

phere in the street and all around. The excitement was contagious and everyone enjoyed the new and sudden prosperity. Was it a harbinger of things to come?

On January 16, 1954, both Wu Gong Yee and Chan Hak Fu arrived in Macao. Chan had been training for endurance by jogging and going through some chi kung drills in the Pine Garden while Wu stayed at the Medicine Hill Zen Monastery. Wu seemed to be at ease, at least on the surface. The Committee Vice-Chairman, business tycoon Mr. Ho Yin, in a newspaper interview said he was participating in the fund raising in order to aid the poor and the hospital. He explained that boxing competition matches were common in other areas while Chinese martial art open fighting was seldom seen. Chinese Martial Arts are a true treasure of China. The art should be demonstrated to the public on occasion. As for the worry that the fight would just not be serious, or on the other hand, that a serious injury or even death might result, Mr. Ho Yin told the reporter he believed both Wu and Chan were good sportsmen and would certainly fight by the agreed-upon rules. In addition, the well-known casino tycoon, Mr. Fu Lo Yung, also expressed his view in the paper. He was very satisfied with the results of the event.

Many of the biggest names in kung fu, movies, and business attended the fight event. Kung Fu masters like Ip Man, Tung Ying Kit, Lau Fat Man (local Gatekeeper of Eagle Claw and father of Lily Lau), Yang Sau Chung, plus the rich and famous of films and the influential of the business world. The wife of the Viceroy of Macao did the ceremonial ribbon cutting.

Radio station Luk Chuen of Maco did a live broadcast. The famous film producer and theater magnate, Mr. Lo Kau, provided three cameras, placed at three different strategic angles, to record the fight. It was an unprecedented event in Chinese martial arts.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The event was named, "Kuo Shui (i.e., National Martial Art) Demonstration and Film and Opera Stars Singing Show Money Raising Grand

Convention". The show started at 2:30 P.M. in the Garden Swimming Pool. Special bamboo scaffolding holding some 10,000 seats had been constructed along with the temporary stage. The fight was to start at 4:00 P.M.

A western boxing ring with corner posts and ropes was used instead of the traditional Chinese fight ring with no posts or ropes. Each round would be five minutes. Prior to the contest it was generally thought that Wu Gong Yee was more experienced and had more skills. He was 53 years old. Wu Tunan, Wu Gong Yee, and Ma Yueh Liang were all born around 1901 and were of the same generation. Chan was much younger and more agile. He had learned western boxing and had better experience fighting in a western boxing ring format. The outcome though was strictly a matter of speculation. And, there was much speculation and heated debate.

The Committee had requested several very senior master judges to determine the rules and to develop plans and decisions for various possible scenarios. Some of them demonstrated their art in the pre-show. Masters like Tung Ying Kit and Lau Fak Man demonstrated a few mock attacks and responses, for example, how to deal with various fight tactics. No kicking above the knees would be one of the rules. Tung and Lau demonstrated that together.

Prior to the event, both fighters signed the "saang sei jong", literally "life/death contract", a contract of death. This was a tradition in Chinese martial art duels. Such a contract prohibits one party from claiming liability on the other party should there be a disabling injury, maiming, or death. Also, the contract prohibits revenge by kung fu brothers, etc.

QUAN

Since videos of the actual fight are widely available, I shall not describe it in detail. There is some controversy regarding the completeness of the tape currently available. Therefore, I have chosen to use the descriptions of the newspapers of that time rather than using my own description of the film. The description is slightly modified for artistic purposes for the lay reader. It does

Many of the biggest names in kung fu, movies and business attended the fight event.... plus the rich and famous of films and the influential of the business world.

not completely represent terms and jargon of the two styles White Crane and taijiquan.

This fight report was done by seasoned martial arts reporters Mr. Chan Fei and Mr. Cheung Guk, as well as Mr. Lui Dai Lu (note - Mr. Lui had gained fame for authoring several well-known historical novels), as well as disciples of the two styles.

In the ring Chan appeared in a long white robe. He looked like a western boxer. He was handsome, young, and energetic. He was a modern young Hong-Konger. Wu came to the ring clad in a traditional Chinese robe. At five feet four inches, he was not very tall. He looked humble and gentle, like a traditional Chinese scholar. However, once his robe was removed, he looked very sturdy and thick in his shoulders beyond expectation. This, in fact, caused some exclamation from the audience.

ROUND ONE

Wu Gong Yee started out in a "seven star" stance. He quickly started dancing. Left fist in front, right midline. Then he took the legs of "cold chicken" stance. Chan placed his two arms to the front and stood leisurely. Note there are several White Crane postures with two hands in front, at the side, two back. Chan's chose the most cautious gesture to start.

The two combatants approached one another cautiously. Chan attacked first. He was very mobile and danced around. Chan used a classical White Crane technique of striking then moving to increase the distance between him and his opponent. He would not allow Wu Gong Yee to get close or make contact or apply any of the close range tactics of taiji.

Chan stepped with his right foot, swung left fist; stepped with left foot, swung his right fist. He used White Crane's famous "Kup Hammer". Each fist went through forty-five degrees from above downward. Chan's legs and arms were flawlessly coordinated. He used his tall build, his quick and powerful pushes well. Those there in the trade clearly could see that Chan was demonstrating typical features of the White Crane. Use of such tactics on a shorter opponent was especially suitable and effective. This showed Chan had the skill and was an intelligent fighter. He was not merely a brash, young challenger.



Wu was cautious in his assessment of Chan. He followed Chan around the ring.

Wu was cautious in his assessment of Chan. He followed Chan around the ring. After his initial assessment, he started a somewhat static tactic. Each time Chan's hand came near, Wu would lightly chop his forearms at painful accupoints on Chan's arms. The newspapers at that time called these "a child's fist". But soon Wu Gong Yee penetrated Chan's defense and hit his face. Chan immediately used White Crane's "Lohan Chuan's Leopard Salvo Hands" and responded harshly. It was a ferocious attack with more than ten unanswered punches. Each one getting closer and closer to Wu's face. Wu was forced to move towards the ropes. He was partially outside one of the ropes. He swung around and used "faan sun pit sun - turn body; side fist" and hit Chan's nose. Chan's nose started to bleed. Wu immediately followed up with several punches counter-attacking Chan's earlier barrage. He struck at Chan's mid-section. Chan's nose kept bleeding. Soon his clothes were red and covered in blood. Judge Ho Yin quickly rang the bell and announced the end of round one.

