

Madison Martial Arts Academy

Shaolin Code of Behavior and Etiquette

Bow in Class:

The first place to salute is when you enter or exit the School. This shows respect and pays homage to our Martial Art Ancestors and lineage.

Bow to Sifu / Sigung (Sensei / Master)

(For purpose of this Code, Black Sash / Belt 1st through 10th levels / Dan's will be referred to as Sifu.)

- Salute your Sifu, when you first see him or her and as you leave. This applies at the school as well as any other place. Always give your Sifu utmost respect for the hardships they went through to achieve their position and for taking you as a student.
- Whenever Sifu gives you instruction outside of workout and "Go" commands.
- When Sifu asks you to stand up or to sit down.
- Preceding a request.
- Whenever you would say, "Thank You".
- After receiving a correction and are not in a stance or other inconvenient position.

Bow to a Senior Student:

- Salute the Senior Students and any classmates that you may be working with. This shows them that you bear no hard feelings during training.
- After receiving an instruction.
- When asked to stand up or sit down.
- Preceding a request.
- Whenever you would say, "Thank You".
- After receiving correction and are not in a stance or other inconvenient position.
- Whenever the senior student is acting in place of Sifu, you will bow to them at such times that you would bow to Sifu.
-

Always Bow to each other when:

- You are about to engage in a training activity together such as Sparring or Chin-na.
- You have ended a training activity together.
- You are changing training activities.
- You are going to practice together.
- A senior ranked student should always return a bow after the lower ranked student has bowed to them.

Bow when meeting other students and teachers, making sure to bow slightly longer and deeper for teachers. Most schools will have a salute used in conjunction with a bow. Their Salute should not be imitated. Shake hands before a bow, after a bow or instead of a bow if offered to do so.

When someone joins a Kung Fu school, everyone is Senior to them. Address everyone using sir unless otherwise instructed. The basis of most Kung Fu etiquette is the family model with the teacher (called the Sifu or "learned father") leading the brothers and sisters of the school. After one is accepted into a school, the atmosphere is usually a little more relaxed.

Some schools will have a designated area or? Altar? **To honor the school's ancestors.** The Kung Fu Altar is something different from what it may sound like. **Our school does not have an Altar** but many schools do. If you are in another school which has such an area, **avoid touching or bumping the altar.** There may be a small statue of General Kwan and or paintings or **photographs of past teachers.** Although usually **not religious in nature, it is an area that must be regarded with a great deal of respect.** **Typically Alters and Kung Fu schools have no religious affiliations whatsoever; however it does represent past masters who have dedicated their lives to training and passing on the knowledge that we are privileged to have today.** In Chinese culture, showing respect to your ancestors is a major part in family life. The same can be said for the Kung Fu family. Showing respect to men and woman who have gone ahead of you and made your training in your chosen martial art possible is a major part role of respect for the Kung Fu student.

Follow the lead of other students as much as possible. **Different schools follow Kung Fu etiquette to various degrees thus it can vary a great deal from school to school just as acceptable behavior in one home would be scandalous in another.** Try to listen for a specific dialect of Chinese and attempt to use its phrases as much as possible. The most common dialects are Cantonese and Mandarin. Words such as **"Sifu," "Sil-lum," "Gung-Fu"** and **"Kwoon"** are Cantonese phrases, while **"Shifu," "Shaolin," "Kung-Fu,"** and **"Guan"** are the Mandarin pronunciations.

The [Madison Martial Arts Academy](#) or? Kwoon (Kung Fu classroom or training area) are filled with many Chinese cultural practices and observances. Even though we are a modern school, we still follow the traditional rules and etiquette given to us by our Kung Fu ancestors. These rules are guidelines for all students to follow during and even after class. The rules of Etiquette help build character, offer structure to the students, and provide depth and meaning for the more advanced students.

THE SALUTE/BOW

The Salute or a bow is a sign of respect. It is also a gesture on your part to show that you are ready to start your martial arts journey. There are many types of Salutes or Bows. Our school has a formal, semi-formal and an informal salute. Our informal salute uses the right fist and left palm placed together, extended in front of you while in a right Leopard Stance, and is the one used most often. You will be taught how and when to use which each Salute. There are other schools whose salutes look very different and some that are remarkably similar. It is not important what other salutes look like or how they are performed. It is much more important to show respect than to worry about what it looks like. To bow, place your right fist in left palm and **bend forward a little when bowing to your seniors** and **bend lower for your Sifu or other Masters**.

