

Personal statement from Chiu Wai - son of Chiu Kau

The purpose of this is to share with you a formal statement signed by Master Chiu Wai in March 2001 regarding discussions about his father Grand Master Chiu Kau.

To Whom It May Concern

Recently I, Chiu Wai, have been informed about the argument between my youngest brother, Chiu Chi Ling, and the Lam family. I am surprised to see this argument has surfaced again after 35 years. In August 1965, Chiu Kau and several kung fu brothers of the Lam Sai Wing School made an announcement through two Hong Kong newspapers, namely HK Seung Bo and HK Sing Bo, in which they denied the claim that Master Lam Cho was their sifu.

My father, Chiu Kau, had told me he learnt his Hung Gar style from Master Lam Sai Wing. In February 1931, Chiu Kau and Siu Ying (whose real name was Wong Sou Nang) became students of Master Lam Sai Wing at the “Lam Sai Wing Kwok Sutt Sair”, Second Branch School. Lam Sai Wing’s student, Tang Hin Choi, was the head instructor at the branch school, located at ground floor of 28 Parkers Street in the Kwun Chun district of Kowloon, Hong Kong. Though he was 70 years old, Master Lam Sai Wing still taught me at the school three times a week (i.e. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays). All students at the school were students of Master Lam Sai Wing, not students of the instructor. In 1933, Lam Cho took over the post of Tang Hin Choi. It’s a fact that Tang Hin Choi and Lam Jo are indeed senior kung fu brothers to Chiu Kau and Siu Ying. Later, Lam Cho relocated his own school to a new location. Many kung fu brothers did visit and train at the new location frequently. Hence, the Pek Kwa broadsword set could be passed along from Master Lam Cho to his fellow kung fu brothers at the time he was the head instructor of the branch school or when Chiu Kau practiced at Lam Cho’s school.

As for the group photos taken in 1936 and 1938 with Chiu Kau and Siu Ying wearing uniforms of Lam Cho’s school, one should know that the photos were taken at the functions under Lam Cho’s school. It was common practice that people with the same kung fu style would help out each other during certain demonstrations or shows. It would be odd if Chiu Kau and Siu Ying wore something different from the others in a function of the Lam Cho’s school.

Both Siu Ying and Lam Cho are still alive in Hong Kong. Siu Ying is 97 years old and Lam Cho is 90 years old. I definitely don’t want any further argument between the two families. We should respect each other and dedicate ourselves to the teaching and promotion of the Hung Gar style.

Through the www.hungkuen.8m.com website, I have also noticed some false claims about my late father, Chiu Kau. I have to clarify that:

1. My parents, Chiu Kau and Siu Ying, were not the earliest disciples of Master Lam Sai Wing. There is no proof that they were his prominent students either.
2. Chiu Kau was not one of the “Ten Tigers of Canton”.
3. Chiu Kau was not the best in Hung Gar style. Nobody should allow the use of such arrogant adjective as “the best”. Who is qualified to give such judgment? On what basis is the judgment given?

Yours truly,
Chiu Wai
March 9, 2001

END OF STATEMENT FROM CHIU WAI

I had the pleasure of knowing Chiu Kau until he passed away in 1995 at age 100, and have very fond memories of him as a practitioner and person. At his funeral in Hong Kong, I witnessed the huge number of people that attended which is indeed endorsement of his high respect in the community.

I have found these articles over recent months about Hung Gar lineage very distasteful, and have discussed it with Chiu Kwok Kei (Chiu Wai's son), who has in turn talked with his brother Chiu Kwok Keung and father Chiu Wai in Canada. As a result I hold the above document signed by Master Chiu Wai himself and written in English by Chiu Kwok Keung on his behalf about this subject, and have been asked to share it with you. If any of you need proof it was written by Chiu Wai, feel free to contact him or the family members, or I can send you a copy.

I am very keen to see this argument put to rest. History is full of misunderstandings and opinions, and as humans we generally do not go through life gathering evidence for everything we do just in case someone may question something at a future date.

Like many of you my life has been devoted to Chinese Martial Arts, and I prefer to hold on to the fond, positive and personal memories of Grand Master Chiu Kau. Like some others I have a special personal reason for my lifelong devotion to martial arts and therefore to uphold its honorable name and character. Let us all refrain from the negativity that seems to have prevailed in recent months, and put our energy into the promotion of what brings us together as a family (Hung Gar), rather than its disparagement.

It is important for all of us, as Hung Gar practitioners irrespective of our lineage, to develop and maintain harmony within the broader context of our Hung Gar family and to promote the learning and development of the Hung Gar style. We all have common roots going back to Wong Fei Hung, and should always remain a harmonious family of his dedicated followers who uphold the honorable name and character of our style through our own behavior and the example we set for others.

I look forward to us all putting things to rest, so that we can continue with our devotion to the style and the behavioral qualities it promotes.

Gam Bok Yin
(aka: Dr. Graham Player)
Hong Kong
