



"The theory of Ving Tsun has no limits  
in its application."  
- Ving Tsun Idiom

## Message from Sifu



*Sifu Jim Kragtwyk Training the Pah Chum Do*

## Ving Tsun Kung Fu—A Gift for a Lifetime

One may ask why I continue to train and teach this self-defense system and martial *art*. It has been over 26 years since my kung fu journey began. You might wonder after all this time, how much is there really left, if anything, to learn from this art? There is a paradoxical truism about this art: the more you learn, the more you realize how little you really know or understand about the precious and priceless gifts this art bestows on the dedicated and faithful. This is certainly true in my case!

The Ving Tsun kung fu system is based on a conceptual framework (Faat Do) that includes two theories, six attributes, three guiding principles, many supporting ideas and several idioms that guide our training and understanding of the art. There

really is no end point in the breadth and depth one can go in integrating this system of martial brilliance into one's being. While there may be limits within an individual in how far and wide one can develop through this art, the art itself is limitless; not only that, but it ever evolves, adapts, harmonizes and attunes to the needs and changes of the practitioner. She will journey with you for a lifetime.

For example, let's take one of the many gems embedded and available to mindfully study in the system—*sensitivity*. This is something one can train and develop endlessly. As Ving Tsun is an integrated and harmonized system, one aspect of training impacts all of the others. Training to feel others' sensations, movement, pressure, direction, balance and other kinesthetic cues—on more and more subtle levels—is what *sensitivity training* is about. The benefit of this skill is if we feel things sooner, we can respond quicker. Kinesthetic sensitivity is 10 to 20 times faster than visual cues. One of the attributes needed to train sensitivity is *relaxation* and here it links, like a web of impact, to all other aspects of our training. Of course, this transfers to non-martial applications as well; sensitivity is always a welcome communication skill to have with others.

Ving Tsun is, more practically, a martial art that is available to most people. It is not limited to people who can achieve extreme physical ability in terms of strength, endurance and flexibility. Ving Tsun focuses primarily on skill, not physical conditioning, although the latter is included in our training. Some martial arts have a shelf-life for most people. Once people hit a certain age, injuries are more common and the recovery time takes longer. Many times, this

is the reason people cannot or will not train a martial art anymore, as it is too extreme on the body. Or as they age, they just can't maintain that extreme level of physical capacity.

With its focus on skill, body structure/bone stacking, sensitivity and economy of motion, Ving Tsun mostly avoids these problems. It can be trained seriously and well into the advanced years, for a lifetime of enjoyment, development and community. I consider myself a student that still has much to learn and I am excited and filled with deep gratitude for the gifts and blessing of this art.

*-Sifu Jim Kragtwyk*

***“Siu Lim Tao comes first;  
do not force progress in training.”***

*~ Ving Tsun Idiom*



*~The Little Beginning Idea~*



**Click the links below (or cut and paste) to see the videos:**

This video demonstrates defense against ‘take-downs’

<https://www.facebook.com/WingChunYYJ/videos/878039089031867/>

This video demonstrates Jin Tsui (battle punches)

<https://www.facebook.com/WingChunYYJ/videos/828732310629212/>

This video demonstrates Kwai Jian (elbow strikes)

<https://www.facebook.com/WingChunYYJ/videos/865846936917749/>



*Senior Students Training Biu Kwan*

## Special Events

- \* July 2017: Instructor Raj Pal receives his Gold Sash
- \* July 2017: First Aid Training in honor of Evan MacRae
- \* July 2017: Goodbye Dinner for Instructor Raj Pal
- \* August 2017: Instructor Tim Lui gets married
- \* August 2017: Club Camping Trip

## UPCOMING

- \* Fall 2017: Book Club “Principles of Taoism”
- \* September 2017: 5th Annual Kung Fu Sister’s Retreat
- \* November 2017: Senior Grand Master Sunny Tang’s China Tour



*Kelly Osborne Training Chi Sau with Jarrad Reddekop*



## Raj's Farewell Dinner



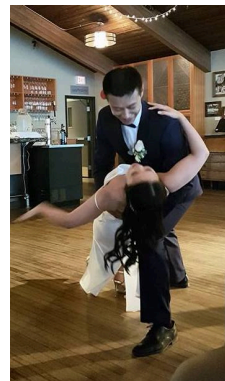
CLUB CAMPING TRIP



RUCKLES, SALT SPRING



## Tim's Wedding



OUTDOOR  
CLASSES  
CENTRAL  
PARK





## Training

Each newsletter features two discussions: an account from a particular new student, and an account from a senior student. These write-ups are focused on what that individual is working on with their training. This way, we can appreciate different perspectives rooted in different skill levels and experience.



