

We are going to win!

Article from "Lininskaya Smena" Newspaper, 28.01.1992

By Dmitry Syrov

Master An has demonstrated some of the techniques. He made his hand as strong as iron in a split second, then moved his heart from one part of his chest to another. If I saw it a month ago I would have called it mystification. But now here's Patriarch of Wing Chun Kung Fu, occupying the 18th rank of mastership, Huynh Ngoc An, and his pupils.

- Master An, please tell us about the origin of this martial art?

- It was set up in Manchuria 300 years ago. The Chinese made up the bulk of population but the Manchurian family came into power. Though the natives were largely oppressed the Manchurian held the native religion - Buddhism - in respect. They were also afraid of the Shaolin Temple, the cradle of the Eastern martial arts. So the Shaolin Temple was the training center symbolizing power and independence of China and preparing the future revolt against the ruling Manchu. It was uncovered and punitive forces were sent there. The monks put up a stubborn defense but due to the tricks of traitors the Temple was occupied and then destroyed. Five high rank monks managed to escape. Having undergone a lot of terrible ordeals just one nun Ng Mui survived. This nun came to the Temple called White Crane and began to create a new fighting technique. Her days were filled with meditation and reflection.

In Guan Dun there lived a young woman Yimm Wing Chun (Eternal Springtime for English). Tired with harassment on the part of a local official she took the patronage of the nun and left her father's home. They say that the old nun once saw a crane and a snake fighting. Ng Mui memorized smooth motions of the crane and effective and perfect lunges of the snake. She managed to apply them in the human fighting technique and improved it to Wing Chun. The nun died in 1726, but Wing Chun kept living there and adopted much of the nun's knowledge. Once Wing Chun saw a leopard and



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a tiger fighting. Soon after she created a fighting method of five living creatures: crane, snake, tiger, leopard, and dragon. The last appeared on the emblem as a symbol of the Shaolin Temple.

Philosophic grounds of the technique. The number 5 is introduced deliberately. It symbolizes the five best human features: flexibility, intelligence, steadfastness, courage, and soberness. It also symbolizes five elements of the Eastern philosophy: humaneness, obedience, politeness, intelligence and belief.

This martial art was named after Wing Chun by her husband, with whom she was engaged from her childhood. The title of Patriarch then passed from her husband to their daughter, next was one of the high rank monks, then his son, and at least his follower, the 6th Patriarch of Wing Chun Kung Fu, who early in the 20th century settled in Vietnam and set up a school of Wing Chun Kung Fu there. One of his former novices trained the famous actor, Bruce Lee. He moved to Hong Kong and became the 1st Wing Chun Patriarch there. He passed the secrets of this art to Ho Hai Long, from whom I accepted the title.

- **Tell us about yourself?**

- I began to attend Wing Chun Kung Fu classes at the age of 8. In my 18 I became a teacher of this martial art. While training I gradually mastered the art. To have success you need persistence and steadfastness. If you acquire such features in full you will be a teacher. It is difficult to develop a school in Vietnam, that's why I came to Russia. But I was confronted with bureaucratic formalities. It hinders me from teaching people here.

- **Are there any ranks of mastership in this martial art?**

- In the Wing Chun School there are five belts. The first corresponding to the lowest rank is Black. It symbolizes the "darkness", absence of knowledge. The next belt is Sky-blue signifying the "dawn", followed by the Gold belt meaning the "Sun". Then comes the Red belt denoting the "sunset", knowledge is extensive. And at least the last belt – White – whose color is that of space and light with power superior to darkness. It corresponds to the highest level. Master An is the holder of the White belt with fringes like the beard of an old man, which symbolizes respect and deep knowledge.

- **Please tell us about the emblem of your school?**

- There is a white circle against the black background. It is our Earth. On the Earth there is a magic hexagon, Mai five petal flower. Six facets mean six elements of a body: marrow, breath (air), brain (consciousness), body itself, arms, and legs.

The Mai flower is in memory of the nun who created Wing Chun Kung Fu. Five petals denote the aforesaid five elements of the Eastern philosophy. They also signify five tactics, five character features. So the emblem reflects everything what is needed for students.

- What is the difference between Wing Chun and other styles of the Eastern martial arts?

- The basic distinctive feature of Wing Chun consists of brisk, straight and effective strikes. The fighting technique focuses on minimum resistance. Among different weapons short sticks (Dragon Poles) and two knives (Butterfly swords) are preferred.

- Master An, is it possible to recover from various diseases through training at your school?

- I can't say for certain but the person who adheres to all the rules of Wing Chun can recover from many diseases and weaknesses. All what he needs is persistence.

- Please tell us about the respiratory gymnastics – Khi Kong?

- It is difficult to explain the internal processes. Each breathing exercise has an influence on a particular human organ. One can control his organs at his will. For example, he can change the shape of his bones and the body as a whole.

- So it may require high energy consumption?

- Energy consumption is very low. All this is achieved through intensive training. I hope that this information will help to choose this martial art and start training. Then you will be cheerful and successful in your business.

