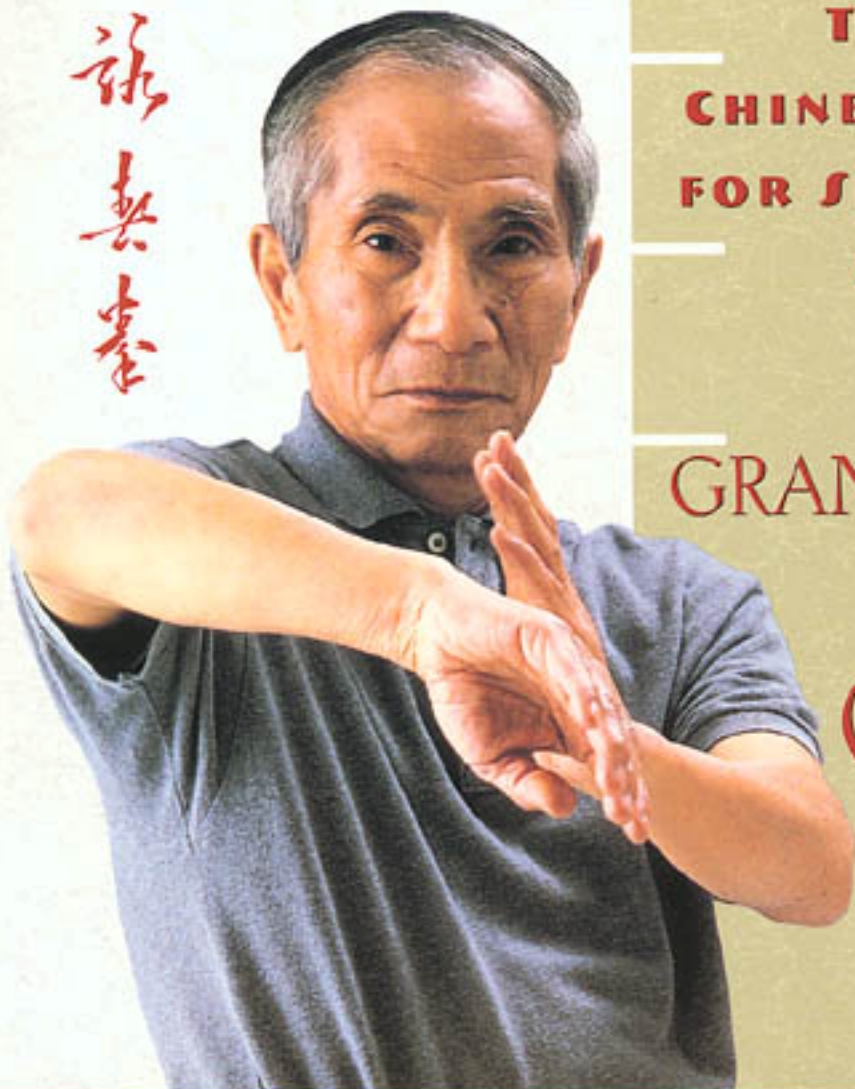


# WING CHUN KUNG FU

詠春拳

TRADITIONAL  
CHINESE KUNG FU  
FOR SELF-DEFENCE  
AND HEALTH

GRANDMASTER  
IP  
CHUN  
*with*  
MICHAEL  
TSE



Also by Michael Tse

*Qigong for Health and Vitality:*

*Increase your energy with simple self-healing techniques*

# Wing Chun

**Traditional Chinese Kung Fu  
for Self-defence & Health**

**Grandmaster Ip Chun**

and

**Michael Tse**



St. Martin's Griffin  New York

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### *Acknowledgements*

I have been fortunate in my life to have met such a generous and skilled teacher as my Sifu, Ip Chun, and to have been accepted as his student. I am happy now to have this opportunity, with Sifu, to share genuine Wing Chun knowledge. I hope that everyone reading this book will find it of benefit.

I would like to thank all of those who have assisted with this book including the publishers, especially Anne Lawrance for her patience and Jon Stewart for his excellent photography. I would also like to thank my team including John Hayes, Darryl Moy, Daniel Poon, Jessica Blackwell and Rafael Bernard as well as my students, friends and family for their continued support.

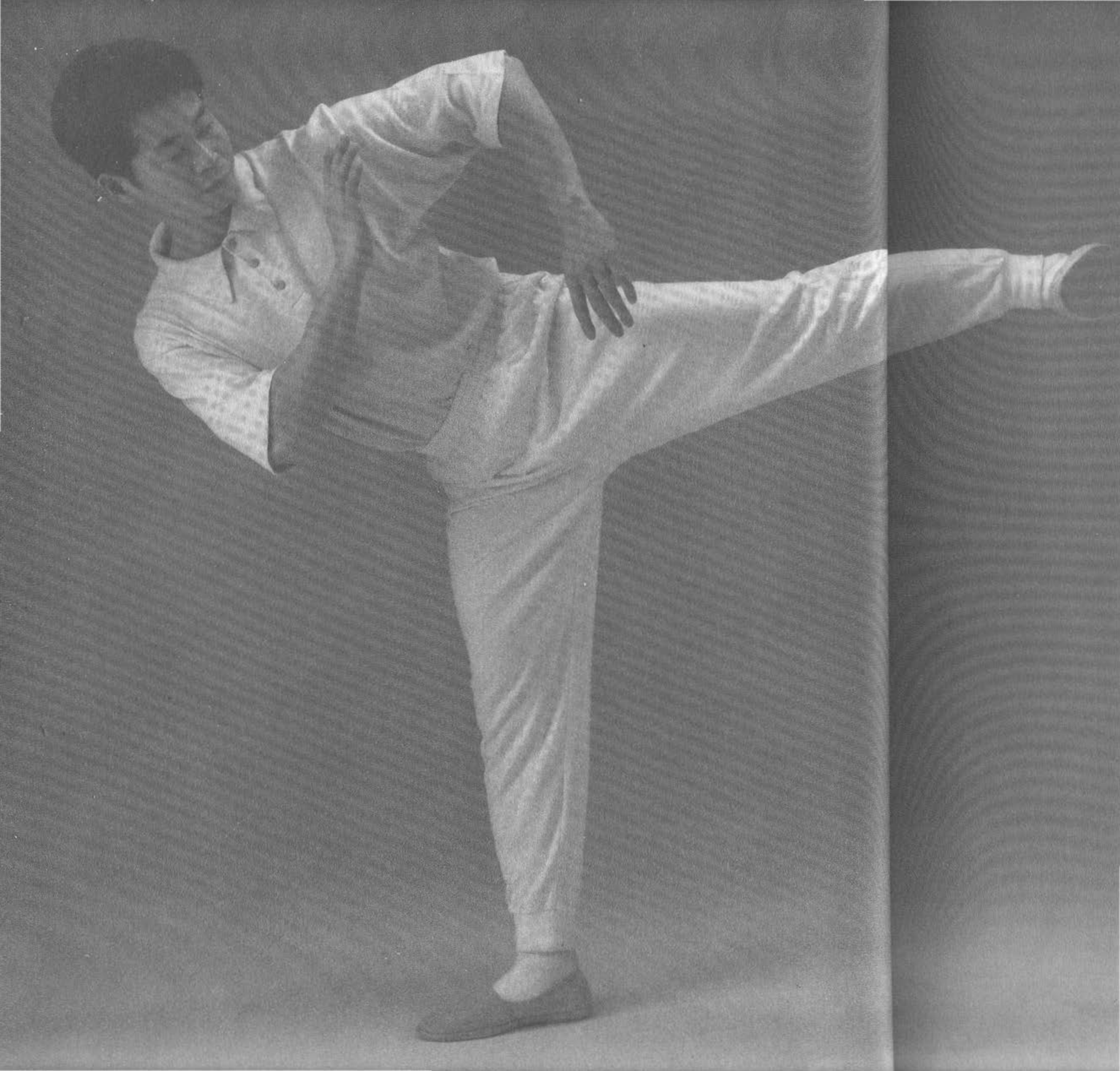


From left to right: Jessica Blackwell, John Hayes, Michael Tse, Rafael Bernard and Darryl Moy

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# About the Authors

MICHAEL TSE has spent most of his life studying martial arts and Qigong with some of the best Chinese teachers in the world. Born in Hong Kong in 1960, he grew up at the same time as Bruce Lee shot to fame and, like most of the teenagers in Hong Kong, he looked upon Bruce Lee as his hero. Michael dreamed of learning Kung Fu and following in the 'Little Dragon's' footsteps.

His chance came following an accident to his arm when he was taken to see his uncle who was a bonesetter and herbalist. Whilst there, Michael noticed his uncle teaching a few people Kung Fu and he asked if he could study. At first his uncle refused – in traditional Chinese culture martial arts are not automatically taught to everyone. The teacher first observes a person's nature to see if they are suitable before taking them on as a student. After many requests, however, his uncle finally agreed to teach him. In return, Michael would help collect herbs, prepare remedies and clean the clinic.

Michael studied for a number of years until his uncle died and it was during this time that he first learnt Siu Lim Tao, the first of Wing Chun's three forms, described and illustrated in Chapter 7 of this book. He would practise this one form for at least forty minutes, until his legs shook under the strain. At this point he first became aware of the Qi (energy) flowing through his body and this

*Left: Michael Tse performing the Wing Chun sidekick from Wing Chun's 108 wooden dummy techniques*

aroused his interest in Qigong, the Chinese health exercises that use movement and meditation to stimulate the Qi and acupuncture points. (For more on Qigong see Chapter 11 and Michael's previous book, *Qigong for Health and Vitality*.)

However, as Michael says, his Wing Chun at this stage was very crude and it was not until he met his Sifu (teacher), Grandmaster Ip Chun, that he started to appreciate that Wing Chun was a very soft martial art which did not rely on strength to defeat the opponent. During the years that Michael has studied with Grandmaster Ip Chun he has developed a very close relationship with him. This is evident when you see them together and helps you to understand the relationship between teacher and student.

Now resident in the UK, Michael has been teaching Wing Chun since 1988. However, he still keeps in close touch with Grandmaster Ip Chun in Hong Kong. Michael's teaching methods are the same as his teacher's and his teacher's teacher (Great Grandmaster Ip Man). Many who come to his classes are surprised by the relaxed atmosphere and friendly approach to training, but they cannot deny the effectiveness of it. Michael always points out that this is the traditional way of learning Wing Chun. He believes that 'training should not hurt you before you need to use it'. Training enhances life and develops the individual.

Michael now teaches all around the world and, as well as Wing Chun, he also teaches Qigong and Chen style Taijiquan (Tai Chi). He also runs Qigong therapy clinics in Harley Street, London, and in Manchester. Almost every weekend he can be found teaching, be it in the UK, Europe or North America. He has studied with some of the best teachers in the world so he demands a high standard of himself and his teachings. To this end he has set up the Tse Qigong Centre to develop his skills and teachings, and publishes *Qi Magazine* as a means of increasing people's knowledge of Chinese

*Right: Grandmaster Ip Chun performing Wan Lan Sau (see page 84)*



culture, philosophy, martial arts and health issues.

Martial arts are a passion for many people, a necessity for some and a passing interest for others. To a few they are a way of life, but when you meet these people you would never guess that they had such a skill. Grandmaster Ip Chun is one of these people, as is Michael Tse. My Sihing (Kung Fu elder brother) once wrote that Michael's greatest skill is as a communicator who can take complex concepts and make them readily accessible. All I can add is that the way he does it inspires us and leads us all further along the road of learning.

Darryl Moy  
Tse Qigong Centre

My Sifu, IP CHUN, told me that his father, Ip Man, was very strict with him. As a boy, he practised the second form of Wing Chun, Tsum Kui, for a long time before going to show his father what he had learnt. His father asked him if he thought it was good enough. Ip Chun had practised very hard so he answered, 'Yes'. But as he stood in the Juen Ma (turning) stance, Ip Man said, 'Don't move!'. He stepped forward and pushed his son. Ip Chun fell over. He thought that he had just been taken by surprise so he asked his father to push him again. The same thing happened.

Ip Man told his son to go away and practise for three months. At that moment Ip Chun made up his mind that he would practise not just his turning skills but all the movements in the form, so that his father would not be able to push him over again. Today his Wing Chun skill is excellent and it is obvious that all his training paid off.

Take his age, for example. Most people have retired by the age of seventy. Many stay at home and are not particularly active, often

due to poor health. However, Grandmaster Ip Chun is seventy-three years old and his attitude and movements are those of a young person. He has a healthy, glowing face, walks briskly, is quick minded and has very swift reactions. All this is due to his Wing Chun Kuen training which keeps him youthful and alert. I have known Sifu for many years and not only is he a skilled martial artist, he is also a real gentleman. This comes from his family upbringing. He is good natured, even towards people who take advantage of him and ask for his help. He is always happy to do what he can for others. This generosity extends not only in his personal life but also in his teaching. He is a very sociable, open-minded person and never has a problem relating to people of any age.

Sifu's personal belief in Buddhism and deep knowledge of Chinese literature, history, calligraphy and even traditional Chinese music have shaped his nature and the way in which he teaches Wing Chun. I have heard him say many times that when doing Chi Sau (Sticking Hands – see Chapter 9), we should enjoy ourselves and behave as siblings or friends towards each other and not try to beat each other up. If you try to beat someone up in Sticking Hands he says that it will do one of two things: make the other person seek revenge, or scare them and cause them to quit.

This is the first book of Wing Chun that Sifu and I have written together. We plan to continue and cover the second form, Tsum Kiu, and the third form, Biu Jee. We hope that you enjoy this book and learn more not only about Wing Chun skill but also about becoming healthier through the Qigong aspect of Wing Chun, which we discuss in greater detail in Chapter 11.

Michael Tse  
Manchester, 1997



# *Introduction*

I invited my Sifu (teacher) Ip Chun to write this book with me because I wanted to present the basics of Wing Chun's first form, Siu Lim Tao, and the ideas behind the skill in a traditional way. Some people believe that Wing Chun has a modern way and a traditional way, but I believe it has only one way – the traditional way. Wing Chun has its own philosophy, principles and basic elements, which include Tan Sau (Opening Hand), Bong Sau (Wing Hand) and Fuk Sau (Rest on Hand) and these cannot be changed. If they are, it is no longer Wing Chun. That is why when Bruce Lee created his own style he called it Jeet Kuen Do. Although Jeet Kuen Do was based on Wing Chun skills, Bruce Lee also combined it with other forms as well. It was no longer Wing Chun.

Wing Chun is a very complete martial art with its own unique way of fighting. In the early stages of learning Wing Chun, some people are surprised that it has no strong punches, no long fists, hook punches or high kicks. They feel that it does not have enough to offer, so they turn to kick boxing or Thai boxing. However, as with other forms of martial arts, when you learn the style fully you see that it covers everything. Each style of martial art has its own system of fighting and each has a provision for covering what seems to be missing. Wing Chun is a very complete martial art skill which has been developed through many generations. It has been tried, tested and refined to the system which we have today.

