



Five External Martial Virtues in Praying Mantis Kung Fu

Northern Seven Star Praying Mantis kung fu is a highly famed martial art recognized for its practical no none-sense approach to self defense. Perhaps lessor known is that it also promotes a strong foundational philosophy and value system to help guide and keep your life on track. The philosophy of San He Wu De, or Three Harmonies and Martial Values is a simple approach founded on three precepts: the Right Mind, the Right Values, and the Right Effort. In the first installment I introduced the general framework of San He Wu De and explored the first precept of the Right Mind. If you have not read it already, I suggest you go back and do so before moving on as it will provide you with an important foundational understanding. In this current installment I will explore the Five External Martial Values of Respect, Humility, Honesty, Justice and Loyalty which reflect a view of the world as it should be.

Why Are Values Important?

Values (sometimes called virtues) are the things you believe to be important in the way you live. They are big picture principles that help guide your life and are things that you strive to embody. They determine your priorities and act as a moral compass guiding you on a path towards becoming better a human being and leading a more meaningful life. When your life and life values are misaligned this can lead to dissatisfaction and unhappiness. When they are aligned this can lead to great things. Instilling a healthy value system is particularly important for younger learners who require increased guidance and mentoring during the earlier foundational years of development and training.

The Right Values and Wu De

The Right Values are the second precept under the San He Wu De framework and form a martial code of ethics known as Wu De. This is foundational to Praying Mantis marital culture, and together with the Right Mindset form the ground-work for effective decision-making that is manifested in actionable behavior.

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Author
Nathan A. Wright

武德
外行 内行
尊敬 意志
谦虚 毅力
诚实 忍耐
正义 勇敢
忠诚 恒心



Master Luo Guang Yu
罗光玉 1888-1944

"Self respect is the cornerstone of all virtue. Respect for yourself guides your morals and leads to self-discipline. The way you treat people and act in the outside world is a reflection of how you value your person."



尊敬

RESPECT

五外行

Five External

尊敬	Respect
谦虚	Humility
诚实	Honesty
正义	Justice
忠诚	Loyalty

五内行

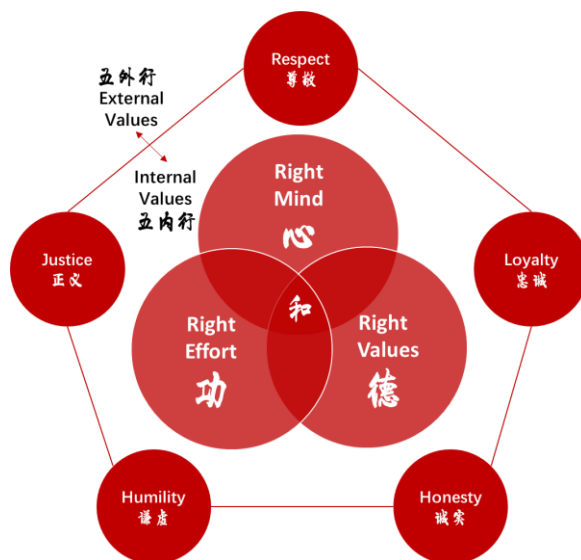
Five Internal

意志	Will
毅力	Perseverance
忍耐	Endurance
勇敢	Courage
恒心	Patience

Traditional marital values (Wu De) includes a system of five external and five internal values that are considered instrumental to the student's long-term development and pathway onto becoming a skilled martial artist. Note here there is a clear distinction between becoming a skilled martial artist and a skilled fighter. To become a skilled fighter there is no prerequisite to practice Wu De. To become a skilled martial artist, you must embody Wu Du and develop warrior like fighting skills.

The Five External Values of Wu De include Respect, Humility, Honesty, Justice and Loyalty. They are considered external values because of their importance in how you make actionable decisions and interact with others in the real world. The Five Internal Values include Will (of mind), Perseverance, Endurance, Courage, and Patience. These are highly relevant to the intensity, frequency, and duration in which you carry out actions and pursue goals in life, but are considered internal values because of how they help build a disciplined mind which in turn helps to regulate the emotional mind. Together the external and internal values form a Ying Yang relationship - not because they are opposite principles - but because they form interconnected, interdependent, and mutually reinforcing relationships within your own mind, body, and spirit continuum (San Bao), as well as your interactions with the external environment (San Cai).

三和武德



Five External Values

Respect

Praying Mantis teaches respect - respect for self, respect for others, and respect for life. Respect is inherently about consideration and acknowledgment of something or someone's fundamental value or sense of self worth (dignity). There are many different types of respect like respect for family, friends, culture, beliefs, diversity, social norms, laws, nature, our planet, etc. But most importantly it starts with respect for self.

