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ACMAF Newsletter

Apr 2024

Highlights

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Shifu Mike helping with Master Jack's chi demonstration.

2023 ACMAF National Meeting

Preamble by Shichong Lawrence Lane

The Eight Step Preying Mantis Annual Meeting was held May 1, 2023-May 6, 2023 in New Jersey. I know, New Jersey? What can we say about New Jersey that hasn't been said before (ok, stop your snickering!) But, wow, wasn't that a great meeting! We had so much fun and got so much useful information! And those great places we visited around South Amboy! This will be one for the history books!

Actually, I didn't know about any of that when I wrote this. This was originally written in January 2020, the year we were supposed to meet. Master Jack and I had spent several exhausting days (and I mean all day), researching hotels and calling places. I found a place that met all the items on the "must have list". These consist of shuttle service to and from the airport, enough available hotel rooms, food places within walking distance (or at least, Uber service), and a reasonably priced conference room for the actual meetings and demonstrations. And really good cookies! But then we got The Pandemic and the whole meeting was cancelled. And now we are in 2023.

Now to keep everyone up to date, the New Jersey Chapter of Preying Mantis went Shaolin Monk during the whole shut down 2020-2022. We had been using a space

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[During Covid]
“The fearless
members of Eight
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Mantis of New
Jersey began to
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snow.”

“With so many
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2023 ACMAF National Meeting

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above a fire hall and the fire hall followed the law of the state and barred people from using classrooms and meeting spaces. The fearless members of Eight Step Preying Mantis of New Jersey began to meet in the snow, or when it got warm, in a baseball field, and sometimes at a gazebo next to the Raritan River. We went “Old School”, but without all those fancy huge cauldrons burning wood keeping us warm, like in the movies. And unlike the intelligent praying mantis, we did not hibernate, but we did wear double socks. So, we now have the pride of ownership that we really went as far as possible to keep up our training!

Meeting Summary by Master Jenny Hsiao-Nakamoto

Wow, it had been 4 years since we had held a meeting. So many things had changed in our personal lives, our kung fu lives, and around the world. And yet, in many ways things were the same. Grandmaster was still the steadfast

keeper of all kung fu, taiji and abimoxi healing knowledge, greeting everyone with a warm, jolly smile and a slightly mischievous twinkle in his eye. Most of us had to admit (perhaps only to ourselves) that we could have practiced or taught more these past years, yet still gave each other the empathy and forgiveness in realizing that life is always a balance of many things. We are all many things to many people, and yet our love of teaching kung fu brought us together again.

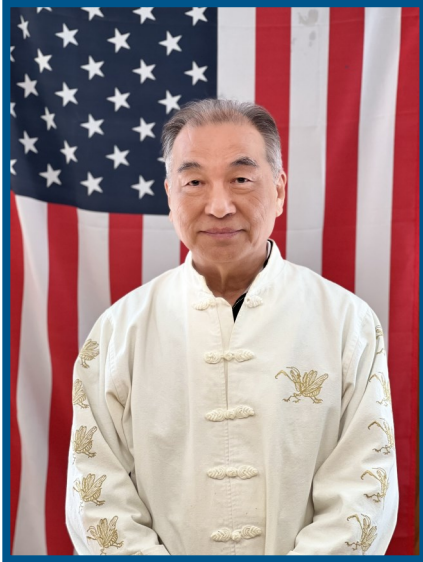
To me, that has always been the beauty and essence of our national meetings. We are not just passionate martial arts practitioners; we are also passionate about passing that knowledge on. It is that common joy we find in helping others achieve their full potential, to use their bodies in the most efficient/ coordinated way possible and in doing so, creating a healthy community that accepts individuals of all kinds – that is the joy and pride I feel when I come to these meetings.

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2023 ACMAF National Meeting



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As usual, Friday – day 1 – we passed 4 new Shifus from Shifu Dan Della Vella's school in New York, who we will get to know better in the later articles. While they were going through one of the most difficult mental and physical tests of their lives, most of us were back at the hotel sharing our martial arts histories and what we do for a living outside of martial arts. Grandmaster and Master Kevin also shared their visions for the system, with an emphasis on building trust and character in addition to martial arts knowledge. We then shared our challenges in maintaining a school and some newer social media strategies for overcoming those challenges.

