



Dragon Nhuis

A FEW OF THE MANY FACES IN OUR CUONG NHU FAMILY



Dragon Nhus

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Our Indomitable Cuong Nhu Family

By Shawn "Smack" McElroy

When I talk about Cuong Nhu to prospective students, the conversation often revolves around training, health benefits and financial costs of our program. Only after people join do they realize that they have become part of something more -- a very special family. If new students stick with us, as time goes by, they come to realize how much they can depend on their new family for growth and happiness and, most importantly, in times of need.

In the past year, Sung Ming Shu Dojo was able to show that talk about a Cuong Nhu family is far more than words. We shared some difficult times and I feel honored and enriched from having been a part of it.

Last year a dear friend and Cuong Nhu martial artist, Luis Caamano, passed away. He suffered a heart attack while training at the dojo. He would be in intensive care for several weeks before leaving us. During that time, his Cuong Nhu family stepped up and showed him that we are truly a family.

Devastated by the news, the members of Sung Ming Shu came together to support his loved ones. I have never seen the giving, compassion and support extended by our members following Luis' tragedy. Every day a member of his Cuong Nhu family was by his side. Every day meals were arranged for the family. Every time Luis' family needed to leave the hospital a member of our dojo would help them get done whatever needed to get done. And, when he finally moved on, the entire dojo mourned, but we also helped celebrate the life of our friend.

Luis' memorial service was held at our dojo. His teachers and fellow students performed the katas required for his next test. That night, Luis passed his test and was posthumously promoted to black belt. His belt was given to his wife and son. During this difficult time I learned just how tight our family can be, and from the selfless acts of students, like Seth Plockelman, I learned more about how to give of myself to those in need.

The bonds of our family were once again evident last December. Sensei Doug Storm went into the hospital for surgery. During his recovery the Sung Ming Shu family stepped in to help every way it could. I was there for Sensei Doug's

surgery and feel privileged to have been part of his support team. I thought back on what I had seen when Luis was in the hospital and wanted to be there for Doug the same way Sung Ming Shu had been there for Luis. Doug is my Sensei and my friend. He has taught us so much about how to work with people, how to deal with difficult situations and how to give back to the community. There was no way I wouldn't be there during this difficult time.



Sadly, another test of our family came on a windy morning just a few weeks ago in April. It was Tuesday morning and Chris Butler was driving to his aunt's house for a morning cup of coffee. The sky was clear, with only a few big puffy clouds drifting across the sun. A recent storm had cleaned all the pollen from the air, and soaked every inch of the ground. Chris was driving his white Toyota down a small side street -- the same street he had taken every Sunday on his way to church. In a random act of nature, a 100 year old tree uprooted itself and crashed through the roof of his car. He was killed instantly.

Chris had spent two years in the army and had recently become engaged. He had just been cleared to test for his 2nd green stripe. At 21, Chris was just beginning his life -- one that ended so unexpectedly and so abruptly.

The loss of this fine young man tore through the hearts of Sung Ming Shu. But once again we stood together as a family. The grief has been extreme, as it was with Luis, but so has the support. As we mourn our fallen friend, I watch as our students and teachers continue to offer their time and energy to comfort the family and loved ones devastated by their loss.

In spite of all the sadness, good has come from these tragedies. In all, it's helped us reaffirm how important it is to reach out and help, especially when it's family. In the words of Sensei Carlos, "Hug more, damn it!"

With all we've gone through, have I become a better person in the past year? I would have to say yes. Surrounded by the love, compassion and sense of giving I've shared with my Cuong Nhu family how could I not?

West Coast Training Camp Report



The 2010 West Coast Training Camp, hosted by Rohai Dojo, took place Friday and Saturday, September 24th and 25th in Alameda, California. Over 140 Cuong Nhu enthusiasts attended, coming from throughout the country. Eight of the top instructors in Cuong Nhu were there, along with Grandmaster Quynh Ngo.

Training opportunities included Sparring Strategies with Grandmaster Quynh, Kenjutsu (sword) Techniques with Soshi Jason Backlund, and by special request, Master Lap Hoang taught two-part classes for both Tiger Form and the partner long stick form Van Ly. Other specialty classes were taught by Masters John and Ricki Kay, Mike Ponzio (the kids got a treat - an autographed tonfa, handcrafted by Master Mike), Sensei Joe Varady and Sensei Anne Ponzio.

The Bay Area head instructors, Sensei Didi Goodman of Redwood Dojo, Sensei Terri Giamartino of Hoa Sen Dojo and Master Allyson Appen of Tuyet Tan Dojo, provided strong local support.

It wasn't all work, however. The traditional Friday night dinner at a nearby Mexican restaurant, and the Saturday evening potluck, provided ample social time to talk about the classes and hear the instructors tell some tall tales.

WCTC is like a smaller version of the IATC, giving West Coast students who can't travel east a chance to experience the style's top instructors and their classes. Attendance by out-of-town students and instructors of all ranks only makes it better. It's not too early to make plans to come this fall, so mark your calendars.

The 2011 WCTC is set for Friday September 30 and Saturday October 1 in Alameda, California Contact Rohai Dojo-via email at rohaidojo@earthlink.net, or by phone at 510-526-4880-for details on official lodging for the event. *tn*

- John Burns

Photographs by Linda Nikaya. For more WCTC photos from WCTC by the very talented see a portfolio of her work on pages 11 - 12.



Dragon Nhus Wins National Award

Dragon Nhus was awarded a 2010 National Apex Award for the 2009/2010 issue. Apex awards are a national competition that draws competitors from throughout the world. They are awarded for publication excellence in graphic design, editorial content and overall communications effectiveness. Dragon Nhus won in the Print Newsletters category.

And While We're Patting Ourselves on the Back

In an email exchange with the editor of *Martial Arts Success Magazine*, Managing Editor John Corcoran wrote,

"I must admit that you have a first-class publication. Not only are the images clear and crisp, but the layout and the literate text are both highly polished and professional."

"I've seen so many of the amateur-eyesore types in our field over the years that your newsletter is a very pleasant surprise."

Congratulations to publisher Grand Master Quynh, the entire Editorial Board as well as our administrative staff. (That would be Jessica.)

Beaches Celebrates Its 30th

Time flies, as they say. Ask Beaches Cuong Nhu; it just turned 30.

It was in July 1981, when Master Kirk Farber, then a recent black belt, decided it was time to open his own school in Atlantic Beach, Florida. He aptly named it Beaches Cuong Nhu.

From a pretty humble start – 800 square feet shared with a dance studio – less than 10 years later the school occupied 6,000 square feet, with more than 200 students. The school came to be one of the most respected schools in Cuong Nhu, as well as in the martial arts community.