“Humility is about inner strength, keeping your ego in check, and living a humble life. It requires nothing less than complete honesty about yourself and is an attitude of understanding your position as a lifelong learner.”



Respect for self is about understanding yourself, understanding your interests and passions, understanding your strengths and weaknesses, embracing who you truly are, and taking action on what you believe with conviction. If you do not respect and value yourself no one else will respect you. Do not let other people's opinion control you, do not speak badly about yourself, and do not let anybody force you to do something that violates yourself or your values. Conversely, respect should not be confused with pride as this can limit your development and growth.

Respect is also outward. Respecting others and world around you is about keeping an open mind, a caring attitude, doing your best to understand other people, and treating them with kindness. It is about embracing differences and celebrating diversity. Respect also follows the rule of reciprocity in that if you do not give it you won't get it, so treat people the way you want to be treated. And if people do not give it to you, be sure to stay focused on your goals and simply move on. Be respectful.

Humility

Praying Mantis kung fu teaches humility. Humility is one of the most powerful and important attributes in life, yet least understood. It is commonly associated with negative connotations of weakness and submissiveness, but this is wrong. Humility is about inner strength, keeping your ego in check, and living a humble life. The four main characteristics of humility include Inward Perspective, Outward Perspective, a Growth Mindset, and a sense of Gratitude.

Inward Perspective is about a willingness to understand yourself truthfully, acknowledging your strengths, weaknesses and limitations. As you build and grow your self-confidence, it is important that you learn to keep your ego in check, regulate your emotions, and let go of pre-conceived notions of self-protection. Be cautious about overestimating your own being, abilities, and accomplishments, and do not look down on others. Likewise, it is just as important not to underestimate yourself and cut yourself short. This is the importance of inward perspective.

Outward perspective is about understanding others, acknowledging their efforts, accomplishments, experiences, and most importantly their struggles. Living a humble life is about acknowledging that you are not the center of your world, and recognition that you are part of a larger ecosystem – couples, partners, friends, family, classmates, work colleagues, local communities, organizations, sovereign nations, global citizens, humanity, etc. This will lead you to living a life of greater empathy and compassion – one that recognizes the struggles of others and takes action to do what you can to help those who are less fortunate.

Living a humble life is about maintaining a growth mindset. It is about seeing life as a journey of continual learning, recognizing that while none of us are perfect, you can, without negatively impacting your self-esteem, work on your limitations by being open to new ideas, advice, criticism, and learning from others. Being humble is a way of being that embraces constant learning through self-correction and self-improvement. As an example, if your kung fu teacher suggests adjustments to a technique to aid your performance, you must be of the mindset to accept that your current technique may not be fully developed and/or best suited for your goals.

謙虛

HUMILITY

Respecting others and world around you is about keeping an open mind, a caring attitude, doing your best to understand other people, and treating them with kindness. It is about embracing differences and celebrating diversity.

Outward perspective is about understanding others, acknowledging their efforts, accomplishments, experiences, and most importantly their struggles. Living a humble life is about acknowledging that you are not the center of your world, and recognition that you are part of a larger ecosystem.

“Honesty is about being honest to yourself and the people around you. It is a Say Do attitude where you say what you do and do what you say. It is about fulfilling your responsibilities and a willingness to face and accept the consequences of your own words and actions.”



诚实

HONESTY

Honesty is also about how you conduct yourself in the external world. It is about staying true to your word and accurately representing your internal states, intentions, and commitments in the public / social domain.

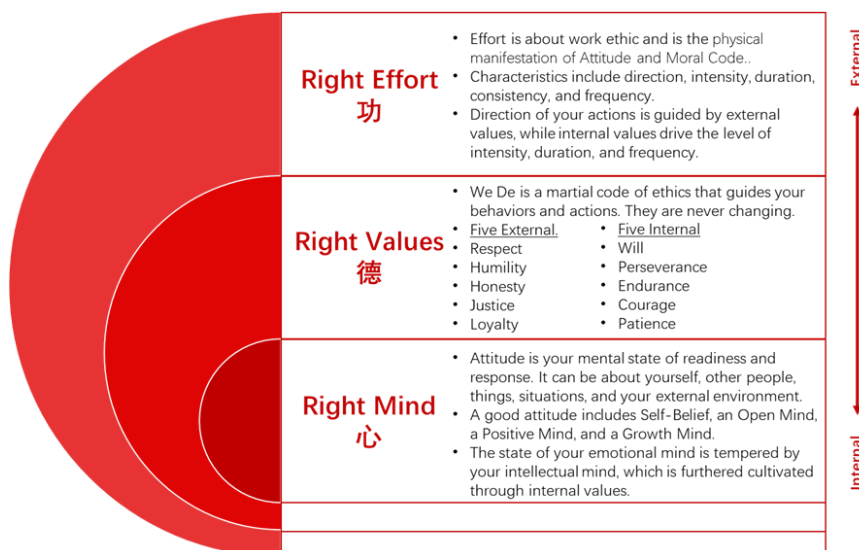
Living a humble life is also about living with a sense of gratitude and appreciation for all things – big and small. Gratitude is not just a feeling or a thought, but it is a deeper appreciation in mind and heart for someone or something that produces long lasting value and positivity. Stay mindful of the truly important things in life like life itself, health, friendship, love, learning, knowledge, experience, skills, and the efforts of others. Be cautious of emotions of self-entitlement (deservedness) or placing too much value on the attainment of material possessions - instead remember that everything must be earned through hard work, and this will give you a sense of fulfillment and enable you to start living a more meaningful life. Be humble.