Saturday – day 2 – the day I always look forward to, was when all the masters brought their A games. Nearly all the masters present gave seminars on a wide variety of topics. Master Jack started off with a lecture and demonstration on chi. I had heard stories of this particular demonstration, but had never seen it until that day. One person is chosen to sit in a chair (we chose one of the tallest/heaviest new Shifus – Shifu Mike). 4 other Shifus, all smaller than Shifu Mike, were then supposed to lift him out of the chair using only their two forefingers. Their first attempt didn't even make him budge. But after aligning their chi by strategically stacking their hands above Shifu Mike's head, they were able to lift him 1-2 feet out of the chair!

Master Kevin then gave a seminar on taiji, starting with single person pung-lu-ji-an in 4 directions. I had never seen it practiced this way, and it was very fun! He then had us practice 2 person push hands for pung-lu-ji-an. I have to admit, I was often rather lost in this exercise but was also amazed at how powerful and solid Master Kevin looked when he was demonstrating. Next, Master Mike had us warm up the first line of set 2 and then took us through all the 2 person applications of that first

line. It felt great and very familiar to be doing these short applications with other Shifus again.

Master Alan then gave an illuminating seminar on how to use Yao, particularly how to move someone who does not want to be moved, or even someone much larger/stronger than yourself who also does not want to be moved. We have all become accustomed to encouraging each other through each of our challenging throwing and joint lock techniques by not fighting the forces – some of this is justified in that an opponent wouldn't know what you're trying to do, and that we would have likely struck them in the face beforehand to stun them. However, in real life, opponents can and do resist forces. So it is great to practice using our legs and our waists to generate enough force to break through any resistance (when it makes sense to do so!).

Shifu Daniel Cimino then led us through some taiji applications, in particular single whip. I personally find knowing the application of the taiji movements to be incredibly helpful, for my own practice and for teaching others. While I may not show the entire application, I can draw on the application to give students purpose to their movements –

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“I can't tell you how proud both Master Alan and I felt seeing her get into her horse stance so nicely.”



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this is not just a dance with abstract waving of arms. It helps them understand what their body is doing, and often immediately helps them settle into the most efficient and powerful position/trajectory.

Shifu Rob Wolfurst wrapped up the seminars with a refresh on stances. We practiced holding our stances and resisting pushes from all directions, trying to channel the forces into the ground. Our 6½ yr. old daughter, Kalea, was excited to help Shifu Rob out with one of his last demonstrations. They both settled into their horse stances, facing each other, palms touching, and she got to push him over! I'm sure Shifu Rob was taking it easy on her. However, I can't tell you how proud both Master Alan and I felt seeing her get into her horse stance so nicely – we haven't formally started teaching her kung fu yet, so she picked this up from watching us and randomly playing around at home.

I don't know if you've noticed this before, but with so many Shifus around, someone is always in

need of Grandmaster's medical attention. This year, it was my turn. Having not thrown since before Covid, and feeling a high after so many great seminars, I asked to practice throwing. Unfortunately, I ended up with a fractured right tibial plateau, which we didn't know was fractured until a couple weeks after returning home. We originally thought it could be an ACL tear. As soon as it happened, the masters that were still around got Grandmaster's attention. He reset my knee immediately, and later bled the side and back of my knee to try to control the swelling. I apologize that this led to dinner being delayed by ~2 hrs, but I am so grateful to Grandmaster Shyun and Master Kevin, Master Jack and of course, Master Alan for staying with me and doing everything they could to set my knee on the path to recovery. As I write this, it has now been almost a year since the injury, and while I am still rehabbing the leg, I know I am so lucky to have had that immediate help.

Master Jack, Shifu Bob Labelle, Shichong Larry Lane and the other Shifus and students from the New Jersey school were such wonderful hosts for



Kalea helping Shifu Rob with his demonstration on stances.