Over the years, beaches has offered classes six days a week, in both hard style and soft style. Contributing to the Beaches long legacy include:

- John Dipietro (started in 1981, still active today)
- Bert Miller (started in 1983, still active today)

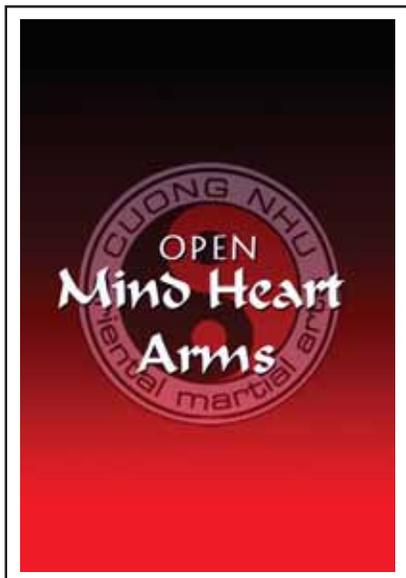
- Mayor Fland Sharp (helped put down the original wood floor in 1983)
- Jennifer Hammock (first female black belt from school, and senior rank in soft style classes)
- Peter Carrick (involved with NFMAA tournament circuit and big helper with children classes)
- Joel Stein (received his Sandan at 67 years old, and taught many students 'tenacity and perseverance')
- Nicole Brown, Bucky Shimp, Adam Hendry (first group of youth black belts in 1992)

Since opening, the school has trained more than 100 black belts, some of whom have gone on to be instructors at other Cuong Nhu schools.

Congratulations – and many more. Gang!



Young Headquarters Students Show Their Understanding of the Three O's



This past Christmas "Cuong Nhu World Headquarters" decided to do something special for children in the Jacksonville community. It

turned out to be a wonderful way to show young students how to put the Three O's into action in their daily lives. We asked all the children in our kid's program to bring in their "mildly used" toys so we could help make the holidays a little brighter for less fortunate kids. The toy drive lasted four weeks – with the excitement growing every week as the young students got more into the spirit of giving, challenged by the idea that more is not always better.

In the end, we filled five extra large boxes with specially picked fun toys. The quality and types of toy the students were willing to part with was inspiring. Best yet, was the proud look on the faces of our very young Cuong Nhu practitioners as they surveyed what they accomplished.

Grandmaster Quynh expressed how proud he and the other Senseis were, reminding all of us about the importance of giving freely to others, and remembering to show gratitude for all the gifts and joys we have in our daily lives. On our last collection day we loaded up the boxes and several of our students delivered the toys to a downtown children's center, where many of the residents are without a home, and in some cases, have absent parents.

Several weeks later we received a letter of thanks that still hangs in our dojo. It serves as a reminder to all of our members to be thankful for their daily blessings and how we can all make a difference – and put the three O's into action. *tn*

- Jessica Bruno

Brains and Breasts: Protecting Our Favorite Body Parts

By Sensei Dawn Miller MHA, PT, ATC

Instructors: student safety in the dojo is one of your prime responsibilities, but do you know why certain precautions are important? For instance why is it so important to wear a mouthpiece? To protect my teeth? Well, yes and no.

The more important reason is to protect your brain. Teeth are definitely important, but the fact is, they're both fixable and replaceable. Not so much with the brain.

Your jaw attaches to your skull at two very small points – the little spot just in front of each ear. This area is sometimes referred to as the “knockout zone.” A direct blow to either area jars the brain, can render you unconscious and cause traumatic brain injuries, ranging from a mild concussion to cerebral hemorrhage – bleeding in the brain. This bleeding can damage brain cells, leading to physical and mental disabilities, even death.

A properly fitting mouthpiece sits on the back molars, so if there is a hit to the jaw, the force is absorbed by the mouthpiece, preventing the back teeth from banging together, greatly reducing the risk of a concussion.

There are several types of mouth pieces. Stock mouth guards, the one-size-fits-all type you buy in sporting goods stores, offer the least protection. Avoid them.

The “boil and bite” versions are better and typically most practical for most of us. You boil the mouth guard in water, then put it in your mouth and bite down (shaking off the hot water first, of course). The heat softens the material so it's roughly shaped to your teeth and mouth. (Instructors, make sure to tell your students not to “trim” the back ends of the mouthpiece – if it isn't between the back molars, it won't reduce the risk of concussion.)

But, the absolute best protection is a custom mouthpiece made for you by a dentist. Using a cast of your teeth, the dentist creates a mouth guard that's a precise fit for your mouth. The problem is, custom

mouthpieces are pricey – but so are monthly cell phone bills.

Priorities.

Brain cells are not replaceable; the number you have as an adult is all you get; and, most scientific research shows they don't grow back.

This brings me to breasts. (Okay guys, stop the snickering.)

Sparring in Cuong Nhu is non-contact, and while

there's the occasional and unintentional light/medium contact, even then, for the most part, women in Cuong Nhu typically don't wear chest protectors while sparring.

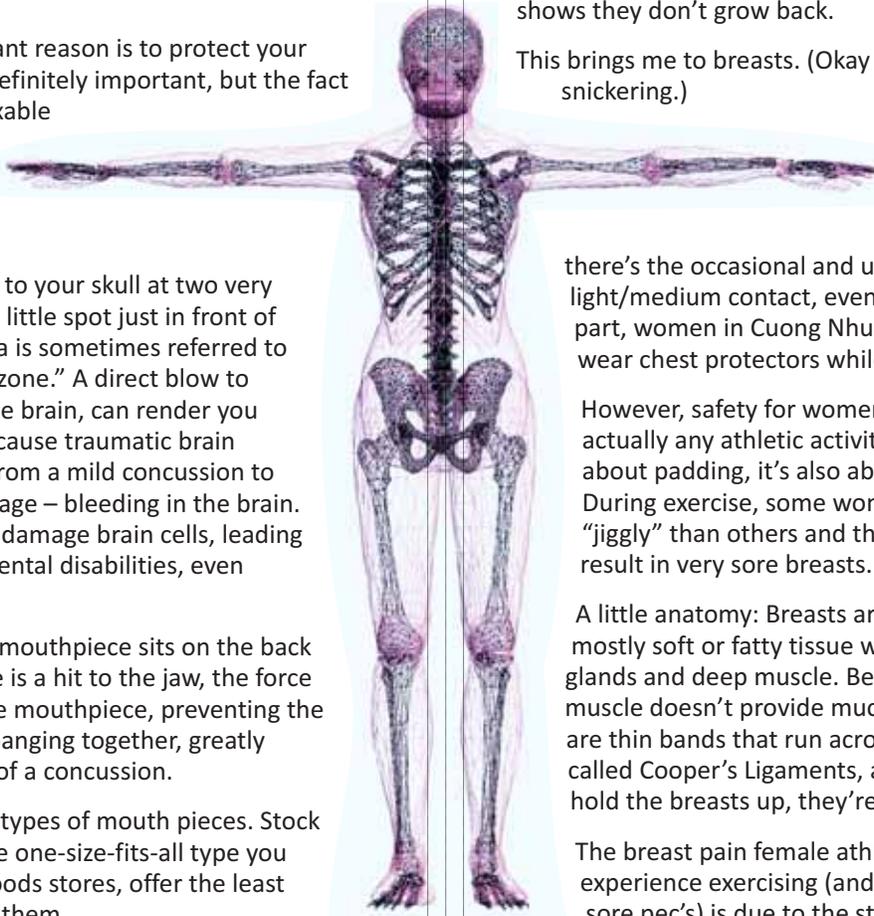
However, safety for women in martial arts -- actually any athletic activity -- isn't solely about padding, it's also about support. During exercise, some women are a bit more “jiggly” than others and this bouncing can result in very sore breasts.

