

## Swiss first to be recognized by China

**At the first overseas Duan Wei grading by the Chinese Wu Shu Association, two Swiss took on a special challenge und thereby made significant contributions toward the recognition of their style of Gong Fu. With the Olympics 2008 in Beijing ahead of us, this may turn out to be an important step forward for Swiss Wu Shu representatives.**

### Wu Shu worldwide

A Wu Shu event of considerable importance took place recently in Belfast, Ireland. For the first time outside of China, martial artists practising a Chinese style could take part in an official Duan Wei grading by the Chinese Wu Shu Association.

More than 50 participants from Zimbabwe, Poland, England, Ireland and Switzerland, took on this demanding task. Five Chinese masters holding high grades from the sixth to the eighth Duan formed the examination committee; three of them from China (Mister Wang Yu Long Vice-president of the Chinese Wu Shu Association, Miss Li Xiao Jie and Mister Kang Ge Wu Vice-president of the International Wu Shu Federation), one from Poland (Mister Zhang Feng Jun) as well as the host himself, Zhu Chang Hai from Belfast. The Chinese masters are also in the Olympics' Committee for Beijing in 2008.

Confusing the issue is the fact that up to now nobody representing our style (Wing Chun Quan, made famous by Bruce Lee) has ever faced this task. Therefore, if this official Chinese committee were to judge our style and give it a grade, from that moment on Wing Chun Quan would be officially recognized!

### The exam

Lex Reinhart Si Fu (Master) and Damian Mohler Chia Nien (Instructor), from the Samuel Kwok lineage, were the only Wing Chun representatives to confront this challenge – especially since it was the first time for this style.

On Friday and Saturday morning the examining experts got a general first impression through practising Wu Shu (Gong Fu) the whole day with all participants. Furthermore, they were given general instructions for the theoretical part of the exam and the examination procedure. The exam for the third Duan and higher required the demonstration of an empty hand and a fist form. Finally on Saturday afternoon or Sunday morning the exams began. The nervousness of all participants had reached its peak, and the language barriers didn't help. Lex Reinhart demonstrated Bju Tse (Thrusting Fingers) and the Pa Cham Dao (Short Sword), Damian Mohler Chum Kiu (Searching For A Bridge) and the Lok Dim Bun Guan (Long Pole). Important thereby was not only the correct execution but also Gung Fa (inner energy) and Fa Ging – the performing of every technique so that it has an explosive effect in the last moment. Philosophical aspects such as the participants ethics and behaviour also formed an important part of the exam. For three days the contestants were observed and judged according to these criteria. This means that every school wishing to participate must assess itself as to these aspects, which will again have a positive feedback on all Wu Shu practitioners. History shows that every martial art has had its code of honour. To disperse similar ideas in today's highly interlinked world is definitely one of the important aspects of Wu Shu.

### The city council's recognition and the Olympics 2008

Sunday evening the city council of Belfast organised a dinner at the City Hall, a magnificent edifice built by the architect Sir Brumwell Thomas in 1896. Official representatives of the council were present, and Lex Reinhart, representing the Swiss Wu Shu Federation and the Swiss Gong Fu Association, was given a seat of honour at one of the two main tables.

## **NING MUI Gong Fu Organisation**

Not everybody passed the exam. After a number of speeches, expressions of thanks and exchanges of presents, the number of Duans granted was finally revealed. Two applicants had applied for the fifth Duan, but only one achieved it. Afterwards the names of the graduates were finally announced, starting with the lowest, the first Duan.

After several anxious minutes Damian Mohler, together with a few others received the fourth Duan Wei, accompanied by enthusiastic applause. By now, the suspense was almost unbearable as the Vice-president of the Chinese Wu Shu Organisation, Master Wang Yu Long, asked Mister Brown, the official representative of the council, to announce the only fifth Duan Wei awarded...

,...Lex Reinhart from Switzerland...' came out of the microphone... what a relief – since there had still been great doubt until the very last moment.

Samuel Kwok, Lex Reinhart's Si Fu (Gong Fu father) and Damian Mohler's Si Gung (Gong Fu grandfather), is very proud of this achievement; especially because the late grandmaster Yip Man has thereby been posthumously awarded with the ninth Duan Wei. Lex Reinhart and Damian Mohler are also proud to have contributed this step forward for Wu Shu, all the more so, as this furthers its chance of being accepted as a new discipline at the Olympics 2008 in Beijing.

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