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“I had heard stories of this particular demonstration [of Chi], but had never seen it until that day.”

“Participants received medallions, and SWAG (a sports bag, notebook, pen and more!!)”

this 2023 national meeting. Participants received medallions, and SWAG (a sports bag, notebook, pen and more!!) all with the New Jersey school's logo printed on them. Clearly the New Jersey school has a lot of pride! We are now coming up on our 2024 national meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico, hosted by Shifu James! I hope to see as many of you as possible for another fun couple of days! ☯





New Shifu Biographies: Somali Nguyen (AL 2022)

Why did you start learning Eight Step Mantis?

Martial Arts is something I always wanted to pursue as a child but we didn't have the financial means. As I got older, I did not want to be a part of the cookie cutter martial arts programs like Karate and Taekwondo. I wanted something authentic. Something that was a part of my heritage as I am part Chinese. From my google searches, I came across Eight Step and have never looked back.

What did you find most challenging about the Shifu training program?

How much mental strength it took to overcome obstacles. If you are mentally defeated, the physical will follow.

What do you find most inspiring about the system?

The holistic approach that Eight Step offers their students.

What advice would you give to aspiring Shifu trainees?

The Shifu training program is a mental/physical challenge that one can overcome if one dedicates himself to all the possibilities that Eight Step has to offer.

How has joining the system changed your life?

I don't think it has changed my life but merely complemented areas that I didn't know that I needed. It has allowed me to be strong when I need to be and soft when needed.

What do you look forward to?

I look forward to one day being able to reach the higher level phases and apply Abimoxi to my practice.

What were the best/worst parts of the National test?

The best part of the test was meeting Master Thanh and the other Shifus and spending time with them. There was no "worst" part of the test.

What are your favorite parts of being a Martial Artist?

Knowing that I have reached a level of physical and mental capacity that many people will never be able to reach.

What are your favorite parts of being a teacher?

To know that I will be able to pass down thousands of years of traditional Chinese martial arts and medicine to special students.

Anything else you would like to say?

It was great meeting the other Shifus and Masters at Nationals. See you all at the next one! ☯



"I wanted something authentic. Something that was a part of my heritage as I am part Chinese."





New Shifu Biographies: Craig Moody (AL 2022)

Why did you start learning Eight Step Mantis?

My Shifu (Shifu Clint) and I shared a mutual friend and would see each other at parties and such. We would always talk about kung fu. Eventually he talked me into coming to a class and now I am a Sifu.

What do you find most inspiring about the system?

Through all of the training I feel stronger, more balanced, and more aware than I know I would have been without it.

What advice would you give to aspiring Shifu Trainees?

Stances. Get your stances correct and parallel!

What did you find most challenging about the Shifu training program?

Memorization, punches and centipede jumps.

What do you look forward to?

Learning more and more. Cultivating my inner strength to be better than my outer strength. ☯



**“Get your stances
correct and
parallel!”**



Shifu Mike getting lifted after aligning chi.



2023 Testing Committee.



A Quote That Matters

By Shifu Daniel Cimino



“I am a warrior in a garden. I’ve never used this martial art to defend my life, and I do not want to. That being said, if I need to, I will.”

“There is such power when a leader can admit to their mistakes and apologize for them. The idea that you’re not going to make any errors is criminally stupid - as is the idea that if you don’t own up to an error, nobody will notice you’ve made one. As hard as it is to hold yourself accountable publicly, it strengthens the bond between you and your team, because if you’re willing to stand up and criticize yourself, people will always be more willing to receive criticism from you. The experience was a beautiful example of the power of vulnerability and its importance in leadership.” This is a quote from *Unreasonable Hospitality: The Remarkable Power of Giving People More Than They Expect* by Will Guidara.

Reading through the above quote, there is so much to unpack. There is so much knowledge, wisdom, and more importantly truth that cannot be ignored. It is not just the admission of the mistake (awareness), but it is the apology that ensures the mistake will not happen again... This is how the problem gets fixed.