The agreement had been that rounds would last five minutes. But round one was shortened to just two minutes. The period of rest was also increased since Chan's nose was still bleeding profusely. Some newspapers claimed that Chan rested for 20 to 30 minutes just because they could not stop the nose bleeding.

The audience became impatient and frustrated. Some started yelling, "Do you need to go to the hospital before you come out to resume the fight!"

Judge Ho Yin asked Chan if he was okay. Chan told him nose bleeding is common in Western boxing and that he was okay. After some five minutes round two finally was started.

It should be noted that at that time the general health of Chinese was still weak. Most Chinese regarded blood as extremely precious. They viewed bleeding as being extremely dangerous. Television with Western boxing was not available so the Chinese audience was not prepared for the sight of so much blood. Many in the audience, especially women, screamed at the sight of the blood. A few ladies even fainted.

The Chinese in those days did not donate blood. Even up to the 1980s most of the blood donations to the Hong Kong Red Cross were from non-Chinese, mostly the British Army. It was common up to the late 1970s and early 1980s when hospital patients needed blood transfusions and the Red Cross was low on supply, the hospital medical doctors would ask the family to buy blood. They would purchase blood from professional donors, most of whom were poor or addicts. Often the blood was not clean. Sometimes the hospital would borrow the blood from the Red Cross and the family would have to promise to donate the blood back.

This same scene is played out even now in China. Many novels in those days would describe a boy donating blood for a girl, or one of her family members, bleeding in distress. In those days novels often portrayed the girl being so grateful for the boy's tremendous courage and sacrifice and his willingness to give-up his precious blood. Often she would fall in love with him or even marry him even when she really did not like him.

By the late 1980s, public education programs took effect. Blood donations were no longer perceived in the same light as in previous generations. Now blood bank reserves are no longer a problem in Hong Kong.

The panel of judges conferred quickly for an emergency review. They made the decision to halt the fight with the following verdict: "Neither side won; neither side lost; neither was there a draw"

ROUND TWO

Chan Hak Fu still used his ferocious rapid-fire attack. Wu Gong Yee changed his approach. He reduced his stepping and the length of his steps even more. Chan made a half circle around the ring. He used White Crane's "Dau Lau" hand—scoop sweep hand to reach Wu's waist in a flash. But Wu was excellent in taiji's small circle, close distance, body "hua" digesting-contact. Not only was he not injured by Chan's strike but he was able to borrow the force of Chan's punch, took out his left hand, and used his right hand to issue "fist under elbow" to strike Chan's chest. He then

hit Chan's upper arm severely. This strike disabled Chan's right hand temporarily. With that Chan then raised his leg to make a high kick.

High kicks were forbidden by the fight rules. Wu responded to Chan's breaking of the high kick rule by using "left separate leg". The judges made quick review and felt that both sides were becoming extremely agitated. They were concerned that if the fight were to continue a disaster might follow. This was counter to the original intention of the benefit and fund-raiser. Therefore, the Chief Judge rang the bell to stop Round Two. Round two only lasted one minute.

The panel of judges conferred quickly for an emergency review. They made the decision to halt the fight with the following verdict: "Neither side won; neither side lost; neither was there a draw".

Since the original purpose had been fulfilled, both the Taiji camp and the White Crane camp accepted the verdict and neither side insisted on continuing the fight to reach a final result. Wu Gong Yee and Chan Hak Fu then shook hands and left the ring. Both camps felt satisfaction.

At the contest Wu Gong Yee was surrounded by Cantonese speaking people. He did not understand them and, therefore, was very cautious of

of fear of revenge or someone trying to trick him. Martial artists or anyone in such a game, normally would take precautions and not accept a towel or drinks from strangers. Tricks of hypnotism were even common among martial artists back then. Towels or a drink might contain the well-known "mong hong yeuk", i.e., a sedative to make one weak. Therefore, in the arena he would accept nothing from anyone, not even event officials. They were also Cantonese. He did not trust them. In the ring he only accepted towels or drinks from the two disciples in his corner.

Even returning to his residency in Hong Kong became a worry for him. The grey zone in the immigration law made him uncertain of being able to return to Hong Kong once he left for Macao. White Crane was so popular then. Many police and government officials were followers of White Crane.

Whether a reality or not, this was Wu Gong Yee's perception. H.W. Wong, a main disciple and former steward of the main Wu Association in Jordan, reports that Wu's attendant disciples also held this highly cautious view. Thus, once the fight was finished, Gong Yee still could not relax. It was only when he boarded the Macao/Hong Kong ferry, in the privacy of the ferry cabin, among old friends and disciples, that he changed his demeanor and relaxed to smile. The world of martial arts took a turn on that afternoon. Everyone celebrated the result.

Both camps celebrated with large feasts after returning to Hong Kong. Each camp invited the other to join their celebration. The two Wu's, i.e., Wu Gong Yee of taijiquan, and Wu (Ng) Siu Chung of White Crane, shook hands and took photos together. Wu Gong Yee and Wu Dai Kwai smiled broadly. Wu (Ng) Siu Chung and Chan Hak Fu smiled politely. All appeared happy and drank toasts to celebrate their success in raising such a large sum for the benefit of the poor, the homeless, and the hospital.

BIRTH OF THE NEO-STYLE MARTIAL ART NOVELS

*Sun Pai Mo Hap Siu Shuet,
Xin Pai Wu Xia Xiao Shuet*

The huge tide of interest just prior to and during the contest did not end with final ringing of the bell on that January day in 1954. Rather,



Newspapers and magazines covered the event with great intensity.

interest seemed to just begin. During those days there was little mass media and not much good entertainment available for the general public. Hong Kong had only one cable radio station and a wireless station. There was no television.

Although the fight had ended, the final verdict was a mystery to everyone except those most closely involved. Since the fight was so short, since television did not broadcast it, and because the fight film was only circulated privately, the general population was unable to see what had really happened in the ring. This resulted in continued, endless arguments asserting different views and alleged secret inside information. This lasted for nearly two months after the fight with little sign of any let-up.