A little anatomy: Breasts are composed of mostly soft or fatty tissue with mammary glands and deep muscle. Being deep, the muscle doesn't provide much support. There are thin bands that run across each breast, called Cooper's Ligaments, and while they help hold the breasts up, they're not very strong.

The breast pain female athletics might experience exercising (and I'm not talking sore pec's) is due to the stress bouncing breasts place on soft tissue, and stretching of your Cooper's ligaments – which also causes sagging, especially as you get older.

This soft tissue can actually tear and cause scarring. In a mammogram, the scarred tissue can look like an abnormality and may warrant a biopsy – and then all the stress and anxiety you'll experience waiting for the results. Inversely, since mammograms are two dimensional, this scar tissue might block the mammography from showing a real abnormality.

Look for a sports bra that's designed for high-impact activities (for which martial arts training definitely



Continued on next page.

qualifies), one with nonbinding seams and edges, and made from a moisture-wicking fabric.

A few good tests to ensure proper fit: Put your running bra on, and clap your hands over your head. If the band of the bra slides up your torso, it's too tight. To reduce bouncing, look for a bra that encapsulates each breast into a distinct cup. This does not mean a hard plastic "cup" but just that each breast has its own "side" like a regular bra.

Test the bra by jumping up and down in front of the dressing room mirror. Select the one that allows your breasts to move the least, but still feels comfortable. Finally, to make sure the straps are supportive, they should be wider than a normal bra – at least ½ inch, wider for larger cup sizes.

Again instructors, it's your job to make training safe.

So if you have a student with a little too much bounce, ask one of your higher ranking instructors to take her aside for a girl-to-girl chat about support, in the context of injury prevention.

That said, man-up guys and don't just dump this off on the women in your dojo. While it's good to have a female instructor for the 1-on-1, everyone -- including the men – should hear these things, especially those who aspire to instruct.

Here's a little help getting started: spend a few moments at the start or end of class talking about personal safety while training, and proper fitting equipment. Bring it up while stretching. Here's a simple script to get you going, "You need to remember that safety is an important part of martial arts training. For men, that means groin protection, when sparring or doing applications. For women, female Cuong Nhu instructors and runners recommend always wearing a sports bra in class – not just for sparring – for comfort and safety."

See guys, it's pretty simple. You can say "bra" without being embarrassed or sounding creepy.

As an instructor, you can help your students avoid preventable injuries. So, brains and breasts, two parts we all like and should protect! **™**

Dawn Miller is an instructor at Whole Headquarters Dojo in Jacksonville. She is a licensed physical therapist and certified athletic trainer.



UCF Cuong Nhu Fundraiser Seminar for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital

On Feb. 19 the Kim Hiep Si dojo hosted a martial arts seminar in collaboration with St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. The event was held as a fundraiser to benefit the fight against pediatric cancer. St. Jude's is a leading center of research and treatment for pediatric catastrophic diseases.

Instructors and students from all across Florida came together in the spirit of learning, teaching, and charity. The instructors shared their wisdom and mastery of different martial arts in several one-hour sessions. Sensei Ian Pinkerton, a Judo instructor, shared his skills and insight into Judo and how it is effectively applied as one of the seven styles in Cuong Nhu. Master Ulysses Ellis led a seminar focused on proper form and etiquette in Cuong Nhu. The event was concluded by Sensei Anh Ngo with a seminar focused on sparring techniques and tactics.

This successful event was a wonderful opportunity for all participants to practice the eight principles outlined in the code of ethics of Cuong Nhu. All proceeds from the event went to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. **™**

History of the Cuong Nhu Empty Hand Kata

By Joe Varady



Kata, or forms, are the trademark of many Asian systems of martial arts including Kung Fu and Karate, and a big part of our Cuong Nhu training. The word "kata" is used to describe a choreographed sequence of techniques performed as if against imaginary opponents, but it may come as a surprise to some people that kata were not always practiced the way they are today.

When forms originated in China more than 500 years ago, they began as short, two-person sets designed to practice very realistic self-defense applications.

The individual two-person sets were then strung together to form longer forms, often representing the entire lexicon of a style's fighting techniques.

These Chinese forms were usually very long, taking several minutes to perform, and were designed to develop stamina and strengthen the body as well as to practice fighting techniques.

Chinese forms eventually found their way to the small island of Okinawa, where they were adapted to suit the purposes of the native inhabitants.

The renowned karate masters "Bushii" Matsumura and his student Itosu "Anko" Yasutsune, modified or developed many of the forms practiced today.

The new, and modified forms also proved easier to teach when karate kata were first introduced to the school children of Okinawa as part of their physical education program starting in 1905, and later introduced to the Japanese by Gichin Funakoshi in 1922.

Knowing the history of a kata helps you understand the original intention of the form and discover the secrets and essence of its techniques. O Sensei Dong was a scientist and a philosopher in addition to being an avid martial artist. He undoubtedly put much thought into the selection of forms for his style. Why did he choose the ones that he did? Let's take a look at the



Bushi Matsumura

origins and characteristics of some of the forms in Cuong Nhu. (In the next edition we'll take a look at basic forms and those unique to our style.)

The Pinan Kata

The Pinan Kata are a series of five empty hand forms created by Itosu "Anko" Yasutsune in Okinawa in the early 1900s.

One story about the creation of the Pin An Katas is that in his youth Itosu learned a kata called "Chiang Nan" either during a trip to China or from a Chinese man living in Okinawa and from this longer, traditional form Itosu created five Pin Ans. The more likely inspiration for Itosu's Pin An katas was from the Bassai, Kanku and other similar



Itosu Yasutsune

katas. All five Pin An kata were loosely based on an I-shaped embusen, or floor pattern, characteristic to most of Itosu's kata.

He called these new forms Pinan, Chinese for "safe from harm" or "peaceful mind."

The five Pinan Kata were introduced into the school system of Okinawa in 1905 by Itosui, and later in Japan, renamed Heian, or "peaceful mind" by Gichin Funakoshi.

Today, the Pinan/Heian Kata form the core of many Japanese karate



Gichin Funakoshi

styles as well as Korean systems such as Tang Soo Do.

Jutte

Jutte is an older Tomari-te kata and

probably has its roots in China.

