



The Newsletter of the
**Twin Cities T'ai-Chi Ch'uan
Studio**

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Wu-Dang

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NEW SCHEDULE - June 15

by Ray Hayward

Our schedule begins June 15th with a few changes. The Tuesday night 8:00 Praying Mantis class will be featuring the Jook Lum Southern Praying Mantis of Master Gin Foon Mark, open to all who would like to try this style and see what the entire buzz is about.

The Wednesday night Hsing-Yi class will begin the 12 Animals and sensitivity training. This class is open to current and past learners of the Hsing-Yi 5 Elements.

The Thursday night Short Form class will continue reviewing the short form and will begin the sword.

The Monday and Thursday day classes will have Summer hours, 12:30-2:00. People can stay and practice for the usual remaining half-hour when senior students are present to supervise and lock up. All other classes remain the same until September 15, when some exciting changes will be made to the curriculum, classes, and schedule. Any questions, feel free to ask me, Paul, or Kim. ☯☯☯

Yaseen's Art Show

Join us Saturday, June 19th
4-6:30 PM at the
Twin Cities T'ai-Chi Ch'uan Studio
to see the works of art Yaseen
has been working on during the past year
under the guidance of artists
Gretchen Dreisbach and Gin Foon Mark.

FROLICS

by Rondi Atkin

One of the best parts about heading a successful event, like our second Night of 10,000 Frolics, is receiving all the praise. However, it also makes me feel like a fraud since I did only a fraction of the work. This affair would have taken place without me, but it couldn't have gone on without the following people who really deserve the praise.

Chef Nick Cronin was the inspiration behind the food. All the delicious crostinis topped with veggies, tapenades, cheeses, and pestos were made that day in the kitchen. I am sure that the most elegant black-tie affairs can't boast more creative, delicious (or healthy) food. But Nick couldn't have done it without assistance from Bruce Tyler, Jeffrey Christianson, Linda Hermanson, and Chris Knudtson.

Lynn Dennis conceived of and scheduled the entertainment, both upstairs and downstairs. From Master of Ceremonies Jim Cunningham, to guitarist Phil Heywood, to Dominick Veldman and company's stage combat, "How Not to Pick Up Women," to belly dancing by Nourah to Sifu Ray and company's T'ai-Chi performance art piece, "A Mystic's Dream," and Sifu Paul's double knife performance, to the Irish folk music of Four Pints Shy. Thanks also to Adam Frank, Matt and Katie Peterson, and Jeremiah Bohn who provided the downstairs ambient music. Each represented the best of their kind. And thanks to Teisha Magee and Tim Dennis who made sure it all went off without a hitch.

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Sharon Nyberg was the energy behind the auction. She was responsible for procuring the auction items, establishing their values and bids, writing the descriptions, and setting it up. Thanks to Matt Lauters and LaVonne Bunt as well as everyone who contributed items and services for the auction.

Kim Hayward conceived of the raffles and the Chinese auction and was assisted by Jim and Yaseen Hayward. She also did the programs, bidding sheets, posters, and postcards. Kim also oversaw all the financials (and I am probably forgetting about ten other things she also did). Thanks to Matt Incorvia who came early to help set up and was her right-hand man throughout the evening. Thanks also to Nancy Antenucci who did tarot card readings and Amy Leinen who did the mehendi, and to Anita, Julie, and Teisha who cashiered at the end of the night.

Karen Magnuson, my co-producer, helped me oversee the overall coordination as well as the front door. Thanks to Misato Sakai and Dominique Conseil and especially to David Innes who sat at the front door for almost the entire evening.

