



Shen Chuan Review

"Hit hard...Hit fast...Go to the House!"

"I'm not going to just roll over and disappear. I was left here for a reason, and I'm excited to find out what that reason is."

--Monica (Albright) Smith

CAMP LANSDALE #10 HAS COME AND GONE!

We always say it. We always mean it. This year's camp was the best one yet.

Professor C, true to form, came in with a determination to teach, as well as learn. And I don't think anybody came away shorthanded.

We kicked the camp off on a Friday night with Sensei Norma Almanza treating us to her flavor of Shen Chuan. There are many reasons why Sensei Norma is our first, and only female Black Belt. Those qualities were self evident as she took the floor. Her method of capitalizing on the Shen Chuan concepts and principles while moving to upset her opponent is truly amazing. Don't let the size, or gender fool you. She's a killer!

Guru Mike Casto returned once again, with a few new tricks up his sleeve. The greatest thing I could ever say about Guru Mike is that he IS the consummate student of Martial Arts. There is no seminar, teacher, flavor or style of the arts that he won't glean some information from. He will absorb the material, add it to his bag of tricks and pass it on for others to know. That wealth of knowledge was laid before us that Friday night, and we learned alot from him.

It was an amazing start to an amazing Camp.

We kicked off Saturday bright and early with Professor Lansdale showing self defense techniques that make the Shen Chuan system so formidable. Locking, striking, pressure point and balance disruption. Mmmmm. Better than caffeine in the morning, but with a lot more kick.

It was enough to get Professor C all excited and rarin' to go for his session, which came up next.

Now I hear tell Professor Lansdale tried to put a bug in Professor C's ear, and mentioned that he might want to use an uke a little younger than yours truly this time. And I hear tell Professor C laughed and said "Why the hell would I do that? Billy Jack's my favorite slap monkey!".

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CAMP LANSDALE #10... (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

So I have to say that it was, yet again, an honor to be Professor C's "slap monkey". If ya gotta be beat, be beat by the best I always say.

And all kidding aside, it really is a leg up on the learning curve when you are uke. As we've been taught from day one, pain is our friend. Not injury, but pain. Pain and precision of having something done ON you far exceeds the imprint on your brain of having someone TELL you something.

I would get tickled, after having something done on me three, four or five times, Professor C would walk the room and iron out everyone's mistakes. Talk about people flopping around like fish out of water. I hope I didn't look that silly. And no, I wasn't laughing with you. I was laughing AT you.

So needless to say I got a lot of imprinting that weekend. And I love Professor C for every bit of it!

Come back soon Professor C. You're always welcome at our dojo!

Shihan Paul Britt was given some instruction time throughout the camp, to bring down some of that Rockwall, tactical police style Shen Chuan that's just... well...brutal.

Shihan Paul is just like most of us at the core of Shen Chuan. Give us the meat and potatoes, and leave that silly green crap off the plate. It's pretty... but it don't stick to your ribs.

That's Paul's character. And that's Paul's art. No froo-froo. Just kick butt on the street, and make it home to the wife and kids at the end of the day.

And you gotta love his little saying. "If you ain't cheatin'... you ain't tryin'".

Paul has been there, in that life and death struggle. His method bores it out. As we like to kid him... "It ain't pretty, but it'll sure as heck get it done and get you home in one piece".

Professor Coy Harry was highlighted this year. His sessions were intense, and well thought out.

There is a reason he is a teacher by trade. He is good at it. More times than I care to count, he has had to explain something to me ten different ways until the lightbulb went off. But that's his skill. He is able to come up with ten different ways to teach the same thing. To do what it takes to make you understand.

That is only one of the many reasons Professor Lansdale chose him as Soke Dai. That, and the fact that he is one of the most phenomenal Martial Artists around.

I know it's seven months away, but make plans to attend this years Camp. Always the first weekend in October. They only get better every year!

RECENT NEWS AND TIDBITS

Professor Lansdale has once again been honored. The World Horror Convention 2007 has announced that Professor was voted the winner of the 2007 Grand Master Award. Here is the official Press Release:

WORLD HORROR CONVENTION 2007 ANNOUNCES 2007 GRAND MASTER WINNER
World Horror Convention 2007 <http://www.whc2007.org> is proud and delighted to announce that hisownself, JOE. R. LANSDALE, has been voted the winner of the 2007 Grand Master Award.

The number of votes cast this year by members of the convention was the highest in the history of the seventeen-year-old award, and Lansdale joins the distinguished ranks of such other honored recipients as Robert Bloch, Stephen King, Richard Matheson, Anne Rice, Clive Barker, Dean R. Koontz, Peter Straub, Brian Lumley, Ramsey Campbell, Harlan Ellison, Ray Bradbury, Charles L. Grant, Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, Jack Williamson, F. Paul Wilson and Ray Garton.

