

# Little Nine Heaven International Kung-Fu



## Destiny/Iron Hand

In my 38 years of training in the Advanced Iron Hand I do not feel I have mastered it, but I do feel that I have accomplished everything I wanted to accomplish and I am happy with that. I thank my teachers Master Ralph Shun (Shaolin 5 Animals), Master Hsu Hong-Chi (Hsing -I), and Master Chin Cheng Yen (Tzu Men Chuan). This journey started many years ago as I now feel it was my destiny to follow.

It was the summer of 1948 and when I reached the top of the stairs, I bent down to pick up the newspaper. As I did so I had this quick vision. Although it seemed like it lasted for a long while and was very real, I am sure it was only a few seconds.

In my vision, I saw an Asian boy standing in front of a stack of bricks. The setting looked like early morning, before sunrise. The ground was dry dirt and in front of the boy three old Asian men in robes were sitting, watching. They sat in front of a building with three large pillars. They nodded and then with a powerful blow the boy hit the stack of bricks. They all broke. The three masters nodded, but never said a word. This vision was so vivid and real. I was in a daze. I picked up my grandmother's newspaper and went back down to the car. I never said a word. Soon my grandmother asked, "What is wrong?" I

said, "Nothing is wrong." At that time in Webster Grove, Missouri there were no martial arts of any kind to influence this vision. I believe this was a premonition of my destiny. I did not know it yet, but my journey had already begun.

It would be years before I understood the vision. I carried on as a young boy in Missouri, forgetting about this strange event. Then in 1968, I walked into my first kung fu school in California and this vision reoccurred. Five years later in 1973, my dearest beloved teacher Master Haumea F. Lefiti died of a sudden heart attack. I joined his senior kung fu brother Master Ralph Shun's school and learned Shaolin 5 Animals kung fu. Also he taught the Iron Hand training. I began practicing and became obsessed with it. I practiced 5 days a week for over 10 years, never missing a day. I could break anything and never used any spacers between boards as they make it much easier.

In 1977 I explained this vision to Master Hsu Hong-Chi and he told me that in one of my past lives I was a master in the Iron Hand. That is the reason for your obsession with this training he said. I believe this as now some 35 years later I am still practicing the Iron Hand training on a lesser scale and I still love it very much.

So why am I writing this article? It is because I believe in the Advanced Iron Hand training and the old ways of kung fu are slowly being forgotten. This is a sad thing that is happening. It also saddens me when I hear of all the so-called masters who teach this training wrong and claim to be something they are not. When training in the Iron Hand, your hands should never be calloused, damaged, or deformed. They should remain soft to the touch and yet powerful.

Among many of my kung fu colleagues and students, I have noticed that too many people are worried about quickly achieving such titles as "Master" or "Grand Master" etc. It is not the title that will make you good, but the right teacher, dedication, and the many hours and years that you really train. And I stress really train. You must always be honest with not only to your teachers, but with all people and, above all, with yourself. Only then will you gain genuine respect.



Slapping Bricks 8 out of 9

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+ Is the demonstrator raising the slab/brick off the supporting surface? If more than one item is broken from being held, is there a slight gap between them? In either case, if even a millimeter gap is there, then the break is being largely done by the slab/brick colliding with the supporting surface/other brick and not the strike itself.

+ Hitting a sheet of ice will shatter on impact. If it makes a clean break, you will know that it was pre-cut then frozen again.

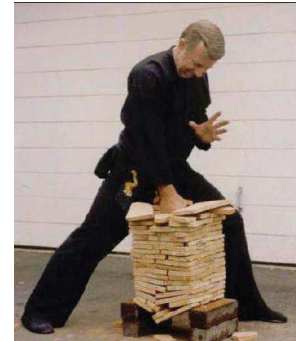
Like anything worthwhile, mastering the Iron Hand will only come through

your dedication to training. But if you are willing to pay the price, the rewards will be beyond your wildest dreams. It is very important that Iron Hand methods are learned from a qualified teacher. I still train 5 days a week and my hands are still soft and without calluses or arthritis.

I am accepting students who are interested in learning the advance or regular Iron Hand Training. We can make arrangements for group classes or individual lessons. As my experience has shown, the benefit is well worth the cost.

Sincerely,

Sifu James W. McNeil  
[www.littleneheaven.com](http://www.littleneheaven.com)  
 (949) 636-1573



Fist hitting 20 tiles no spacers

## Student of the Month: Richard McNulty

Hi my name is Richard McNulty. When Sifu asked me to write about myself because he wanted me to be student of the month I was very nervous. Although, I have studied on and off with Sifu for over 8 years, I do not consider myself to be a very good student, not compared to my other brother's and sisters that are highlighted in Sifu's newsletters. Actually, I consider myself probably Sifu's "Best Worst Student". I have studied Hsing I, Shih Shui, and Taoist Lovemaking with Sifu instructions. I always looked forward to Sifu's newsletter to see other students each month for inspiration and guidance or tips on training.

Like most lazy students I start with a bang giving my training my all, very dedicated, enthusiastic, and committed. As time progresses, life changes, challenges come up, slowly and surely the training slips little by little until it takes a back seat and becomes only a memory. Although I train in my head and think about techniques, this never takes the place of the actual doing-ness of the art.

I am the youngest of five and grew up in NYC. I found Sifu on the internet after my brother passed

away. I went to Rainbow, CA to study Hing I. There I met a diverse group of students from young almost homeless men and women that have saved up to study with Sifu to wealthy business men and women from all over the world. For all of those students that have had the opportunity to train at "The Land" you understand the wonderment and power that that place had. For all of you that have not had the opportunity to study there I can only hope that there will be another place like that in the future for you to study. During my time there I met some amazing people who are still in my life to this day. Throughout the years keeping in contact with them, meeting at seminars, making calls on the phone for advice or just to talk. I consider myself lucky to have met these men and women and feel my life is better for it.



Richard and Carlos with Sifu

We are at a very unique period in history in terms of Little Nine Heaven. Sifu has stated on several occasions that one day he will be passing but before he does he wants to find the committed few to pass on all of his knowledge. We as his students are lucky there are not many Masters that would think this way. Not only is Sifu willing to teach us but I feel he creates the sense of family amongst his students. From my experience there are not that many teachers that do this nor do they have the ability to do this.

I guess as an older brother to some and a younger brother to others the only guidance or inspiration that I can offer as a part of this family is to **NOT** be like me. Keep training, if you are, or start training, if you are not, you could be the legacy of this school and keep this family together.

ONE LOVE,  
 Rich



Richard with Sifu