Tony and Amie Jo Digatono oversaw the bar as well as bused plates and glasses and helped to replenish

A Martial Arts Odyssey

By Sifu Ray Hayward

"Write because you would die if you didn't."
-Rilke



I was standing outside Master Gin Foon Mark's world headquarters for the Jook Lum Southern Praying Mantis kung-fu style in Maplewood, waiting for Master

Mark to arrive for my private lesson. When he pulled up, I walked over to his van and, as he got out, he asked, "Have you been waiting long?" Without thinking I said, "Yes, about 25 years!" He looked puzzled at my answer and I said that I had been waiting a long time to study with him. Let me explain.

the food. Thanks to Humberto Huergo, Doug Rohde, Carter Clapsadle, Lesley Kadish and David, Margo Bock and Mark, and especially to Georgia who not only tended bar but also helped out in ways I neglected to anticipate.

Woody Wolston was there from noon, when we started, until 11:00 pm, when we locked the doors, and he was available for any contingency, from helping to set up the auction, to picking up the keg, to making a midevening run for more wine, to cleaning up. Thanks also to Paul Thompson, Larry Klueh, John and Joe Hennen, David Innes, and LaVonne Bunt who helped clean up.

I simply floated throughout the night, marveling over how well everything went because of everyone who helped out. And the really best part of heading the event, besides the fact that the evening brought in a whopping \$7000 (after expenses), was seeing everyone come together-- laughing, eating, drinking, and having a good time.

So thank you, everyone--my dream of a committee, all the volunteers, donors, and performers, and all of you who came and opened your wallets and your hearts. 🙏🌟

When I moved to Minnesota in the summer of 1984, I was introduced to Southern Praying Mantis by Sifu Paul during our many workouts. We would practice T'ai-Chi and the other arts we were learning from Master Liang, then share and compare the other martial arts we had learned. Paul showed me many sticky hands, basic hands, training methods, and told me about the history of the style and its current grandmaster, Gin Foon Mark.

In 1986 one of Master Mark's most senior students and also a student of Master Liang's, Orley Pettiford, came to study at our Studio. I asked to learn Southern Praying Mantis from him and got to learn many of the basic hands, sticky hands, conditioning, forms and history of the Jook Lum Praying Mantis style. Orley took me to Master Mark's Chinese New Year and I got to meet the grandmaster and see him demonstrate. He was truly awesome!

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I continued to study with Orley, and he showed me many movies of Master Mark and kept me abreast of what was going on in the Southern Praying Mantis world. I wanted to study with Master Mark at that time, but I was teaching full time, studying with Master Liang and couldn't make it to any of the group classes Sifu Mark offered. I continued to learn and practice on my own, as well as with Orley and Paul and a small group of students that I shared the sticky hands training with.

Last year, on Oct. 11, a visitor came to our Studio, a very important visitor. I had received word from Master Mark for years that he would visit our Studio. Many times we had planned for his visit, but he never came. One day Laura Kohlhase, a student of both Master Mark's and our Studio, came to me and said Master Mark would like to visit one of our classes. I said he would be most welcome. She said he would visit the next Saturday for the Solo Form class. I honestly forgot about it, thinking that if he showed up it would be a miracle.

I was in between the 11:30 class and the Solo Form class when I spotted an older gentleman sitting in the hall. He had on a baseball cap, blue jeans and a jacket, but he looked strangely familiar. I said to Paul, "I think Gin Foon Mark is in the hall, but I can't be sure." Paul went out to take a look, and, when I heard him welcoming Master Mark, I went into shock. The master had come to visit!

A small and nervous class greeted Master Mark as Kim rushed out to get him a cup of tea (we were so unprepared), and we began class as usual, sort of. Master Mark sat in the blue chair and watched with great attention and curiosity. He mimicked the motions of the postures as the students demonstrated the long form, and he clapped loudly for the brave group that demonstrated the T'ai-Chi Sword form. Master Mark was happy to see that we had three of his paintings hanging in our Studio. After the class ended and the students left, Paul and I were treated to a private demo and some excellent history from Master Mark. He was most intrigued that we had an altar and that we paid respects to our T'ai-Chi ancestors.