The great treasure of Wing Chun is that it is one of the few martial arts to prove that you can use a small amount of energy to defeat much greater energy. In other words a small, ordinary person can fight back against a larger, more aggressive person. This makes

*Michael (left)  
practising  
Sticking Ho*

# The History of Wing Chun

Wing Chun is named after the woman who was believed to have founded the skill. Wing Chun learnt her martial art from a Buddhist nun named Ng Moy. Having studied hard she asked Ng Moy what the martial art was called. Ng Moy asked, 'What is your name?' Wing Chun replied, 'Wing Chun', to which Ng Moy said, 'Then name it after yourself, call it Wing Chun Kuen.' 'Kuen' literally means fist and in this context it means 'martial art'. Thus the full name of Wing Chun Kuen means Wing Chun martial art. Today, most people just refer to the style as Wing Chun.

In the Chinese language, the word 'wing' means humming. It should not be confused with the English word 'wing'. In Chinese words can sound very similar, but the meanings are completely different. Although they are written the same way in English, in Chinese the writing for each word will be different according to its meaning. For example, one often sees a lot of Chinese restaurants and supermarkets with the name 'wing'. Although this is written the same in English, it might not have the same meaning in Chinese. One has to look at the Chinese characters to discover the actual meaning. 'Chun' means springtime. So the name Wing Chun can be translated as 'Humming a song in the springtime'. It means that a girl with the name should be happy and enjoy life.

## Ng Moy and the Crane

The history of Wing Chun Kuen can be traced back to the Southern Shaolin Temple, in Fu Jian Province, and dates back 400 years to the Qing Dynasty. At that time people were still loyal to the conquered Ming Dynasty and were not happy being ruled by the Manchurians. Ordinary people could do little about it, but if someone had a martial art skill they might be able to fight against the government. At the Shaolin Temple all the monks practised martial arts and their skill was very high. They made the Qing government feel insecure, so they sent an army to attack Shaolin. At first they were unable to defeat the monks. However, the Qing army was able to corrupt one of the monks, and with his help they burnt the temple down and killed many of the monks. Fortunately, five of the leading monks and a nun escaped the fire.

The nun who escaped was Ng Moy, and she was very skilled in martial arts. She made her way to the southwest of China to the White Crane Temple. One evening she saw a crane fighting a wild cat. Each time the cat attacked it failed to hurt the crane. The crane seemed very calm and looked as if it knew what to do. Eventually the cat became exhausted and ran away. Ng Moy noticed that the crane used very skilful methods to fight the cat: it did not use a lot of energy and it appeared very relaxed. This gave her much to think about, and she started to create a new martial art.



Ng Moy spent a lot of her time in the mountains, collecting plants to make herbal medicine. Whilst out on one of these expeditions she met a Cantonese man named Yim Yee. He had a daughter named Yim Wing Chun. At the time, Yim Wing Chun was being harassed by the leader of a local gang who wanted her to marry him. She was already engaged to another man called Leung Bok Chau. Ng Moy wanted to help Wing Chun and told her to tell the gang leader she needed one year to prepare for the wedding. During that year Ng Moy taught Yim Wing Chun all the new skills she had developed after seeing the crane. She taught her the 'Yee Chi Kim Yeung Ma' (Wing Chun's basic stance which is quite special and different to the stance of other styles of martial art), three hand forms (sequences of movements), the first form Siu Lim Tao (this form will be introduced later in this book), the second form Tsum Kui and the third form Biu Jee. She also taught her 108 wooden dummy techniques (a form for training with a dummy which is used in the absence of an opponent) and even a weapon form, the Baat Jam Dao (using Wing Chun weapons, a pair of short swords which are very easy to handle).

## Yim Wing Chun and the Wedding Fight

After a year of hard work and study Ng Moy saw that Wing Chun had reached a very high level and she was now good enough to go back and fight the gang leader. A short time after Yim Wing Chun had returned home to her father, the members of the gang came to discuss the marriage. Wing Chun's father knew she was now very skilled in martial arts and said to the gangsters, 'My daughter has always liked martial arts and she has made a rule that if any man can beat her she will marry him.' This made the gangsters laugh.

Their leader would easily be able to defeat Wing Chun and make himself look good at the same time.

However, when it came to the day of the wedding fight the gang leader was beaten. He found that whenever he made contact with Wing Chun she stuck to his arms, controlled him and then threw him away. Finally all the other gang members came forward to attack her but they suffered the same fate. The harder they attacked, the further they were thrown and the more they were injured. Eventually they all fled. Wing Chun was free to marry the man she loved, Leung Bok Chau.

## Wing Chun Gains a Wider Following

Leung Bok Chau studied Wing Chun with his wife in Canton and later passed his skill to a rich merchant from Guang Xi called Leung Lan Kwai who had many friends on the Red Boat (this was the name given to the boats that carried the opera troupes as they travelled from place to place giving performances in South China). Leung Lan Kwai passed his skill to a worker on the Red Boat called Wong Wah Bo. In turn, Wong Wah Bo had a friend named Leung Yee Tai who had a very good pole fighting skill called the 'Six and a Half Pole' that he had learnt from a cook on the Red Boat. Later he discovered that the cook was one of the leading Shaolin monks who had escaped with Ng Moy. His name was Zi Xin. The two friends exchanged skills: Leung Yee Tai taught Wong Wah Bo his pole technique and Wong Wah Bo taught Leung Yee Tai his Wing Chun Kuen.

On one occasion the Red Boat came to Foshan where a very famous Chinese doctor, Leung Jan, lived. Everyone in the area called him Mr Jan. He and Leung Yee Tai became friends and Leung Yee Tai passed on his Wing Chun skill to Leung Jan. From then Wing Chun began to develop in Foshan. Leung Jan was very educated and

he made Wing Chun more systematised. The skill matured and the system became very complete.

Leung Jan passed his skill on to his children, to his eldest son Leung Bik, his second son Leung Chun and his third son Leung Ko. Every evening they practised in their yard and a man would stand just outside their gates and watch. One day the man ventured into the yard. He was very big and heavy. Leung Jan realised he was the man who worked outside the town market, providing people with small change. His name was Chan Wah Shun and he was commonly called Money Changer Chan. Leung Jan saw that Chan was very keen to learn and so he accepted him as a student.

Chan Wah Shun eventually went on to openly teach his skill to the public. Ip Man was his last and youngest student. In later years, Ip Man went to Hong Kong and opened up the skill further. It matured beautifully. He taught his sons, Ip Chun and Ip Ching and a lot of today's famous masters including Bruce Lee.

## A Topic of Debate

The later history of Wing Chun is well documented, but the early history is now a topic of great debate. There are very few records to prove the existence of all the characters and their actual part in the development of Wing Chun. In fact, Grandmaster Ip Chun has found evidence to suggest that the accepted story may not be wholly accurate.

In 1982, Ip Chun paid a visit to the elderly Pang Nam (Blackface Nam) in Foshan. Their discussion turned to the origins of Wing Chun, and Pang told Ip Chun that Wing Chun was brought to Foshan from the north by a person called Tan Sau Ng (a nickname based on the Wing Chun technique Tan Sau). He told Ip Chun that Yim Wing Chun was only a story book character. Ip Chun said that he sounded very sure.

Later, Ip Chun unexpectedly unearthed some information about Tan Sau Ng in old literature on the history of Chinese opera. He said that the book recorded:

*Besides being very accomplished in Chinese opera, Chueng Ng was especially proficient in martial arts. His Tan Sau was peerless throughout the martial arts world. Cheung Ng could not stay in the capital, so he fled and took refuge in Foshan. This was during the reign of Yung Cheng. This man nicknamed Tan Sau Ng was a character unsurpassed in literary and military skills.*

One day we may learn the whole story, but whatever the case, Wing Chun is one of the most popular forms of Chinese Kung Fu in the world. Grandmaster Ip Chun is living proof of its benefits!



# *Ip Man*

In China there are many stories about heroic martial artists defeating the 'bad guys'. Before the powerful media of cinema, television, and video, all the young people would gather around at night to listen to their elders telling tales of their national heroes, men and women who protected the country and defeated their enemies. Many would also listen to their martial arts teachers who would tell them about the skills of their seniors. All this impressed and inspired young people and they wanted to emulate their heroes. Ip Man is one of my martial art heroes. Throughout his life he used his martial skills to overcome other aggressive martial artists. Not only was he good at Wing Chun but he possessed a good philosophy of life. He was famous too for his beautiful Chinese calligraphy.

## **Learning Wing Chun**

Ip Man was born during the Qing Dynasty in 1893 and grew up in Foshan (Buddha Mountain), Canton province. His family was quite wealthy. They owned houses, farms and businesses. It was even said they owned a whole street! When Ip Man was eleven, one of Foshan's martial art masters approached his father to ask if he could use the backyard of his house as a gymnasium for teaching Kung Fu. Being a generous man, Ip Man's father agreed. So, every evening, young Ip Man could watch people practising martial arts. Most of the time he saw them practising in pairs, touching each other's hands and trying to unbalance their partner. Gradually Ip Man's interest increased. He found out that the martial art was called Wing



*Grandmaster Ip Man  
(1893-1971)*

Chun, that it was believed to originate from a woman and that the master's name was Chan Wah Shun. He also discovered that Master Chan was the eldest student of the famous Foshan martial artist – Leung Jan. So this was a great opportunity for Ip Man to study this Foshan martial art.

One day young Ip Man brought twenty ounces of silver to Master Chan Wah Shun (almost enough money to marry or start up a small business in those days). Ip Man knelt down in front of Master Chan and asked him to accept him as a student. In traditional Chinese martial arts, a student gave 'Bai Si' money to thank the teacher for accepting him and for teaching him his personal skill. Thus, in the past, martial arts were for the rich or for those who devoted their lives to religion, like the monks who stayed in the temples or in the mountains.

Master Chan was happy to accept Ip Man as a student. At seventy years of age, he was keen to have young students to pass his skill on to. Master Chan had fifteen other students studying with him at this time and so Ip Man became his last student. Like the youngest son who is often the father's favourite, Chan was fond of Ip Man and taught him all the skills he had.

Time went by. Master Chan had quite a few famous disciples, like Ng Chung So – his oldest student – Ng Chui Lau, Lui Vuan Chai and his son Chan Yui Min, and they all carried on his Wing Chun teaching. One day he called young Ip Man to him and said, 'Ip Man, you are my youngest student. I know you are very clever and work hard. If one day soon I die, don't stop your Wing Chun training. Keep studying with your (Kung Fu) brother Ng Chung So.' A couple of days later Master Chan passed away. Everyone was upset, but no one stopped their practice. Ip Man continued his training with Ng Chung So and worked even harder than before, constantly developing his Wing Chun. Eventually he completed all

of the Wing Chun forms and his techniques were very strong and powerful.

## An Important Lesson

When he was fifteen, Ip Man's parents sent him to Hong Kong, to study at the famous English private school St Stephen's. This was, and indeed still is, a highly prestigious school. It was not easy to get a place there, few could even afford it. At St Stephen's, Ip Man mixed with English and rich Chinese children. He studied hard, but did not forget his Wing Chun training. Most of his school mates were Westerners and much bigger; some were more than a head taller than him, but Ip Man never had a problem tackling them. All of them knew he had Chinese martial arts training as many had challenged him, but none were able to take advantage of him.

At the age of eighteen, Ip Man was as strong and full of energy as a young tiger. His Wing Chun skill was very good – he feared no one, and became rather conceited. One day a school friend, Lai, whose father ran a cloth and silk business on Hong Kong island, said to Ip Man, 'My uncle, a friend of my father's, would like to have a friendly contest with you.' As Ip Man had never been defeated, he was keen to test other people's martial arts and so eagerly agreed. That Sunday, Ip Man went to Lai's home where he was introduced to a Chinese gentleman who looked about fifty and who wore long white traditional Chinese clothes. He didn't look much like a martial artist to Ip Man.

Ip Man quickly decided it would take little time or energy to defeat this man. The Chinese gentleman was very polite and asked Ip Man about his school studies and other trivial matters. He did not seem to want to fight. After ten minutes Ip Man said impatiently, 'I came here today to have a contest with you.' The man

smiled and said, 'OK, you may attack any part of my body without restraint.' This statement made Ip Man very angry and he thought to himself, 'How dare he say that!' He began his attack. He punched towards the man's face using his 'centreline' punch (see page 118), a strike that had defeated many in the past. However, the older man immediately blocked the punch with his hand. His hand seemed very soft, like cotton, and it kept contact with Ip Man's arm, as if it were stuck to it. Ip Man tried again and again, but no matter how hard or how fast he attacked, his opponent easily stopped him, using just one hand. Suddenly Ip Man found he could not move his arms at all! He could only step back until he was up against a wall. Unable to move the upper part of his body, he tried to use a kick from the second form of Wing Chun, Tsum Kui. Ip Man kicked his opponent's knee but all he did in response was to lift his own leg, causing Ip Man to lose his balance. He then swept Ip Man's standing leg from beneath him.

Ip Man could not understand what had happened. His arms had somehow been trapped and his standing leg unbalanced. The older man smiled and helped Ip Man up. With the embarrassment of defeat, Ip Man quickly said goodbye and left for home. However, the experience made Ip Man think hard and he came to the realisation that 'Behind one big mountain is another big mountain'. As a result he became more humble.

A few days later, Lai came to see Ip Man again. 'My uncle likes you very much. He says you have a good skill and he would like to see you again.' 'I am a loser. I don't have the face to see him again,' replied Ip Man. 'Don't worry,' said Lai, 'it will be all right, when you see him you will know.' Ip Man was not convinced. 'Do you know who he is?' continued Lai. 'Someone who is very good at martial arts,' replied Ip Man. 'He comes from your home town - Foshan - and his name is Leung Bik,' said Lai. 'He is Mr Jan's son.'

Ip Man was shocked, 'Mr Jan, my grandmaster's son! No wonder his skill is better than mine.' He had not even realised Leung Bik had used Wing Chun techniques against him. Now Ip Man was very eager to see him. The next day he went with Lai to meet Leung Bik. He immediately apologised to Leung Bik for his previous behaviour. Leung Bik smiled and said, 'Don't worry. I can see you have been studying Wing Chun for quite a while. Can you show me your forms? I would like to see them.' Ip Man was very pleased to demonstrate his forms. Leung Bik watched and corrected any mistakes he made. Afterwards he even showed Ip Man some new skills and how to use energy during Sticking Hands. From that day Ip Man often went to see Leung Bik who taught him the many skills and principles of Wing Chun. With time, Ip Man came to realise that Wing Chun was not tough, but very sensitive. He found that the more relaxed he was, the more he could feel his enemy's energy and the more he was able to control and redirect it, rather than relying on strength alone to defeat his opponent. He also realised the damage martial arts, especially Wing Chun, could inflict, and this knowledge changed him. He became calmer, gentler and more polite.