Some senior citizens report that a film made by Lo Kau was shown in theaters as a teaser or along with the news-footage. However, White Crane people protested. They purchased the film and the footage was never shown publicly again. The *New Evening* newspaper's chief editor, Sun Man Pao, provided extensive coverage of both pre and post fight events. *New Evening* devoted special columns to interviews of the Wu family and Wu Gong Yee demonstrating to reporters on the roof-top garden of the Kam Chuen Association. In the demonstration, Wu Dai Kwai



A few columns of the first novel "Dragon and Tiger Fight in Metropole", in "New Evening (Sun Man Pao)".

explained how the gesture was used in the fight. Dai Kwai's explanations were accompanied by applicable photos of the technique. Readers eagerly ate these articles up.

BIRTH OF A NEW GENRE

Editor Sun Man Pao took notice that whenever a fight article appeared in the *New Evening*, readers would quickly, ravenously sweep his newspapers from the newstands.

He had an idea—he asked a colleague, Mr. Chan Man Tung, whose pen name was Leung Yu Sang, to write a novel on martial arts. Up to that time Leung had only written on fine arts. He had no previous exposure to martial arts. He was

forced to adopt his fine arts reporting in order to write the novel. He elected to use the modern western as the style of choice for his martial arts writing.

The first novel was formatted like a newspaper column. It appeared nightly in the *New Evening*. The title was, *Dragon and Tiger Fight in the Metropolis*. Immediately it was a hit. Sales of the *New Evening* newspaper soared. After a year the demand was so great that a second novel was added to the series. *Dragon and Tiger Down South* was Leung's second blockbuster. Demand increased and from this start other newspapers became involved with the martial art stories. Chan Man Tung soon reached his limit. He asked yet another colleague, also in fine arts reporting and without training in martial arts, to assist him. This second person was the famous Mr. Cha Leung Yung. Cha used the penname Kam Yung (Jin Yong) to write his novels.

Kam Yung's (Jin Yong's) debut novel was entitled, "*Shu Kim Yan Sau Luk, Xue Jian En Chou (Legend of Scripture and Sword)*". It was an immediate, huge success. It was so overwhelmingly received by voracious readers that in addition to appearing in the nightly newspaper, but each day the novel was sent via airmail to all Southeastern Asian countries. In those days, the facsimile machine had not yet been invented. Each week a small pamphlet was published with a compendium of the seven novel articles. Each month they published a compendium of those thirty novel articles for that month.

Kam Yung took approximately two years to write a novel. He did this continuously for 14 novels. Each night an article would appear in the newspaper with a



Above: "A Page of Taiji Secrets". Right: "How Wu Gong Ye fought Chan Ke Fu". Newspapers had a eager audience for anything related to the fight.



1949, showing the first movie of Wong Fei Hung, 'Magic Whip Extinguishes Candle Light'

new segment of the novel. At first he only wrote in one newspaper. Then he started writing in another newspaper. Finally, as his readership grew, he established his own newspaper. His newspaper measured only four pages in length but all four pages were chock-full of martial art stories.

Kam's novels were so well received and the thirst of the public was such that both teenagers and adults would ravenously read his stories not just once but tens of times daily in order to quench their insatiable thirst for the exciting adventures. So many read them so much that it was not uncommon to hear some recite those stories from mere memory. One result of this feverish fascination was that games of trivia pursuit over some of the finer details of the stories began to be played-out in secondary schools.

In those days in academia the classics were widely accepted and emphasized. Interest in martial art novels was considered foul and a sign of a low education level. Students' bags were searched. When martial arts novels were found, the books were confiscated and the student punished. This author personally was one of those student readers.

Of course, newspapers and other writers soon followed suit and eventually the martial art novel became a respected genre. This new class of writing was

called "New Style Martial Art Novels" by the respected and those looking at societal trends. It became a standard for all newspapers to have a section on martial art adventure stories. Soon newspapers and magazines sprang up that were dedicated solely to the martial arts novels.

A common feature was the difference in the new novels from those older. The old styles mainly told of the adventures of heroes of Shaolin. The great Hung Gar master, Wong Fei Hung, and Fong Sai Yuk were very popular heroes. In the old stories Wu Dang and the internal invariably were cast in roles of villains. Descriptions in

those stories were often rather crude but, on the other hand, those authors were usually highly versed in the martial arts. They were mostly practitioners of Shaolin and other external arts. This new style, however, started with taiji in almost all the novels by Jin Yong and Liang Yue Sang. They went into the history, form names, principles, and practice methods in great detail. In addition to the beloved Shaolin, now Wu Dang and the internal styles were presented in roles as heroes.

I remember now how popular those novels were and how they were read so widely. The stories were also produced on the radio and in movies. In fact, many, many movies were produced based on these novels, especially the



Kwan Tak Hing 1958 showed KTH fighting with his constant enemy Shek Kin



Seven little folk, the group of 7 trained under Yu Jim Yuen, in *Zhongguo Xiju XueYuan* (China Drama Academy) with Yuan Lung (Jacky Chan), Yuan Bo (Sammo Hung Kam Bo), Yuan Kwai, Yuan Biu, Yuan Hua, etc. Jacky is the middle boy.

novels of Liang and Jin Yong. This in turn brought many genuine martial arts masters to the movies.

One of these was Yu So Chau, the daughter of Yu Jim Yuen who was the shifu of seven little people: Jacky Chan, Sammo Hung, Yuen Kwai—the action director of Jet Li, Yuen Biu, and three others. Of course, these seven little people originally found work in supporting roles to bigger stars back then. We also had Yuen Siu Tin, the father of Yuen Wo Ping and Lau Ka Leung. Also included in this group is Lee Hoi Chuen, the father of Bruce Lee. Yes, little Bruce Lee was among those who benefited from the boom in martial art movies. Note, I say this with tongue-in-cheek, of course, these people went on to great fame and stardom in the film and print industry.

Jin Yong's books as well as he, himself, eventually became legends. His books were the most widely read books in the Chinese world.



Kwan Tak Hing standing with the young Sammo Hung as Lam Sai Wing (WFH's disciple, Lam Jo's uncle) at his back.

This new wave of martial art movies lasted from the 1950s until the 1970s when a second wave hit. The second wave was that of Bruce Lee in kung fu fighting movies. Then in the 1980s a third wave hit with Jet Li in the Shaolin Temple. The rest is film stardom history.

