy is explained to them – a privilege I did not have in my own student's days. It is like having a map. Obviously one can reach his destination faster when he has a map.

An excellent way to test whether one has a skill is to experience it. To test whether you have the skill to drive a car competently is to drive a car competently. To test whether you can let energy flow along your arm and consolidate it at your finger is to do it - using One-Finger Shooting Zen or any suitable movements. To test whether you have strong fingers for a grip, or whether you can explode force from your dan tian in a punch, is to do it.

Our Shaolin Wahnam students can understand the explanation and perform the test, and they can know whether they succeed. But for many other people, not only they cannot perform the test, they may not understand what we are talking about here. The reason is that they do not differentiate between skills and techniques.

They may, for example, perform One-Finger Shooting Zen or Thirty Punches, but they may not be able to tell whether they have the skills to let energy flow, to consolidate energy, or to explode force from their dan tian. Many of them may not even have the philosophical knowledge in the first place. If they have read about such knowledge before, they may persuade themselves to believe they have the skills or ability – sometimes in glaring contrast to obvious facts. For examples, it is a fact that those who only practice kungfu forms for demonstration will be unable to use their kungfu forms for combat, but they may persuade themselves to believe that they can.

These skills are very useful in combat and in daily life. If you can generate an energy flow and consolidate it into internal force, you can handle any opponent

irrespective of age, size and gender. You can also be forceful and fast, and will not be panting for breath or become tired easily. When you have strong fingers, your grip on your opponent will be firm and decisive. When you can explode force from your dan tian, your strikes can cause much damage to your opponent.

In daily life, your skills of generating an energy flow and consolidating it into internal force will give you good health, vitality and longevity. If you are in pain or sick, you can generate an energy flow to overcome the pain or sickness. You will be able to carry on physical as well as mental activities more competently, without panting for breaths and without becoming tired easily. Your grip on physical objects will be firm, and by extension your grip on mental concepts will be sure. Your skill to explode force from your dan tian will enable you to be assertive when necessary, yet be calm and relaxed at the same time.

It is worthwhile to bear in mind that we are able to have such benefits in daily life not because of the techniques we practice in our kungfu training, but because of the skills we have developed from our practice.

Question 2

Taming Tiger, Art of 30 Punches and One-Finger Shooting Zen have formidable combat benefits. Many would not believe the internal depths. Please can you tell us about any "A-ha!" moments you had when Sigung transmitted these practices to you? And also how the benefits of these practices transcend combat application?

Sifu Andy Cusick

Answer

Many martial artists may not be aware of the formidable combat benefits in these three arts – Taming Tiger, Art of 30 Punches, and One-Finger Shooting Zen. Many people think, wrongly, that the only issue in combat is techniques.

The irony is that techniques are probably the least important factor to decide victory in combat. This does not mean that techniques are not important, but they are not as important as skills, being relaxed and calm, and fighting experience. Yang Lu Chan, the great Taijiquan master, used only a few techniques from Grasping Sparrow's Tail in all his fights, and he was always victorious. In the Xingyiquan course at the UK Summer Camp 2013, I explained to students that one could use only one technique from Xingyiquan, pi-guan, to handle any attack!

The great contribution to combat efficiency of these arts – Taming Tiger, Art of 30 Punches, and One-Finger Shooting Zen – lies not in techniques but in skills, and in enabling practitioners to be calm and relaxed. Not many people, understandably, could understand such depths.

Of the three arts, the Art of 30 Punches and One-Finger Shooting Zen develop speed and internal force, which are two of the three basic skills in combat, the other being picture-perfect form. They also contribute much to combatants being

calm and relaxed during combat.

How do the Art of 30 Punches and One-Finger Shooting Zen attain these combat benefits? They do so because of their internal training, especially in chi flow and Zen mind. Applying combat techniques in chi flow enable us to be very fast. Consolidating chi flow into internal force enable us to be very powerful, yet not tiring and not panting for breaths. Being in Zen mind enables us to be calm and relaxed.

Taming Tiger is basically an external art, though we in Shaolin Wahnam may train it internally because of our general skills and understanding. It gives us powerful grip, which enhances our combat efficiency. As the physical and the mental are closely related, though not many people may know this fact, a powerful physical grip also enhances our mental grip of any intellectual concepts.

My “aha” experiences occurred not at the time my sifu transmitted these practices to me, but later during my own training and realization.

My first “aha” experience in Taming Tiger was my realization that performing Taming Tiger with tiger-claws was more difficult than I thought than performing push-up with open palms. I could perform push-up quite well, easily performing more than a hundred times when many untrained young men had to struggle to 20. This training was a continuation of my scouting days in school, where performing push-up was part of the Tenderfoot Test, the first test of a boy scout. For a requirement of physical exercise.

So when my sifu showed me how to perform Taming Tiger, I thought it was easy. But it was not, yet my sifu, who was more than twice my age then, could perform it effortlessly.

I had two “aha” experiences with the Art of 30 Punches. The first one occurred when I was surprised I could develop so much internal force using this external method. The second “aha” experience was when I dropped my stone-locks, which were similar to but less elegant than modern-day dumb-bells, to perform kungfu sets, I could perform a sequence of many patterns forcefully and fast in just one breath – a basic requirement for combat efficiency, though not many people may know it.

I had many “aha” experiences with One-Finger Shooting Zen. One was my discovery that not only I had internal force at my index fingers, but my palms and punches were also forceful. Another “aha” experience was my discovery that I became fast and agile with my One-Finger Shooting Zen training. I did not know the reason then. It was much later that I discovered it was because of chi flow.

Another “aha” experience was when a Shaolin master of another school who boasted of his Iron Arm, could not last 3 hits when perform 3-Star Arm Knocking with me. But my most memorable “aha” experience was when I could break a brick, and a few after that, when earlier I could not break one with my more than 2 years of Iron Palm training.

The benefits of these arts transcend combat application. My mental grip of concepts derived from the physical grip of Taming Tiger enables me to attain peak performance in intellectual activities.

Those who follow our three golden rules of practice doggedly may wrongly think that intellectualization is bad. No, it isn't. In many situations, intellectualization and conceptualization are not only good but necessary. When you want to plan a marketing project, for example, you need to conceptualize, then intellectualize your concepts into statements that can be easily read and understood. But during our kungfu and chi kung training, we do not intellectualize, or do not intellectualize unnecessarily.

Developing internal force and performing a sequence of patterns in one breath can be readily transferred to benefit our daily life. Internal force enables us to perform our tasks with energy and mental clarity. Amongst many other benefits, when it is necessary internal force enables us to be assertive.

Translated into our daily life, performing a sequence of patterns in one breath inspires us to perform a complete series of actions in one go instead of performing its parts, often with lengthy intervals between the parts. This principle has enabled me to achieve many things in daily life, and provides an answer to those who wonder how I could accomplish so many things in a relatively short time.

