



Linda T'ai Chi Weekly Handout

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The Wu Shu Greeting

The word, Wu Shu derives from the Beijing dialect of Chinese where it was formed by combining the “wu” for martial or military and “shu” for art or the practice of the form. Chinese martial arts, often named under the umbrella terms kung fu or wushu and in Japanese, Karate, are several hundred fighting styles that have developed over the centuries in China and Japan. Kung Fu was highly developed in China by the 3rd century B.C.E, and it is credited with influencing other martial arts that arose within Korea, Japan, and Southeast Asia.

Today, the harder and faster martial art referred to as Kung Fu has separated itself from the softer more aesthetic art form like T'ai Chi. One of the more well-known divisions of Kung Fu is T'ai Chi the ancient discipline of meditative movements practiced as a system of exercises.

Every martial art has a greeting that is displayed either to the teacher, master, opponent, partner or friend to show goodwill, friendship and respect. Each school and teacher have a defined salutation. Some greetings place a cupped left hand around the right soft fist to show friendship and respect.

In the Tung Family tradition, each class is opened and closed with the Wu Shu greeting. In this tradition, the greeting shows respect to our teachers, fellow students, our family, ancestors and culture. It reminds us that we are part of something greater than ourselves. We are an extension of our history and heritage; a history that is to be honored and valued. More importantly, the Wu Shu greeting symbolizes that regardless of our differences we are one people. It is the differences among people that make us strong.

How to perform the Wu Shu Greeting

1. We begin with our arms at our side, feet apart, softening our body, clearing the mind and breathing deeply.
2. The teacher says, “Salute” and we all perform the greeting together
3. Make a soft fist with the right hand

4. Cup the left hand softly placing the thumb gently on the index finger.
5. Now, raise both arms as the left hand cups the right fist without touching.
6. Lower the shoulders, drop the elbows. (In some forms, the elbows are actually raised)
7. As the hands separate, the right hand goes forward, the left hand comes back toward the body and the arms make flat circles, over and under.
8. Slowly let both arms sink back to the side of your body, bow.

Traditionally, the right fist symbolizes force (yin) and the left hand (yang) controls the force and symbolizes peace over fighting.

The five fingers of the left hand have its own symbolism

The thumb symbolizes Humility

Each of the other fingers symbolize the "Four Nurturing Elements"

Virtue

Wisdom

Health

Art

I hope you find some solace and peace in the Wu Shu greeting.

Peace and goodwill to all,

Linda