As for Jin Yong, he wrote martial novels mainly based on information obtained directly from masters, especially masters of the internal arts. He became a very wealthy writer and eventually started his own newspaper entitled *The Ming Pao*, (*The Ming Daily*). That paper grew substantially until it became the most important newspaper for intellectuals now in Hong Kong. Jin Yong finally became a newspaper tycoon and billionaire. Still he wrote. He wrote daily, nonstop until 1973. At that point, he started to rewrite his earlier novels extensively. In these novels, quite distinct from other writers, was demonstrated an unusually profound and rich knowledge of martial arts, especially the internal martial arts. His books described many details of highly developed internal skills and taiji known by advanced artists but, heretofore, never written about or described in any martial art book.

Jin Yong was able to write in such depth because of his close friendship with the masters. One of these was his Chief Editor, Hui Chi Bun. Hui was a senior disciple of Wu Gong Yee. Jin Yong's descriptions were so realistic that many true masters firmly believed that he, Jin Yong, himself was a great master. Many requested to duel with him because of this.

Jin Yong's books as well as he, himself, eventually became legends. His books were the most widely read books in the Chinese world. This was the scene in Hong Kong and Southeast Asia from the 1950's to the 1970s. Because of a political embargo his books were prohibited from sale in Taiwan and on China's mainland. However, by the early 1980s the embargo was lifted in Taiwan. By the late 1980's it was lifted on the mainland. Immediately, his books were incomparable successes there.

Jin Yong was so important and was so beloved during the times of the bamboo curtain and the highly sensitive era between the western world

in Hong Kong and Taiwan and the mainland and during the political sanctions. This profound respect and fondness resulted in Jin Yong being the one person to be named for interviews by the heads of governments—Deng Xiao Peng and Jiang Kai Shek. Both Chinese leaders read his novels.

THE GROWTH OF TAIJI AND THE WU FAMILY

The extensive infiltration of the new style of martial arts novels profoundly influenced the young people of the 1950s to 1970s. This new genre made them feverish for Chinese Martial Arts. Many flocked to the Wu family. Many of these became the Wu disciples and masters in the years to come. Others who did not join the Wu family art went to the other taiji styles of the Tung and Yang families. In addition, many also followed the external styles and other internal styles like Mantis, Hung Gar, Wing Tsun, Pakua, Liu Be Fa, etc.

With the new demand, the Wu family opened new schools in Wanchai and Mongkok. They bought the permanent site in Jordan Ferry and made it the main school. It remains there still. The newfound interest also created demand in various foreign countries. The Kam Chuen Association successfully sent Wu Gong Yee, Wu Dai Kwai, Wu Dai Sun, and Wu Dai Chai to establish the association in several southern Asian countries.

In general, the students of Wu Gong Yee were a bit older, better-off in family background and financially. They excelled more in theory and in small circle skills. The most famous, of course, was Yip Wai Kay, the nephew of Wu Gong Yee. Unfortunately, he died young. Chung Ngok Ping was another disciple in this group. He was given the nickname of "Number 1 of the Non-Wu's" within the Kam Chuen Association. Yet another was Wong Yee Yim, who has since immigrated to Toronto, Canada.

Students of Wu Dai Kwai were in general younger, more energetic, less well off financial-



Kwan Tak Hing 1949, with his typical martial art fights, in the 'Legend of Wong Fei Hung'

ly, and more likely to have come from the working class. He placed a strong emphasis on real fighting and large circle techniques. These classes were less interested on the fine theory of taiji. These differences were well known in the parks of practice. A few left Wu Dai Kwai to begin teaching outside his school. Of these, the most famous was Cheng Tin Hung. Cheng was one of the earliest students of Wu Dai Kwai. He also learned some from Chung Ngok Ping. Cheng won a Taiwan Ring tournament and then used his fighting skills and experience to produce a generation of champions by placing a strong emphasis on basics and simple but effective taiji techniques in the ring. Like Dai Kwai, Cheng was generally able to produce real fighters within one to two years. Thus, Cheng Tin Hung established himself and the Hong Kong Taiji Chief Association.

As a result of his great success, the Hong Kong government's Urban Services Department authorized Cheng to run the government sponsored taiji classes in the City's public parks. Thus with the support of the government, Wu Style taiji came to dominate public parks for several decades. It is noteworthy that for all his later success, Chen Tin Hung continued to show great respect and courtesy towards Wu Dai Kwai.

The next most impressive student of Wu Dai Kwai was Lee Cheung Shut. Actually, Lee learned under Cheng as a junior student. Lee taught Wu

taiji in Kowloon Park for decades, until his recent death. Lee's better students included the current vice-president of the Hong Kong Kuoshu (National Art) Main Association, Kun Ha Fai, and Mok Tsi. Also, a younger student who has taught in Montreal for several decades now is Lee Man Charn, nicknamed Mai Song Lee.

Several students remained with Wu Dai Kwai in his Mongkok branch school until his death in 1972. Among them was the man in charge, Yip Sue Leong, and several others like Wong Kui, Tam Yiu, who now teaches at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Chan Pui Wah, Fok Wing Tsuen, now living in Taiwan, Lo Pak Tong, Hui Sing, now living in New York, and Lee Yiu Tong.

Wu Dai Kwai taught students, however, for traditional, cultural reasons, all the above people were listed as students of Wu Gong Yee. They all "baise'd" (underwent formal oath and discipleship) to Wu Gong Yee. Their names were recorded in Wu's family record as being students of Gong Yee. There were, however, five teenagers who underwent formal "baisee" to Wu Dai Kwai. These disciples were Chan Cheong Lap, now an executive of the Hong Kong Wushu Union, Tsui Yu Chung, now living in Toronto, Lee Kwok Shu, now in Perth, his brother, and Chung Wai Ming.

All five of these young students were western educated teen-agers. This was unusual at that time because nearly all Wu students were adults and Chinese educated. In those days it was an oddity for a young person to learn taijiquan. For this reason Wu Dai Kwai especially treasured these unusual youngsters. In those days the well-educated, especially those western-trained, dared not mention they were learning taijiquan until they reached 30 or 40 years of age. Taiji was considered a chi kung exercise used by old men only to increase longevity. It was unthinkable to tell others that taiji could be used for actual fighting. This author personally remembers those taboos well.

Lee Kwok Shu was educated in the Catholic College of La Salle. The College was run by the La Salle brothers. The College was well-known for having a strong tradition in any type of martial arts and for producing police officers. During those early days Lee applied his newly acquired taiji techniques that he had learned from Wu Dai Kwai. He bested all in his class. One of the class-

mates he defeated was a thin boy who practiced Wing Tsun. Later, this thin boy would become the king of kung fu—Bruce Lee.