RECENT NEWS AND TIDBITS...(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

Texas-born Mojo storyteller and scriptwriter Joe R. Lansdale is the author of more than thirty novels in all genres, including crime, Western, horror and pulp adventure. The author of ACT OF LOVE, THE NIGHTRUNNERS, COLD IN JULY, SAVAGE SEASON, THE BOTTOMS and THE DRIVE-IN series, he is also known for his seven novels about two unlikely friends, Hap Collins and Leonard Pine, who live in a town in East Texas and find themselves solving a variety of often violent or macabre mysteries. The series began with SAVAGE SEASON in 1990 and CAPTAINS OUTRAGEOUS (2001) is the most recent title in the on-going saga.

Lansdale has also written scripts for comic books and animated television shows, and his novella BUBBA HO-TEP, about an aged Elvis Presley and black John F. Kennedy battling a soul-sucking mummy, was filmed by Don Coscarelli in 2002. His short story, "Incident On and Off a Mountain Road" was adapted as the first episode of the first season of TV's MASTERS OF HORROR series.

Joe R. Lansdale is the winner of six HWA Bram Stoker Awards, the British Fantasy Award, the MWA Edgar Award, the American Mystery Award, the Horror Critics Award, the "Shot in the Dark" International Crime Writer's award, the Booklist Editor's Award and the Critic's Choice Award.

We are extremely pleased that JOE R. LANSDALE will be joining our previously-announced Guests of Honour MICHAEL MARSHALL SMITH, the multiple award-winning British author of such novels as SPARES, ONLY FORWARD, ONE OF US and the best-selling THE STRAW MEN trilogy; Montreal-based author NANCY KILPATRICK, whose books include novels NEAR DEATH, CHILD OF THE NIGHT, JASON X: PLANET OF THE BEAST and THE GOTH BIBLE: A COMPENDIUM FOR THE DARKLY INCLINED; Chesley Award and World Fantasy Award-winning American illustrator JOHN PICACIO; British writer/editor/publisher PETER CROWTHER and Toronto editor and pulp magazine authority DON HUTCHISON, and British-born Hollywood script-writer PETER ATKINS (three HELLRAISER sequels; WISHMASTER). Canadian writer SEPHERA GIRON, author of such novels as HOUSE OF PAIN and BORROWED FLESH, is Mistress of Ceremonies.

For the first time in its seventeen-year history, The World Horror Convention is being held outside the United States. With a theme exploring "The Diversity of Horror", World Horror Convention 2007 will take place over March 29-April 1 at the TORONTO MARRIOTT DOWNTOWN EATON CENTRE, located in the heart of Toronto, Canada.

Among those authors, editors and publishers also scheduled to attend are GARY BRAUNBECK, RAMSEY CAMPBELL, MORT CASTLE, ELLEN DATLOW, SCOTT EDELMAN, LES EDWARDS, STEVEN ERIKSON, GEMMA FILES, TINA JENS, STEPHEN JONES, BRIAN KEENE, ALLEN KOSZOWSKI, MICHAEL LAIMO, ROBERTA LANNES, TIM LEBBON, BRIAN LUMLEY, L.H. MAYNARD & M.P.N. SIMS, PAUL MILLER, DAVID MORRELL, MARK MORRIS, YVONNE NAVARRO, SARAH PINBOROUGH, TONY RICHARDS, ROBERT J. SAWYER and F. PAUL WILSON, amongst many others.

And..... The awards keep coming:

Professor Lansdale recently received The Grinzani Prize For Literature. This is a major literary award from Italy and is much respected in Europe. It also came with a cash prize.

The last seven Nobel prize winners received this award, but Professor Lansdale hastens to mention that he's not foolish enough to be polishing off his Nobel speech for "Bubba Hotep". It's just an interesting coincidence.

And let's not forget Professor Lansdale's latest novel, LOST ECHOES, is now out and available in good bookstores everywhere. The publisher is VINTAGE books, a division of RANDOM HOUSE.

Congratulations Professor!

RECENT NEWS AND TIDBITS...(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

EDGED WEAPONS SEMINAR WAS HELD JANUARY 14, 2007

Professor Eugene, with the help of John McKeown, held an edged weapons seminar for a group of guys that frequent the Texas CHL Board on the internet.

As most of us "carriers" know, a Texas license to "carry" a gun is not a decision to be held lightly. We all take the responsibility VERY serious. We understand that lives hang in the balance of our training, or lack thereof.

One of the most feared predicaments, with or without a gun, is facing an opponent with an edged weapon.

We have had the Tueller drill beat into our heads since the March 1983 issue of SWAT magazine in which Dennis Tueller made it abundantly clear. 21 feet, one and a half seconds, you die. This distance being covered is for the average man. But I dare say, and I have proven it myself, that the "fatal cut" CAN be delivered much faster than the 1 1/2 seconds stated in the drill.

One thing led to another on the discussion board over at http://www.texasshooting.com/TexasCHL_Forum/ and the next thing you know John had wrangled Professor Eugene into a one-day clinic covering all aspects of empty hand, edged weapons and conceal-carry. Of course, you know Eugene. It didn't take too much wrangling.

