

January 2007

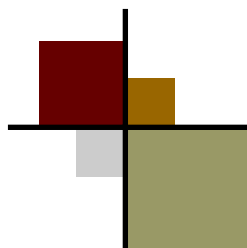


Special points of interest:

- A "Thank You" from the ACMAF
- Grandmaster Shyun demonstrates the 8 Stances!
- Visit our website www.8step.com
- We need your pictures!

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ACMAF Newsletter

A "Thank You" from the ACMAF

By Richard Myrvik & Nicholas Willan

The concept of time is no longer what it once was, nor does it seem as if it will revert back to its primordial past. We are living in a period where the concept of time has changed from days and months to minutes and seconds. The demands on time have changed over the years and the study of martial arts is affected by change like anything else.

As a student of kung fu, one must contend with many demands such as school, a job, family functions, and many other activities. Given the intrinsic nature of kung fu and the number of hours needed to become successful in understanding and attaining the wisdom held within, a student of kung fu has few options when it comes to time spent elsewhere. Unfortunately, as your instructor can tell you all too well, there is nothing we can do to change this. The more successful a student is and the higher level a student grows,

the more physically and mentally demanding the techniques become, hence, the more physically fit and focused one needs to be.

Think back to your first night of class, were your legs in shape to do a low horse stance for more than 30 seconds or crossing leg stance more than once? As Grandmaster Shyun once said when we were discussing martial arts training, "Say for instance that I teach you right now how to punch through a brick wall. I could teach you down to the smallest detail on how to do this. Do you know what would then happen if you then walked over and punched a brick wall? Yes, you would break your hand, just because the knowledge is in your brain doesn't mean the body is ready to perform the action."

As instructors of the ACMAF we understand the time constraints necessary to become successful in kung fu and the number of hours you

as students, parents, or family members must sacrifice. So, it is with this concept of time in mind that all of the instructors of ACMAF would like to send our gratitude to the students, parents, and family members who support someone spending countless hours training. Whether you drive back and forth picking people up or sit at home while a loved one is at the kung fu school, continuous study of a martial art is not an easy task. This is probably why no one ever accused 8 Step Preying Mantis or Shyun Tai Chi as being a physically easy art to study. Without the support of their families our students would find the task even more difficult to accomplish.

Again, to all the students and families our thanks cannot be enough. It is through your dedication and support that we succeed. ☯



Self Defense for the Real World

By Lee Yokota

Protecting the lives of ourselves and others has always been a high ideal of the martial arts. I have often envisioned myself rescuing a beautiful damsel in distress with my formidable skills, defeating several vicious villains, and getting the girl in the process. I would be lying if this scenario does not still run through the back of my mind, but, as often is the case, reality is not as fantastic as the worlds we create with our imagination. Few martial artists will find themselves in the position to honorably defend against a ferocious foe. Think about it. How many fights do we really get into after we pass our adolescence? Most of us will not be harmed by gangsters, thugs, or crazed maniacs.

Today, we have much more frightening enemies that mean to shorten our walk on this planet. Heart disease, obesity, diabetes, and a long list of other diseases take more lives every day than violent crime. According to the American Heart Association's estimates for 2003, approximately 71 million people have some form of cardiovascular disease. Obesity rates are higher than they have

ever been and are on the rise. Despite technological advances in medical science, disease is running rampant in our society and is the likely the biggest opponent we are ever going to face.

In the past, martial arts were taught to help defend property from bandits. Today, the same martial arts are still defending us against a different bandit. This new fiend is after more than the season's crops and some valuables. These diseases are after your most precious possession—your life. Just as we can defend against would be assailants with our martial arts prowess, the same skills can defend us against disease.

Fitness level, stress, and dietary habits greatly affect our risk for cardiovascular disease. The martial arts are a great way to increase cardiovascular fitness and reduce stress levels. A complete martial arts system, such as Eight Step Preying Mantis Kung Fu, encompasses everything you need to live a full, active, and healthy life. Eight Step has exercises that will get your heart pumping and also has stress reduction techniques that

are among the most effective available today. Eight Step Preying Mantis also incorporates Abimoxi, an ancient Chinese form of medicine. Abimoxi not only teaches a person how to treat disease, but how to live a life free of it.

Recent research suggests the mind, body, and spirit are interconnected and can affect one another. Eight Step Preying Mantis has long known this to be true. The body is useless without a mind to run it. The mind is useless without a sense of purpose and drive. Eight Step strives to keep these forces in balance. The ACMAF's goal is to spread this knowledge to the public so as to have a healthier, positive, and more productive society.