The name means "ten hands", and is often interpreted as meaning that one who masters this form fights with the strength of ten men, or that he or she will be able to defend themselves against ten men.

Some suggest that Jutte finds its origins in Arhat Chun Fa (Monk's Fist Boxing) and is related to White Crane Kung Fu. However others speculate that a Chinese monk named Jion-Ji traveled to Okinawa in the 1800's and taught Kamerei Sakugawa, teacher of "Bushi" Matsumura, who then taught it to Itozu "Anko" Yasutsune. Still others believe Sakugawa learned it on his own travels to China.



Empi

Empi is a White Crane-style form practiced in Cuong Nhu as well as other styles such as Shotokan Karate. Empi translates to "Flying Swallow" and is one of the few forms left from the lost Okinawan style of Tomari-Te. The most

commonly accepted theories about the creation and development of Empi are that it was brought to Okinawa in 1644 by a Military Attaché, Master Wang, or "Wang Sifu." His personal fighting strategy was to throw his opponent to the ground and jump on them. The form he left behind became known as "Wanshu," and was known as the "dumping kata." Gichin Funakoshi later changed the name of the form to Empi when he moved to the Japanese mainland in the early 1920's (he changed the names of many of the kata to make the art more palatable to the upper classes of Japanese society, upon whose support Funakoshi relied on for the success of his Okinawan art.)

He felt that the "feel" of the kata, especially the upward and downward movements and the quick shifting of stances, was similar to the movements of a flying swallow.

Chinte

Chinte, Japanese for "beautiful hands" or "rare hands"(despite an unsuccessful attempt by Gichin Funakoshi to rename it 'Shoin') is the 12th kata picked by O Sensei for training from white belt to black belt.

Chinte includes more advanced – and less common – karate hand techniques used for striking vulnerable points on the body. Since none of the previous forms emphasized vital point striking, Chinte is a critical kata in Cuong Nhu and the perfect culminating form for the kyu rank curriculum. From Chinte, students learn techniques that can be applied to the rest of their training, allowing them to greatly improve their effectiveness in self-defense.

While we don't have an exact date of origin, we do know that, along

with Jutte and Empi, Chinte is one of the older forms that we practice. The opening movements suggest it may have come from Chinese Wudang or Wu Tang, "internal" martial arts, originating with Tai Chi, in China's Wudang Mountains. This influence is reflected in the Chinte's large circular movements.

The effectiveness of the hand techniques in the form (i.e. two-finger strike, thumb knuckle strike, etc.) comes from technical prowess rather than raw force.

The purpose and origin of the unusual series of hops at the end of the form has been a common point of contention. Some believe the hops were added

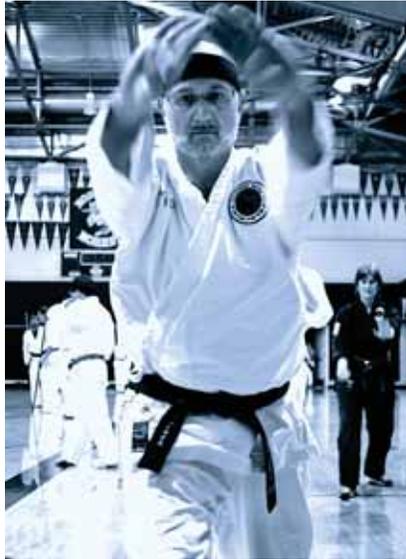
to replace forgotten moves, or perhaps to bring the katateka back to the original starting place to better facilitate competition. The hops are not present in some Japanese versions of the form, having been dropped because their meaning was lost.

O Sensei Dong put much thought into the selection of forms for his style, Cuong Nhu, and careful analysis of the forms clearly shows a steady progression from the hard style forms of Shuri-te to softer forms influenced by White Crane Kung Fu, and finally culminating in true soft style forms representative of the internal arts of China and Japan. O Sensei purposely chose these forms to ensure that Cuong Nhu students were well grounded and skilled in basic techniques before they became Black Belts. 



Gichin Funakoshi

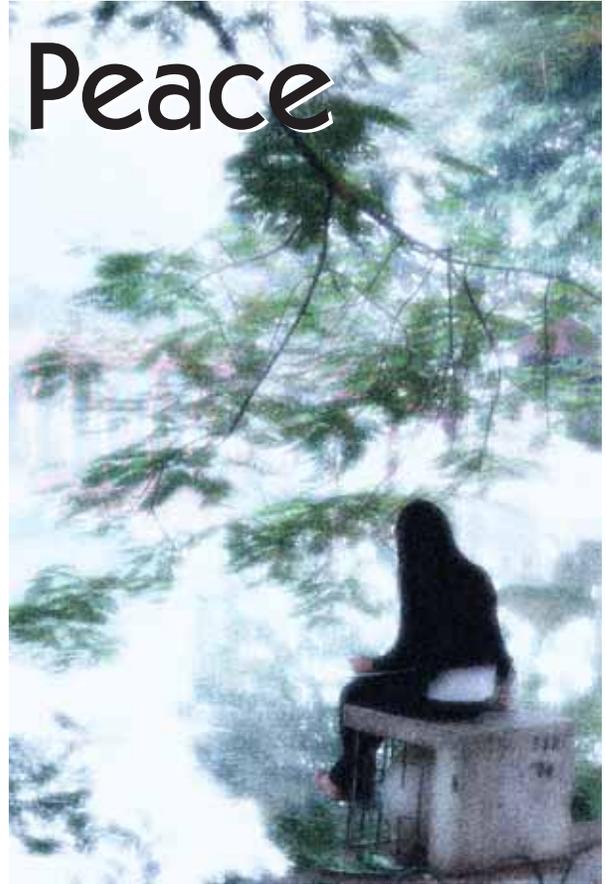
Photographs by Linda Nikaya West Coast Training Camp



Linda is an artist, photographer, Cuong Nhu student and the indispensable office manager at Rohai Dojo in Berkeley. She did all of the photo-illustrations in the Cuong Nhu Training Manual for Kids, and The Kids' Karate Workbook.



Peace



A Poem by Jessica Bruno

Peace is watching the sunrise while listening
To the ocean's voice.
It's sitting still, allowing the world to enter your being.
Feeling the sun warm your skin.
Hearing the birds sing their early morning song.
Seeing a new day unfold as the mist burns away.
Smelling the freshness of flowers blooming.
Peace is looking at a sleeping child, and
the calmness his face reflects,
It's the stillness in your home when you first
awake early in the morning.
The feeling of harmony in the deepest chamber
Of your being, your soul.
Peace is a choice; peace is life, and peace is love.

Jessica Bruno, Teacher, Martial Artist, Gardener

Florida, Self Defense and

By Danny Pietrodangelo
Dragon Nhus Editor*

You're in your bedroom asleep, and you're startled awake by a noise.