For example, I have uploaded many videos to Vimeo. I do not upload a video, rest for a while, then upload another video. I upload all videos of a course, which may range from 30 to more than 100 videos in one go. In this way, not only I save time, I become more effective as I progress.

One-Finger Shooting Zen provides a lot of opportunities to enrich our daily life. In general, it generates energy flow and consolidates energy into internal force, besides enhancing mental clarity. These three most important ingredients can enable us to perform better no matter what we do.

If we wish to perform any physical or mental tasks, like running a company or presenting a proposal, mental clarity enables us to be clear in our aims and procedure, energy flow enables us to work the various processes smoothly, and consolidating energy enables us to perform our work with zest.

These arts - Taming Tiger, Art of 30 Punches, and One-Finger Shooting Zen – not only improve our combat efficiency but also enrich our daily life.

Question 3

I believe Sigung Ho was formerly a professional Muay Thai fighter. I wonder if there are any records of how many fights he had and so forth, I wonder if this paid well enough to be his livelihood though this is not the question, and would have had Muay Thai fighters as his students when he started teaching kungfu.

My question is did he learned kungfu after he fought Muay Thai, or had he already started learning kungfu before that? If the latter, did he find the kungfu assisted him in Muay Thai, and if the former, how did the transition occur, did he meet a great kungfu master and get a demonstration of his skills, or hear about this master through reputation.

And then finally the crux of the question, I wonder how long Sigung Ho had to practise kungfu before he could reach and surpass his Muay Thai level with his kungfu level, and how long it would have taken one of his students to do the same?

I am thinking, perhaps Sifu would have to speculate or guess part of the answer above, he may not have specifically ever asked Sigung Ho these questions, I would like to hear what Sifu would speculate, but if Sifu feels it better to answer other questions to which he has more concrete answers I would completely understand.

Also, and I have added this as an edit after re-reading everything, perhaps these questions do not apply so much to chi kung aspects taught in this course specifically, so again if there are more appropriate questions I would completely understand if Sifu answered those instead.

To try to make my question into a more chi kung aspect related question, I would ask the same thing except I would ask in terms of chi flow and internal force, how long did Sigung Ho take before the internal force derived from his chi kung made

him a more powerful fighter than he had been as a Muay Thai fighter?

Paul (Drunken Boxer)

Answer

I have no doubt that my sifu, Sifu Ho Fatt Nam, was a professional Muay Thai fighter. But I have no records of this belief. I don't have any evidence, not even a photograph, though my sifu liked photography as a hobby.

Probably photography was his hobby when he was young, or much younger. He was also a professional Muay Thai fighter when he was young, probably in his teens or early twenties. He did not tell him when he took photography as his hobby, or when he was a professional Muay Thai fighter. I first met my sifu when he was in his early forties.

I guess at these facts or opinions (if the events really happened, they were facts; if they did not happen but I thought they did, they were opinions) from circumstantial evidence. He told me that he had many cameras in his young days, that his cameras were sophisticated and expensive, and that he loved photography.

Like wushu artists, professional Muay Thai fighters were, and still are, in their teens or early twenties. By twenty five they would have retired due to injury. The difference between professional Muay Thai fighters and wushu artists was, and still is, that the former fought for money and usually did not like their art, whereas the latter perform for free and usually like what they did.

My sifu, even when he was beyond forty, was very good and fast at Muay Thai, far better than what I expected amateur Muay Thai practitioners were. Our students are quite proficient in countering Muay Thai attacks because I taught them so.

And, of course, I learned the counters from my sifu.

My sifu also told me aspects of Muay Thai fighters' life that amateur Muay Thai practitioners might not know, like many matches were fixed, Muay Thai fighters were ill-treated by their managers, often being slapped and kicked at, Thailand's national Muay Thai champions were far more combat efficient than world's international Muay Thai champions, and that fighting was more vigorous and therefore injury more serious at preliminary rounds of professional Muay Thai tournaments than at semi-finals and finals.

But the most important reason I believe my sifu was a professional Muay Thai fighter was because he told me so. My sifu never lied.

Muay Thai fighters were not well paid. But their pay was enough for them to feed themselves and their father's families. Thailand was poor, and professional Muay Thai fighters came from the very poor. Their lives were also very harsh.

I am not sure whether my sifu, when he had started teaching, had professional Muay Thai fighters as his students, but I don't think so. Some of my classmates practiced Muay Thai before as a hobby, not as a profession. As expected, they had a poor opinion of Muay Thai though most other kungfu practitioners fear Muay Thai fighters.

I am also not sure whether my sifu learned kungfu before he became a professional Muay Thai fighter. I believed he did, but it was low-level kungfu.

What I know for sure is that he gave up professional Muay Thai after he had learned Shaolin Kungfu from my sigung, Yeong Fatt Khun. At first he wanted to learn Shaolin Kungfu to improve his professional Muay Thai fighting, but he found Shaolin Kungfu so far superior over Muay Thai, not just in combat but also in many other benefits, that he gave up Muay Thai.

Shaolin Kungfu certainly assisted my sifu in Muay Thai and in combat against Muay Thai fighters. Even when he was still a student under my sigung, but probably after he had left professional Muay Thai fighting, he beat a three-time Thai national professional Muay Thai champion who came to challenge my sigung.

My sifu knew of my sigung through my sigung's reputation even when my sigung kept a very low profile. My sifu did not get any demonstration of kungfu skills from my sigung. Great kungfu masters in the past normally did not demonstrate.

All my sigung taught my sifu for over two years was One-Finger Shooting Zen, with some Shaolin patterns very occasionally. My sifu did not know the purpose of practicing this fantastic art. He practiced it daily and diligently because his sifu told him to. He learned an invaluable lesson earlier. He missed the opportunity of learning the Art of Lightness from another sifu, so when he had a rare chance to learn from my sigung, my sifu did not want to miss the opportunity.

I don't know for how long my sifu had to practice Shaolin Kungfu before he surpassed his Muay Thai level, but I guess at most it was a matter of months. With my sifu's intelligence and experience, it could be a matter of days. My sifu was not a national professional Muay Thai champion. He only reached a district level. But he was highly intelligent, and had much kungfu as well as fighting experience.

All my classmates who were regarded by my sifu as his disciples were very good fighters. Even if they started from scratch, if they trained diligently the way my sifu taught them, they could easily surpass an amateur Muay Thai fighter in six months, or surpass a professional Muay Thai fighter in one year.

My siheng, Yong, took only a few healing sessions watching my sifu's students practice while being treated by sifu for his leg injury, to give up a chance to become a top Taekwondo practitioner in the country to learn Shaolin Kungfu from my sifu. Students attending my intensive kungfu courses learn techniques to

counter Muay Thai attacks in a few days. But of course they have to practice diligently on their own to have the skills. But others who do not know the techniques may practice for years, and still fear Muay Thai fighters.