Chan Cheong Lap went on to become principal of a famous secondary school. Tsui Yu Chung taught in the College of Education training upcoming teachers. Tam Yiu taught in the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He taught many future professors and senior staff along side Tung Muk Lei, another university professor and the daughter of the famous Tung Ying Kit. Through their combined effort taijiquan gradually spread even to those western educated who had previously despised the traditional and only practiced western fencing and boxing.

PIVOT POINT

Thus was the first tide of kung fu fever in Asia. It had spanned from the 1950s to the 1970s. It saw the rise of the New Style Martial Art Novels, the establishment of the Wu family and taiji. This first tide ended in the 1970s with the death of Wu Gong Yee and Wu Dai Kwai and when Kam Yong (Jin Yong) stopped writing his novels on martial arts and the internal master heroes. But as one wave subsided, another took rise. By this time the thin boy named Bruce Lee had matured into manhood. He led a second tide of kung fu fever in the succeeding generation. Not to be outdone, along came Jet Li in his *Shaolin Temple* film to lead yet another generation of kung fu enthusiasts. This third wave led by Jet Li fortuitously combined with China's new open door policy. Subsequent massive interaction of Chinese Martial Art masters traveling abroad coupled with visitors to China's masters opened the door to better understanding of the martial arts. This is now all history.

In a very real sense, all this can be argued to be the product of that Wu/Chan fight in 1954. In 1994, after Kam Yong (Jin Yong) retired, his newspaper the *Ming Pao Daily* published his own biography. Some 150 pages were devoted to describing that fight event in order to document how he owed his success and how Hong Kong owed so many positive social changes to that particular fight in January of 1954. The fight was a milestone in the history of modern taijiquan. It also was a milestone and turning point in Hong Kong's modern history.

AFTER-THOUGHTS

This article was originally published in the same year in *Wu Lin* and *Wu Dang* in 1954. It was extensively quoted in China. However, due to a printer error, *Wu Lin's* version incorrectly wrote in the paragraph on the aftermath, "Wu Family Planted Their Roots in Hong Kong and Macao". The printing mistake was an error of translating simplified Chinese and traditional Chinese. The simplified Chinese version was misprinted as "Planting Their Roots into Fertile Ground". The *Wu Dang* version contained no such error. The whole paragraph was copied without any change and with this error 'in toto' from the book on the Wu family by Yan Ziyuan (Ngan Chi Yuen).

In addition, several books, including Yan's, mentioned that Chan Hak Fu was a Shaolin specialist and the Gatekeeper of the White Crane style.

In reality, Chan was at that time a relatively junior in his art. But, he was clearly an outstanding junior. Chan Hak Fu did eventually become the Gatekeeper of White Crane. He has made immense contributions to White Crane through these decades. He has never been a person of controversy.

The precise problem faced by Wu Gong Yee was deciding whether to accept the challenge. In Chinese Martial Art tradition, one should not fight publicly across two separate generations, at least it was to be avoided if at all possible. Obviously, should the senior person defeat the junior, it would be taken as a matter of course. Should the junior be overly injured, the senior would be susceptible to criticism for having too much of a militant attitude. Should the senior win by a narrow margin, it would mean loss of face for the senior, not to mention the devastation should the senior clearly lose the match. Thus, once Wu Gong Yee decided and announced he would take the challenge, he was in an embarrassing and delicate situation. He must not lose. He could not take a draw; he could not do Chan too much injury. He had a fine line to walk.

Another aspect of Gong Yee's dilemma was that he was a national grade famous profession-

al. He was the eldest son and Gatekeeper of the Wu family. The Wu Style was the second most popular style of taiji next to Yang's. He was the son of the nationally famous Wu Jianquan. He had already served as Vice-Principal of the Hunan Provincial National Martial Art Academy. This was the home-nest of most fighters, soldiers, and military generals. He had been coach of Whampoa Military Academy's Internal Martial Art Department. During this time, the Chen Style and the Wu Style were relatively little known. Sun's Style was not yet fully formed. Tung Ying Kit and the eldest son of Yang Chengfu, Yang Shaou Zhong, two supermasters of Yang's taiji resided in Hong Kong. Wu Gong Yee held the same seniority status and background as these two supermasters of the internal. In addition, Lau Fak Man, Gatekeeper of Eagle Claw and father of Lily Lau was on the scene. All

the large and well-known styles of the north were there and concerned about the match.

The fight represented locals versus immigrants, northerners versus southerners, old versus the new, traditional Central China Han Chinese kung fu versus Western China Tibet kung fu, waigia versus neigia, Mandarin versus Cantonese speakers. It was a socially volatile mix and ripe for explosion and release.

In 1949 when the Communists defeated the Kuo Min Tang, the Nationalists moved to Taiwan. Many northerners took refuge in Hong Kong and Macao. They all spoke Mandarin. Many were from Shanghai. Many were wealthy, many were famous, intellectuals and masters of various fields, military, arts, painting, fortune telling, experts in business and manufacturing, entertainment, and of course the martial arts.

Many local martial artists sided with the existing government party, the Nationalists, because they favored tradition and old values. The Communists at that time were critical of tradition and old values. All this created a high degree of tension among the local Cantonese. They did not understand the Mandarin dialect. Their lifestyles were much different from that of the new immigrants and northerners. They spent money dif-

Once Wu Gong Yee decided and announced he would take the challenge, he was in an embarrassing and delicate situation. He must not lose. He could not take a draw; he could not do Chan too much injury...

ferently. Tension grew in housing and job seeking. During the pre-1997 exodus, Canadians, especially those in Vancouver and Toronto, and the people of Australia and New Zealand, saw a similar scene.

On the other hand, the White Crane Style was popular locally and in the nearby Quandong and Quangxi Provinces. Chan Hak Fu was known locally as a junior but he was well-known as being exceptionally good. The psychological burden on Wu Gong Yee must have been very difficult. It was no wonder some from the Wu camp tried to glorify the fight and encourage it by writing that Chan was the local White Crane Gatekeeper. Thus, the final judgment that "No Side Wins; No Side Loses; Neither is it a Draw" is understandable in light of tradition and the background.