It's breaking glass -- and you now hear someone climbing through the window. You feel you're in danger. What can you do, legally? Can you knock the intruder unconscious with a kick to the head? Break bones with a joint lock? Defend yourself with a lethal strike to the neck? What are the rules if you kill the intruder?

In 2005, Florida took a great legal leap into the murky waters of deadly force and emerged with a significantly different rule book.

By law, using deadly force in your home or car went from being an arguable option, dependent on circumstance, to an absolute, unquestionable right. The new law is said to be one of the most "forgiving" in the country governing the justifiable use of deadly force. No longer are citizens bound by a law based --on the Castle Doctrine; a concept commonly called Stand Your Ground became the underlying principle in Florida law governing the use of lethal force.

The Castle Doctrine, as you might guess, comes from the precept that "a man's home is his castle." It's a principle from English common law, said to go back to the 12th century. Under this doctrine, you have the right to defend yourself if someone enters your home without permission.

You have no obligation to retreat -- retreat being a central issue in most self-defense laws. So under the old law, you could employ lethal force only if you "subjectively" believed you faced "great bodily harm" or death. This means that if someone entered your house, you killed the person, and he turned out to be an unarmed burglar or a disoriented older neighbor, you might have been called upon to convince the authorities you feared for life or limb. Otherwise you might have been arrested and/or sued.

Let's go back to our hypothetical martial arts scenario under the old law: You hear someone walking toward the bedroom. You grab a tambo from the closet and wait behind the door. The intruder starts to enter the room. As he enters, you see a reflection from something in his hand -- it could be a knife -- so you

strike him in the head with the short stick as hard as you can. He dies. The shiny thing in his hand turns out to be a silver ashtray he had taken from the living room.

He shouldn't have been there, true, and the tray might have used as a weapon. But was your fear enough to warrant an instant death penalty by tambo? As a martial artist, it

might have gotten more complicated. Aren't you trained in self defense? Couldn't you have used a non-lethal, empty hand technique to protect yourself? Why didn't you run? (More specifically, isn't that one of your style's five principles of self defense?)

When the law changed, questions like these became moot. With Stand Your Ground, the law gives you a great deal more leeway for taking the life of an intruder.

"Florida's amended statute was a monumental shift in the law and a true game-changer in the law of self-defense," wrote Florida attorney Phillip E. Gosin in a series of articles published last year in Martial Arts Success Magazine.

Historically, Stand Your Ground had nothing to do with personal self defense. The phrase is believed to have originated in medieval military doctrine for foot soldiers in battle: fight, stand your ground, hold on to your lances, don't retreat -- even if the other guys are armored, swinging swords and riding horses. It was an order, not an option.

The new law widened your options, in three significant ways, when it comes to the justifiable use of deadly force.

First, now, by law, if anyone "unlawfully and forcefully "enters your residence, dwelling, attached structure or occupied car, without permission -- just by his being there -- you can assume there's a "reasonable fear of imminent peril of death or great bodily harm" and you can kill the intruder. Your decision is irrefutable; you will not -- actually cannot -- be arrested or sued for your actions.

This is a big change. Now, by just forcibly entering without your permission, the intruder might have

*See important note on page 17.

the Use of Deadly Force

forfeited his life. By being in your house, he is presumed to be dangerous and you can use deadly force without question.

The second big change is that the law now extends the principle to your car and dwelling attached to your home. If he enters either of these, it's okay to kill him - if you decide that's the way you want to handle the situation.

In such situations, your action is irrefutable. No arrest. No lawsuit. So, as they say in the movies, it's a righteous kill.

According to Goss, "The test is terrifyingly simple; if a person enters your home or vehicle without permission, you may kill them."

The new law has been controversial and divisive.

Then Governor Jeb Bush signed the measure into law on April 26, 2005, calling it a "common-sense, anticrime issue." He told the New York Times "(that) to have to retreat and put yourself in a very precarious position defies common sense."

Marion Hammer, the National Rifle Association's (NRA) Tallahassee based lobbyist, said the measure was needed to prevent authorities from harassing law-abiding people with unwarranted arrests. "The law was written very carefully and it means what it says: You have a right to protect yourself," she told the St. Petersburg Times last October.

Vocal opponent, Sarah Brady (whose husband James was shot in the head during an attempt on President Regan's life), founder of the Brady Center to Prevent Handgun Violence calls the law "a license to kill."

The biggest concern for critics is the revised statute opens a very dangerous, lethal door, not even opened for law enforcement, and that there will be inevitable, unintended consequences -- people getting killed for a stupid mistake, or for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Some examples cited by Ross:

A neighborhood kid sneaks into your garage to steal your lawnmower for some quick cash. If you catch him in there, you can kill him -- for a lawnmower. A drunk, homeless panhandler reaches through your car window asking for spare change. Legally, she's as good as dead -- for being dumb, drunk and homeless.

Leon County State Attorney Willie Meggs, president of the Florida Prosecuting Attorneys Association has called it "the Shoot Your Avon Lady Law."

The third big change in the statute is perhaps the most controversial. The law now says if you are attacked anywhere and can provide "proof of (your) subjective fear" you have the right to stand your ground and meet force with force, including deadly force, if you reasonably believe it was necessary to prevent death or great bodily harm ..."

Anywhere. That could include a street corner, a bar, even a grocery store.

Unlike being in your home, you can't presume danger just because there's a potential assailant around and you feel threatened. In these situations, you have to prove the threat was serious enough to warrant lethal self defense.

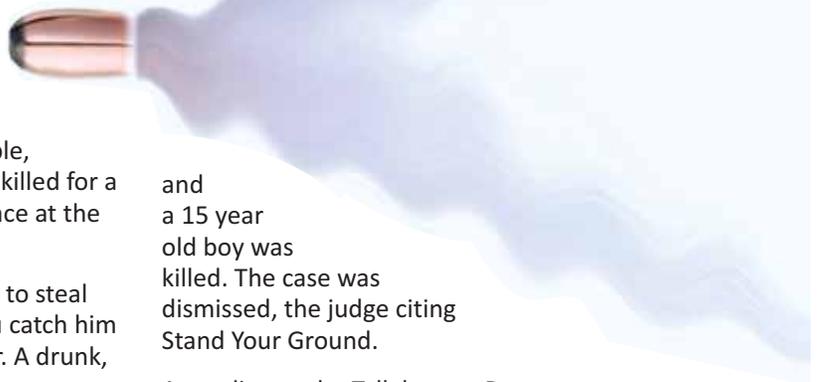
"What in the hell is our state government doing passing a law encouraging our citizens to solve disputes with guns?" Arthur Hayhoe, Executive Director of the Florida Coalition to Stop Gun Violence said to the St. Petersburg Times. "This is the right-to-commit-murder law."

Advocates say the law, is working as intended, protecting innocent people from prosecution. But opponents say there are a growing number of deadly incidents -- the feared unintended consequences.

For instance, in Tallahassee, two rival gangs got in a gunfight. Some 30 shots were fired

and a 15 year old boy was killed. The case was dismissed, the judge citing Stand Your Ground.