Professional Muay Thai fighters were very powerful, but their training was external and their bones, as my sifu once told me, were brittle and could be broken by another harder object. Suffering broken bones was actually not uncommon amongst professional Muay Thai fighters.

The training methods of my sifu, which we now learn, were internal, and the internal force generated was very powerful. I believe that in one year the internal force derived from his chi kung training would make him a more powerful fighter than he had been as a professional Muay Thai fighter.

When compared to us in Shaolin Wahnam, amateur Muay Thai fighters are not very powerful, though they are powerful when compared to ordinary people. Amongst themselves they exchange blows quite generously. If they were powerful, just one kick would fell a combatant, just as one strike without holding back from our students with substantial internal force would damage an opponent seriously.

There are better use of our internal force than damaging an opponent, though we must not be afraid to use it if is absolutely necessary. Fortunately it is usually not necessary. Even many kungfu practitioners may not realize it, the best uses of internal force is to give us good health, vitality, longevity, peak performance and spiritual joys.

Question 4

Dear Sifu, if you were to decide the 5 most meaningful lessons that you have received from Sigung Ho, which ones would they be?

Santiago

Answer

Without doubt and without any hesitation in answering, the most important lesson I have learned from my sifu, Sifu Ho Fatt Nam, was “sum seong si seng”, which means, word-by-word, “heart thinks events materialize”.

In the Chinese language, “sum” in Cantonese or “xin” in Mandarin pronunciation, though the written word is the same, usually means the mind. The organ inside your body that pumps blood is called “sam chong” or “xin zhang”, which literally means “storage of the mind” or figuratively “heart organ”.

In Chinese, it is the heart, not the brain, that thinks and feels. It is in English too, before modern science interfered into language. We ask, “How does your heart think”, or “How does your heart feel?”, not “How does your brain think?” or “How does your brain feel?”

So, consciousness is located in the heart. When a neurologist cuts open a patient’s head in a surgical operation, all he sees is the patient’s brain. Interestingly, many psychologists who are experts in psychology, the study of the psyche, which refers to consciousness, are moving away from the heart to the brain!

“Sum seong si seng” or “heart thinks events materialize” has long-reaching consequences for me, though at the time I did not realize its far-reaching effects. This invaluable lesson occurred not in formal classes but over leisurely conversation. If I remember correctly, Simu was with me then.

I asked my sifu, "Sifu, what is the highest art in Shaolin?"

My sifu thought for a little while. I expected the answer to be something like "Dim mak" or "Chin-na".

But he said, "Sum seong si seng." I was taken back.

My sifu continued, "Our thoughts are very important. Events materialize according to our thoughts."

This is a great, invaluable lesson to all of us. We must always have noble thoughts.

This lesson was particularly meaning to our school. When I first established Shaolin Wahnam Association, which later evolved into Shaolin Wahnam Institute, my thought was to preserve the great arts of Shaolin and to pass on their wonderful benefits to deserving students all over the world irrespective of race, culture and religion.

I did not have any idea how this could happen. I did not have any plans, not even immediate plans to expand beyond the then-unknown school out of the little-known town of Sungai Petani. Yet, events materialized according to this noble thought. Now we have more than 60,000 students all over the world, probably the most widely spread chi kung and kungfu school with the largest student population in history.

The second most meaningful lesson from my sifu was "Koi tau sam chet yow shen ming", or "When you look up three feet, you can find divine beings all around".

I believe Simu was also with me during this most meaningful lesson which also occurred over leisurely conversation, as my wife always was during my leisure time, i.e. apart from my formal kungfu lessons or teaching in schools, or teaching

chi kung and kungfu overseas – even now, more than 40 years after this most meaningful lesson.

I can't remember what exactly led to this most meaningful lesson. But I can clearly remember my sifu also taught me three crucial steps in having an impeccable conscience.

My sifu said, "A person may make sure no one knows what evil deed he does. He thinks no one knows, but he is mistaken because there are countless beings just above his head. Even if he could cheat these countless divine beings, he cannot cheat his own conscience."

"There are three steps of being righteous," my sifu continued. "First, you must be righteous to other people. Second, you must be righteous to heaven and earth. Third, you must be righteous in your own conscience."

This invaluable lesson is very meaningful to me. I am not afraid anywhere, not because I am combat efficient but because I have lived my life guided by righteousness. Except for an occasion in my childhood greediness even before I started schooling when I stole some used cigarette boxes from a friend (but later he took them back and we remain good friends), I have never done any wrong. If some people, including my students or former students, thought I did something wrong, it was because they held different values.

I have been righteous to other people, to heaven and earth, and in my own conscience. I owed this invaluable lesson to my sifu, and I am very grateful to him.

The third most meaningful lesson I learned from my sifu was One-Finger Shooting Zen. It was the exercise that led me to an understanding and development of internal force. Because of internal force, my combat efficiency improved tremendously, promoting me from what I described in another answer as a

student's level to a master's level.

At this level I could even handle kungfu masters comfortably. I found a qualitative difference between kungfu masters who could spar, not kungfu masters who only demonstrated kungfu forms, and masters of other styles. Kungfu masters who could spar had internal force, though some of them might not realize it as they practiced external arts, and they were careful about their own personal safety. Masters of other styles did not have internal force, and like their own students fought wildly with little concern for their own safety.

The combat techniques of kungfu masters were not sophisticated. But their internal force gave them a big advantage. But when I too had internal force, and I knew sophisticated combat techniques, I reversed the advantage.

Besides combat efficiency, One-Finger Shooting Zen gave me vitality and mental clarity. One-finger Shooting Zen also gave me longevity, but at that time when I was still young, the idea of longevity did not crossed my mind. But the increase of vitality was very obvious. I was literally bouncing with energy.

My next meaningful exercise was Thirty Punches with Stone-Lock. It was an external exercise, but the increase of internal force was remarkable.

I sat on a Horse-Riding Stance, held a pair of stone-locks in my hands, and punched out a fist at a time, then three punches in a sequence, then five. I made the stone-locks myself, but modern dumb-bells are more elegant. When I dropped the stone-locks and performed a kungfu set, or engaged in sparring, I was fast and powerful.

My fifth most meaningful exercise from my sifu was "yiet hei hor seng" or "executing a sequence of patterns in one breath". One evening my sifu saw me practicing Four Gates. I performed the set pattern by pattern, like what I used to

do while learning from Uncle Righteousness.

“Perform a sequence of patterns in one breath,” he said.

That was sufficient. My sifu did not have to demonstrate to me what to do. He did not even elaborate. I just acted on his instruction and found my kungfu performance, including combat application, improved tremendously.

I could progress quite rapidly because of my earlier training in Thirty Punches with Stone-Locks. When I performed a sequence of patterns in one breath, I was fast and powerful.

Executing a sequence of patterns in one breath was very important in combat application. Sequence sparring, which was a crucial factor in winning combat, was possible only when one could execute a sequence of patterns in one breath. If he fought pattern by pattern, his opponent would have time to recover himself.

