



# US kung fu expert on a mission

**MORE THAN FIGHTING:** Warren Fox says kung fu is like swimming in that everyone should know how to do it, and believes the martial art is 70 percent of his personality

BY KO SHU-LING  
STAFF REPORTER

Warren Fox is a kung fu practitioner with a mission to save martial arts.

Fox, 29, said he began learning kung fu when he was four years old. His father wanted him and his two brothers to be able to protect themselves in an area of Cincinnati, Ohio, where racism was a problem, he said.

As they grew older, the situation got worse and the family moved to Seattle where there were more minorities and their race was no longer a problem.

Fox's father was a barber and his mother delivered newspapers when he was little. The family did not have much money but he said they never knew they were poor, because their lives were full of laughter.

His father, a former boxing champion, started practicing martial arts after becoming friends with a Korean man who was into taekwondo. He then wanted his sons to learn the best way to protect themselves, Fox said.

At the beginning, Fox did not like kung fu.

"I thought kung fu was stressful, like homework," he said. "[But] when we got older, when we had a choice, it was already something that we learned to love."

Fox admits he got into quite a few fights when he was younger, saying he thought he was trying to protect himself and his honor: the honor of black people when people called him names.

"And then I realized that after a while, I was just protecting my pride," he said. "Pride is a step away from arrogance."

## MATURE

Fox said as he matured, he realized there were many ways to resolve situations without actually having to get into a fight.

Later on, he became more of a protector, he said. When he was working as security, he was more concerned with people around him.

"I think it's just like being a lifeguard, if someone is drowning, you want to get in there, you want to help them. And that's the same way I feel about it now," he said. "I don't want to see anybody in front of me get hurt."

He started practicing and teaching tianwudao (天武道) at high school and grew to love teaching it.

"I loved watching people change. I loved watching someone go from weak to getting strong and confident, especially children and women," he said.

Fox went to Kunming, China, in 2001 as an exchange student and

stayed there for six months. It was then the Chinese major began to learn the roots of baguazhang (八卦掌), or Eight Trigram Palm, a form of martial arts with an emphasis on internal power and hand movements.

He then came to Taiwan and met his master, Wu Guo-zheng (吳國正), who Fox said has selflessly shared his knowledge with his students.

For Fox, kung fu is a skill that takes a lifetime to perfect.

"As soon as you think you are doing something well, you keep practicing and you keep practicing, you realize, whoa, I just start doing it well today," he said. "It's an ongoing process, but that's what makes it fun."

He said that many people distanced themselves from kung fu because they felt it was something that they could not be a part of.

"But it's something that everybody should know how to do, at least a little bit," he said.

"Like swimming, everybody should know how to swim. You don't have to be a professional swimmer and you may not live around water, but one day you might need swimming just to save your life," Fox said.

And kung fu is the same: One day if something happens, you

**"Kung fu is so big that it's not a man thing, it's not a woman thing. It's just a life thing."**

— Warren Fox, kung fu expert

should be able to protect yourself," he said.

Practicing kung fu benefits Fox in every aspect of his life, from mental to physical to staying motivated, he said.

"It's not always fun to do kung fu," he said. "There're days you wake up, it's raining outside and it's so easy to say, today, no, I'm not going to do it. But before I finish that sentence, I say, get up, do it, you'll feel better when it's done."

Kung fu has shown him how to make his dreams become reality, he said, and that's why he is in Taiwan.

Likening his dream to kung fu novelist Jin Yong's (金庸) *Tian Long Ba Bu* (天龍八部), or *Demi-Gods and Semi-Devs*, Fox said his dream is to take the culture and beauty of Taiwan and show people the real kung fu through films, fashion and music.

## MASTER

He would like to become a kung fu master, make kung fu movies, have his own taekwondo academy and pass on the knowledge he has learned. He would also like to meet

Jackie Chan (成龍) and Jet Li (李連杰), work for them and be able to truly combine East and West.

"It's all related to kung fu, but it's a lot of different dreams. It's one dream with nine parts," he said.

In addition to teaching English, Fox is musical, performing as an MC.

"No matter what your dream is, if you really want to support it, if you really want to be real about it, you have to find a regular job and you have to put it together," he said.

"I think that the secret is working enough to have the time that you need to fulfill your dream," Fox said.