Then there comes the grounded thought that I have made mistakes. You will make mistakes. However, the only real mistake is trying to hide it.

What happens when you’re able to admit your mistake and help the situation (showing that it’s not about you or your ego)? What happens when you show to everyone you are leading that you messed up? What would you do if a boss/supervisor you trusted and appreciated greatly told you that he messed something up, and now he needs your help in fixing it? Would you do everything you can to help them? Would you re-

spect and appreciate them more, or less? Would you feel appreciated for being asked to help? The trick to leadership is not in being perfect, but in being human.

The most important piece of that quote (for me) is the last sentence: “The experience was a beautiful example of the power of vulnerability and its importance in leadership.”

The power of vulnerability and its importance in leadership. As Shifus of one of the premier martial arts in the world, we are all leaders of others who want to learn. I recognize that I’m in this role, and with it comes an inherent position in teaching people how to fight. I’m pretty sure no one started learning this martial art without wanting to know how to fight. Therefore, it’s clear we’re teaching people how to fight.

I am a warrior in a garden. I’ve never used this martial art to defend my life, and I do not want to. That being said, if I need to, I will. Seeing a contradiction between being vulnerable and teaching people to fight is incorrect. It’s actually a delusion. There is no contradiction. A true warrior knows all this about himself already, and doesn’t run from it. He moves forward anyway.

While we are leading people, are any of us perfect? The obvious answer is no, and we are still striving towards that goal. We know full well that we’ll never reach it, which makes me happy. I do not want to be done. I want to master what I can, and continue to improve in every other area. By no means do I expect to master all of this.

I want to explain this to my students. I

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A Quote That Matters

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want them to learn from my mistakes. I want them to be better than I am. They are the future. They are who will remain, when I'm gone. They will continue this through to another generation, and so on. They need to know where I went wrong, and how I learned from it and never make that mistake again. Without this "vulnerability," something is lost, and the past repeats itself. With this "vulnerability" comes power to create and build the future free to grow and improve. To continue reaching towards perfection, knowing full well that it will never be reached.

Apparently in dog racing, if the hound catches what it's chasing, it can never race again. The dog needs the carrot at the end of the stick to be a mysterious question to keep it driven to catch it. "It's the question that drives us." It's a quote from The Matrix, a movie that I'm sure a lot of us will remember. What happened to the second film in that series, when the "question" or "mystery" was gone? I and many other people lost interest as the series was watered down. The mystery was a requirement.

"As hard as it is to hold yourself accountable publicly, it strengthens the bond between you and your team, because if you're willing to stand up and criticize yourself, people will always be more willing to receive criticism from you."

We are then reaching towards this mysterious perfection, knowing full well that it's unattainable, and we're teaching this internal motivation to those that follow, in order to not only pass all of this on, but to push the boundaries of this knowledge. The things that teach us the most are our mistakes.

For instance, I took a break from teaching and practicing for a bunch of years. After some time I wanted to train Tai Chi again. I started, and not too long after I was training the Kung Fu again too. Flash forward a little bit

more and I was teaching again.

I've taught the sets of Red Sash many times over the years. I was training for a while again at this point, so I "knew" these sets well. I cannot say how many times I

taught portions of them wrong to students that I would then have to apologize to and correct. I never taught the same spot of any set wrong twice, but I did make a bigger mistake of not acknowledging it as soon as I realized. To make things worse, I didn't learn my lesson at first and made this bigger mistake over and over.

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Father and son: Master Mike & Shifu Daniel Cimino demonstrating Set 2 applications



Shifu James & Shifu Daniel C. working on Set 2 applications.



A Quote That Matters

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In my classes there are several groups of students at different levels, as I'm sure there are in most other Shifus' classes. There are students working on yellow sash, red sash, and gold 2 (for instance) all in the same class. At times I feel rushed to be able to work with all of them. I want to see who needs to work on their stances, or to refine a sequence of part of a set prior to learning more material. Perhaps someone is ready to move on, and when I become rushed, I don't do things correctly.