This invaluable lesson helped me much in daily life. Instead of performing different parts of an activity separately, often resting in between the various parts, I performed all the necessary parts of the activity in one go. Not only I saved time, I also accomplished the activity more successfully.

For example when I gave a public talk to start a chi kung class, I performed all the necessary stages as a sequence and accomplished the task with the formation of a chi kung class. I booked a hall for the talk, bought advertisement in some newspapers, wrote newspaper articles, printed and distributed pamphlets, gave the talk, organized the class, and started teaching it.

It did not mean that there was no time lapse in between the different stages. It was necessary, for example, to have a few days between the appearing of my articles in newspapers and the talk, but all the stages were viewed as a sequence

and not as individual parts. I did not sent my articles to newspapers to be published as general knowledge, but as part of the sequence leading to my talk. All the stages were viewed and acted upon as a whole, and not as isolated parts.

Looking at the five most meaningful lessons I had from my sifu, the third generation successor from the southern Shaolin Temple, regarded by many as the pinnacle of kungfu, it is illuminating that the top two involved spiritual teaching and were taught outside of formal classes. These invaluable lessons, the best of the best, lessons that greatly enrich my daily life, were taught to me unexpectedly, neither by my sifu or me. They were taught at the spur of the moment.

The third and the fourth of the five most meaningful lessons involved energy, the second aspect of triple cultivation of form, energy and spirit, or jing, qi, shen in Chinese. They greatly contributed to my internal force, which enhanced my good health, vitality, longevity, peak performance, mental clarity, and spiritual joys.

It is worth noting that the fourth most meaningful lesson was an external exercise, operated by jin, gu, pi or muscles, bones and skin, and not the internal features of jing, shen, qi or essence, spirit and energy. Yet, it produced a lot of internal force, dispelling the misconception that internal force is only generated by internal methods.

The fifth most meaningful lesson involved form. It was executing a sequence of patterns in one breath. It made all my kungfu performance, both solo practice and combat application, functional and effective. It was not just external. To have good result, I must also be good at the three internal features of the six harmonies, i.e elegance of movement, presence of mind, and energy flow. Of course, the three external features of hands, body and feet in perfect coordination are necessary.

The meaningful lessons were not just how to neutralize a grip or overcome a throw, as some martial artists practicing a mediocre are might think. These

combat applications are basic, i.e. anyone practicing a martial art should know them, although the de facto situation today is that most martial artists don't.

Kungfu may be classified into three categories. Mediocre kungfu enables practitioners to be combat efficient. Good kungfu enables practitioners to be combat efficient, and have good health, vitality and longevity. Great kungfu enables practitioners to be combat efficient, have good health, vitality and longevity, and spiritual cultivation. The ironical situation today is that many martial artists not only are not combat efficient, as revealed by the generous blows they receive in free sparring, but their training is detrimental to their health and spirit.

My five most meaningful lessons from my sifu show what a great art my sifu taught me, for which I am forever grateful. His legacy is now taught and practiced in our School.

Question 5

Sigung kindly once shared with us a teaching of Sitaigung which says that it is important to always have good thoughts; mind thinks, events materialize. This has helped me indeed already a lot and I am very grateful for it. Nowadays I can also feel very quickly and strongly if I am having a bad thought which helps me to correct it accordingly.

Also I start to experience and realize how my thoughts have not only an impact on myself but indeed also on the happenings and people around me. I would appreciate if Sigung could tell us a little bit about the depth and breadth of this teaching.

Binia

Answer

“Mind thinks, events materialize” is the greatest lessons I have had from my sifu, Sifu Ho Fatt Nam. This teaching has helped me and many other people to have a happy and meaningful life.

This teaching is taught in both ancient wisdom and modern science. The Buddha has taught that the most important factor contributing to karma is thought. In other words what a person thinks will materialize as events.

Modern sciences teaches the same lesson. When a scientist looks at an electron, where it turns out to be a particle or a wave depends on what he thinks. If he thinks of measuring the electron as a particle, it will always turn out to be a particle. If he thinks of measuring it as a wave, it will always turn out to be a wave.

Thus, in terms of depth, this cosmic truth is taught in both ancient wisdom and modern science. Long before modern science has established itself as a

respectable disciple, the Buddha has taught that the phenomenal world is a function of thought. In other words, the world is what we think it is!

Spend a few minutes to reflect on this cosmic truth. The world is what we think it is.

Not many people can really comprehend the depth and breath of this cosmic truth. Most people regard the world as objective. A table is a table, and a mountain is a mountain, no matter how they think. But this is not so.

The cosmic truth implies that a table is a table because we think of it as a table, and a mountain is a mountain because we think of it as a mountain.

Will a table become a cat if we think of it as a cat? Will a mountain become a mouse if we think of it as a mouse? No, this won't happen on an individual basis. If an individual thinks of a table as a cat, or a mountain as a mouse, the table and the mountain will still remain as a table and a mountain.

But if all human beings throughout millennia think of a table as a cat, and a mountain as a mouse, then the table and the mountain will become a cat and a mouse! This phenomenon was well explained by the Buddha using the concept of "six entries".

Everything in the world is energy. How we and other sentient beings perceive this energy depends on how the energy enters us through our five sensory organs, namely eyes, ears, nose, tongue, skin, and interpreted by our alaya consciousness or collective consciousness. Because of the ways our eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin are constituted, and the way our collective consciousness operates, a mass of energy may be perceived by us humans as a table or a mountain. Other sentient beings, like bacteria and fairies, have different sets of "six entries". So they perceive the same mass of energy, which appears to us as a table or a mountain,

very differently.

There are also many things in the world that we cannot see or perceive because the range of energy perceptible to us is grossly limited. We cannot, for example, see bacteria and fairies, as well as the countless waves of energy that zigzag across the world and manifest on your computer as information.

When I was teaching in South America, a few students told me something very interesting. They said that the early natives did not see the Spanish fleet at sea because the natives never thought of it. A well-known scientist said, seriously, that the moon in the sky was not there when no one looked at it. This is similar to a Zen story that when a huge tree in a forest fell down, it did not make any sound if no one was present to hear it.

The breadth of this cosmic truth is very wide. It includes whatever a person thinks.

This greatest of lessons, heart thinks events materialize, has benefited me very much. I shall mention just one example here that concerns us.

When I first established our school, I had two noble thoughts. I wanted to preserve our arts for posterity. I wanted to share the wonderful benefits of our arts with deserving students all over the world irrespective of race, culture and religion.

I did not make any plans or preparation to attain these two noble thoughts. Yet heart thinks events materialize. I am happy to say that even if I were to retire tomorrow, our arts have been preserved for posterity. Our school has grown on its own to become the widest spread in all kungfu and chi kung history, with over 60,000 students in more than 35 countries irrespective of race, culture and religion.

There were a few betrayals in the history of our school. But without a single exception, each betrayal was a blessing in disguise. It set our school to greater heights.

