

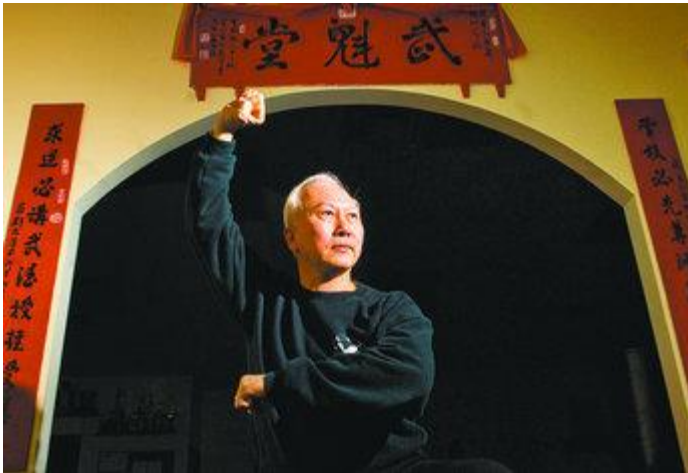
# Grace and Power

*Martial arts grandmaster promotes peace through practice at his Owings Mills studio*

By Linda L. Esterson

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*Grandmaster Huang Chien-Liang practices martial arts at the U.S. Kuoshu Academy, in Owings Mills, which he operates. Huang is an expert in many forms of martial arts, including Tai Chi, Xing Yi Quan and Ba Qua Xhang, and is the world's authority on Tien Shan Pai. Huang, who lives in Timonium, has been teaching martial arts in the United States for 37 years. (Staff photo by Nicole Martyn)*

Dressed in black sweatpants and a black sweatshirt, Huang Chien-Liang circles the room, observing.

Then he curtly speaks out a command, and the six men dressed in red jackets respond with the appropriate Tien Shan Pai move.

With a slight smile, the gray-haired, distinguished-looking man of average height nods his approval. A minute later, he makes a small correction, gesturing the need for a sharper kick or more of a turn.

He demonstrates with swift, fluid movements, changing positions with authority.

As Huang leaves the room, the men, who are instructors studying under Huang, bow as a sign of respect for the grandmaster, the man who is the world's authority on Tien Shan Pai.

This fighting style of martial arts that originated in the Tien Shan Mountains of northwestern China is a graceful Kung Fu that employs punches, kicks, throws and wrestling-style moves.

Huang, 62, grandmaster of the Tien Shan Pai system, shares his expertise with seasoned students at his studio, the U.S. Kuoshu Academy, in Owings Mills. Huang's studio offers a variety of martial arts styles including Tien Shan Pai, Tai Ji Quan (Tai Chi), Xing Yi Quan and Ba Qua Zhang. Huang also teaches Tai Chi at Essex Community College and the Peabody Institute, and he travels across the globe to provide instruction to advanced students of Tien Shan Pai.

Building character

"I train students for their health, to build character and to defend themselves if they need to," Huang said.

"Our goal is open communication and harmony and world peace (accomplished) through martial arts," said Huang, the father of two grown sons and who resides in Timonium with his wife, Jeng.

Students at the academy are taught first to respect their teachers and to be righteous and true, the basic tenets of traditional Chinese martial arts that Huang still employs.

This philosophy is displayed in Chinese on three hand-painted signs gifted to Huang by his mentor, the late Supreme Master Wang Chueh-Jen, who guided and trained Huang to be his successor.

Upon Wang's death in 1990, Huang assumed the role of Tien Shan Pai grandmaster. He's also president of the World Kuoshu Federation and the U.S. Kuoshu Federation.

With his time spent running the national and world organizations, Huang leaves the majority of the instruction at his studio to his disciples, those he has trained for years.

Huang still practices his craft daily, and trains his instructors, those he deems are advanced enough and whom he has invited to study with him. It's done on a barter system of sorts; instructors are paid with his training.

His advice means much to the men he's guiding.

"When he talks, you listen," said Nick Evans, a student at the academy for five years. "It's an honor. Not everyone gets to learn from him."

It is Huang's style to explain a move, then leave the student to practice.

"That walking away makes sure we are self-disciplined," said Ian Chisholm, the studio's senior instructor, who has studied under Huang since 1989.

Heir apparent

Huang began his martial arts study at 12 in his native Malaysia. He enrolled in classes to build his confidence and help with his asthma.

It was during college that he began studying in Taiwan with Wang, who would ultimately anoint Huang his "heir."

In 1971, a classmate's brother urged Huang to come to the United States to teach Kung Fu. In April 1973, in his mid-20s, Huang started at a studio in Washington and stayed for two years under trying circumstances.

Survived on noodles

He had come to the United States with no money and knew little English. For the first year, he slept on the carpet at the school, and survived on noodles heated in a pot.

In 1975, he opened a studio with a classmate in Cincinnati in 1975 while working part time at a restaurant in order to pay his bills. He returned to Maryland in 1982 and opened studios in Gaithersburg and Towson. Those studios eventually closed, and he opened his current studio in 1999.

Today, his students range from 5 years old to 74 and include college professors and police officers.

Each July since 1988, Huang has hosted a nationally acclaimed, two-day tournament in Maryland that draws teams from all over the world with as many as 600 competitors. Several of his students have earned titles over the years.

Others have moved across the country to open their own studios.

"The most satisfying thing is when you see a student's success," Huang said. "They become a better person, open a business and win at tournaments. Anytime they succeed, I'm happy to see that."

Carrying the legacy

"That's one of the things I admire most about him," Chisholm said, "his absolute, steadfast dedication to promoting Chinese martial arts. He tirelessly and selflessly is dedicated to carry on the legacy of his teacher."

U.S. Kuoshu Academy instructor and Huang's student Steven Hoffman agreed.

"We have this gem in our own backyard who teaches martial arts the way it was meant to be taught and the way it was originally taught. People travel all over the world to meet somebody that authentic, and here in Baltimore County we have that person."

John Buckley is partner in two California studios with grandmaster Richard Lee, who represents the Bok Fu Do style of Chinese martial arts. Lee and Huang met in 1975 at the first world championships in China.

"We have never met somebody more giving of his time and his knowledge and somebody that has done more to promote Chinese martial arts throughout the world," Buckley said.