The date was set, and on January 14th the group met at the dojo. I was not able to attend, but by all reports there was a lot of learning that took place.

The start of the whole discussion in the beginning boiled down to the fact that Mr. civilian was not allowed to "carry" wherever this place was he frequented. So what is the next legal line of defense, or offense as the case may be. That is where the edged weapon talk began that culminated into this clinic. With that in mind, Professor Eugene began the class from the worst situation, empty hand against the armed attacker.

From there he progressed to knife on knife, in the defensive mode as well as moving to offense.

The days discussion and training included such topics as the legal ramifications, weapon grips and retention, disarms, lethal points on the body, the "percentage rule" and wasted motion.

To learn attack angles and body movement, the class participated in passing drills, parrying drills and flow drills. Although not necessarily "the flash" that everyone wants to learn, these drills are the beginning foundation to committing the movements to muscle memory and how to react to the different angles of a knife attack.

I think John summed up the day pretty well when he got back online that night.

"I know we threw a lot at you guys...and we don't expect it all to "stick", but if you'll practice some of the basic principles of economy of motion, using larger muscle groups against smaller, moving off line, etc...it will all become second nature to you.

I sincerely mean what I am about to say next: Man for Man we have not had such a pleasant group of people to work with in quite some time. Everyone worked hard and did very well for a "first time". My hat is off to you guys!!!"

It obviously went over well with the students. The first person to make it back to the keyboard that night had the following to say:

It was an honor to spend the day with you folks. The caliber of people I have met from this forum continues to be among the highest I have ever been exposed to! Thank you for your efforts in making this happen. Please send our sincere thanks to Eugene, Adam and everyone else involved in gently kicking our tails today.

We left the seminar with a great deal of information. I had no idea how little I knew and how much I HAVE to learn about the offense and defense of a knife. It is common to hear about how brutal a knife

RECENT NEWS AND TIDBITS... (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

can be and I witnessed this working in the prison, but it was amazing to see what someone is capable of with some training and experience. The speed associated with some of these tactics is absolutely amazing.

The format and staff were wonderful and I would not think twice about sending someone I loved there to learn self defense. Very straight forward and practical.

I am limping off to bed with a smile on my face... what a great day! I like it.

Another of the moderators on the board offered the following:

Like others had already mentioned. The seminar was wonderful. Eugene, John, and everyone else has a sea of knowledge. I wish I could download all this knowledge from you guys in knife defense as well as all the martial arts into my brain just like the Matrix. I will definitely be coming back for more visits when you offer more classes.

And in summation, this is what the final post had to say:

I have to look to the younger generation for a word to describe yesterday, AWESOME! Even more so the day after when I have had time to reflect on it.

Let me see where to start, first, you have all heard about the guy who could go bear hunting with a switch, Flintnapper could take him and the bear at the same time! What was it Walter used to say "no brag, just fact "

Ya'll know by now when I write something it's usually short and sweet and without much window dressing, kinda like me, plain. This shouldn't be like that, I wish I had the word's to describe the Art's that I saw yesterday, all I can think of are VERY FAST and DEVISTATING. I didn't see any choreography or acrobatics, they weren't dancing, the take down's and throw's were to get away from severe pain or to keep from breaking something and they were taking it easy, it was obvious that bone's could have been broken. Thank God they didn't ask the old man to do the take down's, I got to just go through the motion's, slooow-motion.

Shen Chuan StickBoxing is not one of the most well known weapon arts out there. But you'd be hard pressed to find one much better. Professor Eugene has taken the concepts and principles of Shen Chuan and welded them to a weapons system that is second to none.

John says there is already talk of another clinic in the future. We look forward to it. Maybe even having it on a regular basis.

As you know, it my core belief that we live and die by our training. Professionals as well as civilians. Get out there and get trained! You might even have some fun doing it...

After writing this article I ran it by John to make sure I had everything correct. Seems the only thing he thought I should add was a big 'ol "thank you" to Adam Coats for being slap-monkey. Seems Adam bore the brunt of Professor Eugene's demonstration, so that those coming in to learn wouldn't have to be uke as well. Thanks Adam!

SHEN CHUAN HISTORY: LATEST INSTALLMENT

Shihan Richard Metteauer was one of my former Taekwondo Instructors. Of course, back then, in a Korean school he was known as Sabonim Metteauer. It is with Richard to whom I owe my martial art life to. He was the gateway that led me to Professor Lansdale, and the art that would become Shen Chuan.

Shihan Richard's path with Shen Chuan has had many twists and turns. Regrettably after a severe shoulder injury, he had to step down as Head Instructor of Shen Chuan StreetBoxing. But he has been, and will continue to be recognized as a Shen Chuan instructor... Professor Billy Jack Worsham

The following is an excerpt from Shihan Richard's history with Lansdale's Self-Defense Systems:

I got a late start in the martial arts. I began Taekwondo training in the mid-eighties. It took

SHEN CHUAN HISTORY: LATEST INSTALLMENT... (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)

several years to get my black belt and in that time I developed a love for martial arts. I earned my 2nd degree black belt & instructor's certification in 1990. The Taekwondo organization I trained with focused on traditional forms, one-step sparring sets, and competition point sparring (this wasn't enough). During this time, training twice a week wasn't enough for some of my students and I, so we did backyard workouts to get in more practice. While training more informally I saw techniques and skills from a couple of them that made more sense than the self-defense I was currently teaching. This made me start looking for more practical moves.