The recent betrayal where a chief instructor left our school also confirmed the truth of this great teaching that heart thinks events materialize. He thought, but without any confirmation, that a former instructor raped some female students. This thought led to events of him severing relationship with our school. Had he thought differently, that these accusations were not true or at least not proven, events would have materialize different.

Similarly, other instructors and students influenced by the chief instructor thought of the accused as a rapist, and that I condoned his rapist behavior when in reality I honored the noble principle of regarding a person innocent until proven guilty. Their thinking led to events materializing, which resulted in their distancing from our school and family members which and whom by their own admission have given them great joy and benefit.

Heart thinks events materialize is a cosmic truth. Events will materialize regardless of how small or how great your heart thinks. Some instructors and students, for example, sought my help as they suddenly found their boss or colleagues unfriendly to them. I told them to have good thoughts. Soon they reported to me that their boss or colleagues miraculously changed.

When they start some project, some people are in the habit of thinking that they hope their project will be successful. Worse, some of them think of problems and difficulties that impede their project. They should change their thinking. They should learn from the great cosmic truth of heart thinks events materialize. They have to think that their project will be successful.

We must always use this great cosmic truth for good – for others' good and our

own good, or both.

Question 6

Can Sifu please tell us more about how training in Sigung's school was? How many students did Sigung teach and how many people trained together in a class? When I met Sisook, Sigung's eldest son, recently in Penang he told us that a minimum requirement for beginners was to sit in the Horse-Riding Stance for a whole hour. Can Sifu please tell us more about the training procedure and the progression of the students during this initial phase? How does the outcome of this approach compare to our comparatively short, but powerful stance training sessions in regards to immediate and long-term effects? We also learned about a technique that Sisook called "sleeping" which is lying between two chairs. Can Sifu tell us more about this technique?

Sifu Leonard Lackinger

Answer

Recalling my days training under my sifu, Sifu Ho Fatt Nam, is both nostalgic and memorable. They were some of the happiest days of my life, and I am eternally grateful to my sifu for his kindness and teaching.

Much of the time at my initial stage of training, I trained alone. There were no other students, and my sifu was often not present. I went to my sifu's house, which also acted as a temple, every afternoon to train. These were sessions of training, not learning.

Sometimes when my sifu was at home, he would watch me, nodded and then walked away. Sometimes he would say, "Very good, carry on!" Occasionally he would teach me a technique or two, and I would practice and practice it to become skillful.

At my sifu's house there was a big altar where many statues of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and Taoist gods were worshipped. Students voluntarily offered a joss stick — just one joss stick — at a main incense burner. Initially, due to my ignorance and arrogance, I never did that. I remember telling myself that I went there to learn kungfu, not religion. But after an intimate conversation with Immortal Li, for whom I am also eternally grateful, I always offered a joss stick before I started training.

Later I requested to train at my sifu's house at night where some of my seniors also trained. There were not many of them, usually just three or four. My sifu was very selective in accepting students, though I was quite surprised that he accepted me quite readily. I was not only the youngest in kungfu age but also the weakest. My seniors literally handled me in sparring like a small boy, though later due to my dedicated training I could put up some semblance of defence.

It may be of interest to note that before I joined my sifu's class I could beat all other martial artists in free sparring. But then I chose my sparring partners carefully, and I did a lot of homework before I sparred. With hindsight, this was the seed of my 30-opponent programme.

With foresight, this may inspire our family members in Shaolin Wahnam of the tremendous depth of kungfu. It was not without good reasons, and certainly not due to vanity but with much frustration, when I said that it was not difficult to beat other martial artists in free sparring — if our family members confidently used kungfu, and put in a bit of free sparring practice.

All my four sifus, who were patriarchs in their arts, placed a lot of importance on the Horse-Riding Stance. Some of my seniors came to class just to practice the stance. Indeed, most of the time of training of my seniors was either force training or combat application. There was not much time spent on set practice.

However, I did not have to spend much time on stance training with Sifu Ho Fatt Nam. This was probably because my stances were already good. My sifu asked me to show him the stances. He said they were good, and he moved on to other aspects of kungfu training. In fact he taught me Lifting the Sky before even asking me to show him the stances. After seeing my stances, he taught me One-Finger Shooting Zen. I still remember very well what he told me right at the start.

“One-Finger Shooting Zen is very important in Shaolin training,” he said. “It developed two of the most important of the Shaolin arts, dim mak and tiger-claw. Here we teach the best right at the beginning so that you have sufficient time to practice. Practice it every day. ”

Right at the beginning of my kungfu career with Uncle Righteousness, I knew the Horse-Riding Stance was very important. “People in the past practiced only the Horse-riding Stance for at least a year or two,” I was often told, even by people who themselves did not know kungfu. But I did not know in details why was stance training so important. I only knew that the stances formed the foundation of kungfu, but did not know why.

Later I discovered that stance training sunk our chi to our dan tian. All kungfu movements were built upon stances. It developed internal force. Much later I discovered that it also developed mental clarity.

The Horse-Riding Stance in Sifu Ho Fatt Nam’s school was different from that in most other kungfu schools, like the one I learned from Uncle Righteousness. Sifu Ho Fatt Nam’s Horse-Riding Stance was higher and narrower, and was pyramid shaped. Uncle Righteousness’ Horse-Riding Stance was lower and wider, and was box-shaped.

Interestingly, the Horse-Riding Stance I learned from my other two sifus, Sifu Chee Kim Thong and Sifu Choy Hoong Choy, was also high and narrow. But at that time

I thought of them as a particular Horse-Riding Stance for Wuzuquan and a particular Horse-Riding Stance for Wing Choon Kungfu, and not as Horse-Riding Stance in general. I associate the Horse-Riding Stance in general with the one I learned from Uncle Righteousness, as most other kungfu schools, especially Hoong Ka, also performed the stance in this way.

Thus, I was initially surprised why Sifu Ho Fatt Nam's Horse-Riding Stance was quite high. But as a good student, I just followed what my sifu taught me.

The higher and narrower Horse-Riding Stance was certainly more comfortable. It was later after I had started teaching that I discovered that the higher and narrow Horse-Riding Stance, which gave it a pyramid-shape, better facilitated cosmic energy to be accumulated at the dan tian, thus building internal force.

Students at Sifu Ho Fatt Nam's school practiced individually, not in a group, i.e. each student practiced his kungfu on his own, though often they paired for sequence training or free sparring. They also arrived at and left the school at their own convenience, though they might leave at the same time to end the night session.

Students usually started their training with stances and One-Finger Shooting Zen. This was how I usually started my practice too, though my sifu did not spend time formally teaching me the stances. Next they practiced their own kungfu set, or part of it. Often they started with Four Gates, the fundamental set, or part of it. Then they got a partner to practice combat sequences or free sparring, or practiced force training on their own, like rubbing their arms against hard edges of pillars and Iron Palm.

