

TANG SOO TIMES

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PAL CHE TANG SOO DO

229 SOUTH CHESTER PIKE

GLENOLDEN, PA 19036

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Sep 1 - No classes. Labor Day weekend.
- Sep 3 - No classes. Labor Day.
- Sep 8 - No classes. Region 8 Black Belt test.
- Sep 8 - Demonstration.
- Sep 10 - Gup test at dojang. No adult class.
- Oct 8 - Gup test at dojang. No adult class.
- Oct 19-20 - Region 8 Championships. No classes.

MONDAY NIGHT ADULT CLASS SCHEDULE

- Sep 3 - No classes. Labor Day.
- Sep 10 - Gup test at dojang. No adult class.
- Sep 17 - Regular adult class.
- Sep 24 - Black Belt class. Red belts and higher.

MASTER'S CORNER

A lot has been happening and will be happening. One of our Black Belts, Karen Anderson, toured China and Korea as part of a WTSDA sponsored delegation. While there, she visited the Great Wall, Forbidden City, Ming Tombs, Summer Palace, Beijing, Shanghai, DMZ, Kukkiwon, and of course the Shaolin Temple which has a almost mystical influence on all Martial Arts. Our feature article was written by Karen and talks about her visit to the Shaolin Temple.

Our Demo team is preparing for a parade in Norwood to commemorate the housing of a new fire truck. They will be presenting a demo at that time. I'm sure they would appreciate your support if you can be in attendance. I've been told they will repeat their demonstration at the Gup test on Sept. 10th.

Angel Evangelista will be testing for E Dan (2nd Degree Black Belt) at the Region 8 Dan Testing in September. We wish her well.

The Region 8 Championships are fast approaching (Oct 19-20) with deadlines for sign-up in early October. This is always a nice event because of the timing in the Poconos - the scenery is great. Because of this, you need to make reservations early at Fernwood Resort, the place is in great demand in the Fall.

NEW STUDENTS

We would like to welcome the following new students to our Dojang and to the worldwide family of Tang Soo Do:

CARLENE THOMAS

We also welcome back GREG WILLIAMS who trained with us before. Greg is a white belt.

Train often and train hard. You are on the steep portion of the classic learning curve and every class should reveal something new and exciting to you. If you ever have any questions, do not hesitate to ask a senior student.

FEATURE ARTICLE

We left the hotel in Deng Feng at 4:30 am and drove about 30 minutes through the winding, unpaved roads of a rural village in the Hunan Province. Exhausted and groggy, we stumbled out of the tour bus into the early morning darkness. There was an ominous silence as we stare dumbfounded at the entrance to the Shaolin Temple. Chills run up my spine as I strain my eyes desperately to make out the silhouette of the temple. It is still too dark to see the detail of the building so I use all of my other senses in attempt to savor this moment forever. I breathe deeply. "This is what the Shaolin Temple smells like..." I say to myself as I inhale the thick humid air. I feel the cool cobblestones and mud under my bare feet. I wonder to myself what it is like for the monks to train on this type of ground every day. I savor the deep silence that surrounds this sacred place. I am in too much awe to speak.

The sun started to come out and I saw hundreds of children in matching gym suits begin their early morning training. They are students from the surrounding kung-fu schools. I am shocked to see children as young as 6 or 7 running in cadence with 14 and 15 year olds. Locals begin to congregate at the entrance of the temple to practice their various Tai Chi and Kung Fu forms. I watch in astonishment as they practice their forms with unbelievable skill and perfection. Every move they make flows with effortless beauty and grace. Suddenly, I feel ridiculous standing there in my dobohk and "Black Belt."

The doors of the temple finally opened and we were greeted by one of the senior monks and his student. They took us to a room and we drank tea among ancient paintings and statues of the Buddha. Kwan Chang Nim is invited to sit in a throne-like chair next to the monk. Through a translator, the monk tells us the history of the Shaolin Temple. He tells us the temple is a place where people study both Zen Buddhism and kung fu. In 540 AD an Indian Buddhist named Bodhidharma traveled to China to meet with the monks of the Shaolin temple. He taught them exercises to enhance their Ki and build strength. These movements he taught were based on the movements of various animals such as the tiger, cobra and dragon. Later, these exercises were used to help the monks defend themselves against traveling bandits who would occasionally attack the temple. All of these exercises are

taught with the Buddhist principle of "non-violence." The Shaolin practitioner is never the attacker, nor does he ever use more than the appropriate defense for the situation.

The monk later began to tell us about himself. He told us that he is 24 years old and he has been living at the temple for 12 years. His face is young and beautiful but he never smiles when we talk to him. He only politely bows when we approach. Despite his apparent lack of emotion, he radiates a serene and peaceful elegance. All of the monks at the temple have that same expression, a combination of intense concentration and serenity. I see the same expression on the face of the local kung fu practitioners who perform a demo for us. After a breathtaking, vigorous performance, their expression never changes. I can barely see their chest heaving from the physical exertion. After each demo, they stand with hands pressed together in a meditating position, not even stopping to wipe the sweat off their faces.

The people of this rural village breathe, eat and sleep martial arts. Children begin training at age 6 or 7. Their training consists of eight to twelve hours a day. For the first year or so, they practice only basic kicks, blocks and strikes. They do not learn any new techniques until they show perfect control and mastery of these basic techniques. The monks have a saying to illustrate the importance of this type of training: "I do not fear the 10,000 kicks you have practiced once; I fear the one kick you have practiced 10,000 times." Each student only works on one or two forms in attempt to perfect them. They also choose only one weapon to learn and master. This is very different from how westerners train in the martial arts. We have a tendency to rush our training and learn too much at once. Watching these kids I realize it is okay to slow down and work on perfecting simple techniques rather than rushing to learn fancy, complicated moves. As a result of this type of training, their martial arts skills are exceptional. Their techniques are far superior to some of the most talented western martial artists. That is why I felt inadequate wearing my Black Belt in front of them. I feel that I owe it to them as fellow martial artists to spend the rest of my life trying to achieve the skill they possess. I understand this is a goal I may never reach. I have other commitments so I can not train eight to twelve hours a day but I can approach each class with the focus and intensity I witnessed at the Shaolin temple. Each time I feel myself relaxing my stance or yawning during class, I feel I am dishonoring my fellow martial artists and myself. Each night in class, I can't stop thinking about the intensity I saw in the faces of the monks in Shaolin. I long for the day that I will have that same intense expression as well as the serenity and peace that comes with it.

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

FOR THE TRUE MASTER, TANG SOO DO IS AN ESSENTIAL AVENUE THROUGH WHICH ONE CAN ACHIEVE SPIRITUAL SERENITY, MENTAL TRANQUILITY, AND THE DEEPEST SELF-CONFIDENCE.