

History of Choi Lei Fut 蔡李佛的歷史

Jeung Yim 張炎 (1824-1893) was born in Sek Hoi Village 石咀村 in Sun Wui County 新會縣, Gwong Dung Province 廣東省. In his youth he had a passion for learning the martial arts and began learning kung fu from a Shaolin Monk named **Lei Yau Saan** 李友山, master of the southern Lei Ga 李家 (Lei Style). While still at a young age his parents were killed, which left him under the care of his uncle Jeung Gwan 張昆. His uncle though had to leave town on business and wouldn't be able to take his young nephew with him. So, he decided to pay a visit to his old friend Chan Heung who was a former student of Jeung's teacher Lei Yau Saan. Chan lived in a nearby village called Ging Mui 京梅鄉 where he had become a kung fu instructor.

Chan Heung 陳享 (1815-1875) was born in Ging Mui Village 京梅鄉 of Sun Wui County 新會縣. He began learning kung fu from his uncle Chan Yuen Wu 陳遠護, a common disciple of Shaolin. He trained hard and became quite skilled under his uncles teaching. One day Chan had heard of another master who had come to the village to teach, this was Lei Yau Saan 李友山. He took up training under the new master and excelled in his studies. Lei had told Chan much about Shaolin and its history, also mentioning about the 5 elders (5 *Ancestors of Southern Shaolin* 南拳五祖) who had escaped the destruction of the Shaolin Temple. Chan was interested in this story and found that one of the elders, **Choi Fuk** 蔡福, was living on a nearby mountain named Loh Fu Mountain 羅浮山. With his teachers permission Chan set off to seek out this master. He eventually found the monk and was accepted for training. He followed Choi Fuk, a master of Choi Ga 蔡家 (Choi Style) for many years learning the Shaolin arts, and with his talent was able to learn the genuine essence of kung fu. After several years of training under Choi Fuk, Chan Heung left and was recruited working as a drillmaster in Chan Village 陳村, in San Dak County 順德縣, of Gong Mun City 江門市, where he taught the villagers to defend themselves. He took what he had learned and formed a new system. He then opened up a school and began teaching.

When Jeung Yim met Chan Heung through his uncle's introduction he expressed his desire to learn kung fu. Though he was still young Jeung had received prior training under Lei Yau Saan, Chan's former teacher. Though Chan Heung could see Jeung's desire and happy to meet a fellow classmate there was a problem. In the Chan Village 陳村 there was a rule that a drillmaster should not accept an outsider (non-Chan) for training to learn their village's kung fu. Chan Heung was bound to this rule, but decided however to take Jeung Yim as chore man in his exercising hall, cleaning and straightening up. Jeung Yim was then only twelve but was determined to learn. Day by day as classes were being conducted he continued working nearby and watching. Jeung remembered every step while the disciples were exercising, and then later would train in private. Day after day he watched and remembered, all while maintaining his silence. This carried on for some time until one day Chan discovered Jeung training his stolen kung fu. He was upset at first to see this however upon approaching him about this Jeung Yim was honest about his deception and asked for forgiveness. Chan then asked what he had learned and Jeung Yim showed what he had been practicing. The performance and Jeung Yim's ambition moved Chan Heung, convincing him to train and guide the young boy, providing he would tell no-one. He trained Jeung during the night when no one was around, and Jeung maintained his silence during class, often enduring the bullying that came from the students. Five years had passed and Jeung Yim had mastered his lessons from Chan, unknown to anyone else.

One day, Chan Heung went out to deal with something and left the disciples training in the hall. They saw Jeung working on his daily chores nearby and wanted to put him to the shame as he was an outsider. They tried to force him to fight but Jeung maintained. They treated him as a coward and insulted him to the point where Jeung could no longer endure. He finally fought back. To their surprise he defeated the students and many got wounded in the process. The secret was out and when Chan Heung returned he was accused of teaching the village kung fu to an outsider.

The villagers were upset at this break of tradition leaving Chan no choice but to expel Jeung to maintain peace in the village. However, during his training with the monk Choi Fuk, he had learned of another master of even higher skill. Chan hadn't the chance to seek out this master but decided to pass the chance onto Jeung. He arranged Jeung Yim with a letter of introduction to go to Jaap Gin Temple 闍建寺 on Baat Paai Mountain

八排山 in Gwong Sai 廣西 for training under Ching Cho, the “Green Grass Monk 青草僧”. Ching Cho was a senior teacher and survivor of the destroyed Shaolin Temple. He had built a new temple at the 9 Lotus Mountain 九蓮山少林寺 under the Abbot Ji Sim 至善禪師, and now lived in solitude in the mountains.

Jeung Yim departed and found Ching Cho at the temple as instructed. He was accepted as a student and for the next 8 years (1841-1849) Jeung Yim learned the deadly Shaolin art of Fut Mun Jeung 佛門掌 (Buddhist Palm). This was actually not a formal style of its own, but rather a generic name for the skills and techniques that came from Shaolin. He completely imparted the Buddhism Palm techniques and methods to Jeung Yim, and also taught medical knowledge and to accept the idea of revolting Ching and recovering Ming 反清復明. Time passed quickly and Jeung Yim completed his training. Ching Cho who belonged to the Hung Mun Society 洪門 was himself a revolutionary. He renamed him Hung Sing 鴻勝 (鴻 Hung instead of 洪 Hung to disguise the meaning, though both having the same pronunciation in Chinese) meaning “victory to the Hung”, telling him to leave the temple and contact patriots and comrades to fight for Ming’s recovery.

Jeung Hung Sing left to join the Tai Ping Rebellion 太平天國革命 to spend the rest of his life in battle and training revolutionaries to fight, but first returned to Ging Mui where Chan Heung warmly welcomed him. In their meetings, Jeung Hung Sing shared what he learned from the Green Grass Monk with Chan Heung in appreciation for his tutelage years before. During this exchange a new method was born. The 2 masters parted ways and separately developed their respective systems. Since their kung fu was from 3 sources; Choi Fuk’s Choi Ga, Lei Yau Saan’s Lei Ga, and Ching Cho’s Fut Ga Jeung, they named the style Choi Lei Fut in honor of the styles source. Jeung Hung Sing taught under the name of Hung Sing Kwoon 鴻勝 and Chan Heung taught under the name of Hung Sing Kwoon 洪聖. Though sharing the same roots these 2 branches of Choi Lei Fut evolved separately and took on their own respective characteristics and attributes.