One of my best students and good friend tested for his black belt in December of 1991 & I decided to make that my last testing with that organization. I tried other Taekwondo organizations for the next few years and finally opened my own school, Metteauer's TKD, in a flood-prone building on Pillar Street. Joe Lansdale, a friend and former student of mine from the Taekwondo school, was paying part of the rent to use the building to train in Aikido. Joe was training with Terry Thoburn. I worked out with Joe, Terry, and their students for a time but finally decided that as much as I liked Joe, I couldn't stand Terry so I dropped the Aikido. I eventually got tired of being an unaffiliated instructor so I sold all my equipment to Joe and took a couple of years off.

I kept in touch with Joe and watched his school evolve & grow. I dropped by to watch classes from time to time and watched as Joe, Coy, Eugene grew away from Terry. Part of the reason was that the martial art being practiced was no longer Aikido, it was changing and growing. Joe often says that he never invents new techniques, just steals or re-discovers techniques. Techniques were added and others dropped to fit the image or vision Joe had for his martial art. This art soon became Shen Chuan.

Shen Chuan is not a variation of any martial art but a compilation of many arts. There are several divisions of Shen Chuan. StickBoxing, Aikbujitsu, and beginning in September of 1997 StreetBoxing. The concepts of StreetBoxing were derived from Taekwondo, Shen Chuan, and a good old-fashioned dose of "East Texas" butt kicking. Like the main system of Shen Chuan, StreetBoxing is a very non-traditional martial art. We have no "forms"; the self-defense sets we practice are not set in stone as the sets in other systems and some are stolen directly from the main system.

Since 1997 I have been closer to the school and able to watch the transformation of Shen Chuan. The art began as a derivative of Kenpo Karate, Jujitsu, and Aikido. After weeding out the techniques he didn't like Joe started modifying the techniques he got from other styles. Small circles became much smaller, balance disruption began to be refined, and throws were shortened. Shen Chuan started taking on a life of it's own.

Joe now has, and has had numerous outstanding students but three have really made extensive contributions to the style. Joe's two oldest students are Eugene and Coy. They couldn't be more different in personality and build or more similar in skill. Eugene brings a greater attention to precision to Shen Chuan while Coy is just as skilled but has an intensity that few can match. If anybody other than Joe is the foundation of Shen Chuan it was these guys. There are many more students who have made contributions. Unlike the other martial arts I have been around Joe doesn't shut out his lower rankings students. If they make a change that is more efficient he will use it. Shihans Billy Jack and Paul Britt, Sensei's Jim Moore, Richard Hartstein and Norma Almanza have all made contributions based on physical ability, body type, or personal experience.

Shen Chuan began as a very hard style martial art. Soon the style began changing to a more fluid, softer style. Joe claimed he was changing because of age. He lied. It was just more efficient. It didn't matter the age. The changes allowed everybody to hit, lock, or throw harder with less energy. The style isn't truly a soft style either. It simply teaches that there is a place for every type of technique. Sometimes balance disruption will setup a hard strike or knocking the crap out of an opponent may make a lock or throw more feasible. The training isn't easy and Shen Chuan

SHEN CHUAN HISTORY: LATEST INSTALLMENT... (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6)

isn't for everybody. **It hurts.** That is the only thing that never changes. Shen Chuan hurts. I don't know where Shen Chuan is headed but it will never stay the same. I see it constantly changing, I can't wait to see what changes Conner comes up with.

I think the following should be taught to everybody in martial arts and it is the embodiment of Shen Chuan:

Each person brings something into the martial arts; this is what evolves the styles. Everybody doesn't have the same approach or beliefs, so when you pass your knowledge on, whatever style you are teaching change also. Like languages, people, business, etc. if a martial arts style is not growing and changing, it is dying.

Shihan Richard Metteauer

FIGHTING BACK: MONICA (ALBRIGHT) SMITH

Reprinted with permission from The Daily Sentinel, Nacogdoches, Texas

by Kyle Peveto
The Daily Sentinel

January 7, 2007

Closing her eyes, Monica Smith tapped her right foot while listening to her husband, Whitt, play guitar and sing.