Students seldom practiced a whole kungfu set, but go over again and again some sequences in the set. Hence, sequence sparring came naturally to us. Weapon training was seldom. The weapon most frequently practiced as the Ho Family

Flowing Water Staff.

The training procedure I went through was “ku lian”, or “bitter-training”. Ku-lian i.e. enduring long hours of training before one could get a little benefit, is also the approach of most kungfu practitioners in the past as well as today, including those who practice kungfu forms for demonstration or bounce about in free exchange of blows. But my ku-lian certainly gave me more benefits than to most other practitioners.

In contrast, the training procedure of our students in Shaolin Wahnam is a big joke. We tell our students not to train too hard, least they over-train. We tell our students that achieving just 30% of what they achieved while learning in courses taught by me is sufficient to meet their needs. We tell our students to enjoy themselves — and we really mean it.

Yet, despite such enjoyment and less time in training, our students get more benefit than I got when I was a student. And by extension, as I was a very good student with a high level of attainment, our students have more benefits in less time than most other practitioners. Indeed, as some of our instructors have rightly commented, many of our students do not realise how very lucky they are.

Our approach is simply ridiculous in regard to both immediate and long-term effects. Students who practice stance training in my courses experienced internal force discernibly immediately after the training session. In my student’s days in Sifu Ho Fatt Nam’s school I would need about 3 months to experience similar internal force. With Uncle Righteousness who was famous for his fighting, and with Sifu Chee Kim Thong who was famous for his internal force, I did not feel any internal force after training the Horse-Riding Stance for many years!

Students who attended my courses would experience a chi flow on the very first day of their training. It took me more than a year training with Sifu Ho Fatt Nam

for me to experience a chi flow, and it was nothing like what our typical students now experience. I did not have any chi flow training with my other sifus.

Internal force is the essence of good kungfu. Chi flow is the essence of any chi kung.

The long-term effects of our students are marvellous. After training in our school for a year, internal force enables our students to attain peak performance, chi flow enables our students to overcome illness, and to have good health, vitality and longevity.

Until I trained with Sifu Ho Fatt Nam, I did not experience any internal force earlier although I underwent stance training delicately. Hence, I cannot say that internal force contributed to my peak performance in my earlier years.

When I was sick in my earlier years, which was actually seldom, I had to take medication. I did not know that chi flow could overcome illness. More importantly I did not know that chi flow could prevent illness.

Once when I was injured by my siheng in free sparring, my sifu, Sifu Ho Fatt Nam, who was an excellent traumatologist, applied medication on me for six months. If I had a chi flow immediately, I could have flushed out the injury in less than half an hour!

More significantly, chi flow gives our students good health, vitality and longevity. I have no doubt that my kungfu training, despite without chi flow in my earlier years, has contributed greatly to my good health, vitality and longevity, but I did not know the philosophy of how it worked as our students know it now. I also did not know in my student's days how to transfer the benefits of my kungfu training to enrich my daily life, although it must have done so unknowingly, as our students now do.

The technique of lying between two chairs is called “tit pan kiew” in Cantonese or “tie ban jiao” in Mandarin, which means “iron-plank-bridge” in English. It is a very powerful internal force training method. My sifu taught me this method secretly. I don’t know whether he also taught other students.

When I accidentally placed my arm or leg on my wife, she complained that it was very heavy though I did not intentionally apply any force. This gave an idea how powerful “iron-plank-bridge” was.

Actually I almost forgot about this training method, though at the time when I learned from my sifu, I practiced it diligently every night. One reason is that we now have so many effective force training methods which are certainly more comfortable.

Question 7

Can you share with us what Sigung Ho Fatt Nam himself practiced and how he practiced, both as a young man with Sitaigung Yang Fatt Khun and later in his life?

Sifu Markus Kahila

Answer

I don't know in details what and how has he practiced as a young man with my sigung or later in his life, but I shall answer to the best of my ability based on what he told me.

My sifu practiced many types of kungfu as well Muay Thai and Silat. I am not sure whether he practiced other martial arts like Karate, Taekwondo, Boxing and Wrestling, but I don't think so.

My sifu had seven teachers, but I don't know how many were kungfu masters and how many were masters of other styles. I also don't know whether he practiced kungfu, Muay Thai or Silat first, but I know he was a professional Muay Thai champion.

There was, and still is, a big difference in fighting skills between a professional and an amateur. Being a professional champion, my sifu's fighting skills in Muay Thai must be very good. He depended on fighting in a Muay Thai ring for his livelihood.

I don't think my sifu's attainment in Silat was high. He hardly talked about it.

My sifu told me that he wanted to learn Shaolin Kungfu from my sigung, Yang Fatt Khun, the second generation successor from the southern Shaolin Monastery at Quanzhou of South China, so as to improve his Muay Thai fighting skills. But he found Shaolin Kungfu so far superior to Muay Thai that he gave up Muay Thai and

focused on Shaolin Kungfu.

I don't know much of my sifu's other teachers except the one who had mastered the Art of Lightness. To compensate for missing the chance to continue learning the Art of Lightness due to his youthful ignorance, his simu, i.e. the wife of the master of the Art of Lightness, taught my sifu the Seven-Star set.

My sifu's training was the traditional "ku-lian" or "bitter-training" type. When he was an apprentice to the master of the Art of Lightness, he had to carry his master's luggage and walked for miles from town to town as his master was a traveling medicine man. Every morning when he brushed his teeth, he had to sit at the Horse-Riding Stance with a basin of water on his thigh. If he dropped the basin, he would have to go some distance to fetch water for his washing.

My sifu told me that at that time he did not realize the essence of kungfu training was internal force and combat application. Like most other practitioners, he thought, wrongly, that kungfu learning was a process of learning more and more kungfu sets.

After learning his unforgettable lesson when he missed the chance of accomplishing the Art of Lightness, my sifu promised himself that if had an opportunity to learn from a great master again, he would just follow his instructions.

Hence, when my sifu found my sigung, he just did what my sigung said. My sifu told me that my sigung taught him One-Finger Shooting Zen, and except for some occasional patterns, my sigung did not teach him anything else. My sifu had to attend my sigung's class every night and practice One-Finger Shooting Zen for more than two years.

He said, "Someone practicing Taekwondo would have obtained his black belt by this

time, but I had to practice just One-Finger Shooting Zen every night for more than two years. My friends teased me saying that again every night I had to go to piss.” (The shss sound in One-Finger Shooting Zen is like persuading a child to pee.)

My sifu was richly rewarded in his diligent practice. Not only he had developed tremendous internal force, but also had inherited the almost-lost art of dim mak.

My sifu’s kungfu was abundantly tested. You can read about his many combat experiences in my autobiograpny, “The Way of the Master”.

The one that had the deepest impression on me was when more than 35 armed attackers wanted to burn his house and kill his family. He fought them off single-handedly with a spear. It was like a kungfu movie, but was recorded in offical police archive.