After two years, Leung Bik left Hong Kong and returned to Foshan. By this time Ip Man had learnt a great many things and his Wing Chun had reached a very high level. He remembered a story that Leung Bik had told him about his father, Leung Jan. Once Leung Jan met a martial arts master who was particularly famous for his Til Chan Kwun - Jerking and Breaking Pole. Leung Jan had his own pole technique, the Luk Tim Boon Kwun (Wing Chun's Six and a Half Pole), and he discussed his techniques and compared them to this master's. The master said that his pole only had two techniques, whereas Leung Jan's had six and a half. After some discussion, Leung Jan told the master, 'Your pole technique is better



than mine, because it is simpler.' Leung Bik used this story to illustrate to Ip Man his belief that 'Good martial arts are very simple and very direct.'

This story made Ip Man think. He came to the conclusion that most techniques are actually very simple, but people often make them complicated.

## A High Level of Skill

Back in Foshan, Ip Man went to visit his Kung Fu brothers but he found that only Ng Chung So was still teaching their master's skill. Ip Man told him about Hong Kong and meeting Leung Bik. This aroused Ng's interest and he wanted to test Ip Man's new skills. So they began to practise. Ng found that Ip Man's Sticking Hands had become softer and more sophisticated, and on more than one occasion Ip Man controlled his hand. Ng realised that Ip Man's Wing Chun had reached a very high level indeed.

Meanwhile, China had rid itself of the Qing Dynasty and was now a republic. Japan, however, was trying by a mixture of force and seduction to invade China. The Japanese fought China but at the same time attempted to seduce China's businessmen and officials into working for them. They pretended to be allies and to help build up the new China. Although in Foshan it was still very peaceful, even here traces of the Japanese invasion could be seen. Ip Man was now twenty years old. With his family's wealthy background the Japanese were keen to recruit him, but Ip Man did not want to work with them. He sold all of his Hong Kong businesses so he could have the freedom to do what he wanted. Much of his time he spent with Ng Chung So, practising Sticking Hands to maintain his technique and researching higher levels of Wing Chun skill.

## Defending Family Honour

One day, Ip Man decided to go and visit his father's sister in San Shing Kwan. Here, there was a grand temple, Tai Shing (The Monkey King), where a big festival was in full swing. Many people had gathered to watch the traditional Chinese dragon and lion dancing. Having visited his aunt, Ip Man accompanied two of his cousins to the festival. They joined the crowds and were having a good time when suddenly the girls were surrounded by a gang of young men making fun of them and trying to touch them. Ip Man's cousins, being shy and humble girls, were naturally rather scared. Seeing their distress, some of the men began to try to take advantage of them and their language became even more insulting.

When Ip Man realised what was going on, he rushed over and confronted the gang, demanding that they apologise to his cousins. The men were gangsters who went around terrorising the local people. They were not afraid of anyone. Finding themselves challenged by a spoilt-looking rich kid, they just laughed. Was he serious? When they saw him take off his long Chinese coat they knew that he was.

Ip Man looked around. There were maybe six or seven gang members. He relaxed and settled his Qi. The crowd could see the strong spirit in his face. Then one of the gangsters stepped forwards to push Ip Man away. When he tried, it was as if he was pushing a cotton sheet – there was nothing to push! Ip Man turned, making the thug stumble and lose his balance. The thug realised he would not beat him that way, so regaining his composure he quickly turned and threw a punch – but he hit nothing! Ip Man had turned to the right and avoided the blow. Furious now, the gangster attacked with his other hand. Grasping it, Ip Man pulled slightly, before crossing his attacker's arms and trapping them. Now he was in total control. The crowds that had gathered were amazed. How could such an

elegant young man defeat such a big thug in less than two seconds and make it look so easy? Seeing their comrade defeated, the rest of the gang could hold back no longer. They rushed forwards and attacked!

Ip Man did not move a great deal. When someone punched at him, he moved just enough to avoid it, but when he attacked back he went straight for his opponent's centre, either striking him or making him lose his balance. He struck so quickly that the gangsters did not know what had hit them or how they had been pulled off balance. The crowd could see that Ip Man kept himself upright, never leaning forwards or backwards. He merely moved his feet and shifted from side to side, just avoiding his attacker. Every time it looked as if he had been caught, he would suddenly move or dodge away. Then he would step directly to his opponent's centre. Occasionally Ip Man's hands seemed to stick to his opponent's hands, controlling the energy and trapping them. Then he would pull his opponent off balance or hit him. Sometimes Ip Man just appeared to touch one of his attackers – it didn't look serious, but as a result his opponent seemed to be in great pain, or became weak and unable to move.

Within three minutes the gang was defeated. Some had no energy left to fight and others were in pain and could not move. Amazingly, however, none were seriously hurt. The gang realised they had met a very high level martial artist and they fled as quickly as they could! The crowd applauded. Ip Man's cousins were surprised, for he had kept his skill hidden from them. Some young men even came forward and asked Ip Man to accept them as his students, but Ip Man just smiled and refused.

Ip Man had never taught his skill because his Wing Chun brothers Chan Yu Min (Master Chan Wah Shun's son), Ng Chung So, Yu Lo Chan and Tang Shin were already teaching in Foshan. He did not

wish to offend them. Besides, he was still young and wanted to get more experience of the martial arts and develop his skill further.

## The Martial Artist and the Prostitute

One evening Ip Man was invited by some friends to a restaurant at Fa On Chai (Eagle Beak Sands, Foshan). Whilst they were drinking, one of his friends told him about a prostitute named Yim Hung who could withstand three punches to her stomach. The friend told Ip Man that if anyone could beat her she would let them sleep with her for nothing, otherwise they would lose ten ounces of white gold (about £300/\$500). Ip Man laughed. Then another friend said, 'I hear that she comes from the north, and she knows Hard Qigong. She has trained her stomach so when she concentrates on her Dantien [the area below the navel] it becomes like a piece of iron, very strong and powerful!'

Yet another friend turned to Ip Man and said, 'Ip Man, you know Wing Chun, why don't you find out how good she is? I have heard that other Sifus have tried, but none of them have beaten her, they all lost their money. Why don't you try?' Still smiling, Ip Man said, 'I don't want to hurt someone else's business, it is not good.' As they were talking, there was a knock at the door and in walked a very beautiful woman. She introduced herself as Yim Hung. Ip Man had been set up by his friends! They wanted to see his famous Wing Chun, especially his one inch punch. His friends introduced Ip Man to Yim Hung, saying 'This gentleman has a very high level of martial arts, and he can beat your iron stomach!' Yim Hung looked at Ip Man. 'Such a handsome man', she thought, 'How can he be a martial artist?' She responded, 'Mr Ip, I have one rule. If you punch me in the stomach and I cannot withstand it or you knock me over,

then I will sleep with you for free. But if you lose then you must give me ten ounces of white gold. I can see you are a well educated gentleman. I do not know how much you know about martial arts, but I am worried that you might hurt your wrist.'

Ip Man smiled and replied, 'I have never punched a woman before. If you don't mind, I would like to try. Here is ten ounces of white gold. If I lose, it is yours.' Yim Hung thought to herself, 'Many big, strong men have tried to take advantage of me, but none of them have succeeded. Surely this man can do nothing.' Ip Man said, 'If you are ready, I will start.' Everyone could see Yim Hung concentrate her mind and her breath on her stomach, which became bigger and looked very strong. They all wondered if Ip Man could really do it. Ip Man smiled and prepared to punch. He looked very calm and relaxed. He held his hand close to Yim Hung's stomach and punched. When his fist touched her stomach it felt very soft, then suddenly it became solid and powerful and went straight in. Yim Hung could feel her breath being obstructed. She fell to the floor, her face pale as she gasped for breath. She could not speak. Rushing to help her up, Ip Man apologised. 'Take the money, it is yours and you need not do anything for me.' Taking a pen and a piece of paper, he wrote out a prescription for some medicine to help her recover her Qi. Then he said goodbye and left with his friends.

## Rope Tricks

Ip Man's reputation was growing. All of his friends had now heard that his skill in Wing Chun was very high and many of them wanted to find out how good he really was. One friend asked him how strong the Wing Chun stance was. The friend commented that it was not like Hung Kuen's low horse stance; therefore, was it actually strong enough?' (Hung Kuen was another famous style of

Kung Fu popular in Foshan.) Sensing the friendly challenge, Ip Man agreed to demonstrate the stance. He asked for a piece of rope.

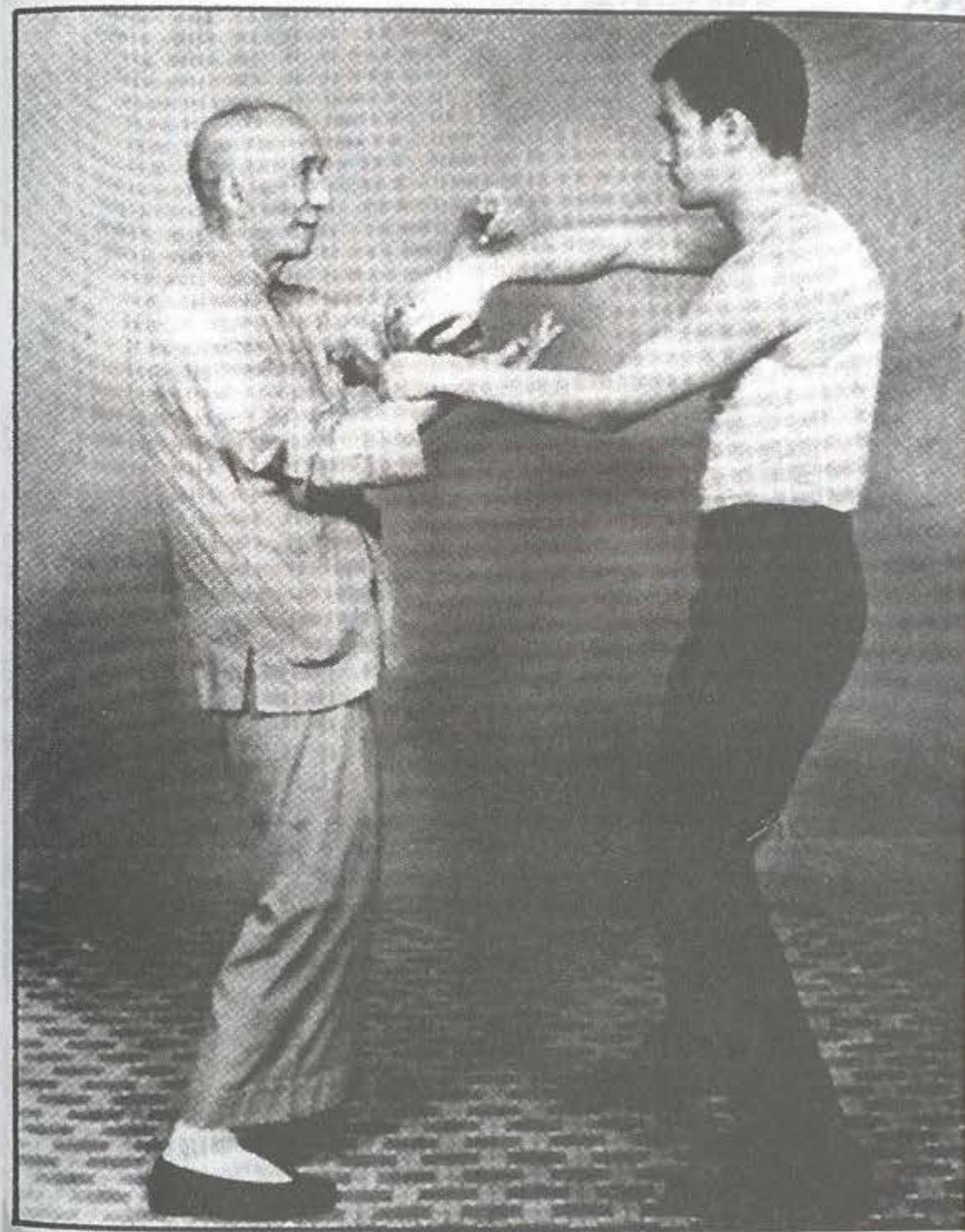
When his friends returned with the rope he told them to tie one end to his left leg and, pointing at the four of them, he said, 'When I am ready, you four pull the rope from behind me. If I move then I lose, all right?' His friends looked at each other in amazement. The four of them were strong enough to pull a cow through a field, so how could one man withstand their joint force? On the other hand, they all wanted to see Ip Man's skill, so they agreed. Once the rope was tied to his left leg, Ip Man raised his right leg and, standing on one leg, raised his hands up in front of his chest, one hand in front of the other.

Ip Man's posture looked very solid and he did not move an inch. To stand like that and keep perfect balance would be difficult enough, but with four men pulling at his standing leg, it would surely be impossible. When Ip Man was ready his friends picked up the rope and began to pull. Ip Man sank his Qi to his Dantien and as he did so the spirit in his face and eyes grew stronger. Then he transferred his concentration to his left leg. All his Qi moved to his left leg and it became very strong and solid, and resisted his friends' efforts. Eventually the four friends were covered in sweat and could not go on. 'That was amazing!', one of them said. 'I've never seen anything like it. I always thought that Wing Chun people were only good with their hands. Now I've seen the strength you have in your legs, I really respect it!'

Ip Man just smiled and said, 'In Wing Chun, we actually train our legs twice as hard as we train our hands. There is a saying in the martial arts: "The hands are like swing doors, defence is in the legs." That means the hands are for opening, entering, contacting, distracting and controlling – the real defence is found in the legs, in your balance and your powerful leg attacks.'

had already stepped forward straight through to Wan's centre. Then, with his Chi Sau skills, he attacked Wan's head and body. Sifu Wan stumbled back, unable to defend himself. The judge stepped in and stopped the contest. Everyone had seen what had happened. As this was a friendly contest and Dr Tan didn't wish to upset anyone, he officially announced a draw. But from then on, no one complained about Ip Man teaching Wing Chun.

Eventually, the Japanese attacks on China grew stronger and Ip Man decided to move to Hong Kong. On reaching Hong Kong, he was invited to teach at the Hong Kong and Kowloon Restaurant Workers' Union by its Chairman, Mr Hu Yee. Since Ip Man needed to make a living in Hong Kong, he agreed. Thus Ip Man's first Hong Kong school started. It was here that many of his famous senior students came to learn: Chu Shung Tin, Ip Bo Ching, Wong Chu, Chai Wan. Later on, Wong Shun Leung, Leung Shun, Tang Shu, William Cheung, even Bruce Lee joined and became one of Ip Man's students. Today many of these students have become masters, grand-masters and even great-grandmasters. Many people have benefited from Ip Man's teaching: in their fighting skills, their philosophy and their health. Ip Man worked hard in Hong Kong and his students spread his teachings very quickly. Many of them have dedicated their lives to promoting Wing Chun. In Hong Kong, Wong Shun Leung and William Cheung challenged others and investigated their skills. Abroad, people like Leung Ting, Bruce Lee and other masters have made Wing Chun popular through films, books, seminars and videos.