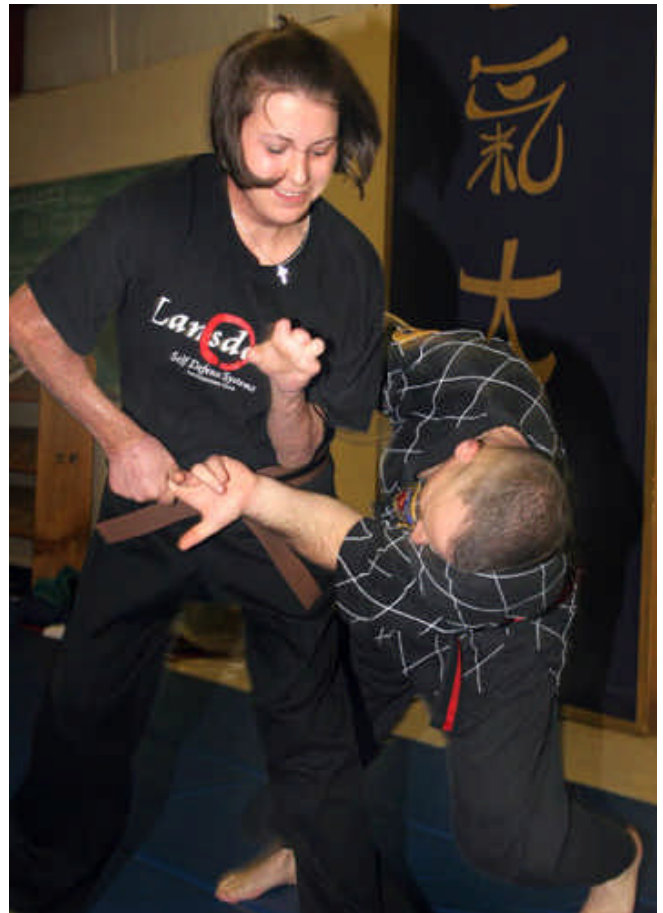
Whitt, thin with salt-and-pepper hair and a moustache, smiled and strummed the acoustic guitar that rested on his lap while he sang a self-penned song with an upbeat melody.

A year and a half ago, while Monica lay in a Shreveport, La., hospital bed, that same song, "The Missing You State of Mind," lingered in her head.

In May 2005, Monica was involved in a horrific car accident in Broaddus. More than 80 percent of her body was burned. Doctors operated on her more than 20 times, amputating her legs below both knees and then taking the fingers from her left hand. Her mother, Tonya Tillery Albright, died in the head-on collision, and when Monica regained consciousness, she learned of her death.

Whitt's song, though upbeat, was about missing a loved one and feeling alone. Monica had heard the song countless times when Whitt's southern rock bands played around East Texas.

"The lyrics just fit my situation at the time," 22-year-old Monica said.



After surviving a major car accident in 2005 that took her mother's life, Monica Smith practices martial arts at Lansdale's Self-Defense Systems with Professor Billy Jack Worsham to help her with balance on her two prosthetic legs. Photo by Christy Wooten - Sentinel Staff

FIGHTING BACK... (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

After leaving the hospital, Whitt's band played at a benefit for Monica, and the two have been together ever since.

Married on Sept. 16, Monica and Whitt joke and talk like old friends. Monica — who has short, dark hair and a constant look of determination — hopes to start college soon, and is studying martial arts to help her regain her sense of balance on prosthetic legs. Marked by the accident, she wears her wedding band and engagement ring on her right ring finger, and she often wears sleeveless shirts to keep cool — her arms are covered with skin grafts that have no pores and do not breathe.

Whitt likes her willpower, and she likes the way he doesn't baby her or treat her like she's disabled. The couple said they don't see anything in their lives as a challenge, even their 14-year age difference. A broad smile growing across his face, Whitt said Monica is mature beyond her years.

"All the women I've been around, none of them have it together like her," Whitt said. "She's got the focus, she's got the good attitude."

On May 7, 2005, Monica and her mother were driving through the intersection of FM 2258 and FM 83 in Broaddus, when their truck collided with another and exploded. San Augustine County Justice of the Peace Randy Williams heard the crash, parked his truck and went to help. Williams saw Monica reaching for him and screaming, he said in an interview with *The Sentinel* after the accident, and he pulled her out of the burning wreckage. He took off his shirt to extinguish the flames.

Monica was conscious the entire time, Williams said, and he saw her eyes lock on his, begging for help. When he first visited her in the hospital — though no one had told her — she knew Williams had saved her by his eyes.

"The only thing I can remember about him saving my life is his eyes," she said.

During her two months in the intensive care unit at Louisiana State University Hospital — Shreveport, she got to know the nurses and therapists who helped her recover. She spoke often of Whitt, and her nurses joked with her about "hunting down" the man who wrote the song, but Monica said she would probably never see him again.

A day after leaving the hospital, at a benefit in her honor, Monica saw Whitt with his band. They spoke every day on the phone, and he began taking her to dinner "just to get her out of the house," he said.

"After that, I began to see how wonderful she was, and her spirit, and then I started falling for her," Whitt said.

They dated while she learned to walk on hydraulic prosthetics. Therapists projected she would walk again in three years, but she began to walk again seven months after the accident.