We heard later from Laura that Master Mark really liked our Studio, our students and us. The Christmas season was crazy for me, so I kept that visit on the back burner of my mind until I could act. Finally, I asked Laura if Master Mark had time for a private

lesson. She came back with the answer that, although he didn't teach privately, he would teach me, and she gave me his cell phone number to talk with him directly. I called to ask how much it would cost because in the past I had to pay a lot of money to study with grandmasters. He said to pay what I wanted, or pay nothing at all; he just wanted to teach me!

Private lessons began immediately. My first class: Master Mark took me over to the altar and had me offer incense to his grandmasters. Then we got down to work, not only correcting my past material but also learning lots of theory, history and hands-on sensitivity. I quickly made progress on my sticky hands, basics and the forms I had learned before. Master Mark said to forget that I ever learned from any of his students and that I was learning from him now, that I was his student. He also said that he was tailoring my lessons to my level and that, seeing as I had more than 30 years of experience with internal styles, he would be teaching me differently than the usual course he taught at his school.



I noticed Master Mark had a large, elaborate altar at his school (which he calls an association), and I learned that he practiced Sin-Kung, or "spirit kung-fu." I also started to learn about the altar and how to pay respects to the ancestors, and some methods for divination and spiritual help. My son, Yaseen, and I started learning Chinese calligraphy, and Master Mark treated Yaseen like a grandson and gave him lessons in painting as well. I felt like I had come home.

Chinese New Year was full of energy this year due to the attendance of Master Mark and his drumming and demonstrations. Our Studio hosted an art show

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and gallery for him in April, and it seemed like things couldn't get better. Master Mark is now a regular part of my life, my family and that of the Studio. I am now working on a book about the Southern Praying Mantis style under the authority and direction from its current grandmaster, Gin Foon Mark, and have been given access to manuscripts, movies, and countless photos documenting this amazing style and this amazing master. Could it get any better? You bet!

A few days after the art show, I was sitting in Subway having lunch with Master Mark, when the discussion turned to the altar and many of its functions and ceremonies. I asked if I could learn some of ceremonies for the altar and Master Mark said, "Do you want to pass through a ceremony?" I asked what kind of ceremony. He said to "go through the front door of the Jook Lum Temple and stop approaching the side door." I asked if he meant a discipleship ceremony and he said yes. I asked if he was accepting me to be his disciple and he said, "Yes, that's what I mean." I said a To-Dai, which is Cantonese for a disciple, inner-door student, otherwise known as a formal student? He said yes again and I began pinching myself, right there in public! On April 27, I was initiated in an elaborate ceremony in which I had to bring a cooked chicken, whiskey, 36 dollars in a red envelope and red candles, for starters. The details are too numerous and intricate, so I will write about the complete ceremony later.

One detail I will share with you now. At a certain part of the ceremony, Master Mark asked the ancestors to accept me, and told me to talk to them

Being Intimate With Our T'ai-Chi

by Kurt Swanson

There once was a Chinese master who one day noticed that a student of his was wearing straw sandals, had a pack on his back and was holding a staff. The master asked, "Why are you dressed in your traveling clothes?" The student said, "I am going on a pilgrimage." The master then asked, "Where are you going on your pilgrimage?" to which the student replied, "I don't know." The master said, "Ah! Not knowing. Very intimate, very intimate indeed."

and to pray that they would accept me and tell them what I would do for them and their teachings. He then took out a set of silver hearts, each with a flat and a round side, connected by a silver chain. He handed them to me and told me to cast them on the floor to see if I would be accepted. What pressure! I had seen Master Mark use this divination method before and had learned its uses and methods in my spirit kung-fu lessons, so I knew what to look for. I circled the hearts, sincerely asking for acceptance, and then quickly dropped them on the floor in front of the altar. I couldn't look. I heard Master Mark shout, "Victory! They accept." I looked down and saw one heart with the flat side up and one with the round side up - the perfect yin-yang, a sign of success.