Question 8

I have heard Sigung state previously that Sitaigung Ho was a "Master of Mind".

What were the relative contributions of Sitaigung Ho's (a) personal character, (b) Kung Fu practice and (c) innate capacity for spiritual development that Sitaigung Ho was born with, in achieving the extraordinary level of being a "Master of Mind"?

Are there factors other than the three I have listed that should be considered when discussing the extraordinary level which Sitaigung Ho achieved? If there are, would Sigung be kind enough to elaborate on them?

Sifu Kevin Barry

Answer

I am just a master of energy, but my sifu, Sifu Ho Fatt Nam, was a master of mind, which is of a higher level. My sifu was very highly accomplished in kungfu, chi kung as well as spiritual cultivation, and I am forever grateful to him for his kindness and teaching.

As a person my sifu was an excellent model of clear conscience. Indeed much of my moral training was not from his direct teaching, but indirectly from his daily example.

One of the deepest impressions his teaching has on my moral development was when he told me that we must always be very clear in our conscience.

"Whatever we do," he once told me, and my wife was with me at the time, "we must have a clear conscience towards all humanity."

“Even if we could cheat all humanity,” he continued, “we could not cheat heaven and earth.”

On another occasion he told me in Cantonese, “khai tau sam chet yau shen ming”, which word-by-word means “lift head three feet have divine beings”, which is figuratively, “there are countless divine beings all around us.”

My sifu continued that “even if we could cheat all divine beings, we could not cheat our own conscience.” This is a priceless lesson for me, and which we cherish in our school. It makes me fearless, not because of my combat efficiency but because I have done no wrong.

My sifu’s kungfu was excellent. He once told me, in his typical humbleness, that he had defeated all challengers, and there was one occasion in a weapon combat where there was a draw. This was a friendly combat between him using a staff and a Punjabi master using an odd weapon that resembled a bunch of ribbon-swords.

The combat that most impressed me was when more than 35 attackers came to burn his house and kill his family. It was like a kungfu movie except that it happened in real life. Not only he fought them off using a spear, but also he had to defend his family and prevent them from burning his house.

My sifu was so compassionate that he did not want to hurt them, but seeing that they refused to go away, he had to wound the leader to scare them away. He thrust his spear onto the side of the leader and blood gushed out. All the attackers then ran away. Had he missed by a few inches and pierced the leader’s liver or kidney, the leader would be killed.

My sifu was a spiritualist by profession. People from all walks of life consulted first the Monkey God, and later Immortal Li, through my sifu as a medium, for advice. My sifu told me in secret that he was a reincarnation of Golden Boy, one of the

two personal attendants of Guan Yin Bodh Satt, the Bodhisattva of Great Compassion, the other personal attendant being Jade Girl.

Once my sifu had a fatal accident, and he actually died. But the Buddha saved and revived him. The Buddha asked my sifu to return to our phenomenal world to help people and save lives. Skeptics are of course free not to believe such amazing stories, but they were personally told to me by my sifu himself, whom I know never lied. After completing his mission on earth, my sifu happily returned to heaven.

We are indeed very privileged and honoured to have such an amazing patriarch in our school.

Question 9

What did Sitaigug Ho look for in his practice of internal arts?With kindest regards,
Sifu Anton Schmick

Answer

I did not ask my sifu this question when I was learning from him. So my answer here is based on my speculation, which in turn is based much on my conversations with my sifu.

I guess my sifu just practiced diligently and delicately what my sigung taught him, especially after he had promised himself when he lost the opportunity to learn the art of lightness from another master that he would just follow his sifu's instruction if he ever had a good opportunity to find an excellent one.

I was not sure whether my sifu knew my sigung was the second generation successor from the Shaolin Monastery at Quanzhou when he learned from my sigung, but based on the stories my sifu told me, he certainly treasured my sigung's teaching dearly.

At the time of his learning, my sifu, like most masters when they were students, might not have differentiated between external arts and internal arts. But there was no doubt that in his later years when I learned from him, my sifu knew clearly what was external and internal. This was because he often told me that external training concerned tendons, bones and muscles, whereas internal training concerned essence, energy and spirit.

I would guess that in his later years what my sifu looked for in his practice of internal arts was to enhance his combat efficiency. This is also what most kungfu practitioners look for when they practice any internal arts. It was also the same with me when I was a student and in my early years teaching in Shaolin Wahnam

Association, the fore-runner of our school, Shaolin Wahnam Institute.

The concepts of practicing internal arts for spiritual cultivation and for peak performance in our daily life were not in my mind, nor in my sifu's mind. It was only during my years of traveling and teaching that the ideas of internal arts for spiritual cultivation and for peak performance in daily life gradually materialised.

Now these two concepts, together with the practice of our arts for good health, vitality and longevity, have become the hallmarks of our school, and they set us apart from all other chi kung and martial art schools.

But this did not mean that our practice of internal arts did not contribute to my sifu's and my spiritual cultivation, peak performance as well as good health, vitality and longevity. Indeed the internal training contributed greatly, but at the time of my sifu's and my training, we were unaware of these concepts and philosophy.

My sifu was a spiritualist. But I believe this was due to his Taoist cultivation, and later his Zen cultivation, though practicing the internal arts must have contributed greatly.

Question 10

You mentioned Sigung Ho replaced sleeping with sitting meditation in his later years. What was his goal? Was he aiming for enlightenment? Was Sitting Meditation taught to all students in Sigung's school? Or was it reserved for special students?

Sham.

Answer

My sifu just told me that he didn't sleep in his later years but performed sitting meditation, which was more than enough to replace his normal sleep. As it was a causal talk, I did not ask him why he performed sitting meditation instead of sleeping normally. At that time my understanding of spiritual cultivation and Enlightenment was nothing like what I know now. So the idea of asking whether his aim was for attaining Enlightenment was never in my mind.

Nevertheless, I could guess at his answers if I had asked him, but I didn't. My answers were based on my knowledge of my sifu from my time spending together with him, including a lot of conversations. He would probably have said that it was not to aim at Enlightenment. He did sitting meditation instead so as to replace normal sleeping to be charged by cosmic energy.

Sleeping is the normal way of being charged with cosmic energy for most people. When people sleep, after a lot of tossing about and dreaming, much of which they could not remember, they remain perfectly still for about 15 minutes at dawn when the sun was about to rise. This was the time when cosmic energy is at its best. This is also the time when people are perfectly still in their sleep. So they are charged by cosmic energy, in the same way we charge our cellular phones. The amount of energy received by people in such charging will be enough for their daily use.

It is interesting that I also discovered independently that 15 minutes of daily chi kung practice would be sufficient for our students daily needs. It was because our students were in a chi kung state of mind, which was similar to people in their perfect sleep.

So instead of sleeping normally to attain the perfect sleeping state to be charged by cosmic energy, my sifu sat in meditation in a chi kung state of mind and be charged by cosmic energy. which would be sufficient for his daily needs.