There are also many different origins of the Kung Fu Salute. The Salute is different for each style and has different origins. The truth may be found in one, some or all of the following. Here are just a few possible explanations. **Some say the right fist is martial power and left palm is knowledge of how to use it.** Others **say the right fist is Yang and left palm is Yin.** Still others claim that it was even **a wish to return to the Ming dynasty**, which was the Golden Age of Shaolin. The different positions of palms and fists could have **even been secret signals or code signs for rebel factions.** If you did not know the correct hand position, then you probably were not a member, did not gain access to their gang, and may have even been killed. Yet another possibility of the Salute is that the salute had a practical application. Martial artists were always very cautious in the old days, and a handshake was considered either too dangerous or an invitation for an attack. Warriors would try to avoid contact with unscrupulous people, and were leery of surprise attacks. Many **Chin Na (joint locking)** techniques **begin from a handshake.**

WHY YOU SALUTE

One of the main reasons to salute is to give honor to the past Masters who have gone before you. Give them respect for the hardships they endured to gain their skill and knowledge. Saluting those senior to you also shows humility. Being **humble is a big part of kung fu training.** It is part of your **moral character training,** in which your Sifu will test to see if you are worthy of learning the more advanced material. **An incorrect attitude may mean that you may never learn the deeper aspects and secrets of that style.**

WHEN TO SALUTE

Informal Salute upon entering the school, When Sifu enters the Kwoon, in preparation to sparring when saluting the opponent and head referee. Semi-Formal when about to perform a Kung Fu Form or when a bit more? Class and Flash? Is called for. Formal Salutes are for formal occasions such as tests or whenever Sifu deems necessary.

ATTENDANCE AND TARDINESS

Through diligent observation and years of experience, many different schools have found that 2 or 3 classes per week of 1 to 2 hours per class equaling 2-6 hours per week will sufficiently train a student and help them to achieve their goals in the appropriate amount of time. Our classes meet twice per week and last from 2 to 3 hours per class equating to approximately 6 hours per week.

The term? Kung Fu? Can be translated Hard Work or Still Learning? It is a skill gained over a period through dedicated effort. Going to class on a constant basis builds ***mental*** as well as ***physical strength*** and refinement of techniques. As you become used to the rigors of Kung Fu; you are able to do more extreme workouts moving you towards your Black Belt / Sash Rank and better preparing you for the many and various encounters that you will run into during your lifetime.

Tardiness or being late to class is probably one of the ***biggest bad habits there is***. Barring any physical problems, such as a flat tire or you had to work overtime to make your tuition payment, being late may be seen as you being:

- **Disrespectful to the Instructor. Making it seem that you do not care about the lessons.**
- **It disrupts the class as the Students have to move and change rank arrangements.**
- **You miss part of the exercise and stretching program. Some students are late on purpose to miss the physical workout portion and/or stretching portion of the class.**

DRESS CODE

The Kung Fu uniform is the attire worn during class time or during any class functions (tournaments, demonstrations etc.). The reason behind wearing the uniform is that it is practical, economical, as well as also traditional to the school and style. Many students wear schools colors or patches to show how proud they were to be under their Sifu and School. Also on a more traditional note, schools usually made every one wear the same thing so no one would feel inferior and all would be equal under the teacher.

Besides the uniform, there are items that are not good to wear during your class. Things like ***jewelry, street shoes, head covers,*** and ***such are not permitted in class*** as these ***can injure you and other classmates.*** ***Street shoes bring dirt and debris onto the kung fu floor.***

RESPECT

The ***beginning of wisdom is to be gracious and humble and always show respect to others.*** This is in the ***first rule of the Shaolin Creed*** and for a good reason. Respect is a big part of your Kung Fu training. Showing respect to your teacher lets them know that you are humble enough to know that they deserve it. Respect is not only for your Sifu, but also for everyone. Overall, respect is an essential for the Kung Fu student in their goal to master themselves. ***Never eat or drink before your Sifu or other higher rank Masters,*** wait for them to start. ***Never back talk*** persons in authority over you, ***including your parents (regardless of your age)*** as ***this brings much shame and discredit upon yourself, your Sifu, School and chosen Style of Kung Fu.*** Help whenever possible, expecting nothing in return and make this a practice in life. Silence is Golden; you cannot learn much while you are talking (It is said even a fool seems wise to those around them if they remain observant and alert but silent during conversation).

Living by this Code will improve and develop your character creating a superior person out of you. Your life will be enriched, your personality deepened and your qualities will overflow into those around you enhancing their lives and creating an enjoyable environment wherever you go ultimately making your journey in life both pleasant and enjoyable and having made this world a better place just by you being here on it.

NOTE:

*Kung Fu and **Attention Deficit Disorder** (A.D.D.)*

***Pediatricians** have recommended the Kung Fu style of martial arts training to help **A.D.D.** behavior with children. This also holds true for adults., Many parents have praised the results of their children's progress including better concentration, higher grades, improved control of anger and aggressiveness, more consistent and polite behavior, greater emotional stability and an enormous improvement in self-esteem along with the ability to protect themselves against a myriad of hostile encounters.*