*Instructor Mark Watson leading the Siu Lim Tao Form*

### Advance Training with a Beginner's Mind Set

To start this off, I'd like to talk about the non-linear aspect of training Ving Tsun Kung Fu. Unlike one's life, that has a beginning and an end, Ving Tsun requires one's training to be cyclical. My Sifu described it like learning the letters of the alphabet. First you learn them from A-Z, then it is required to go back through the entire alphabet to create words, sentences and paragraphs. This idea runs parallel to how one trains Ving Tsun, always having to go back to the basics and rediscovering finite details that one was not ready to see before. Through repetition, time and patience, one becomes more deeply familiar, then words and sentences flourish into poetry. Or like my Sigung describes, that deep familiarity "frees one's self."

It is important to understand that training Ving Tsun is not linear, but rather multi-directional and requires recycling through the whole system again and again. If one's desire is to truly become great at Ving Tsun, this recycling must happen over and over again throughout one's life. As a Ving Tsun practitioner who has trained for 10 years, I now understand the easiest way to become better is to

approach the system as if I were a beginner again. I must continue to put my ego to the side and consider that possibly—just possibly—one or more of the most basic details may have been misinterpreted at the time of my initial training. This will enable me to repair some area of my training that I was not aware needed changing. Only then can I continue to grow endlessly.

Training in an advanced-level setting can be difficult for many reasons:

The first difficulty can start simply with ego, the idea that "I MUST WIN". Unfortunately, when it comes to internalizing true martial arts, *winning* doesn't necessarily mean *learning*. One must invest themselves as much as they invest in their kung fu partner—even more so at an advanced level than at a beginning level—due to the arsenal of understanding.

The second difficulty is clarifying your own goals, so that your expectations match your actions. An example would be hitting a plateau, yet you don't train frequent enough to overcome it. Remembering your goal (in "keeping your eye on the prize") might mean training more. It might also indicate a need to slow down in order to understand more fully what is happening. It could mean you simply need to ask for help from an older kung fu brother or sister, your Sifu or Sigung, outside a classroom setting.

The third difficulty can be having enough patience to allow yourself to digest the system at your own pace. Don't worry if a younger brother or sister may get something quicker than you. You cannot treat your training as a marathon. It is a lifetime journey. A student that has been training for 8 years may see that as a long time, unfortunately his or her expectations of achievement may not be a reality in that duration of time. The reality of the "Kung Fu Life" is that is a lifelong journey. At this point in my own journey, I feel a truly *good* kung fu practitioner will work through these difficulties. Like I said, the training is cyclical.

I'm very curious to see how my views will develop differently in another 10 years. The reason I'm so interested is not because I'm in a rush to get there,



but rather the acknowledgement that my views have changed so much from when I started, I can't imagine what they will become in another decade. It is not only my views that have changed, but the whole reason I train. Of course when I started, I had this romantic idea based on movie actors and that weird wood statue, the wooden dummy. That's another story! My reasons now are simple: Ving Tsun has been an antidote for a better life. And I mean this on all fronts: physically, mentally and spiritually. Ving Tsun has had a positive effect in my career, my personal relationships and my understanding of my own family dynamics... making for closer and easier relationships all around. These are all things that were not part of my intention in training Ving Tsun 10 years ago.

I guess this is a good transition to talk about why I graded under Grand Master Sunny Tang for my gold sash. Now, gold sash is not some *mystical level* above black sash. Rather, with the gold sash comes an understanding that I am dedicated to preserving and passing forth this incredible system. I absolutely attribute the decision to grade for my gold sash to the change it made in my life. I wanted to allow another that same opportunity. I remember after getting my gold sash, my Sisook Wade looked at me and said, "It's all academic from here on." I'll tell you I got it. But I didn't. I understand more now, after teaching only a couple of years. Having a physical understanding of the system is one thing. Translating that understanding verbally, in the most simplistic manner, is something totally different altogether. It requires two totally different skill sets. That being said, the more I teach the more I understand. I know less than I originally thought, and that keeps me digging. Consistently. Deeper. Once again, it comes back to *the beginner's mindset*... allowing space for growth.

I'd like to finish up with a thought on self-direction. This is tied into understanding your goals. As a senior student, I may not always get what is needed in class to keep me on my edge. What do I mean by edge? I mean that point of training that is *uncomfortable* rather than sitting back and only training in that *safe place*. So training outside of a formal classroom setting is vital. It allows one to be

free and dynamic in an expression of that individual's kung fu. This is something that can't be achieved in a traditional setting because of the influence the senior brother or sister has on younger students. The students must have the opportunity to learn the system traditionally—in a kung fu class setting—rather than as the teacher's expression of the system. This means as an instructor, I must teach kung fu the way it was taught to me, not my interpretation of kung fu. This allows every single student the same opportunity and clarity. As a senior student, you are in the driver's seat. You will determine your destination.

