

MY WAY TO WING TSUN AND EBMAS

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Since I was child, martial arts were something what I really wanted to do in my life. My first contact with martial arts was at the age of 5, watching karate or kung fu movies at my cousin's house. I started imitating my kung fu heroes and my family thought I was crazy. Actually, I came from countryside and from a very large family. They are something like a clan, almost all members (uncles, cousins...) are very good fighters. They are not tall but very quick and powerful. So they are very respected in my village. So maybe it is my heritage to know how to fight well. My cousins gave me a hard time when I was little. They used to beat me up for fun. I hated this time, but later I admit it helped me, because I was not afraid of being hit. But I did not want to practice some "family street-fight", I was longing to do some style properly. So at the age of 7, my father enrolled me in Judo classes, where I learned discipline, how to fall, and other important things. Still, I felt it was not what I wanted to do. I lacked punches and kicks. That's why I started Shotokan Karate when I was 9 years old. After 2 years I had to end my Karate training because of some knee problems and I had to go to the hospital for operation.

The doctors made more mess in my knee then it was before and I could not continue in my martial arts for another year and half. In this time of relaxation, I read a lot about martial arts and I started to study chinese philosophy, theories of Bruce Lee's JKD and I found a first article about WingTsun KungFu - Leung Ting system in 1992. It impressed me a lot and I knew that I had found "MY MARTIAL ARTS WAY". The writer of this article lived in Germany where he studied under Jurgen Pottiez and opened a school in the capital of Czech Republic - Prague. I knew my father would not let me go to Prague at the age of twelve so I found another Chinese KungFu school in my town and started practicing Hung Gar and Choy Li Fut Kung Fu. This time was really wonderful. I started to work really hard (after the bad thing with my knee) and after some time I had strong legs again, so the muscles were able to support my knee. By the way, I felt very well in the company of my elder kungfu brothers. We were very good friends outside of the KWOON, but when it came to practice, they were really strict and everyone had to follow their commands. After a few months later only six students (including me) took part in SIU LUM PAI KUNG FU SCHOOL.

Shortly after I started to attend the first year in the high school, I found in the sport store a flyer about WT classes in my town. So I took one and called the number of sihing Jindrich Kopecky. He was very nice and he invited me to his WT Introductory evening in a local school gymnasium. There I met him for the first time. He was even smaller then me, but the width of his shoulders showed that he must have practiced bodybuilding or something like that. After a brief introduction he began to demonstrate some WT self-defense techniques which were really effective. Then he put a videotape in his VCR and there were SiFu Emin Boztepe's demos recorded from German TV TELE 5. The show continued with Realistische Selbstverteidigung (Real World Self-defense) and that was it. I stared at the TV screen, watching every motion of SiFu Emin. It was incredible, everything looked so real and easy. I was dedicated. " I want to be a good WT fighter", I told myself and started to attend every WT class I could. Then I told to my Siu Lum brothers to come and see WT, but I shouldn't have done that, because after that they started saying something like: "Do you really like WingTsun? What is that? See the WT

punch? It has no power! The punching motion is too short! And the stance, it looks like dancing, not KungFu!” But I told them “ You don’t know anything about it, so do not criticize it! I know that WT is really good and you are talking about it like that because you are afraid of better competition. And after some years I will prove it!” After this I lost contact with every Siu Lum kung fu brother. But I did not care. I found a new family.

I started to come with my sihing to his other schools every weekend, to train more and help him with new WT students and I did a lot of demos with him to attract more people. He was like my real brother. I believed him very much. I practiced WT at his house even instead of coming to school for whole week. During this time we trained like 8 hours a day. He was really good and he had a lot of posters, articles and TV shows about Emin Boztepe and since this time I dreamed about coming to Los Angeles to train with this WT fighter and teacher. Some of my classmates wanted to study in Schloss Langezell in Germany, but I wanted to go to the United States.

I was with my friend Veronika, the highest student of our sihing and I have to say pioneers of WT in our country. So WT training was very important for us. After 2 years of WT training, sihing Jindra let me teach WT in my town during the week and every weekend I spent at his house with 12 hours exhausting training per day, sometimes more. Everything seemed to me like I did nothing but WingTsun. However, I was a teenager and I started to miss my friends. I wanted to go out with them, to have relationships with girls, go to the disco etc. So I told to my sihing that I would like to have 2 weekends free of WT, because I wanted to live my young life and not just to train WT. So I started to go with my friends to the disco, to have girlfriends, but not for a long time, because I still wanted to give more time to my WT than to the girls. But this time was very important to me, because I could test my WT knowledge in a real fight.

After some time, people started to recognize me as a good fighter and they asked me about my technique, so it helped to promote my WT school a little. Even when I used to tell them that I was not an expert, just a student, they were more interested, because it didn’t make a sense to them that a student could beat up an older, higher or more powerful person in a bar in a very short time. I always tried to be nice to people and be honest with everybody. But it always seemed to me that I had friends because I knew something that they didn’t. Actually it was a great feeling. My friends were very weak and they didn’t know how to defend themselves. So I gave them some easy tips to build up their self-confidence and it helped some of them and I am very happy for that.

Later I had more and more arguments with my sihing. He wanted me to do everything for granted. I felt depressed, because I tried to do everything right and I was afraid that it would be wrong. I dedicated a lot of my time and energy to him and WT and he never said “ thank you, that is nice”, or something. He just told me “ Do this and that” like he was my big boss and I was just a small human being who had to pay money almost for nothing in the past years. In this time I really wanted quit WT and live a normal life. But my dream about coming to USA was still in me and I contacted SiFu Emin Boztepe via e-mail. But I had no luck. I got an answer from some secretary and she wrote me, SiFu Emin is out of the town and could I write or call later. So I did. But without any success.

This time I didn't even get an answer. I was very disappointed. I didn't want to give up and I was looking for other ways to reach my dream. I read an article about SiFu Emin and WT in USA in Kampfkunst International by Daniel Schoenbrod. Then I found his web site and I wrote him. Daniel was very nice and he invited me to Berlin, Germany for some workouts with him and SiFu Peter Vilimek (this master was very kind and after a while speaking with him, I figured out he had Czech origin) and for some chat. We talked more than three hours about my possibilities and Daniel promised to talk to SiFu Emin. It worked out! After some weeks I got an e-mail from SiFu Emin Boztepe and I started to work nightshifts just only for getting to the USA.

I took off on Thursday June 7th, 2001 and I took plane via Frankfurt to New York. Here I was able to participate in SiFu Emin's seminars and I am going to continue to learn the art of WingTsun and Latosa Escrima under the direction of one of the best teachers and persons I have ever met.

I am very happy I have joined his new martial arts organization for WT and Escrima EBMAS – Emin Boztepe Martial Arts System or American Escrima WingTsun Organization. But my final destination is not at the end and I would like to go for it!