Traditional Eight Step Preying Mantis has always met the needs of society. Its original development was for self preservation and that still holds true, now more than ever. Our ability to keep ourselves healthy and vibrant, not only enriches our lives, but the lives we touch. So keep training because you never know, your life might just depend on it.



**Grandmaster Shyun
Demonstrating
Horse Stance**

“A complete martial arts system such as Eight Step Preying Mantis Kung Fu, encompasses everything you need to live a full, active, and healthy life.”



**Grandmaster Shyun
Demonstrating
Bow Stance**

Preserving Kung Fu Traditions (Part 1)

By Wade Sirles



**Grandmaster Shyun
Demonstrating
Tiger Stance**

“The term kung fu...originally meant any skill that was attained through great effort.”



**Grandmaster Shyun
Demonstrating
Mantis Stance**

In the Orient, a unique form of personal combat and martial philosophy developed unlike any other combat method throughout human history. Most of the martial arts today have evolved from the Chinese combat arts popularized today as kung fu. Granted, historical influences on Chinese martial arts range from Mongolia and India, the Chinese made it profoundly distinct in character. However, not all kung fu traditions have survived the passage of time, not all have retained the depth of their historical roots, and not all have maintained ties to their original artistic expressions.

This article is the first part in a series over viewing the preservation of kung fu traditions. To begin, what are kung fu traditions? A quick search of the word “tradition” on the Internet reveals a long list of slightly varying definitions, such as, “an inherited pattern of thought or action” or “a cultural, technological, or stylistic pattern that has consistency and identity over time.” We may just know that anything traditional has been practiced for a long time, usually within a specific cultural envi-

ronment. The term kung fu (*pronounced gōng fu* 功夫), although currently associated with the combat styles developed from ancient Chinese warfare, originally meant *any skill that was attained through great effort*. To practice kung fu did not just mean to practice a form of fighting, but also a process of training – strengthening the body, mind, and the learning and perfecting of skill. So when I refer to kung fu traditions, I am speaking of sets of practices and teachings (thought and action) for perfecting skill and cultivating the mind and body, which were derived from Chinese combat methods and carried on generation to generation.

Sounds wordy and somewhat vague, but kung fu traditions go beyond mere combat methodology to encompass a deeper history of philosophy and traditional customs (Traditional Chinese Medicine, Chinese Languages, Chinese Classical Literature, Lion dances, Chi Kung, Taoism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and more.). Its rich heritage is central to why kung fu traditions deserve to be protected from cultural extinction,

but how they are preserved is just as important as why they should be preserved. History demonstrates the ebb and flow of kung fu traditions through veteran to neophyte, from master to student, to those whom received authentic instruction to those taught a falsity, and of course through war and death. Old masters set the precedent of disclosing the full extent of their knowledge to only one disciple. If many years of education were needed to prepare one person for total comprehension of a kung fu system, then it is easy to see why many authentic kung fu traditions are now lost traditions for not all masters lived long enough to ensure such continuance.

Keep in mind several questions that will be addressed in later parts of this series: *Can kung fu be preserved solely through practice or can it be archived and kept safe? What elements of traditions are tangible and what are intangible; are there different means to preserving each? Can kung fu traditions be subject to change, or must kung fu traditions be kept within a Chinese cultural context to remain genuine?*

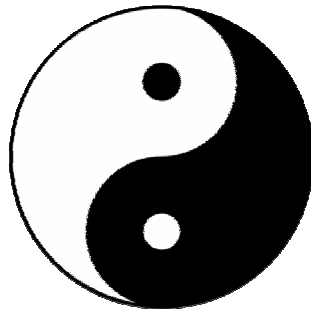
Abimoxi: Understanding Yin Yang Theory (Part 1) By Nicholas Willan

This is the first in a series of short articles that will hopefully explain some of the mysticism and misinformation regarding Chinese medicine. Each article will shed some light on a new topic regarding Abimoxi and hopefully leave the reader with a sense of understanding and connection between the concept of Abimoxi and the reality that lies within.

The idea of yin and yang is quite simple; the theory behind it however is far more complex. The iconic symbol of the yin yang is a circle made up of both black and white. It appears as a double curve forming the letter "S" between each color. At the heart of each section is a solid circle of its opposite color: black inside white, white inside black.