This is another big mistake. I let myself become rushed, and do things sloppily. I do not take the time to do them correctly the first time. When I'm rushed I go by memory and don't verify with my notes first. Over and over I have made this mistake.

Here's the point. With this "vulnerability" of me explaining a major mistake, I find the power to fix it. I have found the ability to never let it happen again. When I exposed my "vulnerability" to everyone reading this, I set up a level of accountability. I am a highly competitive person. I want to win. I find that if I make a mistake over and over I lose. However, if I add accountability in with "vulnerability" and my competitiveness, then I'll do what it takes to win. I'll do what it takes to lead my students not only in learning the Kung Fu, and the Tai Chi, but I'll also lead them in how to lead/teach others down the road.

With all this being said, after this super long-winded article, I'm looking forward to seeing you all in Spring 2024 at ACMAF Nationals! ☯





New Shifu Biographies: Greg Czajkowski (NY 2023)

Why did you start learning Eight Step Mantis?

Like most of us I assume, I've had a lifelong fascination with martial arts. As a teen I spent about a year training in Isshin-Ryu karate. At one point our school competed in a tournament. The higher belt students who participated came back in awe of the kung fu practitioners they competed against. Apparently they were impossible to beat. Ever since then I've had a high interest in Kung Fu.

When the Hamburg NY Eight Step Preying Mantis school participated in a Christmas parade my family attended 6 years ago offering childrens' classes, I brought my oldest son in who was 5 or 6 at the time. He wasn't quite ready, but during class I chatted with another parent who was a student himself. He had studied Isshin-Ryu as well and knew some of the same folks. We chatted about Isshin-Ryu and the differences between that style and Eight Step. I was immediately intrigued. My brother and I took a few classes together and things progressed from there! My son by the way is now 11 and working on his red sash!

What did you find most challenging about the Shifu training program?

Definitely the memorization and keeping straight all the subtle differences between the many lead ins.

What do you find most inspiring about the system?

I really like getting glimpses of how deep and profound the system is. I love that there are three aspects of it in Kung Fu, Tai Chi and Abimoxi and seeing how they all work together. I like that it's a complete martial art - linking striking, grappling, throwing and joint locks in ways other styles have to cross train to emulate.

What advice would you give to aspiring Shifu trainees?

Train outside of class often. Drill everything

inside and out, focus on the areas you're weakest in rather than avoiding them. Don't be afraid to ask questions. The more you put into Eight Step, the more you'll get out of it.

How has joining the system changed your life?

I have a lot more confidence and energy. I feel younger than I did 5 years ago. I've made some great friends and learned invaluable skills. I feel like it's reinvigorated my spirit, truly.

What do you look forward to?

Sparring, particularly testing myself against other styles and systems at some point. I also look forward to continuing to guide my children through the system, and helping to reach other new students as much as I can.

What were the best/worst parts of the National test?

The best parts were getting to meet the incredible people in this system all throughout the country, and of course the great feeling of having passed. There were so many perspectives and incredible skill levels to see which let me know just how early I am in my journey with this system.

What are your favorite parts of being a Martial Artist?

A sense of calm and control in situations I'd previously not felt. A sense of inward and outward fitness that will continue to grow with time and effort. An eagerness to tackle physical challenges.

What are you favorite parts of being a teacher?

Seeing the development and growth of the students and seeing smiles when students grasp something new and game changing.

Anything else you like to say?

It was an honor and a pleasure to meet all of you and I look forward to next year's meeting! ☯



"I really like getting glimpses of how deep and profound the system is."



New Shifu Biographies: Steve Czajkowski (NY 2023)

Why did you start learning Eight Step Mantis?