*Ip Man and Bruce Lee performing Chi Sau (Sticking Hands)*

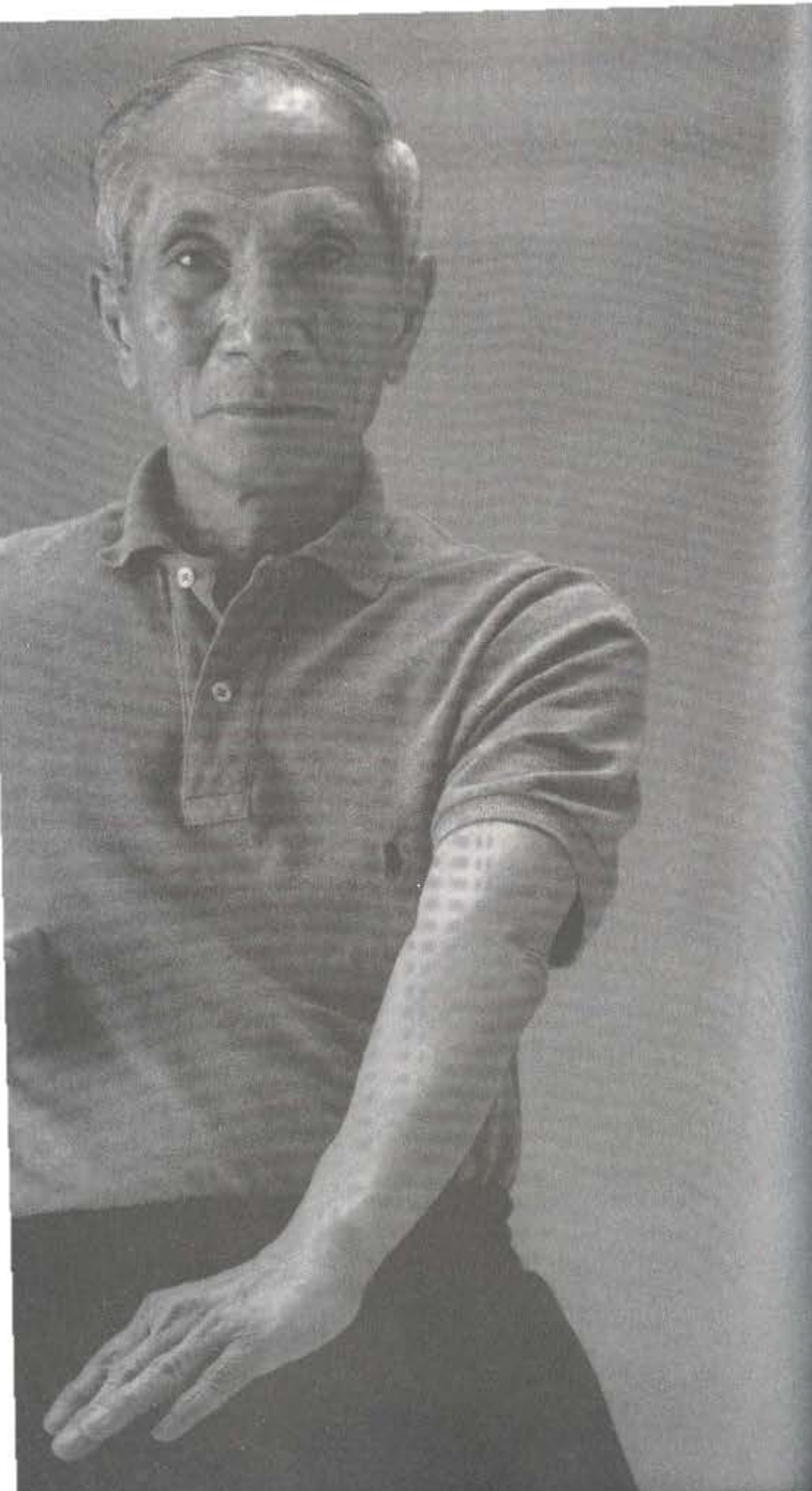
# *Ip Chun*

## **The Early Years**

Ip Chun is Ip Man's eldest son. At the time of Ip Chun's birth in Foshan, Canton, in 1924, China was in a state of chaos. The land was controlled by many different war lords following the overthrow of the Qing dynasty. As already mentioned, Japan had also begun its invasion of China and many provinces suffered from the effects of war and from starvation. One day one group of people ruled, and the next day, another group ruled. The Chinese people had to learn to change their attitudes and welcome each new government. Luckily, throughout this period, the area of Foshan remained quite stable and daily life and customs went on as normal.

However, when the Communists took over China, they began to criticise wealthy people and anyone connected to the Kuomintang (the political party founded by Sun Yat-sen, the first president of the Republic of China in 1911), so it was at this time that Ip Man left China and went to live in Hong Kong. However, his two sons – whom he had taught Wing Chun from a very young age – stayed behind to finish their schooling.

Ip Chun was very fond of traditional Chinese culture. He chose to study Chinese history and traditional Chinese music. He read many books and did a lot of research into Chinese philosophy. His favourite subjects were Chinese poetry and Buddhism. When he finished his studies, he decided to become a teacher specialising in Chinese history, music and science. For his music research he was chosen as the recipient of the award for 'The person with the most



potential in Chinese art'. During his leisure time he helped the Foshan Entertainment Department organise Chinese operas.

Unfortunately, the entertainment system under the Communists was very left-wing, and people had to follow the government's directions and study communism. At that time, Mao Tze Tung initiated many campaigns, such as 'Training Metal', ordering the population to pull up all grass because he did not like it. On another occasion he decided that sparrows were bad, and the population followed his lead in killing most of them. All Mao Tze Tung's crazy campaigns damaged the balance of Chinese nature and the original Chinese system of living.

## A New Life in Hong Kong

At around this time, Ip Chun came in for criticism from the Communists. He was sent to a farm, forced to become a farmer and instructed to give up his interests and studies. As his studies and skill were of no use under this regime, he decided in 1962 to leave for Hong Kong with his brother Ip Ching. The Chinese government was quite lenient on people who wanted to go to Hong Kong. Mao believed the Chinese Communist system was the best system in the whole world and would make China stronger than all the western countries, so anyone who wished to leave could do so. Thousands and thousands of people left China. In Canton the local government introduced an unofficial period for people to leave. During their journey Ip Chun and Ip Ching were even directed on their way by the Chinese Revolutionary Guard!

On arrival in Hong Kong the two brothers were reunited with their father. Ip Chun began work as a newspaper reporter. With his excellent writing ability he was able to make a living and use his Chinese literary skills. At the same time, both brothers were happy



*Ip Chun with Ip Man (right)*

to resume their Wing Chun studies. In the past whenever a family had a skill, it would be handed down from generation to generation, from father to son. During the day Ip Chun went to work and at night he continued with his martial arts training. He picked up the skill very quickly again, even though he was thirty and had not trained for a long time. It was probably in his genes – he picked up the skill quicker than many of the other students.

## Developing His Wing Chun Skills

Ip Chun found that his father had changed some of the exercises and movements to make Wing Chun easier to study and more effective. Ip Man gave up all the complex terms that talked about yin and

yang, five elements, and Bagua (see Glossary). In fact, he gave up all the old traditional Chinese names, martial art poems and phrases and adopted the use of western physics and mathematics so that modern people could understand the skill more easily. Ip Man concentrated more on Sticking Hands, and so Wing Chun training became more interesting. He also gave up many of the traditional methods of training, such as only teaching the basic stance for the first three years, so many beginners could begin to defend themselves after only three months of training. Later, after they had been taught the principles and philosophy, the students could develop their skills more quickly.

In 1971, Ip Man died and Ip Chun carried on his father's teaching. He kept the skill he had inherited pure, and whilst he saw many of his Wing Chun brothers adapt what they had learned, he did not. He continued to follow the same principles that his father had taught him. Eventually, he found that his Wing Chun training was good for his health, and he did not need to practise any other martial art. When he performed his Siu Lim Tao, he found that he could feel warm Qi flowing strongly through the meridians (channels) in his body, making them smooth and getting rid of any pain. Slowly, he developed a very accurate skill and power.

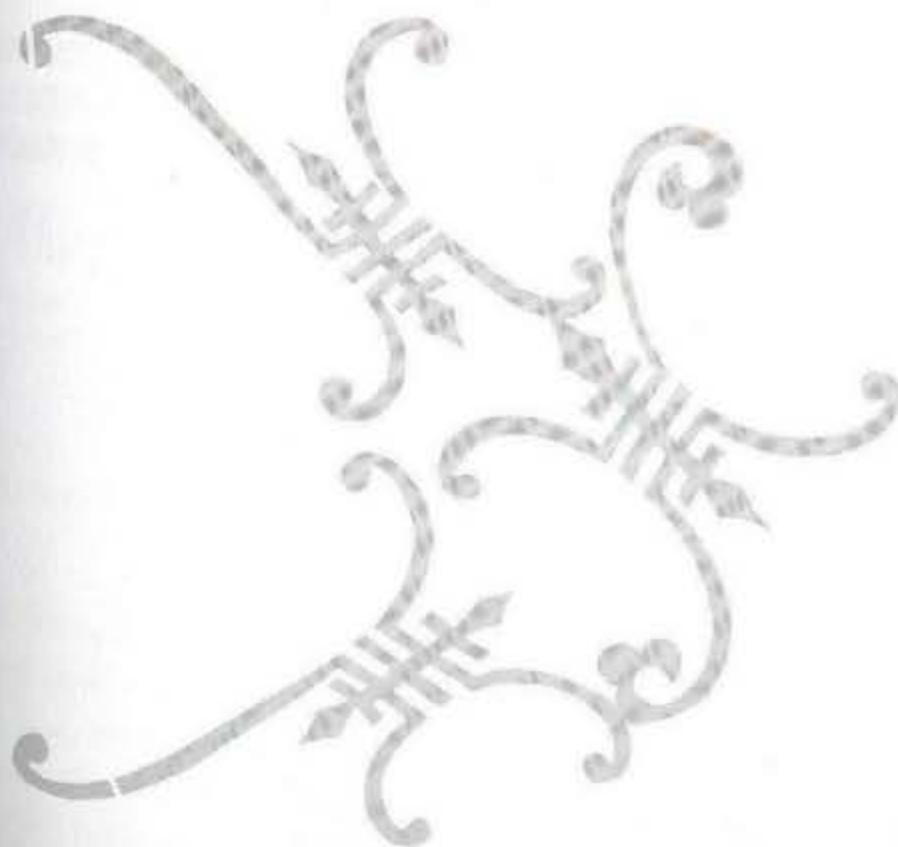
Ip Chun also discovered that during Sticking Hands he could clearly sense his partner's nature and detect any illnesses they had. This was new, something his father had never mentioned. He was able to deduce that if an opponent was aggressive and concentrated only on fighting and used too much energy, then they could have a problem with their liver or spleen – the liver and spleen being connected with anger. If someone was weak and nervous, with low energy, unable to defend themselves and always mistiming their movements, then he realised that they might have a problem with their kidneys and lungs. The kidneys are related to feelings of fear

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and weak kidneys can cause insecurity. Weak lungs can cause depression and clouded thinking.

Ip Chun could see people's health and nature change as they practised Wing Chun. When you train, you don't have time to think so you must rely on your sensitivity alone. In this situation your mind becomes quiet and relaxed, allowing mind and body to balance. A good Wing Chun practitioner should have a very calm mind and healthy body because the training develops these attributes.

Wing Chun is one of the greatest treasures to emerge from China. Each year, Ip Chun travels from one side of the world to the other giving seminars and teaching so that more people can learn and benefit from this skill.



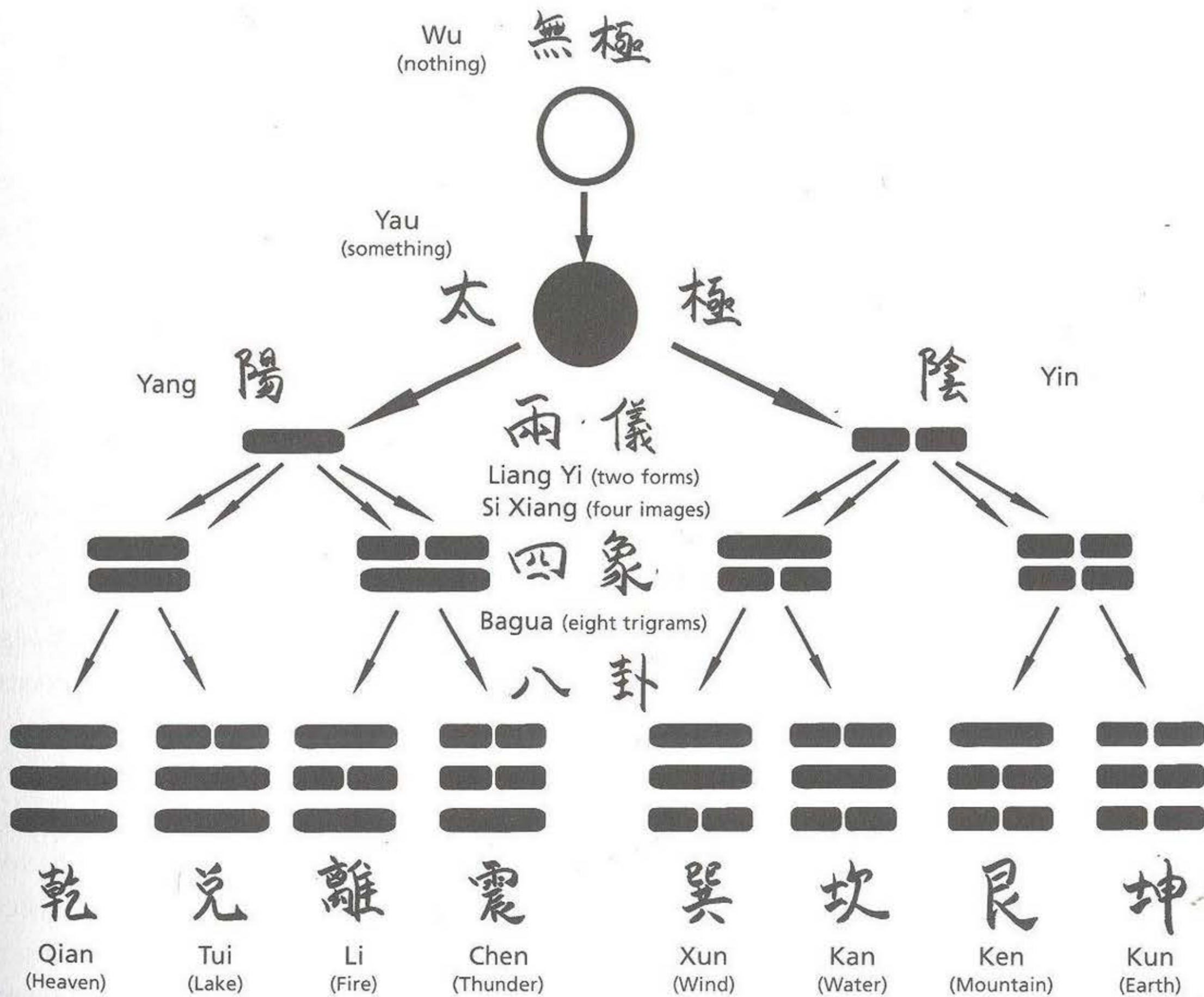
# *The Philosophy of Wing Chun*

All Chinese martial arts are connected with one philosophy or another. Some have a strong connection. For example, Shaolin Quan is connected with Buddhism and Wu Tang Quan connects with Daoism. Taijiquan (Tai Chi) is connected with the principle of yin and yang which in turn connects with Daoism. Xingyiquan is based on the five elements (air, fire, water, earth, wood) and Baguazhang is based upon the Bagua which follows the principles of the Yijing (I Ching or Book of Changes). It too belongs to Daoism.