According to the Tallahassee Democrat the judge later said that the law created an environment "very much like the Wild West."



Continued on page 17.

Tips and Techniques from Grand Master Quynh

Part 1: Going Back To Basics



Kata

Don't get sloppy and don't over do it; kata is about beauty and perfection, not fighting. Slow down and hit every technique.

Your lower body has the freedom to move in all directions, however your upper body must remain upright with no dipping of the shoulders. Swivel, but don't dip and dive.

Stances need to be the proper width and length. Be sure to move through transition (cat) stance, keeping your upper body level throughout the movement.

Loadups -- Be sure to fully chamber each technique (fist over elbow, hand to ear, etc.). Swivel your upper body but do not break form and dip your shoulders.

Kicks – your kicks need to be balanced and controlled. Don't try to kick too high, it is more important to kick properly. All kicks must flow

through a proper chamber position, presenting proper foot position and striking surface at maximum extension, and pull back before stepping down into the next stance.

White and green belts sometimes look sharper than brown and black belts because beginners are performing pure kata while advanced ranks are seeing their opponents more and sacrificing clean technique for speed and power.

Kata Applications

Applications must evolve with rank. For example, to a white belt, a block is a block but by green belt, the student should be incorporating the double blocking principle, and more advanced students should be striking with chamber and block. Squeeze out more and more strikes from each technique, breaking the mold of formatted applications and becoming progressively more free-form and flowing.

Weapons

Bo and tambo should be about the same thickness, that is thin enough that you can close your hand completely around the shaft of the weapon, and as light as possible.

Weapons also need to be of the proper length for the user.

Tambo

Your tambo should extend down to your ankle bone, while your bo should be slightly longer than you are tall. Be precise, striking through a target the size of your fist.

Swing completely through the target but keep your toes pointing towards the opponent so as not to give up your centerline.

Tambos should swing through to cover your back, while the tail of your bo should extend just past your body when viewed from the front, again covering your rear.



Bo

The Bo should be thin enough so that extending your strike does not break your grip on the weapon.

When you pick a bo for kata it should be thin enough that your two longest fingers should be able to wrap all the way around the weapon and just touch your palm without gripping too tightly.

When performing bo kata, swing through target so that your front arm is fully extended ("locks out") and your reaction end of the stick ("back tail" of stick) can be seen from the front.

All bo strikes should end with your lead arm fully extended.

Use a light stick for kata and practice. It will be easier on your joints and its weight will allow you to do more repetitions improving, improving your technique. Use a heavy stick for real applications – fighting. **22**







Photographs by Ming Fung, Clive Rayner and Danny Pietrodangelo

Love, Yourself, Don't Compare, Give By Mary Lynne Lackner



I was happily retired from Cuong Nhu for several years. My last class had been a big test night for two black stripes and I failed. After working out in the Aspen Mountain Dojo for 6 years and feeling pretty good about my abilities, I felt humiliated, let down and believed all my work was a waste of time. Oh well....onward with my life!

I never regretted leaving the style. I still had my friends, I had learned quite a bit, and I never thought I was ever going to be a black belt anyway.

When Grandmaster Quynh took up snowboarding he was able to offer several seminars in Aspen. He seemed genuinely concerned that I had left the style. He wanted me to come back, not because he was the Grandmaster, but for his Dad. Here is something he said that has helped me get back into Cuong Nhu, as well as being a practicable principle for life: *love yourself, don't compare, give.*

It wasn't until I returned for a few classes that I realized I had lost all confidence in my Cuong Nhu abilities. I had left on such a negative note, that I had no assurance that the simplest techniques were correct.

This made me very uncomfortable and question why I should come back. I would have to relearn everything to get my confidence back. I clearly didn't love myself in respect to Cuong Nhu.

However, I learned you can't compare yourself to anyone whether it's in Cuong Nhu, at work, at play, anywhere. There will always be someone younger, stronger, faster, richer, prettier, taller, a better skier, own a nicer car, etc. than you. There is absolutely nothing you can do about other people, so there is no point in comparing yourself to them. You have to be comfortable with who you are – and Love Yourself.

I still can't describe what Cuong Nhu is about, but the spectrum of emotions and experiences I have had are nothing I would have imagined. From that initial class with Sensei Rich's sharing of his heart-felt loss of O'Sensei, to having Grandmaster Quynh in our living room demonstrating weapons self-defense, to attending campout and seeing the sincere support from so many people....

No two people will experience the same journey in the martial arts, but there are bits and pieces that will be the same. Being able to give to others, whether its physical techniques, philosophy or encouragement seems to be the essence of what others have given me. It is my hope I can return the favor to others. **zn**

Loss and Rebirth: Down to Essentials By Jason Hickson



In the two years since my Shodan test: I got divorced, lost my job, lost my house and moved into a house half the size, sold all my furniture, emptied my retirement and savings, had to inform a student he was no longer welcome at my dojo due to a lack of respect, lost stable

students to injuries and other hobbies, developed tendonitis in my right elbow and then was bitten by a mystery bug or spider that put me out of training for a few weeks.

And as a result, I am happier and more at peace with myself than ever.

For all the hardships and losses I've experienced over the past few years, I have gained more than I could ever have hoped for, much less expected. I gained a family -- a girlfriend with children that have accepted me as

though I'd always been in their lives. I've gained more experience as head of my school. Both the positive and negative things that have happened to me as an instructor have helped me become stronger in that role.

The most unexpected and beneficial thing I have gained through all my losses is a renewed appreciation for what is truly most important to me. It's not stuff, not furniture, not drywall and studs and certainly not trying to act like my body bounces as it did when I was 21.

I realized that what's important to me is a genuine, loving family, a healthy sense of self that is not defined by vocation and a dojo that will exist long after the handful of current higher-ranking members move on.

Life is change, without question or exception. Different people will inhabit different roles in your life at different times. How you incorporate those changes and people into your life shapes the experiences you have.

Stripping things down to essentials, can show you (or simply remind you) of what's truly important. **zn**

Laughter

Re - memorizing Cuong Nhu philosophy for my Nidan test was a challenge. My fellow candidates and I used flash cards, e-mails, twitters and text messages for friendly quizzes.

As I ran through the 5 A's and the 5 R's and the 10 "tions," looking for hooks, stories or mnemonic devices to aid me, I kept going back to the 2007 IATC t-shirt, one of my favorites. Its message was simple and to the point: "Live – Love – Laugh."

Laughter is one of the things I love best about training camp.

Take skit night. I have never been part of an organization where the members good-naturedly lampoon each other – with higher ranks favorite targets. It's brilliant. I have to believe O'Sensei Dong recognized the benefits of moments of levity – and humility. I think it keeps the organization strong.

So, let's never forget to keep laughter as an unofficial "L" in Cuong Nhu.

