

September 2007

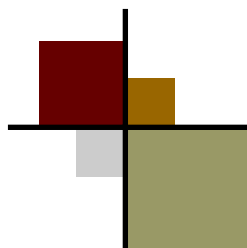


Special points of interest:

- Learn and understand your own fears
- Read Asa Tenpow's Journey to the World Championship
- Visit our website www.8step.com

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ACMAF Newsletter

Sifu Highlight — Jack Skutnik, South Amboy, NJ

Q. Please tell us a little about yourself and your school.

My involvement in martial arts goes back to when I was fascinated as a young boy of 9 or 10 (can't remember that far back) watching Wide World of Sports and seeing these men demonstrating fantastic feats of martial arts such as breaking boards, taking on multiple opponents, etc. I was picked on as a boy and wanted to learn how to defend myself. By the time I was 12, I bought some books, one in particular an old Bruce Tegner book on self defense. My brother and I practiced in the basement everyday, and we picked up some good practical moves from the book. Then all the movies came out with Bruce Lee as I became a teenager and that inspired me even more. I begged my dad relentlessly to take me for lessons and finally he broke down and took me and my brother for lessons two times a week. I studied

Chito Ryu Karate for about 3 years and made it to brown belt. I had a wicked side kick back then and that was my move I used in many situations.



The Karate school closed and I went to college. After college I joined a martial arts club for a couple of months but just like the Karate school, the club closed. My brother then found a TKD school and I wound up joining. I became very good in it and made it to Master rank. I eventually went on to buy a martial arts school of my own, broke 1000 boards in 39 minutes for charity, and hosted numerous tournaments, etc.

A few years went by and I called Dean Economos [a sifu who was once apart of the ACMAF

Federation] about a high school reunion, he showed up and I showed him the school I now owned. We began conversing about the techniques each of us had and his techniques were amazing. He told me to throw a punch or two so I did and he grabbed my arms, twisted me up, and yanked me down to the ground. He explained it was 8 Step Preying Mantis Kung Fu. From that moment I was hooked. I had to learn this magnificent system of martial arts.

I attended seminars in Buffalo, New York with Grandmaster Shyun and eventually started teaching a class in 8 Step Preying Mantis Kung Fu. I continued to train under Grandmaster Shyun and beginning in 1997, the ACMAF began hosting Sifu camps each year to standardize the system for future generations.

Q. What do you enjoy about teaching Kung Fu and Tai Chi?

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Fear in Martial Arts

By Tom Sumbera

I decided to write this article about fear based on some of the experiences I've had during my practice, teaching, and everyday life. Fear according to the dictionary is defined as a powerful unpleasant feeling of risk or danger, either real or imagined. From a medical point of view fear is a chain reaction in the brain that starts with a stressful stimulus and ends with the release of chemicals causing a racing heart, fast breathing, and energized muscles, among other things. This is also known as the fight-or-flight response. The stimulus could be a little bug, a knife at your throat, or simply another human being. Among people you can find many different types of fear and phobias. Fear is a defensive emotion and helps us to survive. For example, if you see something dangerous—your blood goes to big muscles (such as your legs) allowing you to run faster. Also your body freezes up for just an instant allowing the brain to decide if another reaction would be better (such as hiding). In your brain, hormones are released centering the attention on the threat and always looking for the most accurate reaction. This response is fine

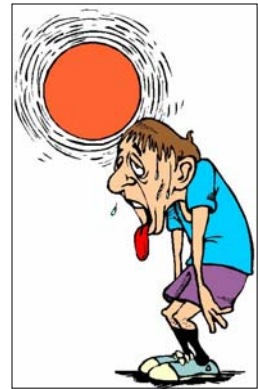
with lots of dangers around us, however, in the martial fighting arts, you have to face this reaction of fear. You cannot afford to freeze up and have that deer in the headlights look while someone is charging you. Also, activation of your sympathetic nervous system (fight-or-flight) can disrupt your clear thinking, judgment, and act as a block for all your hard trained reactions that you are supposed to do in order not to get hurt.