While he began learning kung fu at four, Fox said he wants his children to start when they are three because he wants them to be better than him. And, of course, his future wife must do kung fu.

"In order for my wife to understand me, she has to do kung fu. Kung fu is 70 percent of my personality, so if she doesn't do kung fu, she won't really understand 70 percent of me," he said. "Kung fu is so big that it's not a man thing, it's not a woman thing. It's just a life thing."



Warren Fox strikes a kung fu pose in this undated photo taken in Taipei. He won third place in a kung fu masters competition held in Taiwan in August, becoming the first foreigner ever to be allowed to participate in the competition. PHOTO COURTESY OF JUSTINE WANG

## PIGEON POST

### English-speaking drivers to hit Taipei County's streets

Taxis with English-speaking drivers are expected to hit the streets of Taipei County soon as part of the county government's efforts to build a more foreigner-friendly environment in the local transportation network, a county official said last week. The exact date would be announced later, the official said. Under the program, the Taipei County Government will offer free English conversation courses to taxi drivers through virtual reality learning and those who qualify will be certified and recruited into the English-speaking service network. In the future, foreigners will be able to call an English-language taxi service through the county government's certification system, the official said.

### Indonesian facing trial for alleged poisoning

The Taipei Prosecutors Office indicted an Indonesian domestic worker on Wednesday on charges of causing injury, after she allegedly poisoned the family of her employer with mercury. Prosecutors said the worker, known by the name Sukini, is being held at a detention center in Hsinchu pending trial. The alleged victims — a man surnamed Chang, his wife and their two children — are recovering after being treated in hospital and having heavy metal residues removed from their bodies, prosecutors said. The prosecutors said Sukini allegedly broke several thermometers and put the mercury into the family's food. Chang and his wife later developed symptoms that included hair loss, mouth ulcers and impairment of vision, all indicative of mercury poisoning. The two children in the family, aged three and five, were constantly falling because they lacked physical coordination, the prosecutors said. It was found that the mercury concentration in their bodies was 10.42 times the normal level in the adults and 23.33 times the normal level in the children. After Sukini ran away, Chang's wife found several broken thermometers in the house, which led her to suspect that the family had been poisoned, prosecutors said.

STAFF WRITER, WITH CNA



### GALLIC GALA

Holding Taiwanese and French flags, kindergarten children dance at the "Lire en fête" event on Wednesday organized by the French Institute in Taipei and Taoyuan County's Cultural Affairs Bureau to promote reading in French.

PHOTO: CHEN WEN-CHENG, TAIPEI TIMES

## Welfare group highlights plight of Vietnam spouses

STAFF WRITER, WITH CNA

A social welfare organization has urged the government to provide greater legal protection for divorced or abandoned Vietnamese spouses and to help protect the education rights of their children.

Good Shepherd Social Services said some Vietnamese women married to Taiwanese men and their children suffer serious consequences when they are divorced or abandoned.

If they stay in Taiwan, most of the women cannot earn a living as they have to take care of their children. If they return to Vietnam, their children, having only Republic of China nationality, cannot attend public schools there because of local regulations, said the group's head, Sister Therese Thong.

"These children are deprived of their right to receive an education, and they might have hatred for Taiwan when growing up," said Sister Thong, adding that private schools are not affordable for most Vietnamese spouses.

Sister Thong said that a non-governmental organization tried to open a Chinese-language school for such children two years ago, but the project failed as they were scattered all over Taiwan.

"What we are more worried about is whether traumatized women can still give decent care to their children," she said.

She argued that the children's education was the responsibility of both countries and demanded that the government find a solution to help people facing such a predicament.

In response, Hsieh Li-kung (謝立功), deputy director-general of the National Immigration Agency, said the government has a 10-year budget of NT\$3 billion (US\$92,000) to help foreign spouses, and non-governmental organizations can apply for funding in case of need. But Hsieh said it was up to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to negotiate with Vietnamese authorities on the education question.

He said that foreign spouses are already protected by the Immigration Law (入出國及移民法) in particular situations, but acknowledged that enforcement rules need to be studied and amended to adapt to real needs.

# Becoming a permanent alien not as painful as it seems

**HERE TO STAY:** Despite a daunting pile of forms to fill-in, a medical test and an interview, the process of obtaining an APRC need not be a major headache

BY PERRY SVENSSON  
STAFF REPORTER

"Pregnancy, yes, no?"