## **The Yijing (Book of Changes)**

The Yijing has a long history within Chinese philosophy. It says that everything starts from nothing (*Wu*), to become something (*Yau*). *Yau* splits into two, *Yin* and *Yang*. *Yin* and *Yang* become *Si Xiang* (Four Images) which in turn become *Bagua* (Eight Trigrams). All this sounds very complicated, but the important thing to grasp is that from nothing came something, and from something small developed something bigger – just like a tree that starts life as a small seed.





*Everything starts from nothing*

From a single root come many roots, from a single trunk come many branches. However, no matter how many branches, leaves and fruit there are, they all come from the one trunk and root. They are all connected and follow the same principle.

## Keeping Yourself Centred

The philosophy of Wing Chun teaches you how to keep yourself centred. This idea comes from the principles of Buddhism, Daoism and Confucianism, the three main religions practised in China. It takes into account that people tend to go to extremes and lack the balance to see that things are not just black and white. Children, for example, often say, 'I love it' or, 'I hate it'. But there are many sides to every issue. It is a matter of how much we can balance ourselves.

Through the practice of Wing Chun you can understand how to balance your life. If you attack your partner using too much energy in Sticking Hands, you will end up being beaten. In life, there may be something you want but you cannot do just as you please to obtain it. You have to make the circumstances appropriate before things fall into place. If you like a beautiful girl, you cannot just chase her. If she doesn't like you, it won't work. You have to create the opportunity and atmosphere to make everything right.

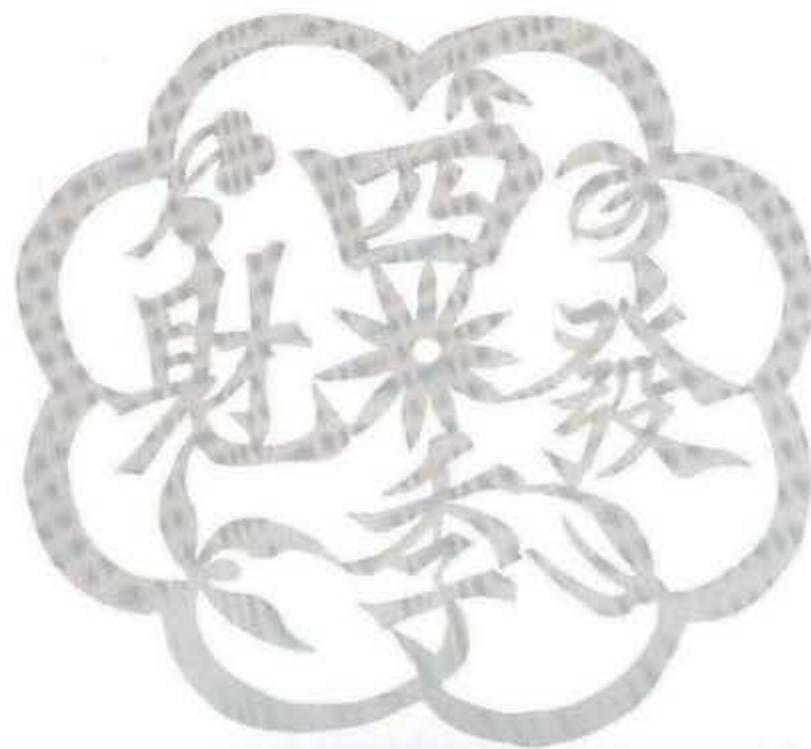
It is the same with people who want to make money and try any means by which to do so. However, you have to understand the situation and the environment. Then you will find out if it is right for you. If so, then you can go ahead. All of this is based on experience and a lot of practice. It is not just luck. Without skill, luck will not last. Good luck is made from a lot of experience, just like the flowers and fruit you see on the tree. They only appear when the tree is growing in the right conditions, with the correct amount of water, air and sunlight.

A Wing Chun practitioner has to practise hard as well as contend with difficulty and failure in order to become successful. During Sticking Hands you will get beaten and controlled by your seniors or your teacher. Eventually, however, you will learn how to do the techniques properly and how to manage your energy.

Wing Chun has two parts which we all have to practise. One

part is based on skill and the other part on energy. It is rather like life, you need the skill which comes through knowledge and education as well as the nature, health and personality to make everything work, to make your life fulfilled and to give it meaning. For example, an artist may draw or paint very well but if he is an anti-social person, no one will want his paintings. It is not enough to have skill; you need to know how to relate your skill to others in order to be successful. Other people have very good social skills but no real talent, therefore whatever they create will not last long. To build your life you need skill *and* work. Then good luck will come your way.

Through practising Wing Chun you can train yourself to become a more centred and grounded person. The philosophy of Wing Chun is to keep yourself centred.



# *The Principles of Wing Chun*

As discussed in the previous chapter, philosophy is very important to any martial art you study. It applies to the skill of the whole system and the principle of the system follows the philosophy. Principle is the body and philosophy is the spirit. The two combine to make the whole system work perfectly. Each system has its own character and principle. A martial art without principle and philosophy is just like a person without a brain. You may still be able to move and eat, but you have no spirit or feelings and cannot tell right from wrong.

Some people make up their own styles. They take techniques from here and there and end up with punches, kicks, locks and jumps. However, they cannot claim to be the founder of a martial art. All arts need to develop over a long period of time and through experience. It takes time, for example, to discover how much benefit people can get from practice, how long they are able to do it for and whether it will be good for their body or mind.

A true martial art must cover internal and external training so that you can continue to practise as you get older. You should be able to practise until you are sixty, seventy or even eighty. Martial arts are not just for the young and strong. They should be suitable even for those who are small and weak.

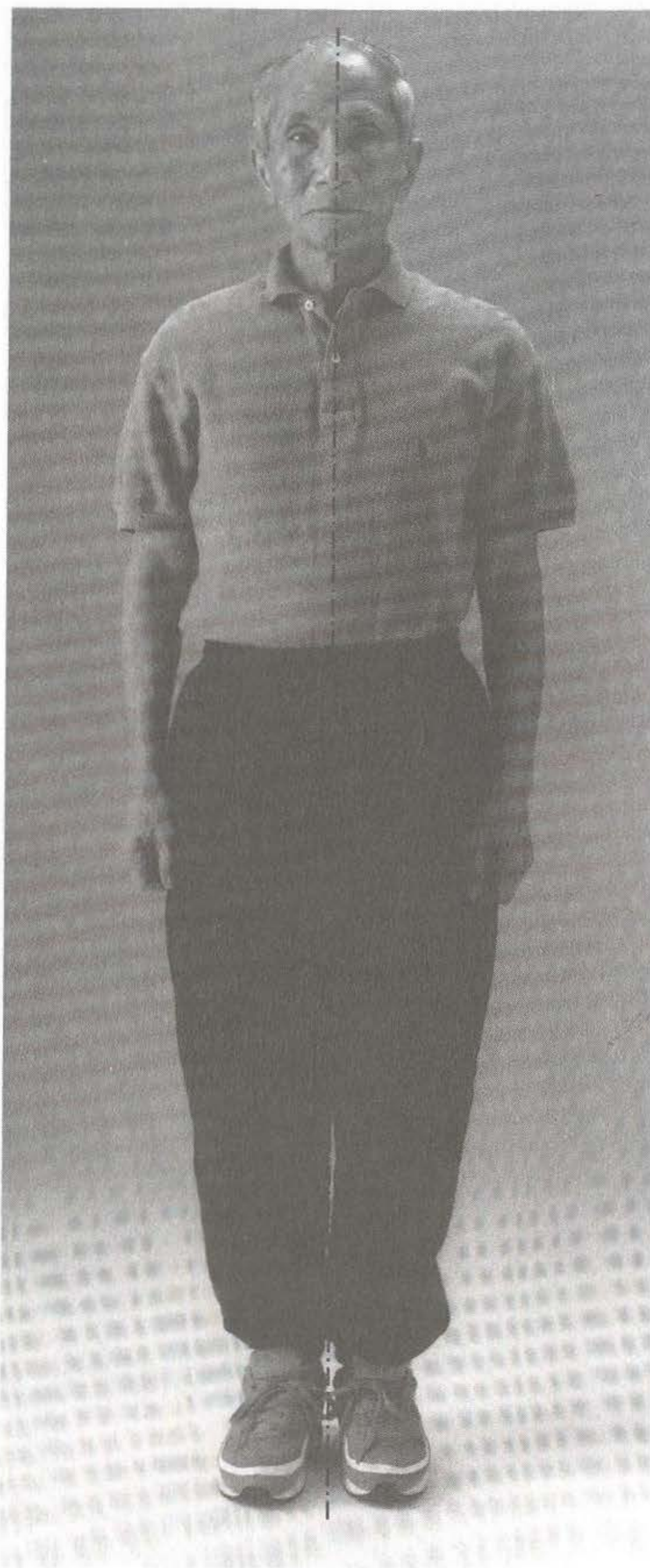
Wing Chun covers all these skills. Traditionally, Wing Chun practitioners believe the system comes from a woman. Whether this is correct is now uncertain, but what is certain is that the principle

of Wing Chun is to maintain your centre and consider the centreline of your opponent and the shortest distance it takes in which to attack him or her.

## The Centreline

When practising Wing Chun it is very important to keep the centreline in the correct position. The centreline runs from the top of the head and down the middle of the face, chest and lower body. This is the most vulnerable part of your body. However, it should be noted that the centreline of your opponent will change depending upon the angle you are attacking from and the angle at which he or she is facing you. For the purposes of this book, and for beginning Siu Lim Tao and Sticking Hands, we will refer to the centreline as shown in the photo. Think of it as the trunk of a tree. No matter how the branches spread or how much fruit grows, everything is still connected to the trunk. If the trunk is not centred, but leaning to the side, all the branches, leaves and fruit will also lean to the side. The tree will not grow vertically and will therefore be vulnerable. It will never grow big and tall.

When practising Wing Chun it is very important that the body and back should be



*The position of the centreline*

straight. Wing Chun has no movements in which you lean forwards or backwards except in the third form, Biu Jee. In this form there is a bending down movement. However, this is just for loosening the shoulders and the back. Traditionally, training in this form uses the shoulders and waist to develop power, so at the end of Biu Jee you bend forward and rotate the arms to loosen the joints and waist. This rotating has nothing to do with fighting – it is purely for relaxation. Unfortunately, some people have not learnt properly from their teachers and, thinking they are being clever, they try to create something out of the movement. Some say it is used for pulling somebody's legs or for snatching sand off the floor to throw in your enemy's eyes. Hearing about these strange applications is laughable.

## The Closest Distance for Fighting

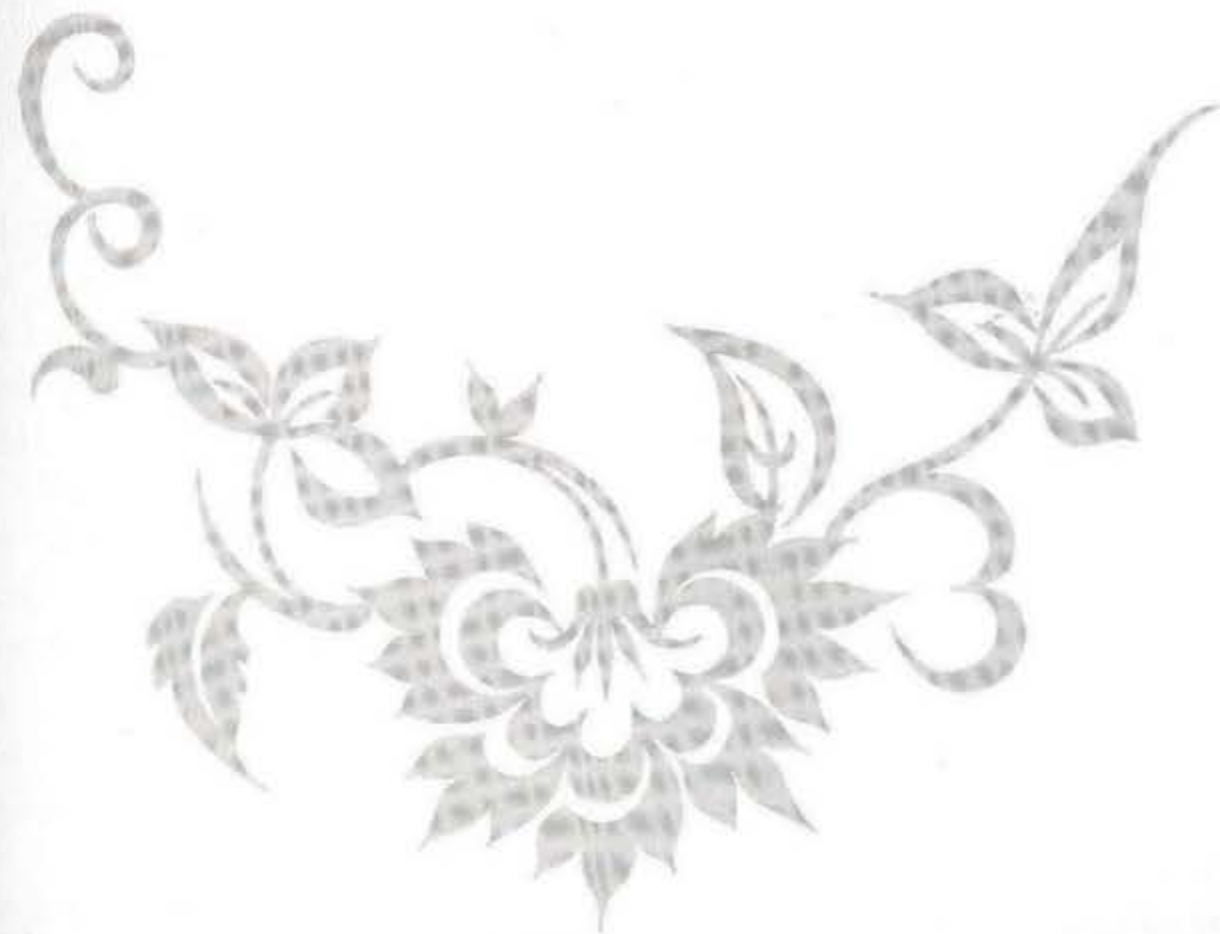
Wing Chun takes the closest distance for fighting. The reason is that this is difficult for big or tall people to handle. This makes them vulnerable, thus giving an advantage to smaller people and making it ideal for women. Long distances rely heavily on speed and strength, so a tall, strong person can easily win in this situation. However, this goes against the principle of Wing Chun, which was created for ordinary people. It does not train you to be big and strong so you can beat up smaller and weaker people. This is why it is one of the most popular martial arts.

