



## Message from Sifu

Welcome to our Wing Chun Kung Fu club's second Newsletter. It is here with pride and enthusiasm that we want to spread the word about this very special traditional Chinese martial and practical self-defence system for all ages and body types. Our system of embodied martial wisdom is based on 2 theories, 6 attributes, three principles, numerous supporting ideas and idioms (a phrase or a fixed expression that has a figurative, or sometimes literal, meaning. An idiom's figurative meaning is different from the literal meaning). I would like to share a little understanding about the principle of sensitivity as it is understood in Wing Chun Kung Fu.

One of the ways that a person who is smaller than and not as strong as their opponent can defend themselves is to train a higher level of sensitivity. Noticing subtle movements, changes in pressure and direction allows one to respond faster than their opponent and be able to block a strike or strike the attacker first in order to end a fight. We train sensitivity in almost every form, drill and exercise we do. In forms we train internal sensitivity, noticing where we hold tension and replace it with relaxation or are too loose in our techniques and movement and replace that with structure. This practice requires mindfulness and presence which has a multitude of health and wellness benefits on its own.

The beauty of training an art form such as Wing Chun which invites embodied wisdom is that it starts to transfer into all the other areas of our lives. Beyond self-defence we can develop more sensitivity in how we see or judge self and others or in how we speak with them; improving our own lives and in our relationships with others. The kung fu journey is to be exalted



-Sifu Jim Kragtwyk

## Bai-Si Ceremony

This winter we had the honor to visit a very traditional and momentous occasion: Our Sifu Jim Kragtwyk became a disciple, or Bai-Si in Cantonese, of Grandmaster Walter Jakimeczuk. Having such a strong family presence across Canada is special, having our Si-Gung come and take time to come from his home Ottawa train here with us of the West Coast is very special and truly priceless. Here is Si-Gung's own description of the Bai-Si ceremony:

“Traditionally, when a Sifu finds someone worthy to be taught and whose personality and conduct is exemplary; The Sifu may ask the student if they wish to become a disciple. That is, to take on a family relationship more than just teacher and student but becoming part of the Sifu's family.

As a disciple of your Sifu, it is not appropriate to take another Sifu from the same style. You may have another Sifu from another style, but not from the same style or Kung fu family. The true measure of your relationship with your Sifu, and your virtue, is demonstrated in

maintaining familial lifelong contact and committing virtuous actions, similar to those of General Quan . True students of Kung fu will continuously treat their Sifu like a father and their training partners as brothers and sisters. This constant demonstration of filial piety and friendship will validate their relationships; these are the daily actions that people will see and respect. Such students will always be close to their Sifu , both physically and socially . In the Chinese culture, which is a large part of our legacy, the family unit is viewed as a strong lifelong bond and those who honour it are considered to be of great virtue . Do not ask people to respect you because of your credentials rather respect comes from your heart, actions, integrity, and virtue. Be a good example for your students and partners asking yourself whether you have shown the same respect to your Sifu that you hope to receive from your own students. Understanding the concepts of honour, integrity, loyalty or respect is important but the true measure of your Kung fu is to put the morals and ethics of General Quan into practice. Why does one spend time learning the art of VING TSUN? Is it only to become a person that is noted for his fighting skill or rather a person that is respected for his / her ongoing journey on becoming the best human being that they can be dedicated to qualities represented by the General Quan ! Sifu has always said that you must " believe in yourself" but how can you do this if you do not respect yourself , your Sifu and your classmates ..... your family!

Thus the Bai- Si ceremony is simply a confirmation of a relationship that already exists; not a trophy to be held high for exhibition demonstrating one's superiority . This is a legacy that we have inherited .... Understand it and put it into daily practice ....my young Jedi!"