Jill Martinucci, Rohai Dojo

Live The Life I Love

Cuong Nhu has helped me to live my life in the "now". Each day I try to "live the life I love" and not get caught up in trivial issues, of the past or the future. Upon reflection this was one of the things I enjoyed about Cuong Nhu from day one. You are involved in a physical activity that requires you to think of nothing else. You are training your body to react to the situation in the ("now") moment – while enhancing your physical strength, your mind and your spirit.

Angel Albanese, Shojin Dojo

Cuong Nhu and the Gurukuls

Cuong Nhu is so close to my heart, due to its striking resemblance with the Gurukul system in the Indian culture. In historic India, in the days of religious masters and dynasties, the role of conventional schools and universities was filled by Gurukuls.

The main principle of Gurukul was that everyone involved was contributing to a collective goal of community progress, thereby building a strong nation.

These Gurukuls used to be called Ashrams. The teacher was called Guru. At a very young age children would stay at the Guru's home, typically located in the woods, away from urban life.

The students would do all the chores and stay together as one family while learning all skills at the Ashram. The Guru would teach his finest students to serve the kingdom. The idea was to create a well educated, dedicated and selfless society committed to upbringing and nurturing itself through its own resources.

Students in Ashram would look up to the senior students and Guru as their role models and strive to become the best in the eyes of their teachers. After becoming senior students they would take up the responsibility of mentoring the younger students and helping Guru in running the Ashram.

I see Cuong Nhu as similar. I see my Senseis as role models who constantly inspire and encourage me to give my best as they give their best to me as my teachers.

**Surendra (Suren) Kulkarni,
Piscataqua Dojo**

The Pleasure of the Moment

"What I love about coming to parents' class is that for one hour I don't have to make any decisions. For a whole hour someone tells me what to do. And I do my best to obey."

Jill Martinucci, Rohai Dojo

Dedication

Dedication comes to me into form of two personalities: Miguel my son and Gary, my friends. Gary is my inspiration because he is the definition of pure dedication to the art; no excuses he just does it! So every time, I feel down and out, all I have to think of is Gary and his commitment and therefore any excuse I have suddenly appears irrelevant.

Miguel is my reason and purpose. I am teaching my son what I consider a most valuable lesson: the importance of commitment and the importance of keeping his word. But in order to serve as an example, I must follow what I preach and stay committed. In the long run, by me helping Miguel to learn commitment, he in turn helps me stay committed. In the end both Miguel and Gary keep me on the straight and narrow path to Cuong Nhu success.

Why Cuong Nhu? Because it has become my village. It is the people that I have entrusted my son Miguel to help him become a man of honor. It is Master Quynh, Jessica, Joe, Thu, Clive, Bert, Mark, Dawn, and Anh that have accepted Miguel and have provided him with a healthy, and safe environment to grow.

Ray Huertas, World Headquarters

Ed. These are select excerpts from student test papers. They have been edited for length and style. If your paper was not excerpted, please understand that doesn't reflect on its quality. Submit your papers to Dragon Nhus as Word files (not pdfs). Remember to include the name of your school.

Growth In Unexpected Ways

By Donald M. Williams, Kim Hiep Si Dojo



(Excerpt from paper.)

I am an athletic type of guy. I've participated in high school and collegiate football, basketball, tennis, bowling, Aikido, Sword, Cuong Nhu and weightlifting – all of which would be nonexistent over the next 8 months. With this

debilitating injury, my physical strengths would be non-existent, and this was something that I was not and had not been prepared to deal with.

As it turns out, my reliance on my physical ability was a mental handicap that limited my ability to fully grow. I have always relied on my physical skill as a measuring tool, to gauge my level as a martial artist.

People in sports often talk about wanting to having the wisdom of a seasoned athlete/fighter and the body of a 20 year old man. We as martial artist sometimes talk about Judo or karate being for younger people and Aikido and Tai Chi for older people.

This is because when you're younger, you can use your physical prowess for those things that require athletic ability and when you get older, you use your mind for those same things while utilizing more wisdom than strength. All types of training require different kinds of practice; it's true for just about anything we do. As my Aikido instructor Hooker Sensei says, "Training"

requires two types of practice: 'Grinding the Stone' and 'Polishing the Mirror'.and "Polishing the Mirror".

I've spent most of my life grinding the stone, just relying on my physical abilities. This injury has been a secret blessing in that it has forced me to polish the mirror.

Ultimately, as every life-changing situation affects people, it is the brain's ability to learn and compensate for these changes that continues to make the human being /martial artist stronger, wiser and better. Because we change as we get older or get injured, we must make adjustments to continue our learning, and continue to grow. To quote O'Sensei Dong "Understanding people is intelligence, to understand yourself is wisdom, to understand people and yourself is Enlightenment."

Understanding does not come just from physical training, but it is the mental backbone behind that training. I challenge everyone to make a change in their training from what they typically do. If you teach on a regular basis, try sitting down in a corner and just watch. If you're a student, try video taping yourself and critique yourself. If you're strong, try doing something that does not rely on your strength.

The yin-yang on our patch is more than just a symbol of hard-soft, or Karate vs Tai Chi. It is a symbol used to exemplify balance. What you thought was weakness, is actually strength. Where you thought you excelled, you have a whole lot more room for growth. This is why Cuong Nhu is life. This is why Cuong Nhu is family. 

Deadly Force - continued from page 11.

State Attorney Meggs put it more bluntly: the Legislature should repeal "that stinking law."

The number of similar incidents - innocent people killed and suspected killers going free – has been growing annually, according to multiple media outlets throughout the state.

There continue to be questions about in what circumstances the law should be applied and whether it can be applied consistently across the state. According to criminal defense lawyer Deeno Kitchen, who is also a Cuong Nhu black belt, "Ultimately we never know how the law will be interpreted until the Supreme Court settles it." 

(IMPORTANT NOTE: This article is a generalized discussion of Florida law, self defense and use of deadly

force. The author hopes you will find it informative and educational

This article takes no position for or against the laws discussed. Further, publication of this article DOES NOT represent any official policy or statement of support or opposition concerning Florida law, by the Cuong Nhu Oriental Martial Arts Association, its instructors, students nor the editorial board of Dragon Nhus.

In some places terms and language have been simplified for understandability, and do not represent the precise letter of the law.

This article IS NOT legal advice NOR legal interpretation of the law. Contact an attorney for legal information.

Special thanks to trial attorney, Sensei Deeno Kitchen for reviewing this article. And an especially big thanks to Florida attorney Philip Goss whose articles In Martial Arts Success magazine were the impetus for this article.

Perspectives On Being A Master By Terri Giamartino

Master is defined as skilled practitioner. It is also defined as a person who has dominance over another. My uneasiness with the title comes from the latter, but I can embrace the word as I reflect on the skill level I have achieved. My mastery represents a comprehensive knowledge in both skill and subject which allows me to be a sensei. I am a teacher passing on knowledge and growing in knowledge as I instruct others. The years have taught me much and humbled me at the same time as I have learned to hone my teaching style in order to be efficient and effective.