According to Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) extreme fear injures the kidneys. Fear also affects the heart and produces general dysfunction of chi. As a result heart chi is said to “wander about, adhering to nothing.” This scattering of chi is very opposite of what we try to achieve while practicing Mantis Kung Fu and Shyun Tai Chi. So, what do you do during the practice in class? How do you train your body not to be afraid of punches, kicks, and throws? Well, you are already doing it! From the beginning you learn by practicing certain drills. For example, the simple sun punch—side block drill or young sparrow form. During the

training drills your body and mind constantly get use to seeing punches and kicks going towards your face, body, and psychology. Throwing and joint locking definitely eases fear of falling and breaking your bones. A lot of drills and exercises in Eight Step Kung Fu have multiple purpose on your body and psychology. Also, one of the very important subjects in our system is that you have to work with another human being so that you can understand your own body. This is why we don't spend a lot of time hitting a bag. Punching bag will help you only up to a certain point, although it will not help you with how another human body can react and project some of the fears.

Another aspect of training that can cause you to develop bad fears is free sparring. Eight Step uses a lot of controlled drills, where you develop certain reactions to different kinds of attacks. In these controlled drills you can experiment and explore your body reactions, different levels of speed, and your own fears. These drills are practiced with different body types of your opponents in controlled

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On average, it takes a person 2 hours of non-stop walking (80 calories/hour at 3 mph) to burn off the calories and sugar from a 12 oz. Can of Coke (160 calories).

“Fear is a powerful, unpleasant feeling of risk or danger, either real or imagined.”

DID YOU KNOW:

Black, green, and oolong teas are all derived from exactly the same plant. The difference in taste and color come from their processing.



The Chinese character for Autumn

Fear in Martial Arts cont...

By Tom Sumbera

environments of your school, but most important in the right state of mind. By this I mean the state of mind where you're learning and experiencing new things, not a state of mind where you try to hit your opponent, try to win, or compete and fear of being hit.

In my opinion free sparring should be used only to test yourself, or as a sort of self check. On the other hand, free sparring should be fearless and as close to real situation as possible. This way you can prepare for situations where you can control your fears and your true skills should come out.

During my practice I came across many practitioners of many different styles of martial arts, however, most of them in sparring looked like kickboxers. It is okay for kickboxer to look like that when fighting, but not for Tae Kwon Do, Karate, or Kung fu practitioners.

Grandmaster Shyun told us once that when you overcome fear of death you will not be afraid of facing anything. It took me a long time to understand this, and see the effect of fear on myself

during dangerous situations in everyday life.

When I was young I was afraid of many things: monsters, ghosts, the dark, etc. Today, I know better throughout my experience and practice. However, now that I am an adult, new fears are trying to settle inside of my mind; fears that never scared me as a child such as illness, losing my job, cancer, death of family members, etc.

Little do those fears know, that thanks to kung fu, I have a secret weapon against them.

In conclusion, fear affects our bodies and mind. These effects can be changed through our practice to the extent that some fears would never enter our mind and body. Our system of Praying Mantis has many exercises and drills, we just have to be aware of them. These exercises can without question prepare you and your fears for many real life situations. Ultimately, if you are not afraid of death you will never loose. Death can kill you, but it cannot defeat your Eight Step spirit!

In this article I did not mention one very impor-

tant aspect of fear—breathing control. I left out the breathing purposefully because I intend to write a further article on this. Breathing in martial arts is a very broad subject that you will read in my next article. So, I will finish with the words of Grandmaster Shyun, "Practice, practice, practice."

Until next time, good luck! ☺

Acknowledgements:

On behalf of the ACMAF, 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!"



Sifu Jack Skutnik (Continued from Page 1)

What I like about teaching is helping people improve themselves and help build their confidence. Eight Step Kung Fu flows from one movement to the next with maximum efficiency and is practical for self defense situations. Plus it gets everyone in great shape!

My Tai Chi students love coming to class. I have a small group but they've been coming for five years or more.

Their feedback let's me know the Tai Chi really helps them feel better to relax and reduce the stress from their busy lives.

The Federation is growing and the system is in place so sifus who graduate and teach can continue to learn every year. Also, the Abimoxi medicine really makes our system complete, since you can't find this sort of thing anywhere else.

Kung Fu & Tai Chi are what I enjoy the most in life. It is a way of life. We have a great group of people in the federation and I enjoy attending our yearly camps. I appreciate all that Grandmaster Shyun has sacrificed over the years to help us learn and grow and I am happy to be part of this great 8 Step Kung Fu Family.

Thank You for allowing me to participate in the newsletter. ☺

Road to the World Championship

By Lee Yokota

The International Kickboxing Federation (IKF) held its Ninth World Classic Amateur Kickboxing Tournament this past August 10-12, 2007, at the Marriot World Center in Orlando, Florida. Fighters came from all over the world to compete in this prestigious event (it is the largest amateur kickboxing tournament in the world). Fighters representing North and South America, Europe, and Asia all made sure this was the most exciting year yet.