I did the same thing for a month when I wrote my book, "The Art of Shaolin Kungfu". When my publisher asked me to estimate the total number of words for the book, I placed it at 75,000 words. But when i completed the manuscript, it turned out to be 150,000. My publisher was kind enough to grant me a month to shorten the manuscript. But my writing was not verbose. To shorten 150,000 words to 75,000, I would have to leave out many passages that I would not like to miss in the book.

So I set to write a new book in one month. At that time I was still working as a school teacher. So apart from about 6.30 to about 2.30 for my school teaching, and apart from quick lunch, dinner and shower and 2 hours of nightly kungfu teaching, I worked at my new manuscript from about 2.30 in the afternoon to about 6.30 the next morning every day for a full month without sleep, but substituted by about 10 to 15 minutes of sitting meditation.

I managed to complete my new manuscript in time, and the manuscript was published as "The Art of Shaolin Kungfu". The original manuscript, which was initially meant for "The Art of Shaolin Kungfu", was later published as "The Complete Book of Shaolin".

Not only I was not tired and I could maintain my sanity, I actually found that I had more mental clarity and energy. I could successful write an informative and

readable book, and spar with my students like Mogan and Kowi Being who had a lot of internal force. It was an excellent testimony to our wonderful arts. It was also an excellent testimony that 10 to 15 minutes of meditation would provide us with sufficient energy for our daily needs.

Question 11

Thanks so much for your immense generosity in sharing such marvelous treasures! Did Sigung Ho achieve Enlightenment?

Smiling from the heart,
Sifu Angel G. Perez Oliveras

Answer

The answers not only are beneficial to our instructors and students but also beneficial to me. They enabled me to crystallise my thoughts and present them in a coherent manner.

Without false modesty the answers are indeed marvellous. They reveal secrets that only enhance our arts but also enrich our lives.

I believe my sifu, Sifu Ho Fatt Nam did not attain Enlightenment when he left this world. It was not because he did not have the ability to attain Enlightenment but because he did not want to. He preferred to return to heaven to be the personal attendant of Guan Yin Bodh Satt, the Bodhisattva of Great Compassion, as Golden Boy.

My sifu had a special mission to reincarnate as Ho Fatt Nam in our phenomenal world. Besides saving countless people and giving invaluable spiritual lessons, he helped us to preserve the legacy of the Shaolin arts.

Enlightenment, with a capital "E" as used here, means perfect Enlightenment, i.e. the perfect merging with the Great Void without any differentiation.

If we use enlightenment with a small "e", as many people use the term, my sifu was highly enlightened. He had cosmic wisdom, and knew exactly where he came

from and where he would return to.

The term “enlightenment” as used in English and other Western languages, like the Age of Enlightenment, has another meaning. This period was from about 1620 to 1780. Here, enlightenment means reasons or intellectualisation. This was a period where reasoning, intellectualisation and analysis were emphasised as opposed to traditional authority. Some famous philosophers who promoted the Age of Enlightenment were Francis Bacon, Rene Descartes, John Locke, Voltaire and Immanuel Kant.

It is worthy of note that reasoning and intellectualisation were required to attain Enlightenment in the Western sense, but in the Buddhist and Eastern sense there should not be any reasoning or intellectualisation to attain Enlightenment. If reasoning or intellectualisation is present, aspirants remain in the phenomenal world, and will be thwarted from attaining Enlightenment.

Perhaps a major reason why so many Westernised people today, including modern people who live geographically in the East, have a lot of wandering thoughts, to the extent that they have become stressful, is the pervasive influence from the Age of Enlightenment. Hence, if you want to be at peace, to be free from unnecessary stress, you need to control your wandering thoughts. One excellent way is to enter into a chi kung state of mind, or to attain a Zen mind, which all instructors and students in our school, Shaolin Wahnam, can do very well.

Question 12

Is Sitaigung one of the Immortals? How does he became one of them? Is it possible that we, in our school, receive his blessing? Is it any way we can express our gratitude to Him?

Karol

Answer

If we use the term “immortal” to mean a heavenly being whose life span is “eternal” by human standard, as we normally use the term, yes, my sifu, Sifu Ho Fatt Nam is an immortal. His earthly life as Ho Fatt Nam was a reincarnation of the immortal, Golden Boy. On hindsight, now I realize why my sifu always looked so youthful even in his ripe old age.

Golden Boy is one of the two personal attendants of Guan Shi Yin Bodh Satt, or the Bodhisattva of Great Compassion. The other personal attendant is Jade Girl.

I don't know how my sifu, in one of his early lives, became an immortal as Golden Boy. It must have happened long ago.

My sifu told me that he was a reincarnation of Golden Boy in his later years, and it was supposed to be a secret. He did not specify that I kept it a secret, but he asked me not to reveal it indiscriminately so as to avoid unnecessary criticism.

But now I feel it is only fair that our Shaolin Wahnam Family members know the truth. The truth is that my sifu personally told me he was a reincarnation of Golden Boy, and I knew for a fact that my sifu never lie. Of course, as it is a tradition in our school, no one is obliged to believe it if he is skeptical.

Criticism from other people is not my concern. If they do not even believe that

kungfu can be used for fighting, chi kung can be used for overcoming so-called incurable diseases, and internal force is real, why should I be concerned if they do not believe that my sifu was a reincarnation of Golden Boy.

Actually I myself do not know much about Golden Boy. I also do not know whether Golden Boy was the same as Red Child who is often worshipped as a god of wealth. But I know that my sifu was not wealthy, despite his very high levels of accomplishment in kungfu and healing.

Yes, it is not only possible but we, in our school, do receive his blessings. Again, many other people may be cynical about this statement, but many divine beings, like the Bodhisattva of Great Compassion, Immortal Li, and the 18 Lohans, actually have come to our classes and courses to bless us.

It is legitimate to ask how we know of these blessings by divine beings. In principle it is the same as asking how do you know when a mentor has visited your house, or a doctor has cured you of an illness. The answers to all these questions are the same. We know from direct experience.

If a mentor has visited your house, you know it from direct experience. You also have the benefits bestowed by the mentor. If a doctor has cured you of an illness, you know it from direct experience, and you do not feel the sick symptoms you felt before. If divine beings have blessed you, you know it from direct experience, and you feel greatly blessed.

It is appropriate to mention that such blessings from divine beings are often not isolated happenings to a particular individual. Many people in the same class or course also have the same experience.

A good way to show our gratitude to their blessings is to live the type of life that they will be proud of us. Bodhisattva of Great Compassion is famous for her great compassion. Immortal Li is kind and helpful to others. The 18 Lohans are peaceful and happy. My sifu was outstanding for his clear sense of conscientiousness.

So if we exhibit these qualities in our daily life, like being compassionate, kind, helpful, peaceful, happy and have a clear sense of conscientiousness, we can express our gratitude to them. In practical terms we live by our Ten Shaolin Laws.