For me, it was always going to be kung fu. I don't know why. I will share that when I was young, I had a symbol I drew on a set of nunchaku that I felt represented me and would put in place of my name at times. It is extremely close to the modern symbol for Qi, but not perfect. I still have the nunchaku, and they are still my preferred pair. Back then, I either couldn't afford martial arts, or when I started my earlier years of working, I didn't have time. One day my brother, now Shifu Greg, watched a parade in Hamburg, NY over a weekend that 8-Step marched in. He asked me if I'd be interested in trying it and I was overjoyed that this was finally my time, and that I'd be able to get closer to him and learn more about him as we did it together. Shortly after joining I verbally told Shifu Dan Della Vella and soulfully committed that I would carry through and become a Shifu and would not stop until I did. He will validate that. Over the years, I witnessed maybe a hundred students come and go. I recognize the actual commitment is rare, and that when someone says they will stay, it often does not mean much. I have been and am all in. I constantly look for ways to find more time to train with the other Shifus (we are blessed) at our school, and/or teach. I could not be more thankful or satisfied with that decision. I am fortunate and thankful for being exposed to the small portion of the system that I have.

How has joining the system changed your life?

My confidence has achieved new heights I would not have thought possible. With

the skills Shifu Della Vella meticulously planted and patiently cultivated. Many fears have subsided and been replaced with a deep calm and understanding. I am much more relaxed in all aspects of my life. The system has also made me more aware of the sum of all my activities and its impact on my kung fu. I've also learned that many of life chores, tasks, or activities can be tied back to kung fu or supports kung fu, and I enjoy moments where that becomes evident to me. My definition of what's included in kung fu, or effort, has also greatly expanded.

The opportunity to learn about, experience, and begin to explore my human potential with Qi has changed the way I perceive, feel, and interact with my surrounding environment. I feel more closely tied to the natural world. (I live up in the hills, surrounded by forest, so it is very easy for me to be close to nature.)

What do you look forward to?

I am so excited to continue to refine and practice what I already have been exposed to as well as begin to learn more advanced techniques and applications in Mantis. Being very spiritual and having a lifelong interest in natural health, I am as excited to learn more about Qi and Abimoxi while I am refining and improving my Mantis capabilities.

I also look forward to contributing to 8-Step with my professional skills as a Strategic Management Consultant. With Market Research and Business Intelligence we create and refine strategies for business and government, and I hope to be able to have the opportunity to share with this group what the public wants and



"I hope to pay the universe back for its generosity to me by not only teaching regular classes, but donating a portion of my teaching time to young people..."



New Shifu Biographies: Steve Czajkowski (NY 2023)

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thinks about martial arts and kung fu,

And who, where the best market is for the types of students we want.

What are your favorite parts of being a teacher?

Teaching not only forces me to examine my own technique and study the implications of the technique, but the gift also that I am giving others activates my own Qi (strongly sometimes). After a class, I am often warm/tingling/slightly magnetized, and I feel very thankful that I am doing what I am supposed to be doing because I feel harmony in my life. There are some classes that I have walked away from so thankful that it has impacted me emotionally with strong feelings of joy. I have shared with Shifu Dan on many occasions that I feel like sometimes I should be paying my students because of the benefit I receive when teaching.

Anything else you'd like to say?

My wife and I are very into the outdoors and being physically active. We live in a very rural area in the hills and are surrounded by woods, and we have a very large garden where we grow and preserve (canning, pickling, dehydrating, freeze drying) a large portion of the food we eat. We also grow a small number of healing foods and flowers and make salves like Calendula (like a natural Neosporin). My wife also raises bees and harvests

her own honey which she sells in local stores and markets. I am currently working on planting a superfoods farm. I have a few hundred blueberry bushes in as of this writing and plan to extend that over the next few years to many other superfoods such as elderberry, forest-grown mushrooms, and ginseng. I really hope to learn how to grow the plants and herbs that have application in TCM. (Of course, only those that I can grow in my USDA zone 4-5!)

I feel very fortunate that I have found 8-Step. Learning under Shifu Dan Della Vella with Master Mike Cimino's oversight has been one of the greatest honors and is currently one of the three most important things in my life. I was not always in a position time wise, or financially to study martial arts. I hope to pay the universe back for its generosity to me by not only teaching regular classes, but donating a portion of my teaching time to young people that could use the discipline and accomplishment that comes with martial arts but maybe can't afford it. I'd like to help them find and enjoy "The Way" and what it can do for them. Because I do believe this is "The Way".