They began dating in October 2005, and after a few months, the couple began to hold hands in public. On Father's Day, June 18, 2006, Whitt proposed.

Since the accident, Monica had kept up with Judge Williams, who pulled her from the burning truck. After Whitt proposed, she called Williams to tell him the news, and Williams asked if he could perform the ceremony. So, Sept. 16, amid a crowd of motorcyclists at East Texas Motorcycle Enthusiast Acres, a festival ground near Chireno often used for fundraisers, Williams married the couple.

FIGHTING BACK... (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8)

Whitt works as a lineman repairing electrical lines across East Texas. Monica wakes him at 4:30 a.m. each morning so she can make him breakfast and spend time with him before he leaves for the day. Monica never had a driver's license before her accident, and driving is awkward for her now. Eventually she plans to drive — and maybe even drag race muscle cars — but for now, she spends time at home, making crafts and keeping her dog, Beethoven, company.

Two nights a week, they leave their apartment on the north side of Nacogdoches for a martial arts dojo run by Joe Lansdale, a Nacogdoches author and the founder of Shen Chuan, a combination of several fighting styles. For about five years before her accident, she studied with Professor Lansdale, as she calls him, and she earned her brown belt. Though she can never lose her belt, Lansdale said, she has started at the bottom to relearn every technique with different tools — prosthetic legs and a fingerless left hand.

"I think that is what she has to do is get used to her artificial legs and learn to stand longer," Lansdale said. "Every time she comes in, she gets better and better at it."

He said her kicking is limited, and her fighting style now focuses solely on self-defense. Developing her own style, she uses her left hand to jab at the body's pressure points and uses her body to pin and suppress opposing blows.

"She's bad to the bone. I've seen her throw big 'ol guys down to the ground," Whitt said.

Eventually, after earning her black belt, she said she hopes to open her own dojo to teach amputees and people who use wheelchairs and canes to protect and empower themselves.

For now, though, Shen Chuan helps her learn to use her new legs and protect her body from falls.

"That's one of the main reasons I was so persistent about continuing my martial arts as soon as possible," she said. "Because I can fall down walking out the door just like you can. But if I don't know how to fall, I can screw my knees up, and that's the only thing I can rely on."

Most Sundays, Whitt and Monica attend San Augustine Church of Christ, where Monica was baptized a few months ago. She responded to an invitational hymn after a few months of Bible studies and said she "floated" down the aisle to the baptistery.

She often quotes her favorite Bible verse, Jeremiah 29:11, which says "'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future.'"

She talks about the future often, about plans to attend college and study communication or photography. And she wants to encourage other burn victims and amputees, something she began doing soon after leaving the hospital.

"Mom was always very supportive of everything I always did," Monica said. "She was very supportive, very caring. And I want to be that for everyone else — for anybody that will let me. If I can do anything to support you, or give you the inspiration or desire to do whatever you want to do with your life, then that's the only thing I want out of my life."

She and Whitt do not know what the future holds, but they look forward to finding out.

"I'm not going to just roll over and disappear," Monica said. "I was left here for a reason, and I'm excited to find out what that reason is."



CROSS TRAINING: BY GURU MIKE CASTO

There are no "pure" martial arts. Every system of martial arts has been influenced by other systems. Either directly or indirectly. When fighters fight, they influence each other ... it's inevitable. Since martial arts wouldn't exist without confrontation, all the martial arts systems have been influenced by each other (or by now defunct systems). Where they didn't directly "steal" from each other, they developed things specifically to counter each other.

Cross-training isn't a new concept. The Shaolin and the Samurai both cross-trained ... and they weren't the only ones, just the best known. Cross-training has been around for a long time ... probably as long as martial arts. It's just that in this day and age, we have a larger variety of options available for cross-training.

There are some universal pros and cons to cross-training. But on top of these, each person will have his/her own personal pros and cons when it comes to cross-training. Some people are wired in such a way that they would just be spinning their wheels if they tried to cross-train. Others are wired such that they'd get bored and quit if they couldn't change gears every so often.

Cross-training can be very valuable ... if done properly. A "foundation" is vital. The foundation gives a student a certain base-line understanding and something with which to anchor future learning. The foundation can be developed alongside supplemental training ... but the training must be perceived as such (i.e.: a foundation and supplements).

Once the foundation is solid and the basic principles are understood, then the student can start spotting those principles in other training. The principles are universal. Every martial art draws from the same large pool of concepts and principles. What makes each system unique is the emphasis it places on various aspects and the approach it takes in applying the various concepts and principles.

So, once the basic principles are understood, it's useful to see how other arts, systems, styles, or instructors approach those same principles. Where an art overlaps one's foundation, depth is gained. Where it doesn't overlap, breadth is gained.

But without the foundation, you're just digging a bunch of shallow holes and will likely never hit water.

Dig until you hit water ... then you can start looking for other flavors of water.