## Accuracy, Energy and Relaxation

Other principles of Wing Chun include accuracy and how you use energy. If your hand position is not accurate, it will not work and could even be dangerous. Wing Chun is not like other styles of martial arts where it does not matter if your position is a little bit

higher or lower. In Wing Chun you must be correct and accurate. (It is interesting that Ip Man named his sons Ip Chun and Ip Ching. 'Chun' means accuracy and 'Ching' means correct.) And you must use the right amount of energy. Too much and you will get beaten, too little and you will also get beaten.

Relaxation is also very important. If any part of your body is tense and making you rigid, your enemy can use your energy to fight back against you or to make you tired. When practising Wing Chun always think about how to use less energy to defeat greater energy. Judge whether your position is right. Going to your opponent's weak side is always the best solution.



# *Bruce Lee and the Principles of Wing Chun*

Bruce Lee is perhaps the world's most famous martial artist. He put martial arts in movies so everybody could see for themselves their action and excitement. His movies made a powerful impression in the 1970s which has lasted through the 80s and even into the 90s. Virtually all young people have been affected by his movies and many people have taken up martial arts because of them. People have tried to imitate his style, his movements and even his sounds. Bruce Lee actually studied Wing Chun and continued to do so until he died, as he wanted to complete the Wing Chun system.

Many times he publicly demonstrated his fast, powerful punch and his kicking, which was based on the principles of Wing Chun's low kicks. Although he created his own style, Jeet Kuen Do, you can see that many of the principles of Wing Chun have been incorporated. They include Lap Sau (Grabbing Hand), Paak Sau (Slapping Hand) and Kau Cha Sau (Crossing Hand). When I study Wing Chun, I understand these skills and do not just see the external movement. Many people who try these techniques, however, rely only on speed and strength, not understanding the true principles of Wing Chun Kuen. When you become older, you will no longer be able to rely on speed and strength. Also, this approach will not work



on a person of high level skill or on your senior Wing Chun brothers and sisters. In fact, in Wing Chun, speed and strength can also be to your disadvantage. In relying on strength, a person can easily lose sensitivity and cause their opponent to use their own energy against them.

This is why, having moved to the United States, Bruce came back to Hong Kong many times to study more Wing Chun. He found other martial arts easier to understand, but in Wing Chun he wanted more, because he knew it was high level skill. He knew that learning techniques without understanding their meaning meant that they were just external movements. He needed to understand the energy and principles of Wing Chun so that he could improve the level of his martial art. He realised all his skill relied on speed and power. He had no internal training. He knew relaxation and Qi were

*Bruce Lee in the film  
Enter the Dragon*



*Bruce Lee with Grandmaster Ip Man*

important, so he kept training in order to develop this. Unfortunately, he died before this could happen.

When he became famous, the press led many people to believe that he did not respect his teacher, Ip Man. In fact nothing could be further from the truth. The situation was getting out of hand, so Bruce called his teacher and invited him to tea. Then he walked with Ip Man along Nathan Road, one of the busiest roads in Hong Kong. Many people, of course, saw them together, and this was his way of proving that he respected his teacher. On occasion Bruce contacted my Sifu, Ip Chun, to write articles about his good relationship with Ip Man. And after he passed away, his wife Linda wrote to thank Ip Chun for all that his father had done to help Bruce. Ip Man taught Bruce Wing Chun and helped him to understand martial arts and to reach a high level of skill.





# *Siu Lim Tao: The First Form and its Applications*

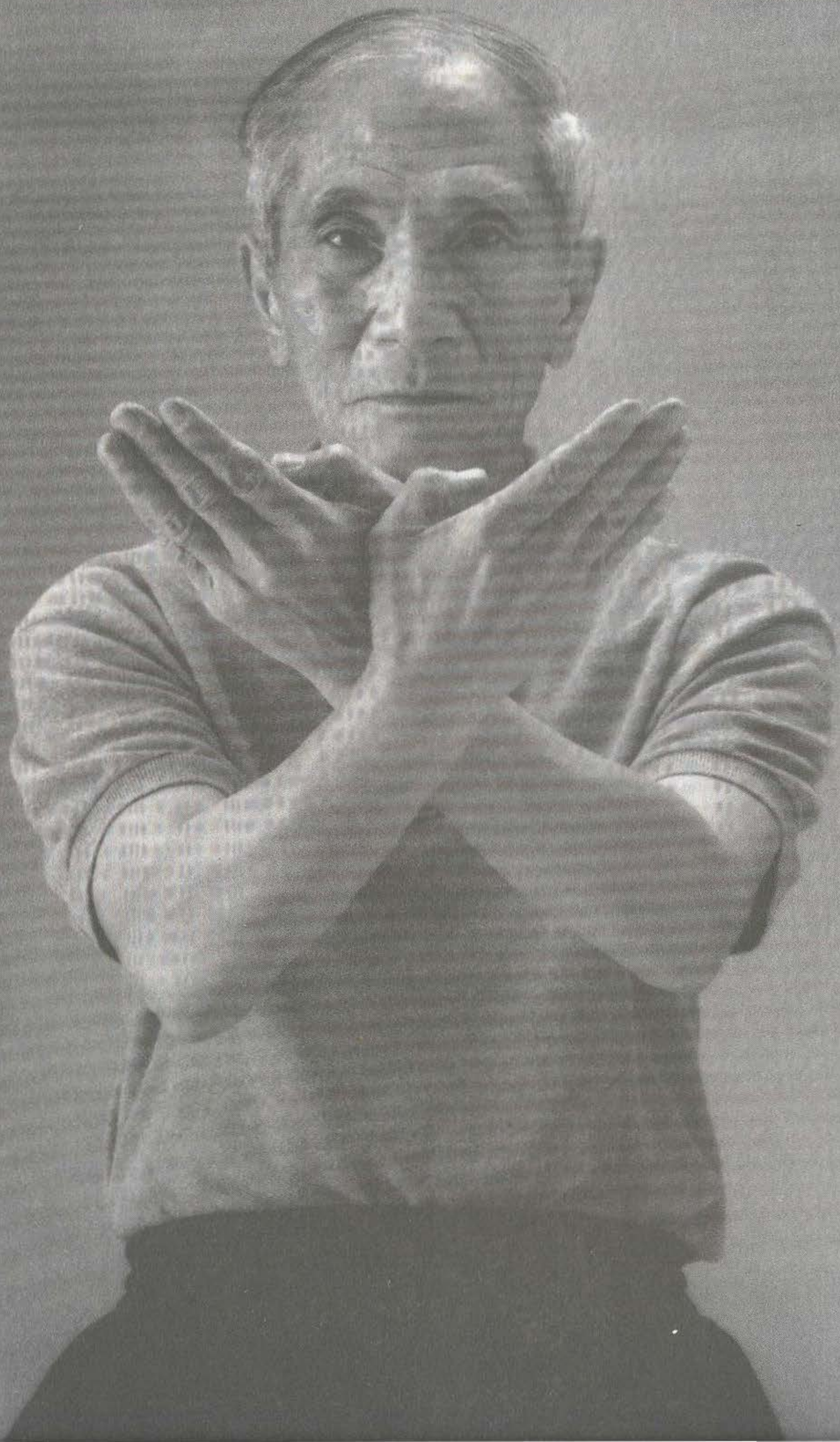
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by Grandmaster Ip Chun

There are three forms in Wing Chun. They are Siu Lim Tao, Tsum Kiu and Biu Jee. In this book, however, we will be concentrating only on the first form, Siu Lim Tao. The good thing about Siu Lim Tao is that it requires very little space in which to practise and can therefore be performed anywhere, at any time.

## **Siu Lim Tao**

'Siu' means small. Small does not necessarily mean inferior. In fact, most martial artists would agree that small is better than big and that simple is better than complicated. Sijo (Great Grandmaster) Leung Jan, Ip Man's grand teacher and a man highly respected by all practitioners, once said, 'Any style of martial art that has only a few forms and movements but which is successful in conveying the



essence of the skill is the best martial art. In the future, if any Wing Chun practitioner can combine the three forms of the system into one form, then this will be even better.'

Many Wing Chun students or practitioners have since tried to fulfil this wish, but they have been unsuccessful. Why? There are three points to consider. The first is that most people who study martial arts always want more and more. Therefore, they find it difficult to accept the principle of making it less. Secondly, the three forms of Wing Chun are already very simple and practical. It is almost impossible to make them any simpler or shorter. Thirdly, these three forms are actually states for studying Wing Chun and therefore have an important part to play.

Siu Lim Tao is the starting point when learning Wing Chun. It is the basis of the Wing Chun skill. When building a house, you must make sure that its foundations are strong and solid. No matter how beautiful the exterior of the house, if it is unable to stand up to a strong storm it will be ruined. It is the same when studying Kung Fu. You need to build up a good foundation through continual practice and patience. Otherwise you will not reach a high standard or attain good results. If you were to ask me how long one should practise Siu Lim Tao, my answer would be that the longer you train, the more benefit you will get.



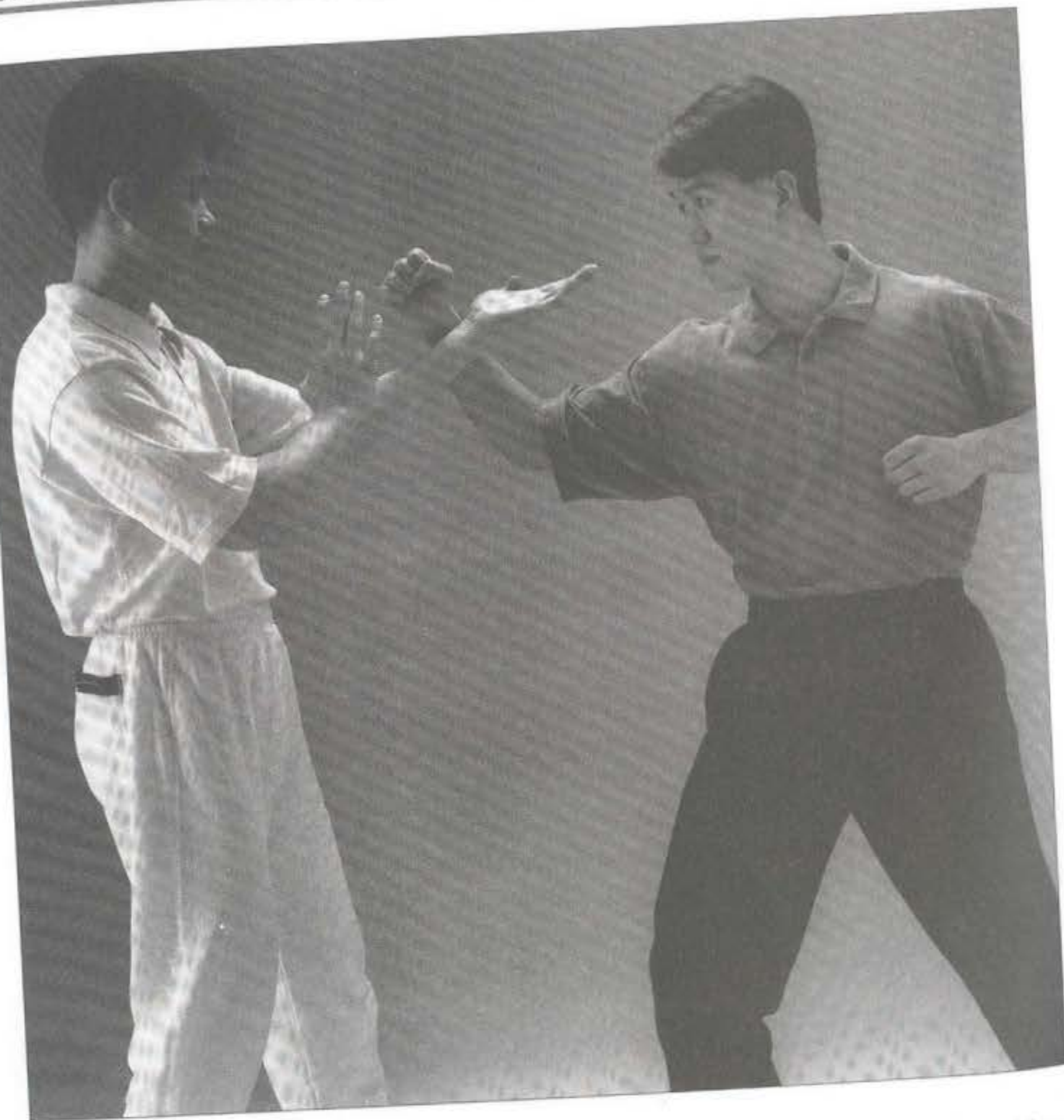
## *The three sections of Siu Lim Tao*

Siu Lim Tao has itself been divided into three small sections, each with its own meaning and responsibility. The first section is for training Gong Lik (internal training or high level skill). The second section is for training Fa Ging (power development), and the third section is for basic skill training. Because each section has a different meaning, each one has different attitudes of practice. I will explain this in more detail.

### **Gong Lik**

Gong Lik is an abstract theory which is difficult to express. We can say to a person that they have a deep level of Gong Lik when they are skilled at something. It does not necessarily have to be in martial arts but can relate to other things as well. For example, when preparing food a chef will cut up all the meat and vegetables to the correct size. The cutting is precise and the chef makes no mistakes. The heat source he uses to cook the food is also just right. He ends up making a delicious meal. This will prompt people to say that he has a deep level of Gong Lik.

Recently when I went to China for a sight-seeing trip, I joined a tour group where we were taken by coach to the various sights. We usually called the driver 'Sifu', which in this case did not mean master or teacher, but someone with a high degree of skill. The driver was very good, he drove well in heavy traffic and made accurate turns and adjustments. He was also very reliable. We could say that he too had a high level of Gong Lik.



*Demonstrating elbow energy*

What these two examples have in common is accuracy of position, stability and attention to detail achieved through a long period of training. In martial arts we also need good position, accuracy and stability. In Wing Chun the most important aspect of Gong Lik is

what is known as the elbow energy. This energy keeps the elbows at the front of the body for protection.

In the photograph opposite Michael (on the left) is being attacked. He protects himself by using elbow energy to deflect the attack. The energy does not come from the forearm, as might be supposed, but from the elbow. From the elbow, the energy is then transferred up to his forearm. This is the principle of using elbow energy in Wing Chun.