Honesty

Praying Mantis kung fu teaches honesty. Honesty is about being honest to yourself and to the people around you. It is a “Say Do” attitude - you say what you do and do what you say. It is a precursor to many things such as integrity, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, and sincerity. It starts with being honest with yourself, ‘keeping it real’, and being mindful of your true feelings, emotions, thoughts, and the motivations driving your behavior. It is founded in a sense of personal responsibility that allows you to be consistently true to yourself.

Honesty is also about how you conduct yourself in the external world – with your partner, your family, your friends, your colleagues, your teacher, your mentor, your kung fu club brothers and sisters, etc. Living an honest life is about fulfilling your duties and a willingness to face and accept the consequences of your words and actions. Being honest and staying true to your word is about accurately representing your internal states, intentions, and commitments in the public / social domain. It is also about accuracy of perception and acknowledging the attitudes, efforts, words, behaviors, and consequences of other people's actions. Be honest.

Three Harmonies Five Martial Values



“Justice is rooted in truth, fact, equality, fairness and action. It is about your obligation to be as fair as you can be, to be honest with yourself and with others, and to speak up to injustices when you see them .”



Justice

Praying Mantis teaches about justice. People typically think of justice as a series of social arrangements or legal / political institutions, but it is an important personal virtue requiring that you judge others fairly and that you judge yourself fairly too. It is rooted in truth, fact, equality, fairness and action. It is about your obligation to be as just and as fair as you can be; to be honest with yourself and with others; to speak up to injustices when you see them; and to do as much right as you can in a world that is at times unfair.

Justice begins within yourself - as bias toward the self often leads to bias against others. It requires adherence to truth, fact, and rational logic. Living a just life requires that you question yourself truthfully making you honest and non-self-deceptive. You vigilantly maintain a clear conscience and are cognizant of your own mistakes and faults. In doing so this also makes you forgiving of others. You respect who you are and not whom you merely wish you were, and this authentic self-respect in turns makes you respectful of others.

Living a just life is about equality and requires that you give proper respect to one another. Each of us must recognize the other as a person and not merely as an object - the least common denominator is that we are all human beings. You must be aware of the biases you have towards others and recognize the fact that we each have particular features making us all unique. Justice not only pays proper attention to what we have in common, but just as importantly it embraces the diversity that sets us apart, therefore making you wise in the ways of fairness and equality.

Justice is about action and doing the right thing. Although it is critically important to live a peaceful life and go about your own business while respecting others, but in times when you witness inequalities, inequities, injustices and abuses of power happening to others, or incurring upon your own person, it is of the utmost importance that you have the courage and conviction to take action and say what you see. Speak up, speak loudly and speak truth to power. This might be related to school bullying (physical, verbal, social, cyber), workplace harassment, racial discrimination, abuses from people in power, or other forms of injustices. Not speaking up is the very in-action that abusers of power rely upon to “get away” with their own selfish actions and continue on un-checked. Take action, speak up, and say what you see.

In living a just life you must also value your own person and rights to equality, justice and a fair share. Never judge yourself to be less worthy than you truly are because when you do so justice also fails. Humility as discussed above is a powerful virtue, but it should not be confused with weakness or being servile to power, and it should never interfere in any negative capacity with regards to the intellectual courage required to call out injustice. Those who unfairly put themselves down or who are servile, for whatever reason, are doing themselves an injustice by willfully accepting less than their fair share.

正義

JUSTICE

Justice is about having the courage and conviction to speak up and speak loudly when you witness inequalities, inequities, injustices, and abuses of power happening to others, or incurring upon your own person.

“Loyalty is not passively expressed merely as a strong feeling but is manifested in action through a whole-hearted commitment to a person or cause. Most importantly it is about staying true to yourself, true to what you believe in, and true to the people you love in life.”



