

Letter of Appreciation to my Instructor

I first encountered Grandmaster Cheng Aiping and her teachings when I was 10 years old. I was immediately entranced by the depth of the knowledge and embodied wisdom she had spent a lifetime cultivating and was so graciously and generously offering. I started taking wushu classes and continued uninterrupted for the next 8 years until leaving home for undergrad. I remember the school transitioning to 3 different locations during that time. But Master Aiping's commitment to teaching and cultivating knowledge and wisdom remained steadfast and consistent even as the location and specifics of the training center shifted.

I began attending 2 classes a week. And as my ambitions and aptitude for instruction continued to grow, Master Aiping's commitment to teaching continued to expand to meet mine and other's appetite to learn. For several summers, I expanded my training to 5 days a week during the months long intensives she so graciously offered. I joined the performance team and began exhibiting routines at the annual Lunar New Years events and other local showcases throughout the year. I began studying the basics consistently under her stern, attentive and devoted and watchful eye. I expanded to foundational weapons like staff and Jian. Before continuing to more specialized forms like the three-section-staff, double nine-section-whip-chain, and Ditang ground tumbling routines.

Eventually Master Aiping further expanded her commitment to cultivating and sharing the jewels of Chinese culture and embodied wisdom and martial understanding by organizing and leading her students and their families through several week's long summer excursions to China, and specifically to her beautiful hometown of Hangzhou. During our training intensive with the elite Zhejiang wushu team that she used to coach, I expanded my repertoire of routines further to include tongbeiquan and later drunken sword and other specialized practices. It was an honor to compete and perform in group exhibitions at the time to showcase her school and her commitment to maintaining and preserving these pieces of embodied cultural heritage.

Throughout the years, I continued to visit the studio and maintain my connection with Grandmaster Aiping, my first, foundational teacher and the one who set me on this life-long path of enrichment and spiritual and physical development through her commitment and dedication to preserving and sharing such a powerful and deeply infused philosophy and craft as traditional Chinese wushu.

To this day, Master Aiping remains steadfast and dedicated to the wellbeing and continued cultivation of her many students throughout the country and throughout the world. I have been fortunate to remain in contact with my instructor to this day. She generously took the time to visit and attend a workshop I held in Austin recently as an esteemed guest of honor. And she has taken time to visit and reconnect when passing through the West Coast, where I stay now.

She has remained attentive to my practice and continues to express an interest in my training, which is a deep honor to say the least. But I am most moved by her consistent effort to offer jewels of wisdom and advice in regards to my internal meditation and stillness practices. To this day, she continues to shed light on and offer invaluable insight into this robust and deep endeavor of internal self-examination and health-cultivation. I will be forever grateful for the groundwork and instruction she offered at the start of my martial arts and health practice journey, as well as for her continued insight and conviction and guidance from here forward. XieXie Laoshi. Thank you Teacher.

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Eve of the Lunar New Year Fire Horse Year