I think it is possible for a person to develop a core while simultaneously training in supplemental material. But, for most, I don't think this is the most efficient approach to training. Until the student has a foundation, all they are really doing is collecting techniques. The foundation, an understanding of the underlying concepts and principles, is what ties all the various techniques together. "Technique collection" is one of the universal pitfalls of cross-training. Like any pitfall, though, if one is aware of it, it can be avoided.

In which system the foundation is developed is irrelevant. What matters is that the student develops and understanding of the underlying principles and an eye for spotting them. The student should reach a point where he/she understands the underlying principles and can answer the question, "Why does this technique work?" Once that understanding is developed, the student should have the mindset of seeking the principles and a foundation for recognizing/comprehending them.

Each student starts as a mimic. He/she mimics the instructor to learn the basic movements. Later, the student mimics the instructor's explanation of the movements. At some point, though, the student should start understanding the movements. The explanation may or may not change, but the understanding should change. The student should reach a point where he/she can explain the same movement in a variety of ways that branch from that understanding. Without the understanding, the student can never do more than parrot the instructor's words.

CROSS TRAINING...(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10)

If a student seeks only to learn how to fight, then cross-training isn't necessary ... though it may still be helpful. I think martial artists, though, should seek out other perspectives in order to deepen their own understanding. A martial artist should always be in pursuit of developing a better answer to the question, "Why does this work?"

Students must learn to seek the underlying principles ... not techniques. If you learn one technique, then all you have is one technique. If you learn the underlying principle behind that technique, then you have a thousand techniques. This is analogous to, "Give a man a fish and feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and feed him for a lifetime." If a student never digs deeper than the techniques, then the student will become a "technique collector." He/she will have a bunch of pretty techniques but no real understanding of why they work or how they might be tied together. To return to the fishing analogy, this would be like collecting a bunch of fish instead of learning to fish. That collection of fish, no matter how large, will only feed the person for a few days before the fish start to rot.

Here's specific martial arts example (from my own experience) of this concept:

In the Silat that I study, we have "kunci jembatan" ... literally, "locking the bridge." Technically, this term can be applied to virtually any joint lock done to the extremities. But we have a few specific locks that we apply it to. One of these locks is identical to Aikido's "shiho nage." Silat and Aikido get to the lock (or throw, depending on how it's done) in different ways. If I just learn these techniques then all I'll have is a couple of ways of getting to the same lock.

But, because of my solid foundation in Silat, I understand that the principle of that lock is used in several other locks (which also fall under the heading of "kunci jembatan" in Silat). Since I understood this, when I learned "shiho nage," I automatically realized that the "shiho nage" and "kunci jembatan" were working with the same principle. Therefore, I wound up with literally dozens of "techniques" based on that shared principle ... and I wound up with quite a number of ways to get to those techniques.

Since they are based on principles that I know are valid, each of these dozens of techniques is also valid. Though the practicality of each, for me, will depend on my testing of each. But I know that each one is valid because it is firmly rooted in a valid principle.

So, a "technique collector" would come away with two techniques. A martial artist comes away with dozens.

Cross-training shouldn't be about learning how to fight. It should be about refining the knowledge of how to fight. "Technique collectors" aren't refining, they're loading up. Eventually, they'll overload. Proper cross-training should be about refinement. It should be about finding options within what you already know ... not about adding new "techniques" to the pile.

A potential problem with cross-training from the beginning is that all of the student's classes will be beginner's classes. If one studies 5 arts for 1 year, he/she will only have one year of training. The student will still only be a novice in each of those arts and in his/her overall development. If the student then starts switching and studying other arts, he/she will never be taught anything past the rudimentary basics. Some people can train in several things simultaneously and, intuitively, find the underlying connections between the arts. For most, though, this approach is the long way around.

For most people, the most efficient route to building a foundation is to train in one system until the foundation is built. Once the foundation is built, then cross-training can be useful in finding weak areas in the foundation and shoring them up and in building a house on that foundation.

It's a fine line to walk. Cross-training is easy. Proper cross-training is difficult. But if one can walk that line, they are likely, though not guaranteed, to be better martial artists because of it.

CROSS TRAINING...(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11)

On the flip-side, cross-training isn't necessary. It's possible to be a good martial artist and to develop a solid foundation and understanding of the underlying principles without cross-training. For people who can't walk that fine line and find proper cross-training, though ... they're better off not cross-training at all.

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THE FOUR FISTS' OF SHEN CHUAN, PART III ...BY PROFESSOR COY HARRY

Excerpted from Volume 8, Issue 1: "Professor Lansdale has designed Shen Chuan in a very specific way to follow the maturation of the human being. The four fists in the title refer to the changes in the art as you progress from white belt to the higher ranks. The fists are as follows Hard, Hard-Soft, Soft-Hard and Soft."

Following is a continuation from the previous newsletter of Professor Coy's explanation in the design of Shen Chuan and theory behind the "four fists" of Shen Chuan", beginning where we left off in the last issue; the hard-soft fist:

In the previous newsletter I carried you through the theory behind the second of the four fists' of Shen Chuan, the hard-soft fist. That brings us to the next level, that being the soft-hard fist.