The question wasn't included on the printed form, but the nurse decided to ignore my beard and focus on my earrings — she stamped the question onto each of the three identical forms I had to complete without a carbon copy.

"Pregnancy, yes, no?"  
One by one I ticked them off — No, no and no.

I have gone through the process of obtaining an Alien Permanent Residence Certificate (APRC), in fact a straightforward affair made easier by the helpful staff at the National Immigration Agency (NIA).

I based the application on my Joining Family Resident Visa (JFRV), rather than on my past work record in Taiwan, since the JFRV automatically included a blanket work permit allowing me to do any job I wanted without working illegally.

An application based on past work experience requires that the

applicant have only worked for the company providing the work permit and violations of this rule may even lead to deportation.

Documents were needed: One clear criminal record (良民證) from my home country and one from Taiwan, a clean bill of health, tax statements (納稅證明) and detailed tax reports (所得資料清單) for the last three years, a copy of my household registration (戶籍謄本), and from my employer, tax withholding statements (扣繳憑單) for the past two years and proof of employment (在職證明) to serve as proof of income.

The home country criminal record and the health exam are valid for three months, the other documents for one month.

I also needed to bring any old residence permits and passports that I had. I must have felled a forest with all the photocopies required. One of each document and two of the old passports and residence permits, including two of each entry/exit visa and stamp in each of the passports.

Finally, I had to prove that I have resided in Taiwan for 183 days every year for the last five years by providing a listing of all entries and exits to and from Taiwan during the period. This information was magically provided by the case handler at the time of the interview.

Take heart — it is easier than it sounds.

The biggest problem was getting the criminal record from Sweden. I had to get the document issued by the Swedish police and sent to my parents, who had to have it translated into Chinese.

The translation then had to be notarized and sent together with the original document to the Swedish foreign ministry for legalization, before going to the Taiwanese representative office in Sweden for legalization by the Taiwanese authorities.

Swedish document in hand, I started the process here in Taiwan by calling the NIA to make sure that the list of required documents in the NIA's printed information was

exhaustive. It was. All local documentation was then easily acquired or applied for in two mornings.

My employer reissued the tax withholding statements and the proof of employment the next day. Tax documents and household registration were issued on the spot at the tax office and the household registration office. The clear Taiwanese criminal record was applied for in five minutes at the Taipei City Main Police Station and could be picked up five days later.

On the third day, I had my health checked at Renai Hospital — the NIA has a list of approved hospitals — which has a department on the first floor dedicated to dealing with residence permit health checks.

I went there when they opened at 9am with three photos, passport and residence permit, completed the forms in triplicate — form B (乙表) for permanent residence permits — and waited five minutes for the examination to begin. A week later I picked up the result.

Health exam completed, I called my case handler, and when we were satisfied that I had all

the necessary documentation, we arranged an appointment for the interview.

The health exam provided the first, and only, snag. It showed a harmless parasite — probably too much raw beef and sashimi the doctor said — that I still had to get rid of before I could become a certified healthy man.

Taking the medication would bring me past the interview date and the doctor also said these things frequently require more than one course of treatment, which had me worried that my documents would expire before I got an OK from the hospital.

No problem. The interview was held as scheduled and I was allowed to complement it with a certificate from the doctor at a later date. Still, if I had taken the health exam as I applied for the clean criminal record from Sweden, the problem would have been taken care of by the time I started dealing with the locally issued documents.

The "interview," it turned out, was a practical matter of verifying that all documentation was OK, and that every single photocopy



had my signature on it. The whole procedure was completed with a visit to the fingerprinting machine downstairs and that was it.

About two months later, my case handler called to say that the authorities were ready to receive my NT\$10,000, and five days after that, a group of six foreigners met at the NIA to receive our APRCs and a short information session.

The whole process had taken three months, including the application for the clean criminal record from Sweden. I applied for my Taiwanese documents in late July, had the interview in early August and received my APRC late last month.

I am now a happy permanent alien.

In Taipei City, detailed information on the APRC application procedure is available at the NIA at No. 15, Guangzhou St.

APRC info: 02-2388 5185, ext. 3132

The NIA's information Web site for foreign residents: <http://iff.immigration.gov.tw>

The main NIA Web site: [www.immigration.gov.tw/](http://www.immigration.gov.tw/)

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