At this time, I am writing a book for Master Mark and hope to present him with a working manuscript by his birthday on Sept. 14, but don't tell anyone. We are currently forming a lion-dance team to be trained by Master Mark, and you will get a chance to study with him directly at our Studio retreat this August. Master Mark has said that of all the martial arts he has studied and observed, T'ai-Chi is the closest to his style of Praying Mantis and that he thinks our students will be able to quickly learn the most important part of Jook Lum Southern Praying Mantis Kung-Fu - how to use other people's strength against them. Sound familiar, Pushing-Hands students?

Twenty five years ago, this was all a dream. Now my dream of learning Southern Praying Mantis directly from Master Gin Foon Mark has become a reality. Good things come to those who wait, and I waited a quarter of a century. Thank you, Master Mark! ㊦

Perhaps, like you, I've always thought that knowing something and being intimate with it go hand in hand. I've been raised to believe that being intimate with something means you know that something rather well. So what's with this Chinese master who seems to think the opposite—that *not* knowing about something is being intimate with it? How can we be intimate with something we *don't* know?

I suspect that the Chinese master in the story is alluding to a type of mind called "beginner's

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mind.” A beginner’s mind is one that is always saying “I don’t know,” and because it is always saying “I don’t know,” it is completely free to have direct relationship with everything it experiences. Such a mind has intimacy with everything because it is not restricted to preconceived bias, such as opinion, belief or conclusion. A beginner’s mind is a mind that is not caught in the narrowed avenues of structured thought, reasoning or desire. It is a mind that does not hold on to anything, and it therefore has the freedom for timeless immediacy and relationship with everything.

Once the beginner’s mind holds on to something and begins its tiresome analysis or reminiscence, fixed and repeated tendencies are carved and it ceases to be a beginner’s mind; it becomes imprisoned within its deeply cut ruts and blind to all possibilities, and I sense that it ceases to be a truly intelligent mind. The intimate mind experiences no moments or epiphanies in its discovery, no moments of “I know!” because these imply time, fixation, tension and eventual death. In the beginner’s mind there is no time, no birth, no death.

The best and simplest description of beginner’s mind, I believe, was given by Shunryu Suzuki, who said, “If your mind is empty, it is always ready for anything. It is open to everything. In the beginner’s mind there are many possibilities; in the expert’s mind there are few.” Jiddu Krishnamurti seems to go one step further by describing the beginner’s mind as having a quality of “choiceless awareness,” for how, he argues, can a beginner’s mind be wholly aware and continuously intimate with everything when it has restricted itself to choices or to those things that it believes it knows?

Our sifus are always reminding us that T’ai-Chi is about feeling, and when they say feeling, I don’t think they mean *thinking* about feeling; they mean just feeling. And this “just feeling” means to me that the thinking mind no longer says “I know” and that we consequently become intimate with our T’ai-Chi; all fixed notions, conclusions, beliefs, imaginations—all those things that make up our so-called “knowing”— are finished and we are left with just the bare, raw essence of immediate T’ai-

Chi experience. When the “knowing” mind quiets, we are left with innocence, immediacy and intimacy with everything, and out of that arises wholeness, stillness and the eternal.

Intimacy in T’ai-Chi, I have found, is necessary and actually quite remarkable. For example, I’ve been amazed during times of greater T’ai-Chi intimacy by not only the realization of previously unseen, subtle tension in the body but also by the simultaneous disappearance of this tension upon seeing it. It seems that when time goes to nothing in the intimate mind, seeing tension is the same as letting go of tension, consequently giving way to a seemingly unlimited, almost transparent beginner’s body, as well as unparalleled relaxation. My investigations also suggest that greater intimacy results in better balance and posture, both during and after a round or two.

I’m beginning to feel that the deepest and highest understanding of our T’ai-Chi—an understanding that goes beyond intellection of our T’ai-Chi— happens when we are most intimate with our T’ai-Chi, when we are always saying “I don’t know” about our T’ai-Chi. In fact, I suspect that such a deep and intimate understanding of T’ai-Chi is always present, yet we are unaware of it because it is overpowered by the emotional and intellectual dramas of the thinking, knowing mind.