忠诚

LOYALTY

Living an honorable life involves valuing something greater than yourself and acting upon it without hesitation to sacrifice. You should never betray yourself, the values you represent, or the circle of people that you love and consider important.

Loyalty

Praying Mantis kung fu teaches loyalty. Loyalty is about allegiances directed to someone or something you deem to be important in your life. It is built entirely on a foundation of commitment, honesty, and sacrifice to someone or something, and is about living a noble and honorable life.

Loyalties are chosen and actively engaged upon, not passively expressed merely as a strong feeling, but manifested in action through a wholehearted commitment to a person or cause. Important examples of loyalty include loyalty to spousal partners, family, friends, teachers, mentors, community, causes, country, and to yourself in the pursuit of your own interests or goals. All may differ in relative importance, rank, and scope in your life, with inherent tradeoffs to be made at times in the pursuit of each.

Understanding loyalty first begins with loyalty to self and is of the utmost importance. This should not be misunderstood as a predisposition towards selfishness, but is more fundamentally about staying true to yourself, true to your values, true to your loved ones, and true to what you believe to be important in life. It is about embracing who you truly are and taking action on what you believe with conviction. You should never betray yourself, the values you represent, or the circle of people that you love and consider important in your life. This is what loyalty truly means.

Living an honorable life also involves valuing something greater than yourself and acting upon it without hesitation to sacrifice. Just as a parent does for their children, or as a soldier does in defending his or her country, there is a sense of honor and nobility in these types of real commitments that speak to the depth of your personal character. Similar to respect, loyalty is also reciprocal in nature – if you do not give it, it won't be returned, and likewise if people do not give it to you, then you should lower your expectations and proceed eyes wide open.

Closing Remarks

In this installment I introduced the martial code of ethics known as Wu De in Praying Mantis kung fu, and the Five External Values of Respect, Humility, Honesty, Justice, and Loyalty. These values form the foundation of Praying Mantis martial culture, and together with the first precept – the Right Mindset – lay the groundwork for effective decision making. Core values are unchanging and are fundamental to the healthy long-term development of a student, acting as a moral compass guiding them towards becoming responsible human beings in the pursuit of excellence, and a meaningful harmonious life. In the next installment I will introduce the remaining Five Internal Values, as well as the third and final precept, the Right Effort, which will complete this three-part series on the philosophy of San He Wu De. If you have any follow up questions, please do not hesitate to write to me at the email address below and I will be happy to follow-up. Until next time, be kind, be passionate, and train hard!

Nathan Wright
Chief Instructor, China
Luo Guang Yu Seven Star Mantis Kung Fu

Mantis Publications & Research

September 19th, 2021



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Author: Master Pel
Date: 2021

This book is a must-read for anyone who is interested in the history of martial arts, the evolution of martial arts, and the legal principles of self-defence. It is a comprehensive guide to the history of martial arts and the legal principles of self-defence. It is a must-read for anyone who is interested in the history of martial arts and the legal principles of self-defence.

[Foundational Concepts and Legal Principles in Self-Defence](#)

The Secret to Better Performance is Control

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Author: Master Pel
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Author: Master Pel
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Author: Master Pel
Date: 2021

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[Part III: Cultivating the Five Internal Values and the Right Effort in Praying Mantis Kung Fu](#)

San Ho Wu De (Part II)

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Date: 2021

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Seven Star Praying Mantis

with Chan Buddhist meditation and Neo-Confucian philosophy. It is considered the apex of traditional Chinese martial arts providing a development pathway of self-protection and self-cultivation. As a self-defence system it integrates practical empty-hand and weapons techniques (including kicking, striking, grappling, and throwing) organized by a governing body of knowledge (in the form of combat strategy, theory, and principles) and implemented through an arduous training regimen that develops applied self-defence skills, improved physical fitness, and enhanced cognitive abilities. Visit our website at www.luoguangyu.com to learn more and read our extensive list of publications on martial practice and philosophy of thought.

A Typical Class

A typical class in our Northern Praying Mantis Kung Fu system covers a wide range of exercises, skills, and drills. You will learn traditional fighting techniques, application of 12 Keyword principles, physical conditioning, tactical theory, and traditional forms and weapons. These practices have been passed down for hundreds of years, and we continue to strictly adhere to and promote our rich history of combat practices and traditions.

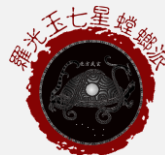
Contact Us: Luo Guang Yu Seven Star Mantis Kung Fu Club

China

Nathan Wright
Chief Instructor
nwright@luoguangyu.com
www.luoguangyu.com
Facebook @LuoGuangYu

New Zealand

Cameron Hirst
Chief Instructor
nz.7star@gmail.com



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