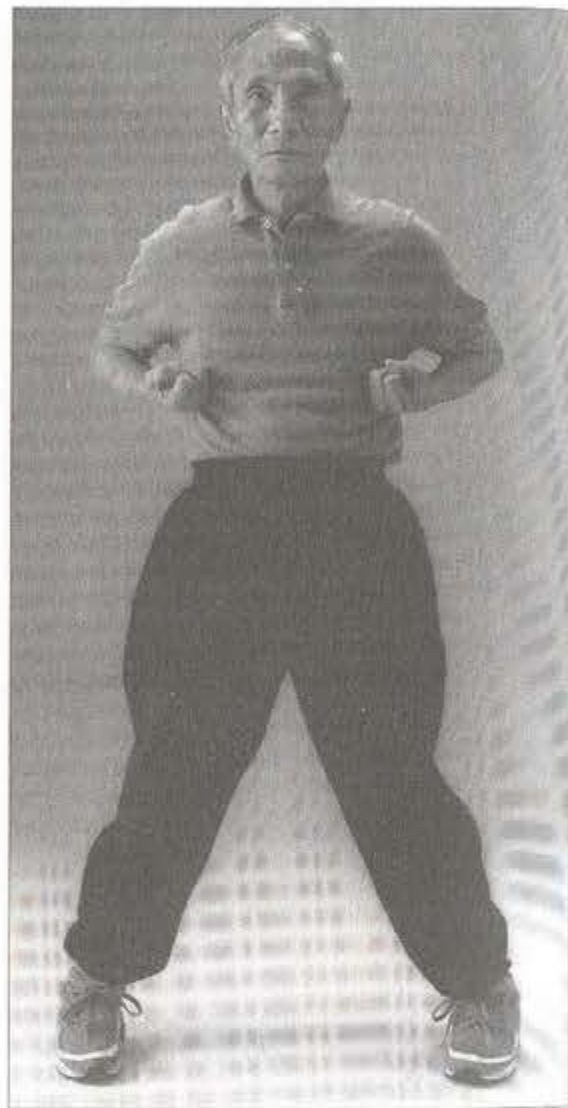
Developing martial art Gong Lik is not easy. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, the Gong Lik of most other arts is based on daily practice. The more you do, the better you will become. But the Gong Lik of martial arts cannot be treated in the same way. It would be impossible to try and find someone to fight with every day. Even a professional fighter cannot do this. Therefore, if you want to reach a high level, you must train hard by yourself.

The second reason is that we are dealing with people, not objects. We cannot change our opponent to suit us. When we face an enemy or opponent, we are facing an unknown quantity. In martial arts when you are with a person who wants to attack you or hurt you, they will try all possible ways to break down your correct position, accuracy and stability.

In Wing Chun an enemy will try to break through your elbows' energy and come to the centre of your body, your most vulnerable area, to try and sabotage your whole protection system. Most people will use strength to open your elbow energy or Paak (slap) your elbow to get inside your centre. Therefore, in martial arts, your strength must be enough to keep the stability and accuracy of position in order to protect yourself.

Siu Lim Tao helps develop your Gong Lik, especially for the elbows. There are three important points which should be considered when practising. They are:

1. You must keep your whole body, including your mind, relaxed. When teaching beginners, especially older people, I prefer them to remain relaxed instead of concentrating overly hard on getting their positions perfect. Experience tells me that correcting mistakes in a position is very easy. Changing a tense person into a relaxed person is far more difficult.
2. After opening the stance to the correct standing distance (see right), no part of your body should move other than your hands. The shoulders, head and legs do not move at all in the first part of Siu Lim Tao.
3. Try to do all the movements as slowly as possible. Be careful to do this properly, however. Many Wing Chun practitioners, even instructors, try to push their elbow inside the centreline while doing the Fuk Sau (Resting Hand, see page 75). While pushing the elbow forward, they also try to imagine that there is a heavy object in front of the Fuk Sau which stops it from moving forward. Therefore they use more strength, pushing out the Fuk Sau with the back of the hand. If you keep practising like this, the muscles on the back of your hands will develop too strongly. After lengthy training, you will even find it difficult to relax your body or hand. So why do people make this mistake? By keeping their strength on the elbow and pushing to the centre, students think they can build up Gong Lik. In fact, just like a small plant beginning to grow, if you keep pulling on the plant to make it grow faster, it will die. You cannot force internal strength. It must develop naturally.



*The correct standing distance in the Wing Chun stance*

## ***Fa Ging***

The aim of the second part of Siu Lim Tao is learning how to use strength. In most forms of fighting, the person with the greater strength normally wins. This is not the case in Wing Chun, however. Wing Chun is different. It is a martial art, so you have to know how to use strength. How does one know how to use strength? It is very simple: you use it when you need it. When you do not need it, do not use it. Never waste your energy and time.

How do you know when you need and when you do not need to use strength? Let me give you an example. We usually punch someone in order to injure them or cause them pain. However, think about when they will actually feel the injury or pain. They will not feel pain if you are holding a fist before you punch. Neither will they feel pain while you are punching and your fist is on its way towards them. It is only when your fist reaches them, during the very short time it is in contact, that the other person feels pain or receives an injury. Therefore, even if you use all your strength as you start to punch or while your fist is on the way, they will feel nothing. Only when your fist makes contact with their body will they receive all your energy. This is when the power of your punch is felt and this is the principle of how to use energy.

After attacking or punching, if you keep using strength, you will not be causing any additional pain or damage to the enemy. In fact, on the contrary, you may cause injury to yourself. So there is only a very short period in which you use strength when punching, and this is immediately before contact with the opponent. It is at this point that we can use Fa Ging. That is enough. Anything before this or after this is a waste. Bruce Lee called it the 'one inch punch'. Some other Wing Chun practitioners call it 'long distance Ging'. I call it 'short distance Fa Ging'.

Fa Ging takes time to achieve. Although it is very easy to

describe, it is very difficult to do. It is only after a long period of training that one can reach a good level. In this second part of Siu Lim Tao, you do not just experience how to use Fa Ging but also learn how to train Fa Ging in many different ways.

## Basic Skill Training

The third part of Siu Lim Tao contains all the basic hand positions and trains basic skill. All martial arts have their basic positions and skills. Wing Chun's basic hand positions are very simple: Tan Sau (Opening Hand), Bong Sau (Wing Hand) and Fuk Sau (Resting Hand). There is a saying, 'If you are good at Tan, Bong and Fuk, people will listen to you'. So how do you become good in Tan, Bong and Fuk Sau? There are four main things you need to learn:

- 1 The correct position of each Sau.
- 2 The applications of each and how and when to use them.
- 3 How to use energy, timing and position.
- 4 How to think ahead and be able to handle the opponent as his or her hand changes position.

The above are all things which you will learn when practising Sticking Hands. As you practise more, you will slowly begin to understand the hand positions, their applications, the use of energy and handling of an opponent. In Wing Chun the basics are very important because the skill relies on accuracy of position. It is similar to geometry. Understanding angles and their relationship to you and your opponent is crucial to good skill.

However, the most important thing is to start by relaxing both your mind and body. This will help you build up sensitivity which is



*Tan Sau - Opening Hand*



*Bong Sau - Wing Hand*



*Fuk Sau - Resting Hand*

crucial to good Sticking Hands. Once relaxed, you should practise the first section of Siu Lim Tao (see pages 66-81) slowly, taking your time to feel the energy beginning to develop. In the last two sections of Siu Lim Tao (see pages 82-99), you should concentrate on making the movements clear and clean. Although these sections are done more quickly, the movements must not become clouded or mixed up. This too will help you learn the correct hand positions.

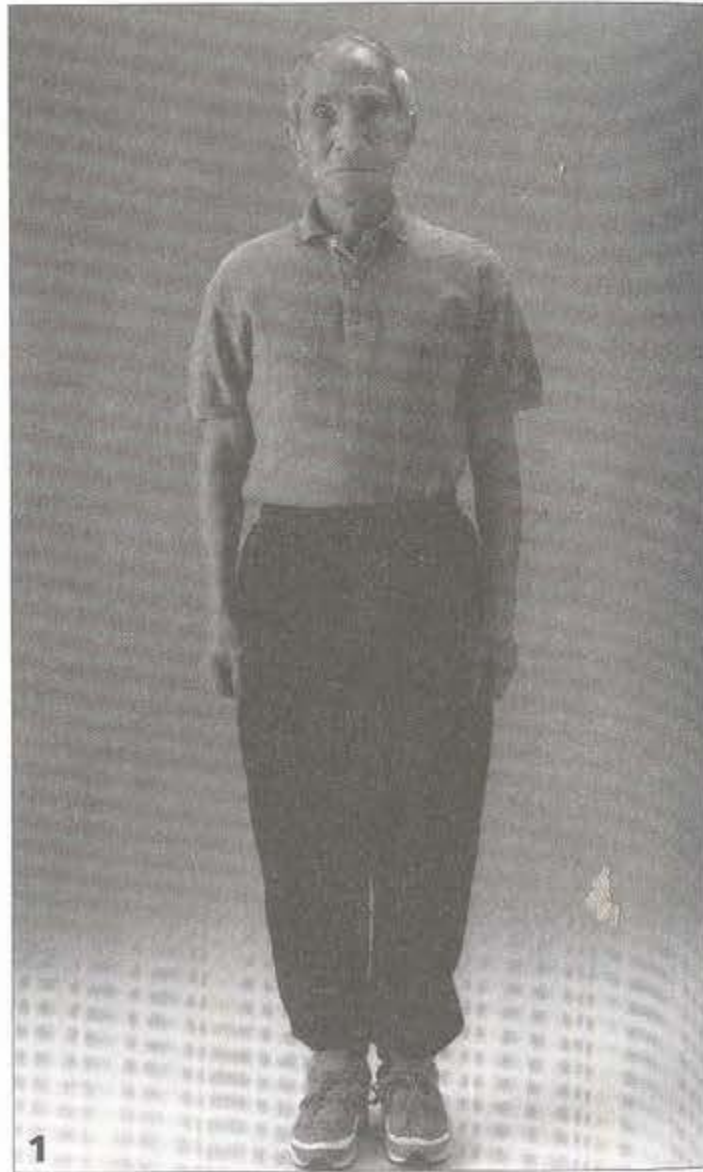
Finally, another important point to consider in the opening stance (see overleaf) is not to come up on your toes. Your body should remain level and not move up and down. Next, relax and let the energy sink to the Dantien (the area just below your navel where Qi is stored). The weight of your body should be on the upper thighs and the back should be straight throughout practice, with the shoulders back, not hunched forward. If you hunch your shoulders, you will block your lungs.

# The First Form

## Start

- 1 Stand still, legs and feet together and back straight. Relax your whole body, muscles and joints. Look to the front.
- 2 Make relaxed fists with your hands and then draw them up to the sides of your chest so that your forearms are horizontal to the floor. Keep your shoulders relaxed, chest open and back straight. Do not rest your fists on your body, but lightly support them with your arms. This is their resting position.

Now bend your knees, keeping your spine straight, so that your weight sinks down.



- 3 Open the stance by first sliding your toes so that they point outwards. Then push your heels out to follow until your feet are a shoulder width apart with the heels slightly wider than the toes. Keep your body level when opening the feet, don't move up and down, and keep your weight on your heels. Allow your thighs to sink in slightly, but support yourself with your upper thigh muscles, not your knee joints.

Breathe slowly, evenly and naturally through your nose, keeping your mouth closed.

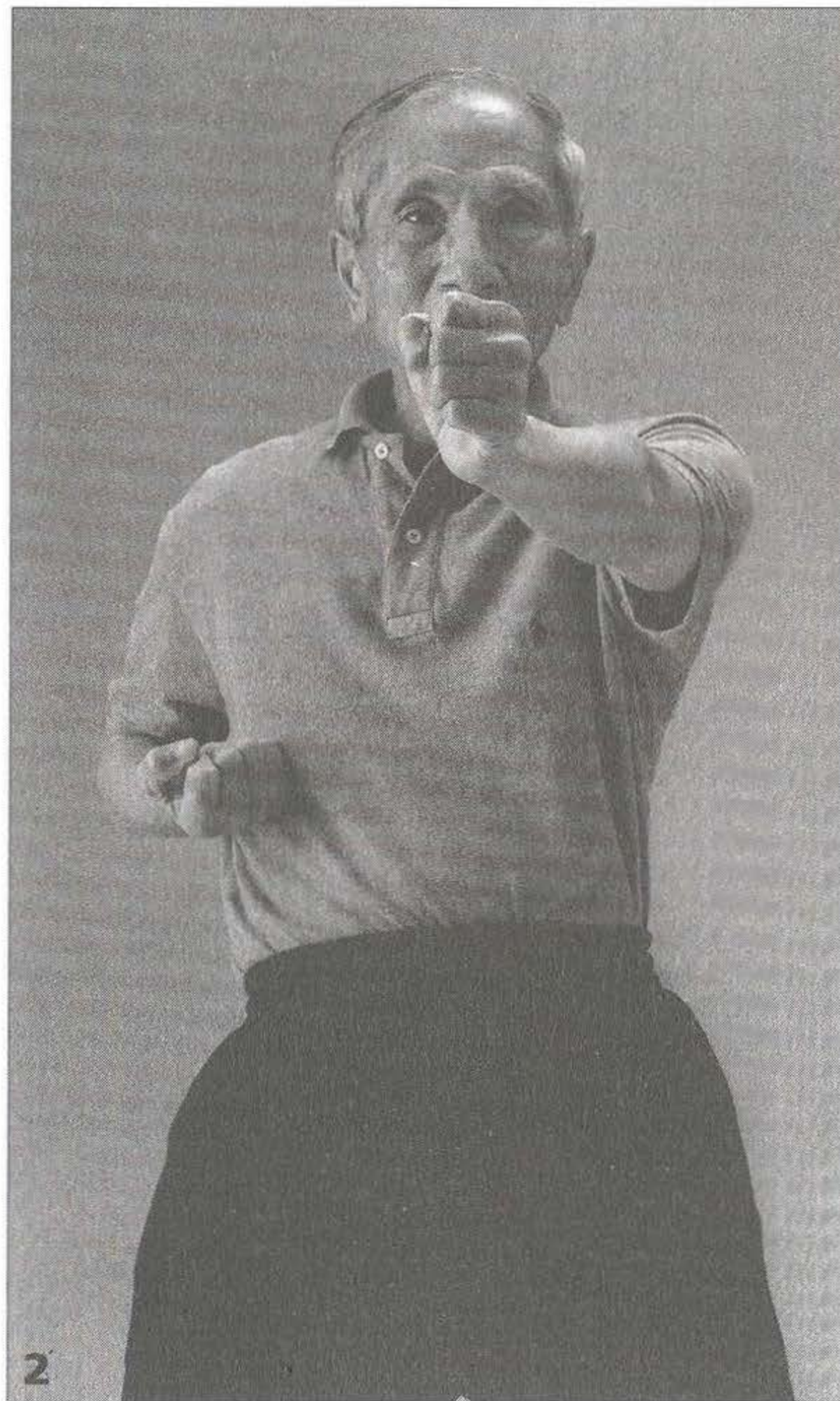
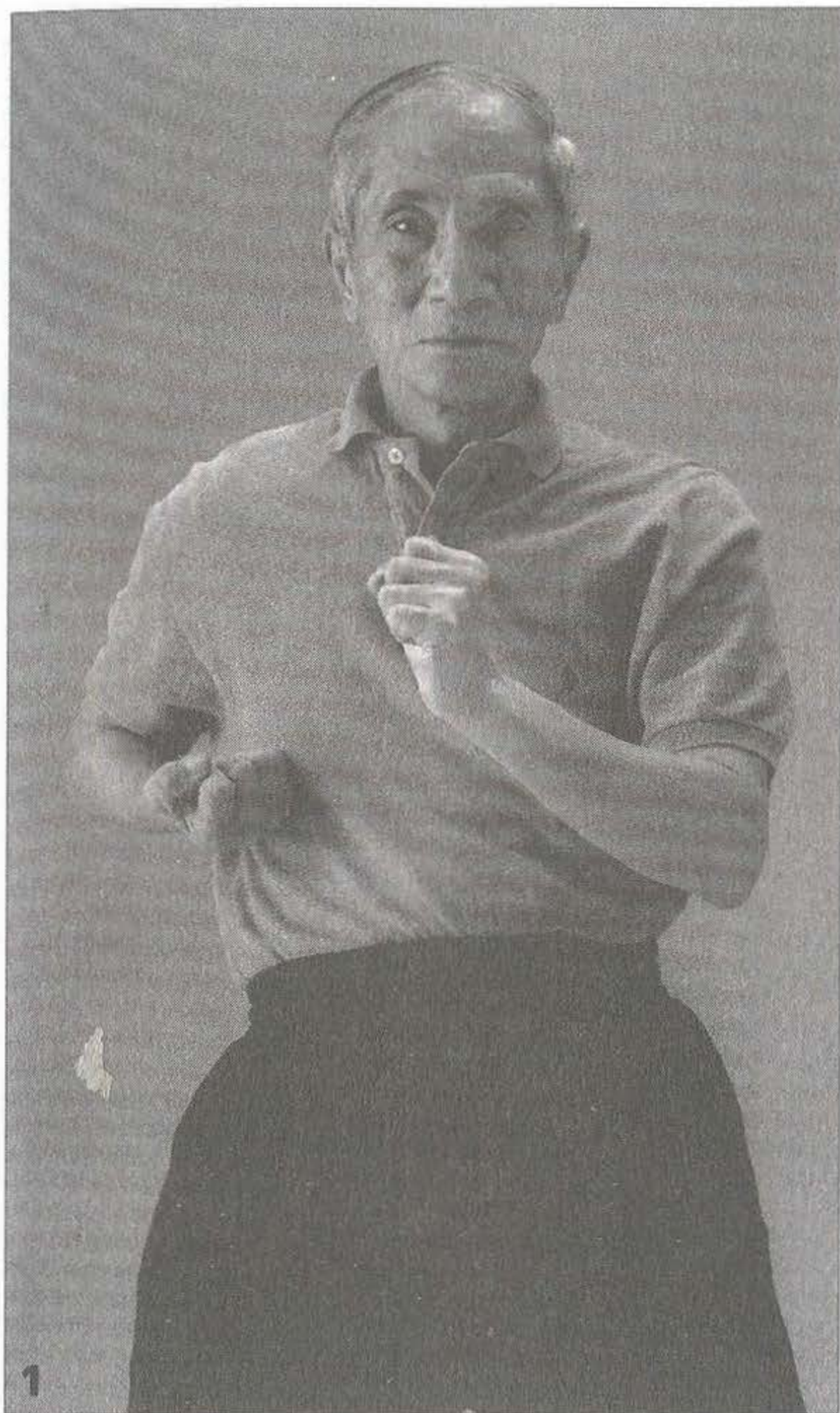
This is the basic Wing Chun training position.