Having stopped along my way to write this article, I have set aside my beginner’s mind and have mistakenly claimed to know something of T’ai-Chi. I think it’s time once again to forget everything I have thought and said here, lace up my Sambas, pick up my bag and my sword, and just simply carry on with my intimate T’ai-Chi pilgrimage. 🌀

Congratulations

to the following people for completing section one of the

Liu Ho Pa Fa Main Form (Jook Gae):

LaVonne Bunt, Amie Jo Digatono, Linda Hermanson, Kim Husband, Lisa Strong, Paul Thompson, Woody Wolston.

This is a difficult and demanding form that requires patience, focused attention and a lot of practice to learn.

Class Schedule for June 15—September 15, 2010

Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Saturday	
12:30-2:00 pm Solo Form (all levels-join anytime)						12:30-2:00 pm Solo Form (all levels-join anytime)		9:00-10:00 am Chi-Kung (enrollment closed)	
6:00-7:30 pm Solo Form (beginners only)		6:00-7:00 pm Solo Form Refinement (instructor authorization required)		6:00-7:30 pm Solo Form (all levels-join anytime)		6:00-7:00 pm Professor Cheng's Short Form (all levels-join anytime)		10:00-11:30 am Eclectsis (join anytime)	
7:30-8:30 pm Weapons Cycle I: T'ai-Chi Sword, Energies, Applications, & Fencing (enrollment closed)		7:00-8:00 pm Pushing-Hands & San-Shou (enrollment closed)		7:30-8:30 pm Hsing-Yi Ch'uan: Level II: 12 Animals (prerequisite: 5 Elements)		7:00-8:00 pm Pushing-Hands (prerequisite: Solo Form completion, enrollment closed)		11:30 am-12:30 pm T'ai-Chi Review & Practice (prerequisite: Solo Form completion)	
8:30-9:30 pm		8:00-9:00 pm Praying Mantis Jook Lum Southern Praying Mantis (join anytime)		8:30-9:30 pm Pa-Kua Swimming Dragon, Chase-Hands, Weapon Review (enrollment closed)		8:00-9:00 pm Wu-Tang Sword (enrollment closed)		12:30-2:00 pm Solo Form (all levels-join anytime)	
Liu Ho Pa Fa (join anytime)	Pa-Kua 64 Mother Palms (enrollment closed)								

NOTE: The Studio will be closed Saturday, August 14 for Master Gin-foon Mark Seminar (details will follow in July Wee Wu-Dang), Monday, September 6 for Labor Day. August 16-21 will be open for practice time, no instruction. (Mon, Thur, Sat 12:30-2:00 pm and Mon, Tue, Wed, Thur 6:00-8:00 pm)

Richard Griffith's New CD Release Party at our Studio!

The Master of the Magic Lute will perform selections from his new Renaissance Lute CD (his 3rd) at the Studio on Saturday, July 17, 6:00-8:00 pm. Rick graciously played a concert for us last year during our Beat the Winter Blues seminars. Rick will be accompanied by his wife, Ann who will sing. Cromatica, an a cappella trio, will open the evening with their amazing vocal talents. Join us for some wine, some food, lovely music and more. Don't miss this affordable night out, it's FREE!!!

Master Gin-foon Mark Seminar

In lieu of our weekend summer retreat we will hold a daylong seminar on Saturday, August 14. We are unsure at this point of the schedule, price and location, but details will be coming shortly. There will be flyers at the Studio and the information will be in the July 1 Wee Wu-Dang

Walker Open Field

This summer the Walker Art Center is offering an opportunity for organizations and groups to sponsor a time slot and offer an activity or demonstration on their field. We will participate on Saturday, September 4 from 3:00-5:00pm. If you can join us, please talk to Rondi or Dominick. Please come, bring your friends, and a picnic if you wish.
<http://walkerart.org/openfield/>