Soft-Hard Fist

As a person moves into middle age they begin to do things a little differently than when they were a bit younger. Prioritizing becomes more important along with doing things with less effort to save time. It becomes not as important to follow other peoples view of what you should be doing and how. You have gained enough experience to make your own way. Your body is not healing as fast as it once did and when you exert yourself you get tired quicker. Many people, men especially, have a hard time dealing with this time of their lives. They long for the "glory days" and miss the vigor of youth. They don't appreciate what they have, knowledge and wisdom. They have seen alot and dealt with alot and have made an impact on others around them.

The same is said for Shen Chuan Fourth Degree Blackbelts. They have seen and done a tremendous amount of martial arts. They have made an impact on others in the class both below and above their rank.

As they feel the lower rank sets become more constricting, because they have found their own methodology, they have begun the move into the Soft-Hard Fist. In the Soft-Hard Fist the primary focus is moving from reflex to response. This means that techniques become less important than results. When you intercept a punch you no longer use a specific or Hard Fist interception, instead you allow your subconscious to intercept with what it deems appropriate. Your techniques don't appear to others as sharp and defined. Your strikes don't snap like they used to, they have all become "lazy". Locks also lose their definition and have become much more powerful. You don't get as winded because you have begun to relax deeper. Wherein lays the problem with moving from Hard-Soft to Soft-Hard.

At first you feel like you have lost your edge and are getting sloppy. You begin to wonder if something is wrong with you. Have you just gotten retarded or what? What is really happening is that you are dispensing with unneeded material. Your reflex is changing to response, which is faster.

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You move less and do more. You have moved from classical technique to conceptual technique. At the Hard-Soft level you go hard and end with soft. With the Soft-Hard you go soft and then hard if needed.

Another example of the difference is, in Hard-Soft you cut angles when intercepting an attack. But in the Soft-Hard you envelope the attack. Balance disruption becomes a part of everything you do. When you strike, lock and throw you are disrupting balance on the point of contact. It is no longer a conscious exercise, it is coming out all on its own. The opponent is no longer an individual he is only an extension of you. This happens because you have blended completely with them, their balance no longer belongs to them it is a part of the whole. Consequently, when they move you move and vice versa.

Your focus on the motion of your hips changes again at this level. Instead of techniques beginning and ending with the hips you begin to move your focus to your feet. You understand that the feet set the motion of the hips. By positioning your feet in a certain manner you open up more possibilities for the hips. The key to gaining this ability is to let go of the sense of self. It is like the samurai philosophy of not being afraid to die in battle because they are already dead. Or the Zen approach of having a mind of no mind. There are others but all with the same meaning; empty your mind of all things to accept and use what is presented. To accomplish this you must know yourself in order to let go of yourself. A very risky venture for some, which explains why everyone who studies martial arts is not a Master of their art. The letting go is not a sense of apathy, it is a sense of selflessness.

Added benefits of the Soft-Hard state of mind are a loss or reduction of stress in your private life. You begin to not worry about things you have no control over and focus on the ones you do. I realize this sounds more like philosophy and less like martial arts and in a way it is. You will face no more difficult opponent than yourself. Not wanting to let go of conscious control is understandable as it doesn't seem natural. It is however very natural and very satisfying physically, mentally and emotionally.

CONCEPTS, PRINCIPLES AND PHILOSOPHY OF SOFT-HARD FIST

1. Know yourself - To reach the point of subconscious expression of martial arts you must master yourself. Know who and what you truly are. Know your strengths and weaknesses, conquer your fear.

2. Allow a release of technique - This means to allow your subconscious mind to respond with technique. Don't think just do. It isn't easy to let go, so you have to have mastered the first concept to be able to apply this one.

3. Be one not two - When you are in a fight you must be connected to your opponent. This includes blending your balance, body, intent and action. A good way to apply this is to envelope your opponent, move into and just enough, like moving in the slipstream around the hull of a boat. You should do "as one", what you want to do. Be selfish, put your arm where you want, step where you want, turn when you want. Being able to do this is a power unlike any other, you find things happening because you want them to not because you make them. When you make yourself and your opponent one they have no other choice than to do what you want. This also takes the size and strength of opponents away from them and adds it to the whole, so you get to use it too. Another benefit is that you can tell what a person is going to do

THE FOUR FISTS' OF SHEN CHUAN, PART III ... (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13)

4. Accept - This is means just what it means. If you don't accept you will anticipate and that will get you nothing but hit. When you are attacked accept it, don't stop it or change it. You accept what is given and use the concepts above to deal with it. If you try to do something you may react, not respond. Your conscious mind will take control and you will fall into the trap of confrontation, which is what your opponent wants. Another application of this concept is to let go of results. When you are results oriented you may lose the initiative. For example if you move and the person is not thrown you may keep trying it even though its not working. You have lost.

In the next newsletter we will continue with the Four Fists' of Shen Chuan by discussing the fourth and final concept, the Soft Fist.

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