This year, the IKF World Classic offered three different rule styles in which fighters could choose to compete. The first category was full contact rules in which

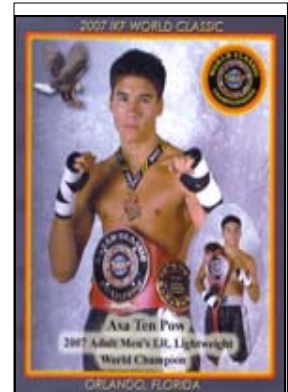
fighters can only kick above the waist. The next category was international rules where a fighter can perform roundhouse kicks to the legs. Finally, the Muay Thai rules consist of the same basic rules as international rules except you are allowed to throw knees.

Kung Fu USA of Lake Park, Florida was also in attendance this year. Sifu trainee Asa Tenpow was scheduled to fight for the men's lightweight (130-140 lbs.) world title in international rules after defeating 17 year old Muay Thai fighter Robert Berstler in the state qualifier at Lake City, Florida. Tenpow had to move up to the adult

class because his scheduled fight went down in weight and wanted to fight Muay Thai rules. This was Tenpow's first fight in an adult class (he's only 17 years old).

The event kicked off with some point kickboxing matches, showing the talent of future kickboxing hopefuls. There were two rings set up for the fights, which were needed as there were over 300 fighters scheduled to fight this year. Ring one was dedicated to full contact rules kickboxing. Ring two was set for international rules and Muay Thai. A slight delay in the fights on Saturday was due to ring two collapsing while

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Asa Tenpow who trains exclusively at Kung Fu USA in Lake Park, Florida, defeated three contenders to become the 2007 IKF Men's Lightweight International Rules World Amateur Kickboxing Champion. Congratulations Asa!

Asa Tenpow: Champion (Continued from Page 4)

being tested. Luckily, the IKF officials do this test and no one was hurt as a result. Ring two was back up and running at about noon that day and fights went off without a hitch.

Tenpow was called to the pit (place for fighters to warm up before their fights) and began warming up at about 2:30 pm. His first fight would be against 19 year old Zein Alziyapi fighting out of Detroit, Michigan with a record of 7-3-0. Alziyapi gave Tenpow a glaring stare down during the explanation of rules and looked ready to brawl. Alziyapi came out with a burst of speed at the sound of the bell with a flying roundhouse kick at Tenpow's head. Tenpow blocked the kick and countered with a right cross. At the beginning of round two, Alziyapi showed his athleticism and came flying out with that roundhouse kick again. Tenpow moved easily out of the way of this kick and shook his head at Alziyapi to let him know that it was not going to work on him. Alziyapi did not heed this warning and tried the flying roundhouse kick again. Tenpow side-stepped with a right hook that sent Alziyapi slamming to the ground with

a loud thud causing the referee to give him an automatic eight count. In the third round, Tenpow continued to fluster Alziyapi with punching combinations. He won the fight by unanimous decision and moved on to the championship bout scheduled for the next day (Sunday).

Sunday was championship fight day. The energy in the air was a little more intense and anxious than the day before. Fighters were stretching out and warming up (most of them were just a little stiff from their fights the day before). Tenpow's next fight would be against 27 year old Jessy Jimenez from Camp Verde, Arizona with a record of 1-1-0 after defeating 29 year old Marlon Telmo of Fairfield, California the day before.

The first round began and both fighters tested each other out. Tenpow scored impressive points with kicks to the legs and combination punches to Jimenez's head and body. The second round came with both fighters coming out fast and strong, Tenpow getting the best of the exchanges again. The third round began and both fighters looked a

little tired. Tenpow evaded Jimenez's strikes and countered. He moved quickly and effortlessly around the ring and at one point did a Bruce Lee like shuffle that pleased the crowd and followed up with a side kick to the stomach of Jimenez. A unanimous decision made Tenpow the men's lightweight international rules world amateur kickboxing champion (he will hold the title of world champion until challenged or until next year's event). He trained very hard for this fight and his feat is even more impressive because he has won an adult title as a junior fighter. Kung Fu USA of Lake Park, Florida looks forward to seeing Tenpow in future fights and defend his well deserved title.



DID YOU KNOW:

A person will die from total lack of sleep sooner than from a lack of food! Death will occur after about 10 days without sleep, while starvation takes a few weeks.

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