This also explains why Wu Dai Kwai insisted that Chan Hak Fu fight him instead of his father. They were of equal seniority. It also explains why he felt Ng (Wu) Siu Chung, the White Crane Gatekeeper, should fight him, Wu Dai Kwai, in another match. But White Crane would not agree to this and, thus, Dai Kwai argued vehemently and nearly got into a street fight with White Crane judge Lee Kim Kam on Caine Road. Since Yan Chi Yuan's book has been widely read in China and overseas and caused a fair amount of controversy with students of several important grandmasters, Wu Tunan, the Yang family, Fu Zhong Wen, Man Lai Shing, and Wang Zhing Yin, it is important to bring clarification to the issue.

LITTLE KNOWN DETAILS

Several sidebar stories not well known by the lay public nor are they recorded in known texts of the fight. Some are quite interesting.

Chan Hak Fu's arm injury—after the fight many young men went to learn from Chan Hak Fu. One of them was Lo Pak Tong. Lo Pak Tong was a writer and painter. He remembers Chan as being in his thirties, warm, very earnest, a strong man who spoke Cantonese with a very strong ToiShan accent. This is a popular dialect frequently found in Chinatowns in America. Chan

Hak Fu showed Lo Pak his forearms. They had multiple bruises. Chan told him, "Do not think I cannot beat an old man. This Mr. Wu is not such a simple matter. His light chops like a 'baby fist' caused all these bruises."

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Wu Gong Yee was pretty agitated by reports that he had suffered severe punches by Chan Hak Fu. Once, in order to make his point, he showed the disciples his dentures. He told them, "I wore these dentures into the ring. Had I been hit, the dentures would have fallen out." In addition, a reporter asked Wu whether he had used "WuDang's hard fist" in the fight. Wu was surprised at the question. He answered, "WuDang Quan and taijiquan are fundamentally different styles. I do not know WuDang Quan personally. If I had fought with WuDang Quan, it really would have been very interesting." Then Gong Yee said humbly, "Taijiquan has basic principles. Put very simply, it has

direction, location, light and heavy, empty and full, long and short, and timing, etc. It also considers the body reaction, i.e., Hua, Na, Da, and Fa. All are depend on the opponent's reaction in determining how one should move. For example, that day I used 'Boon Lai Chui' (Ban Lan Chui). That gesture, itself, has many possible variations. From the beginning to the end, the situation changes continuously. So, while I start with 'Boon Lai Chi', it may change to 'Wild Horse Parts Mane'. This is especially so when two men fight freely; each has different reactions. The fist method invariably changes a great deal."

Someone asked him, "Taijiquan uses slow motion and does not use force. How is it that you fought using quickness and power that day?" Wu answered, "I did not deviate from the principles. In the classics it is written, 'If the other moves fast, then respond fast; if he moves slowly then follow slowly.' It also says, 'If the other does not move, I do not move. If the other moves even the slightest, I move first.' So, on that day as his fists became faster and faster, I responded with fast fists."

Wu also said after the fight he returned to the dressing room. Senior student Shum Heung Lam

was there. Changing clothes, he let people inspect his body for injuries. Not one bruise or injury was found. A surprised reporter then asked, "Your opponent definitely hit you once, where is that mark?" Gong Yee patted his abdomen below the navel and said, "The kick was upward from below, although it hit my belly it did not affect me. People who have witnessed effects of chi kung should appreciate this point."

WU GONG YEE'S HEART FAILURE THE NIGHT BEFORE THE FIGHT

AS REPORTED BY R. NG

R. Ng (Rock) was only a small kid when Wu Gong Yee fought Chan Hak Fu. The young boy and his father, a disciple of Wu Gong Yee, along with the young boy's godfather, Shem Heung Lam, a senior disciple of Gong Yee, dined together the night after the fight. Someone offered Wu a bowl of meat soup. He in turn gave the bowl of soup to the young Rock. With traditional Chinese courtesy, young Rock politely refused and insisted that the older and revered Wu Gong Yee should have it. Gong Yee was slightly upset that evening and inadvertently crushed the bowl with his fingers. Rock felt that Wu Gong Yee, although seemingly calm and serene on the outside, was tense underneath, otherwise, under normal circumstances this would not have happened. Rock has advised that Wu Gong Yee had a form of chronic heart disease. He actually had a relapse during that time and exhibited shortness of breath along with slight edema and swelling of his legs. R. Ng advised that Wu was not overly pleased with the fight or his performance. Wu Gong Yee felt that he had demonstrated skills apropos of a junior level when he should have exhibited more senior level skills.

WU GONG YEE AND YANG WAH BIU ON THE FIGHT

Yang Wah Biu was one of the well-known students of Wu Jianquan. He started in Monkey Boxing. There Yang was so good that his teacher, the Gatekeeper of Monkey Pekkua Boxing, actually planned to have him become his son-in-law. But, Yang Wah Biu liked taijiquan and sought to learn it. The Monkey Boxing teacher asked him, "Who do you plan to learn from? So many are of

such poor skill." But when the teacher learned Yang intended to learn from Wu Jianquan, he sighed and tears came to his eyes. The Monkey Boxing teacher then told Wah Biu, "Okay, okay, let me introduce you to Wu Jianquan."

Actually, the Monkey Boxing Gatekeeper was a friend of Wu Jianquan. As teenagers they hung together and fought together in the streets of Beijing. They were both born there. Thus Yang Wah Biu switched to taijiquan and underwent tutelage to Wu Jianquan. However, Wu Jianquan insisted that Yang must completely give up all the skills and methods he had learned in the other system. He must do this before even starting to learn taijiquan. Yang also learned from Wu Gong Yee in Wu Jianquan's absence. Wu Jianquan would often return to Shanghai to visit friends and family. Wah Biu told the junior students, all senior citizens now in their 80's, that he was made to practice a single movement tens of hundreds of times before being taught a new movement. Yang felt now these juniors were being too leisurely in their practice. As a very senior Wu family student Yang Wah Biu debated hotly with Wu Gong Yee against taking the challenge. Yang Wah Biu is now approaching 100 years of age. He lives in Rochester, New York. Mostly now his daughter carries on his teaching duties.