Thank you, from the depths of my being Shifu Dan for putting up with trying to install the system in me for better than half a decade. You have changed my life. ☯



Shifu brothers, Greg and Steve, bowing to each other.



New Shifu Biographies: Bryan Kaufman (NY 2023)

Why did you start learning Eight Step Mantis?

About 16 years ago I began my journey in martial arts. I searched high and low to find an authentic, intense, and complete system that was more than just a uniform and a belt. I had to look no further than my coworker, Master Mike Cimino. He introduced me to the basics of what I always dreamt of, a true Kung fu system that has deep roots and rich culture.

What did you find most challenging about the Shifu training program?

The most challenging aspect initially was balancing work, life and time to practice. However, as the years went by, I was inspired by the dedicated students that began their journey as well. When Shifu Dan, Bill, and Jesse joined the school it forever solidified my desire. Their dedication to the craft, inspiring words, and strong desire to learn the ancient techniques in a modern world, along with Master Mike's vast knowledge made it impossible to want to do anything else.

What advice would you give to aspiring Shifu trainees?

If I had one piece of advice for a new aspiring Shifu trainee I would say remember this is a life long journey. About 8 years ago I broke my leg. However this did not discourage me as I saw how valuable the system was. I continued to practice, and persevere even through the pandemic and the other difficulties life threw at me. I am honored to now join the ranks of the few that call themselves Shifu.

How has joining the system changed your life?

It has changed my life in so many positive ways. I have more energy, patience, and confidence in areas that extend beyond just physicality. It has drawn me closer to the spiritual and religious world as well. Everyone's journey will be different, but the results this system produces will make anyone a better person if they stay on its path. ☯



"Everyone's journey will be different, but the results this system produces will make anyone a better person if they stay on its path."



Master Jack leading a Chi-Gong exercise.



New Shifu Biographies: Mike Kugel (NY 2023)

Why did you start learning Eight Step Mantis?

I have been interested in martial arts since the age of ten (Bruce Lee was the first celebrity that I looked up to and admired, even though he had already passed by the time I learned about him). Then I came across Praying Mantis by accident and liked it way more than anything else I tried up to that point.

What did you find most challenging about the Shifu training program?

For me, the most challenging aspect of Praying Mantis was trying to remember everything for the test. There is so much to know and my memory is just not what it used to be :). The national test is probably the most difficult thing I have ever accomplished in my life.

What advice would you give to aspiring Shifu trainees?

My advice to aspiring Shifu trainees would be to study every day - even if it's just a little bit. To stick with it, no matter how hard it gets, and to have faith that if you keep working at it, the seemingly insurmountable task of becoming a Shifu becomes surmountable.

What do you look forward to?

I look forward to learning more and more, to becoming smoother with movements, to continue cleaning up what I have already learned, and to just becoming a better and better martial artist in general - to be a well-rounded practitioner of the arts.

What were the best/worst parts of the National test?

One of the best parts of the national test was seeing so many martial artists, making new acquaintances, and learning more martial arts (new moves and new concepts). The worst part was the test itself. It was extremely stressful. I don't think I have ever been so nervous in my life. Another best part of it was finding out that I passed. The relief was absolutely euphoric. ☯



“The national test is probably the most difficult thing I have ever accomplished in my life.”





2024 National Meeting: Albuquerque, NM

Shifu James White & others will be hosting the National Meeting in May 2024 in Albuquerque, NM. It will be another week full of discovering and sharing new kung fu secrets, testing and passing new Shifu students, and enjoying each other's company. Who knows what new secret skills Grandmaster might reveal!



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Shifu Steve Czajkowski

Shifu Greg Czajkowski

Shifu Craig Moody

Shifu Somali Nguyen

Shifu Mike Kugel

Shifu Bryan Kaufmann

Shifu Daniel Cimino

Master Jenny Hsiao-Nakamoto