This unmistakable symbol represents more than just the black and white outer surface. Yin and Yang can be represented by many elements. Yin is typically thought of as dark, sinking, water, cold, etc., whereas its opposing but complimentary force yang is represented as bright, rising, fire, hot, etc. The concept of yin and yang is not simply a

concept in ancient Chinese proverb, but can be seen in our everyday lives. Take for example, day and night. This fundamentally superficial part of nature that we all take for granted is intrinsically yin and yang. As well, the sun and moon which are the fundamental components of day and night are yin and yang.



In the realm of martial arts yin and yang typically represent hard and soft. As martial artists and as humans we want to categorize styles as internal/external, hard/soft, or attacking/defending, etc. Hence, we tend to place different martial arts styles in essentially yin and yang categories.

In the field of medicine this idea of yin and yang and the fundamental principles which apply are very much the same. We can categorize humans as being hot or cold, weak or strong,

sick or healthy. This categorization can be taken a bit further in that when understanding illness a person can have an excess or be deficient. For example, spending all day on the beach or in a park and getting sunburned would be considered a yang excess. Another example could be spending a great deal of time making snow angels and having snowball fights. Being out in the cold is no different than being out in the sun. This could cause a person to have yin excess, hence too much cold. These examples are the extremes, but follow the standard principles of yin and yang. These principles are explained below.

Yin & Yang Follow 6 Simple Principles:

(1) Yin and Yang balance each other. Neither predominates, a harmony exists.

(2) Yin and Yang co-exist. Yin reflects yang and vice versa (eg. inward function has outward manifestations). Mutual dependency (eg. support of nutrition (yin) allows the function (yang) of the organs). Deficiency of one causes deficiency of the other.

(Continued on page 5)



Grandmaster Shyun Demonstrating Crossing Leg Stance

"Our bodies and the environment in which we choose to live, naturally engage in a balancing act which makes Abimoxi medicine a complex, yet fundamentally clear-cut form of medicine."



Grandmaster Shyun Demonstrating 50/50 Stance



**Grandmaster Shyun
Demonstrating
Falling Stance**

Expect the next

ACMAF

Newsletter

to arrive

March 1, 2007



**Grandmaster Shyun
Demonstrating
Single Leg Stance**

Understanding Yin Yang (Part 1) cont...

(3) **Yin and Yang can exchange quantitatively.** If yin or yang is expended, the opposite releases to keep up with the loss.

(4) **Yin and Yang can exchange qualitatively.** A transformation occurs (eg. extreme yang transforms into yin, and vice versa).

(5) **Yin and Yang undergo infinite subdivisions.** An infinite series of subdivisions occurs (eg. yang possesses a yin and yang component and each of these also has a yin and yang component, and so

on).

(6) **Yin and Yang can block each other.** During an imbalance of yin and yang, the stronger prevents balancing from occurring (eg. excessive yang prevents yin from balancing the excess).

Our bodies and the environment in which we choose to live, naturally engage in a balancing act which makes Abimoxi medicine a complex, yet fundamentally clear-cut form of medicine. ☺

We Need Your Help!

We need your help! ACMAF is looking for pictures to put in our newsletter and on our website. If you have a picture of yourself or your classmates doing a technique, sparring, or in a stance we want to see it!

Please send all pictures to Sifu Nicholas Willan via email (sifuwillan@gmail.com) or give the picture to your Instructor and have them send it to the above email address.

We look forward to seeing all of you in the newsletter or on the web in the future!

Don't Forget to Visit www.8step.com!

- View photos of students and instructors from around the U.S. and Canada
- See the latest rank advancements
- Learn the principles of 8 Step Preying Mantis and how you can apply them to your everyday life
- Read vast array of articles and the first chapter to all the books
- Learn specific training techniques to improve your martial art ability
- Read past ACMAF Newsletters
- Stay up to date with the latest news and information from the ACMAF

Acknowledgements:

On behalf of the American Chinese Martial Arts Federation, wholehearted thanks and gratitude go out to the following:

- Grandmaster Shyun for allowing us to take part in his life and vision
- The Disciples for standardizing the material and providing smoother acquisition of the information
- To all of the Sifus for their dedication in teaching and furthering the public's awareness of Eight Step Preying Mantis Kung Fu, Abimoxi Medicine, and Shyun Style Tai Chi
- The students and parents who make all of this worth while, "Thank You!"

ACMAF Newsletter Committee:

Supervisor

Richard Myrvik

Editor

Nicholas Willan

Editor

Wade Sirles

Staff Writer

Lee Yokota

Staff Writer

Daniel Finley