WU GONG YEE AND WU DAI KWAI ON THE FIGHT

Some of the disciples hold that Wu Gong Yee had been offered \$5,000 by Ho Yin for the fight. In those days, that was an astronomical sum. Wu was under a great family financial burden. He was responsible for many in his household including his son Wu Da Chai, Wu Da Sun, the son of Gong Yee's younger brother Gong Cho, daughter Ngan Ha and her husband and several daughters. In addition, of course, his wife and several sisters were in the household. In those days, the only offspring really independent financially and career-wise was Gong Yee's oldest son Wu Dai Kwai.

When Gong Yee was asked why he fought instead of the more logical Dai Kwai, he responded, "I was afraid Dai Kwai did not have enough *Fan Chuen*". Literally this means feet/inch and is a common Chinese term for fine judgment used



EPILOGUE

Recently Mr. Chan Hak Fu has spoken out on that fight and the events of that day.

Some 48 years after the fight that did so much to change the course of modern martial arts,

Chan Hak Fu is now 85 years old. Throughout all these years he has worked diligently to spread White Crane to various parts of the world—Australia, then the U.S.A., Canada, the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, Italy, even Israel. Branches of Chan's White Crane schools are spread through these countries. In recent years though he has kept a low profile. In past times, he traveled extensively back and forth between Hong Kong and Macao.

Chan Hak Fu's main school in Macao features a bone-setting and Chinese herbal medicine clinic. Although a senior citizen now, Mr. Chan is still very healthy and energetic. He still has good tolerance for exercise.

When Mr. Chan was asked about why there had been such a fight, he just smiled and replied, "It was just because of the qi of a short time". Note, this expression is a Chinese proverb meaning one cannot rid one's self of a provocation and do something out of impulse. At such a moment, one's qi raises to one's head, making it congested, red, and even may create a feeling of being stuck in the throat. It also makes one blindly act out of a sense of righteousness, as he thought.

As explained by Chan Hak Fu, the fight happened because at that time Wu Gong Yee had moved to Hong Kong. Many famous celebrities learned from Wu. Wherever he appeared in public he was very pompous, surrounded by disciples and friends.

Also, Chan explained, the newspaper wrote that Wu Gong Yee traveled from the north to the south and had yet to meet a rival. From that point on there was great debate in

the martial arts field and in the newspapers.

Chan Hak Fu said he felt that if Wu had not met any one worthy from the north to the south then I have also not met anyone worthy from the south to the north. He said much debate was circulated in the newspapers for half a year. Gradually two camps were formed. Media people from Hong Kong supported Wu. Media in Macao backed Chan. In fact, he said, it was the media who really stirred up the fire, forcing them to settle the issue in a real fight.

Mr. Ho Yin was behind the promotion of the fight. After that big fire that year in Shekipmei colony, both sides were given an opportunity to go ahead. Chan Hak Fu, full of respect, said, "Mr. Ho Yin is really a very kind and generous man. He immediately donated \$30,000 to the people whose homes were destroyed by that fire.

The fight tickets were sold in denominations of \$10, \$20, \$100, and \$200. However, due to the very short supply, even the \$10 tickets were sold on the black market for \$100. Those originally selling for \$20 went for \$200.

Chan Hak Fu went on to explain that there had been a problem as the hour drew near. "All the tickets had been sold out. However, because we, that is Wu and I, had signed a life and death contract and because so many knew of this, the Viceroy of Macao received many, many letters from various countries and even including the church objecting to this. At that time Macao was a civilized Catholic society. Legalized killing was not permissible. It was because of the intense international media pressure that the Viceroy kept delaying authorizing the fight."

Soon Mr. Ho Yin became as agitated as an "ant in the hotpot" because all the tickets had already been sold. He went to speak with Chan Hak Fu. Mr. Chan said he offered the Viceroy a suggestion. "If you are afraid the fight might result in a death, I guarantee you I will not kill Wu. But I cannot guarantee that

I will not be killed by him."

Ho was worried and responded, "Both of you are masters. I do not want any injuries, especially since you are doing this for the benefit of the needy and poor. Can you think of a better way to guarantee neither one will get into trouble?"

Suddenly Chan had an idea. He said, "Let's do it like this. If I am no match for Wu and should the fight situation go unfavorable for me, I will fall down to the floor. Once this happens Wu obviously will not continue his attack on me. This way I will be able to preserve my life."

Ho liked the idea. He told the Viceroy of the Chan's idea. The Viceroy accepted it and then signed his permission for the fight.

Chan Hak Fu said according to his memory, "This fight made the silent Macao streets come alive and bustle with people and auto traffic. The trans Hong Kong/Macao ferry had to add extra hours to carry all the new passengers. All the hotels were chock full of people. People flocked to the newsstands in droves to catch the extra editions of the newspapers. Even the rickshaws, earning \$40 a day, were extremely busy with customers on that day. On just one such day they earned as much as normally in one whole month. The total purse was \$270,000. It does not seem like much now. But at that time, e.g., an apartment flat cost only about \$1,000 to \$2,000.

In the martial arts field there is a proverb—"Do not fight, do not become friends." After this Wu and Chan became friends and visited one another often in the years after the fight. Mr. Chan said, "After the death of Wu Gong Yee and when I moved to the U.S.A. to open a school there, members of the Wu family in Canada even flew to the U.S.A. to personally congratulate me."

Early underground betting favored Wu to win according to Chan Hak Fu. Many celebrities of Hong Kong, Macao, martial arts schools and clubs, and even the general man in the street all joined and bet in private and in underground

gambling houses. At first, since Wu was so famous, the betting heavily favored Wu. Some two to three months before the fight the odds were in favor of Wu 4 to 1. At around three weeks before the fight the odds changed in favor of Wu 3 to 1. Two weeks before the fight the odds had fallen to 2 to 1. By the day before the fight the odds were nearly even at almost 1 to 1.

Chan Hak Fu was asked whether he felt he had won or lost the fight. Chan said, "Personally, since the fight was stopped half way through neither side had really been decisive yet." So, he said, he has no feeling of victory or of being defeated. Instead he felt he became good friends with Wu Gong Yee. Afterward each side put on dinners and invited one another. Chan said laughing, "In the three months after the fight I became really tired of running around Hong Kong, Kowloon New Territories, and Macao meeting various business tycoons, celebrities, communities, village folk, and friends. So for me, the match was a gain with no loss."