- Instructor Mark Watson, Gold Sash



Mark Watson Demonstrating with Kurt Fairfield



Mark Watson Demonstrating with Zach Lewis



Nicholas Miller Training at the Outdoor Class in Central Park

***“I practice alone  
and I learn together.”***

## **The Profundity of Ving Tsun**

Profound is defined as, “having or showing great knowledge or insight”. As a beginner, I will express to you ways in which I think Ving Tsun is profound. To illustrate the different ways, I will break it up into three chunks; Firstly, how Ving Tsun is personally profound; Secondly, how Ving Tsun is socially profound; and lastly, how Ving Tsun is spiritually profound. Before I begin, I would like to say that I do not claim that I fully understand Ving Tsun, personal growth, or spirituality, but nonetheless I would like to formulate and share my thoughts as I feel capable of contribution.

As a human, my body plays a big role in my experience. Although it could be said that bodies play big parts in the experience of all living things, humans have uniquely and quickly changed the ways in which our bodies are used. As life can be lived between desk chairs and car seats to “great success”, this sometimes makes it difficult to know how to best take care and maintain the body, as there is minimal external pressure to do so... Although I have always been relatively active, I began to feel there was an unfilled space in my life in the area of getting to know my body. From my first class, I immediately recognized the refined methodology in Ving Tsun, as it illustrates efficient and productive ways to move the body—learning to move the body as if being the hand that holds a marionette. Originating the movement of the arm through the shoulders and down the back, and experiencing movement this way—if not only when truly

practicing—is something that I know no better way to describe than as *personally profound*.

A simple way to describe my experience with Ving Tsun would be to say that *I practice alone and I learn together*. So much of my time spent at the Kwoon has been working, practicing and playing Ving Tsun with my kung fu brothers and sisters. As I perceive the overt application of kung fu to be in physical exchange, it most often puts learning in the hands of the partner. Therefore, class can be a great exchange of knowledge on many sides. At Sunny Tang Victoria, my experience has been getting to know and respect a host of people of who come from wide walks of life, but yet share in the experience of Ving Tsun. Learning to explore mutual physical sensitivity, on top of the responsibility to act respectfully to the lineage and etiquette, is a recipe for what I would consider to be *profound social and spiritual growth*.

One tool that I like to think about, invented by Suzy Welch, is called 10/10/10. It’s simply thinking about the choices we make in terms of how we would feel about them ten minutes, ten months, or ten years from now. Ving Tsun is the one element of my life that I am confident is wholly productive in my growth as a person. Getting to know the movement through the lineage is a felt sense, as it lives through the body. A gift passed down like the rivers formed from melting glaciers. Balance, timing, coordination, sensitivity, relaxation and orientation are the six grounding attributes to scaffold the wide awareness required to incorporate them all. This system is a place to grow physically, personally and spiritually. Again, it is something that I know no better way to describe than as *profound*.

I am grateful for the experience of Ving Tsun, for I recognize how fortunate I am to be in the vicinity of what I see as a profoundly fine club. Not only can I hope that others share in these experiences, but I can continue training and continue sharing the experience brought from this system myself.

- Nicholas Miller, *White Sash*



## ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Congratulations to Tim Lui and Vanessa Lui for their union through marriage on August 7, 2017. Tim has been a long-standing teacher at West Coast Sunny Tang Ving Tsun Kung Fu and has been a student of Sifu Jim Kragtwyk for over ten years. We wish him well in his new life!

Raj Pal has moved to Costa Rica with his family. We're sad to see Raj go, but happy for the adventure he's embarked upon with his wife and two daughters. He has relocated to Costa Rica with his new Gold Sash, spreading his unique capacity for care and service through the Ving Tsun lineage.



*Raj Pal with his daughter Priya at our Farewell Dinner*

Congratulations to the following students on attaining their new respective sash levels during the last quarter:

Günter Zieser (Red)  
Jon Hicks (Red)  
Helen McCall (Brown)  
Matt Hodges-Whittaker (Blue)  
Raj Pal (Gold)

Excellent work!

## Welcome to Our New Students:

Andy Chan  
Lake Curry  
Roman Hamilton  
Wendy Hamilton  
Valentin Jeandot  
Jason Messenger  
Rocky Tung

### Welcome BACK:

Dillon Hunt  
Kaylo Schuett  
Nicholas Miller  
Kelly Osborne  
(visiting us for 3 months from Canmore, Alberta)

**GET BETTER SOON KURT!** Just a wee note to Kurt Fairfield, our long-time kung fu brother who got injured and has had to take some time off from training. We miss you Kurt. Take good care of yourself!



*Kurt Fairfield Training with Kelly Osborne*

**Photo Credits:** Ida Becskerekí, Andy Chan, Eben Hensby, Heidi Erhardt and Mark Watson

Edited by Heidi Erhardt

*Note: We use the spelling Ving Tsun which late Grand Master Ip Man used to differentiate our Kung Fu from the various branches.*

Please check out our Facebook Page (@WingChunYYJ) and website (victoriawingchun.com) for more information about Ving Tsun, Sifu Jim Kragtwyk's talks on various aspects of the system and instructional videos.