-Walter Jakimczuk



*Si-Gung Walter Jakimczuk and Sifu Jim Kragtwyk*

## Winter of 2015

The 2015 Christmas party took place in the spacious party room of Samantha's apartment complex. It was a party for friends and family, so the space was packed with students, wives, husbands, girlfriends, boyfriends, children, and other associated humans. The party was a potluck, as is our tradition, so over half the space was taken up by a table full of more food than should ever be consumed, which was ultimately consumed by everyone throughout the night in a gluttonous cacophony of Christmas pleasantries.

The highlight of the night was the secret santa event, organized by Samantha. The event was standard; you picked a present, opened it, and then had the opportunity to trade it with someone else's gift. The gifts ranged from remote control cars, hair products, multiple types of alcohol, and home-made pickles that Sifu defended with much ferocity from potential gift-thieves. Competition was fierce for some of the more choice gifts, with several gifts being stolen and passed around many times throughout the whole process.

Post secret-santa, the party inevitably descended into a musical drum circle with a variety of instruments whose names remain shrouded in mystery. The music continued long into the night, with the party wrapping up at around midnight.

## Training

Each article features an account of what a particular new and senior student in the club is focusing on in their training. This way we can appreciate where someone who is just starting and someone who has been a practitioner for a little while are coming from.

"Hey, you know what? In many years, having settled down and been living peaceful life in my hometown(I'm a foreigner), when asked about what the coolest thing I ever experienced in Victoria is, my answer will not be school or landscape of the beautiful Victoria, instead, it will be West Coast Sunny Tang Wing Chun Club.

There are cool people and cool stuff. The studio is cool, and, Wing Chun is cool. It will be a cool thing to think training the coolest martial art with a lot of cool guys in a cool place.

One day I decided that there should be some Kungfu in my life in Canada. And after watching for only one class, I realized this club is the exact place I should train with. And what I have learned from our club is beyond my imagination. Our club is more of a family than a club. There are people who are not only friends or Kungfu brothers and sisters, but also people who are similar to you.

I even feel like it is destined of me to be here, because everything works so naturally.

Thank you all. Thank Sifu and instructors and brothers and sisters. I was lucky enough to meet you and be with you, and I will keep being lucky.”

-Martin Yao, White Sash

“After many years and hours of training, you can fool yourself into thinking you have nothing left to learn from Wing Chun. Similarly, you may face periods where you feel as if you are learning nothing new. This can happen to anyone, in fact I have witnessed so many Kung fu brothers and sisters come and go for this reason it is difficult to count. When you or a Kung fu brother or sister goes through one of these times, it is difficult to know what to do. This is because although your Sifu and instructors can help you along the road to successful Wing Chun, they cannot walk it for you. What this means is, the only way to succeed in training beyond the curriculum and forms, is to ask yourself the hard questions.

I have many examples of times I can look back on, which I am truly grateful for, where I have had to ask myself “hard questions”. They are hard because there is not often one answer, there is no quick fix. One example of a hard question is when I attained my black sash, that may seem silly, is: “Does a black sash mean that I have mastered Wing Chun?”

This is not an easy question to answer, because if you know all of the forms, have practiced the drills, how can you continue to grow and become better? The answer is different for everyone and yet the same. You have to learn how to practice the same forms, chi-sau, drills-whatever, in a new way. The things that I need to work on, may not be the same as my Kungfu brother or sister. You have to challenge yourself and learn to be honest and critical of both yourself and the system. The truth is, if you do not have questions for your Sifu or your older

brothers and sister, you have not asked yourself the hard questions. Si-Gung stresses the importance of “investing in loss”, one thing this means to me is being critical of myself, realizing and accepting when my Kung fu could have been better without it being that I did something “wrong” and analyzing that moment to find how I can refine it and make it better.”

-Zach Lewis, Black Sash

**Congratulations to the following students on attaining their new respective sash levels during the winter:**

**Dillon Hunt (blue) and Matthew Milligan (brown).**

**Excellent work!**

Edited By: Cameron Young and Zach Lewis