When asked by a reporter whether there was a fixed rule to not use kicks, Chan said, "At that time Ho Yin was afraid that if we fight using both feet and hands a death might result. So he made rules to not kick, stab eyes, or attack the groin. But when we fought, we became excited and we forgot the rules. Therefore, Mr. Ho entered and stopped the fight."

Now Sifu Chan has schools in various places around the world. The bone-setter and Chinese herbal clinic, however, are only in Macao. He leaves it to his lady disciple Kam Lai Kwan to manage. White Crane Internal is now spread all across the globe. Now his disciples look after White Crane.

Although a senior citizen now well into his 80s, Chan Hak Fu is still full of zeal. He plans on organizing some bone-setting classes in Macao and overseas. He will do this partly to assist the income flow for White Crane schools and also to promote the old art of bone-setting. According to what Chan saw overseas, most trauma patients under western medical care usually lose their appetite and suffer constipation as a side effect. Bone-setting, he says, uses mostly external applications and is, therefore, better than western orthopedics for one's health.

When asked about his health, Chan replied, "I eat mostly vegetables, fruits, drinks lots of water, avoid too many sweets and salty foods, and I drink some milk daily. I exercise. Younger people can do more vigorous exercise. Older folks need to do less strenuous exercise to avoid injury to tendons and bones." ■

in delicate situations. Wu Dai Kwai was well known to have excellent fighting skills. He had been literally invincible in fights those years in the Pearl River Delta and Hong Kong. But he was also well known to badly injure and tease his opponents.

Wu dai Kwai was well known to have excellent fighting skills... but he was also well known to badly injure and tease his opponents.

Wu Ngan Ha reported that she used to accompany her older brother to many martial art challenges in those years. She did so to stop the bleeding and dress the fight wounds. She would use raw tobacco shreds and fine cuttings to dress wounds. This was a folk remedy for traumatic bleeding. She later said this had been her nightmare for many years. She was fearful that someone would be killed and there would be big trouble for the family. Wu Dai Kwai was young and overly fierce. He used very ferocious methods in his fights.

COMMENTS OF WELL-KNOWN OTHERS

Wu Gong Yee's approach to fighting looked very dry and plain to lay people. His fights were not like those seen in the movies. His two palms would go from outside to inside, from lower down upward to intercept Chan Hak Fu's fists. In fact, his tactics resembled those of Xing Yi's "Drilling Fist". Afterward many said he did not use taijiquan since he delivered strikes just as fast as the younger Chan. In my view, this is incorrect. Training in taijiquan utilizes slowness and relaxation, however, the aim of taiji training is to acquire "yi and qi". In a real fight, regardless whether it be taijiquan or another style, the goal is being first and achieving optimum timing with opportunity. Thus his tactics were not contrary to taijiquan principles.

Lo Pak Tong first studied White Crane with Chan Hak Fu. He later switched to taijiquan under Yang master Tung Ying Kit and then to his son, Tung Fu Ling. Then he became a student of Wu Dai Kwai and was defeated by my father. He then learned from Cheng Tin Hung. Later, he learned from Fung Ngai, the founder of Judo in Hong Kong. Fung played the role of Japanese judoka in Bruce Lee's "Fists of Fury". Note that in all of Bruce Lee's films, genuine martial artists were used. Lo Pak Tong was then accepted by Wu Dai Kwai as his assistant coach. So Pak Tong returned to Hong Kong to assist on a full time basis. Lo was then sent by Wu Dai Kwai to Wu Gong Yee since by that time Gong Yee had returned to Hong Kong. Lo Pak Tong did all the write-ups on Wu Gong Yee in the Hong Kong newspapers like *Ming Pao*, *Wu Lin*, and the others.



Rare photo of Leung and Kam playing chess.

LEUNG YU SANG AND THE FIGHT

Although described as a big fight, to many lay people it was really a simple affair. To Leung Yue Sang, the most important founder of the *New Style Martial Art Novels*, the fight was really nothing remarkable. He commented, "It lasted only a few minutes. Old Wu hit the young Chan and made his nose bleed profusely. That's it!"

Kwan Tang was a student of the Wu family before the fight. Since he could not afford the monthly tuition and Wu Gong Yee did not want to change the rules for one student, he was sent to learn from Chung Ngok Ping, the most senior disciple at that time. But Kwan Tang studied with Cheng Tin Hung under the eye of Chung. Once he visited Cheng Tin Hung in the hospital after Cheng had been ambushed by assassins. Kwan told others afterward, "This chap Cheng is really a daredevil, like Wu Dai Kwai. They knew he was good so they painted their knives black so he would not be able to see any reflections off the blades. Cheng Tin Hung left the hospital soon and took his revenge within a few days."

Kwan Tang said further, "I am not a timid guy; not in the least. During the Second World War I traversed mine fields and even dared to pick-up bombs. But that (Wu/Chan) fight really terrified me. During the fight I could hear the cracking sound of their hits. They fought ferociously. Some ladies even fainted during the fight. None of that was seen on the video."



Leung Yu Sang

FINAL WORDS

These years have passed like the blinking of the eye. A half-century has now gone by. In 1969 the White Crane Gatekeeper, Ng (Wu) Siu Chung, passed away. In 1970 Wu Gong Yee died. In 1972 Wu Dai Kwai died. Even the much younger and much more famous and much more successful Bruce Lee has passed away.

We witnessed there the rise and wane of the New Style Martial Art novels that still persists in movie and television formats. They are even considered classics now; have stood the test of time. The creators Jin Yong (Kam Yung) and Leung Yu Sang have all retired after becoming multi-millionaires. The other main character in this story, Chan Hak Fu, however continued his teaching duties in White Crane and immigrated to America. There he taught a whole new generation of young Cranes of American nationality.

In the 1980's Chan Hak Fu invested in the film entitled, "White Crane". This film showed modern kung fu with an American background. The movie featured Chan Hak Fu, himself as the main character and some of his students and grand-students in supporting roles. In his mature years he has retained good health and has even developed his skill level and kung fu further. At the beginning of the movie, before the main feature, he showed the rare Wu/Chan fight movie clip that he owned. He did this so people may review and catch a glimpse of the Fight of the Century in Macao and Hong Kong upon which pivoted a wave of interest and fascination in modern martial art history.



Kam Yung

Photos accompanying the article were supplied by the author and were scanned from old documents too valuable to be shipped. Some scratches, stains, and tears were removed in an attempt to restore some original quality, but content was not changed nor altered.