With experience, I have learned that less is more. I revisit my basics more not less while I watch my many of my up-and-coming students gravitate towards the latest and the flashiest skills I can teach. As less becomes more, I think my understanding has deepened and a sense of mastery has arrived. There are those golden nuggets that I can focus on in class, short and sweet comments that change everything if the student can listen.

I read the classics. The books are succinct. Musashi's *Book of Five Rings*, Funakoshi's *The Essence of Karate* among many others. Within the pages of these books you find the simple truths, the fundamental points that distill the martial arts to as Funakoshi says, "the essence." It is this essence that I truly connect with that keeps me going. It keeps my passion alive and my mind, body and spirit connected. No matter what chaos might be going on around me, this is the place that is whole, centered and home. It is what I want to pass on to others.

When I first heard the title "Master" being given in our style, I was taken aback. Could any of my peers live up to the name? I certainly felt I had not arrived at that level. I was still learning what it meant to be a teacher, a leader, a dedicated martial artist. Could my technical skills reach the level of mastery that the title implied? Could my philosophical and spiritual development reach the level of near enlightenment? This is what "master"

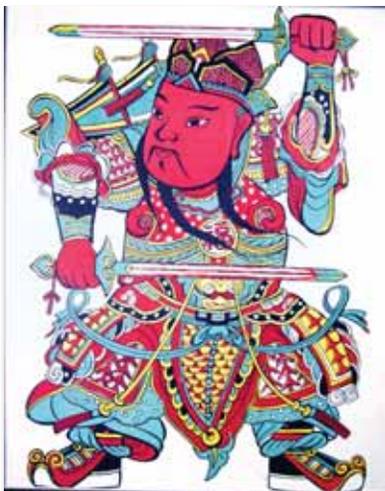
meant to me. These are the guidelines I set for myself. I am adjusting to the concept of being called a master. The art of Cuong Nhu is a young art, yet it is guided in its foundation by arts that are thousands of years old. The fact that Cuong Nhu is eclectic has helped the style grow and attract a diverse population of practitioners. Trends come and go and the trend in martial arts has moved in the past decade or so to eclectic styles known as mixed martial arts. Cuong Nhu is truly the original mixed martial art. I hesitate however to use this wording since it is associated with cage fighting, a sport and not an art. As a result, MMA loses the true meaning of art and Way.

The focus of MMA emphasizes athleticism and raw brutality. While these elements are fundamental to the martial aspect, the beauty and philosophical restraint of the Do is lost. Competition replaces self-improvement as the main motivator for study. Character development takes a back seat to machismo. This is not mastery to me, but domination.

O'Sensei talked of the goal of the Do: to fortify the body, discipline the mind, and

strengthen the heart with compassion. Being given the title of "Master" is humbling and yet invigorating. It makes me reflect further on the impact of my role as teacher and raises my personal bar for continuing to learn and understand the nuances of my art.

I hope my new title will only serve to cement my purpose and challenge me to continue to pursue the path of the Way. **™**



Illustrations courtesy of Sensei Jim Kemp, Talismans of the Far East, the James Kemp Collection.

Wing Chun: The Legend



The history of Wing Chun has been passed down through word of mouth over many generations. Often, this type of storytelling results in many different versions of the story appearing over time. This is one

The Story of Wing Chun

Shaolin Buddhist Temple in China, was burned down by the Manchu government about 300 years ago, killing many of the monks and nuns. A few escaped, including the Five Elders: five who had mastered every chamber. Only one of the Five Elders was a nun; her name was Ng Mui.

After the temple burned down, Ng Mui traveled the country, hiding from the Manchus. She settled on top of a

mountain in southern China, where she began to think about all of her martial arts knowledge. She realized that much of what she had learned was ineffective or impractical for a small, frail woman to use on a larger man. So she began to revise everything she knew, discarding those techniques that relied on strength or size, were inherently slow, were too flowery, or which wasted motion. She was left with a core of fast, effective, economic techniques that relied on things like the body's structure for power; simultaneous defense and attack for economy; and angle, distance, and redirection of the opponent's energy instead of strength.

One day Ng Mui made her usual trip to the village at the bottom of the mountain to buy food and supplies. While at a bean curd stand owned by a father and his daughter, Ng Mui noticed that the two seemed troubled. She soon found out that the girl, named Yim Wing Chun, was being pressured into marriage by a local bully who had threatened her father with physical harm if she refused. Sensing their desperation, Ng Mui revealed her identity and offered to train the girl in kung fu. She suggested that Wing Chun challenge the bully to a fight in one year's time. If the bully won, the girl would marry him; if the girl won, the bully would leave her alone. Wing Chun and her father agreed and the bully, who was the best fighter in the area, laughed at the challenge and gladly accepted.

Ng Mui trained the young Wing Chun in her newly revised system. She trained diligently day and night for one year, learning the basic theories and techniques of the system.

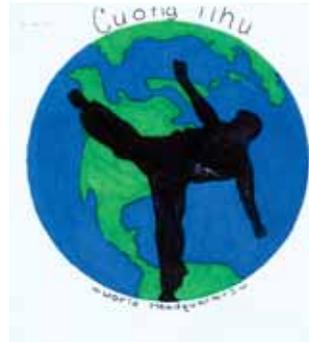
When the year was up, Wing Chun returned to the village and faced her challenger. Each time the bully charged in at her, she would quickly drop him with a simple technique. The bully could not believe he was being defeated—much less by a young girl. He became more frustrated and charged in harder. Each time he was knocked down by Wing Chun until he stayed down.

The system became known as Wing Chun, after the woman who made it famous throughout China. 

Special Thanks to Sifu Jason Lau, new Wing Chun academy in Smyrna, Georgia for sharing this story.

Photo illustration: Michelle Yeoh (Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon) who played Yim Wing-Chun/Wing, in the 1994 Yuen Woo-ping film, Wing Chun.

World Headquarters Logo Ideas



Above left to right: left to right:- Jeff Berry, Abby Pham, Kelly Green, final design. All of these ideas helped us come up with the final design on the right. Thanks for the help!

Awareness – Alertness – Avoidance

Anticipation – Action

By Julia (Age 8)

Essay #1: A boy was walking into Purchase College to do karate. An old lady hit him in the back with a chop. He was **aware** that she hit him. She chopped him again and he was **alert**. He tried to chop her back, but she blocked (**avoidance**) and he **anticipated**. He ran away and did his **action** by running away.

Essay #2: Zoey (a doberman) bit Chelsea (a golden retriever). Chelsea was **aware** that zoey bit her. Chelsea bit Zoey back. Zoey was **alert** that Chelsea bit her back. Zoey tried to bite her, but Chelsea moved away and **avoided** her. Another dog came and **anticipated** in their fight. The other dog came and made them run away from each other. That was the **action**.

2010 Promotions – Congratulations

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