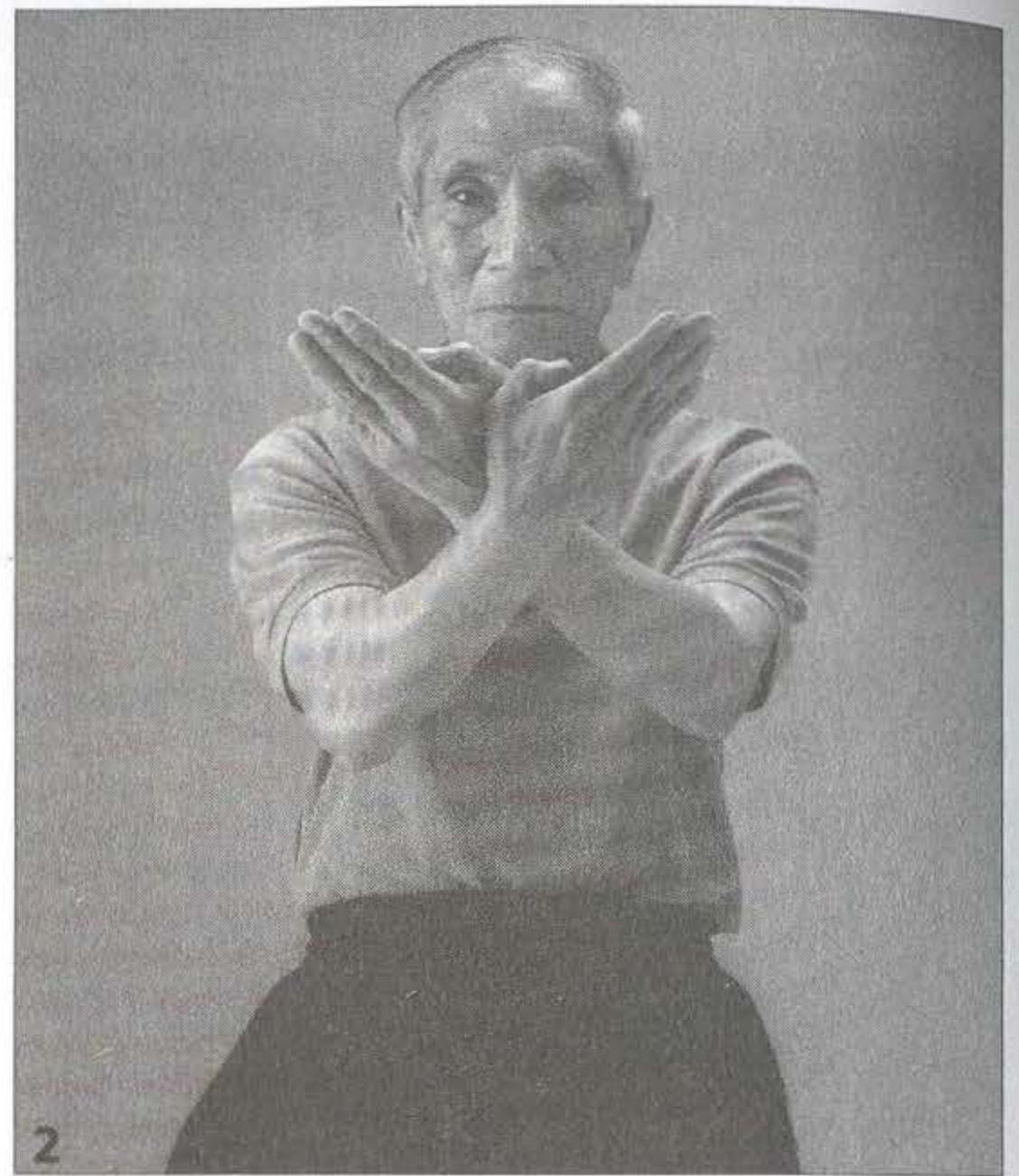
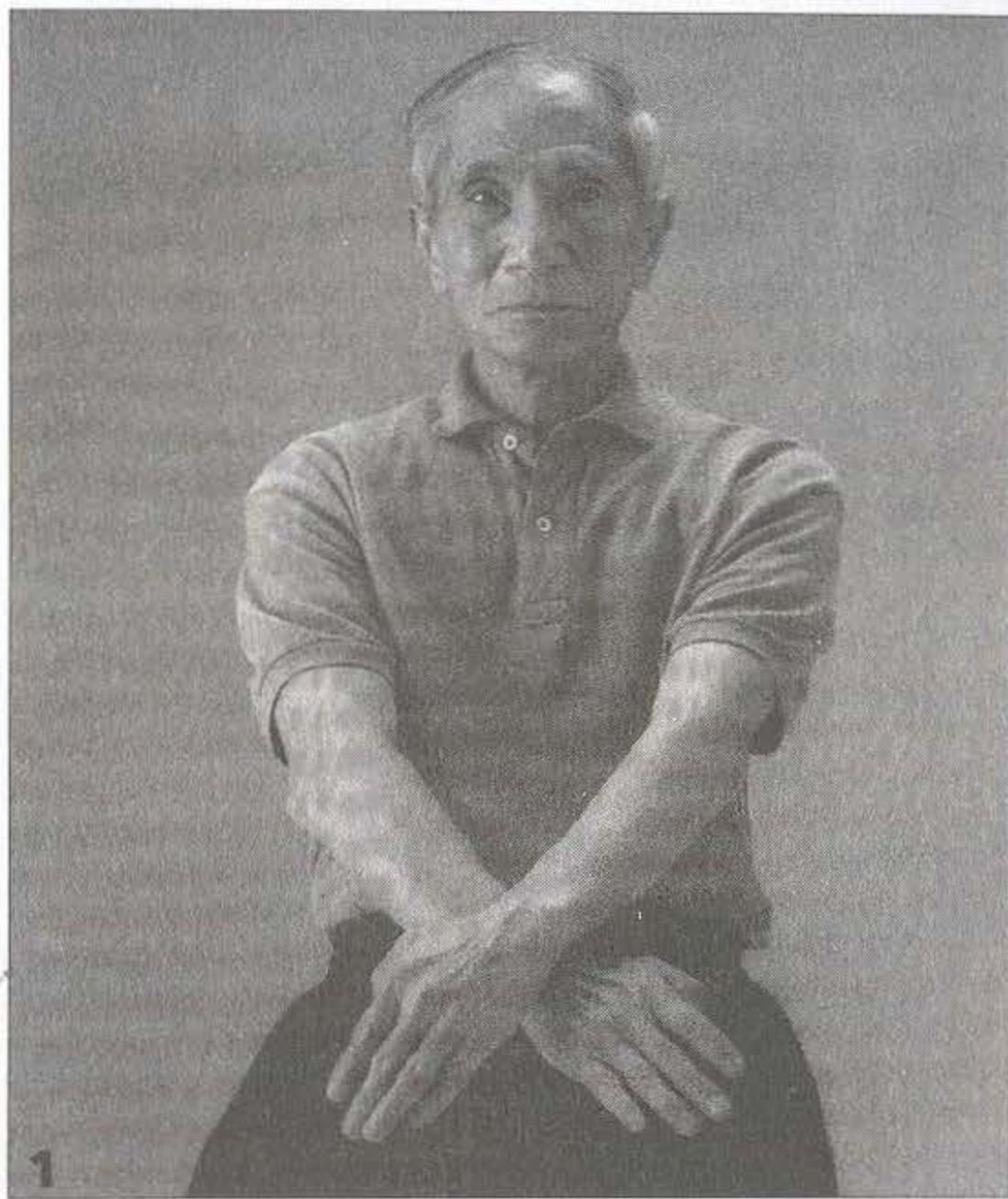
# 冲拳

## ***Chung Kuen***

- 1** Bring your left fist to the centre of your chest.
- 2** Punch with the knuckles of your fist facing forwards. The punch should travel in a straight line until your arm is nearly fully extended. Keep your fist relaxed until the end when you 'Fa Ging' and release the energy. However, do not put too much pressure on your elbow as this can injure the joint in the longterm.



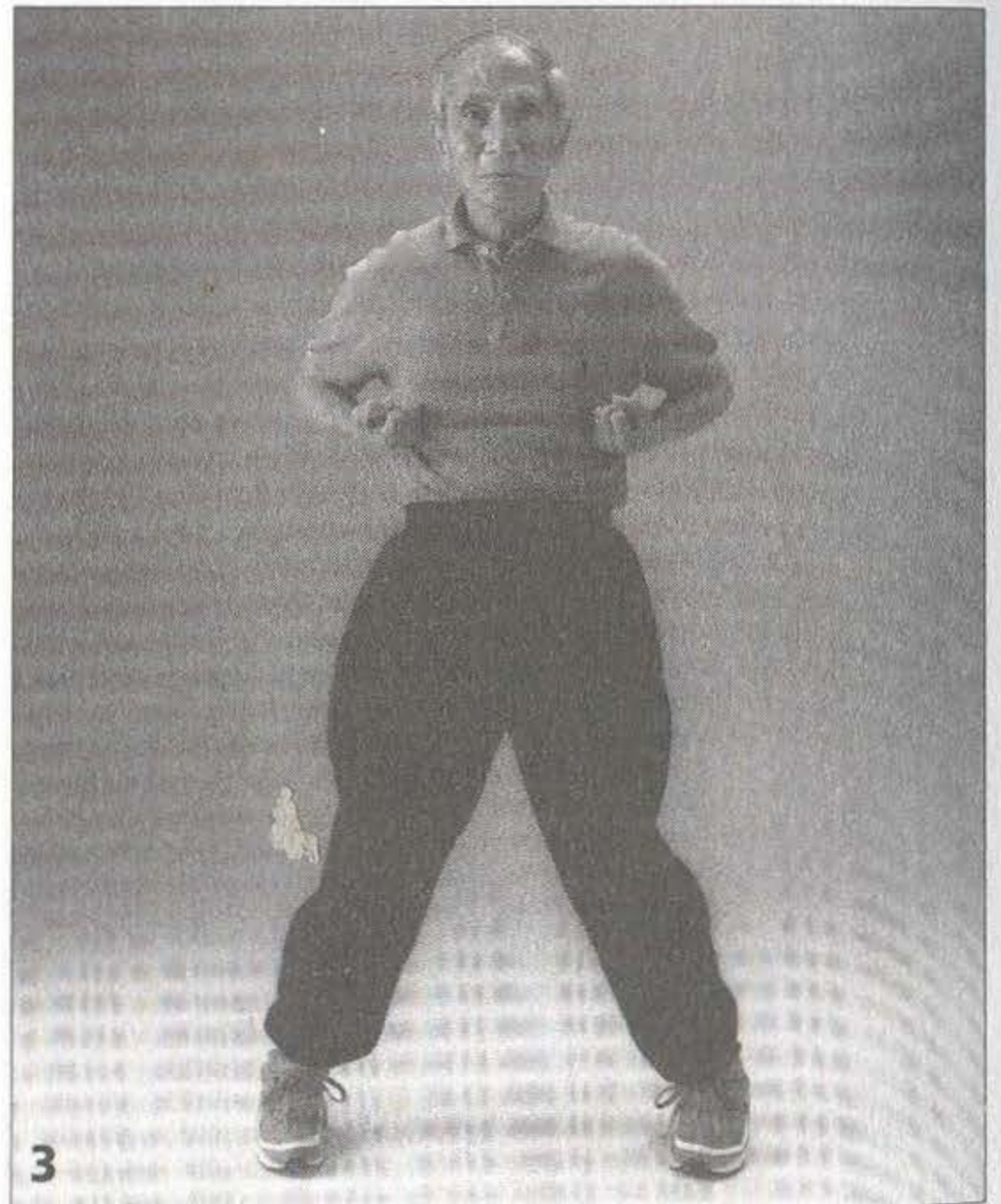


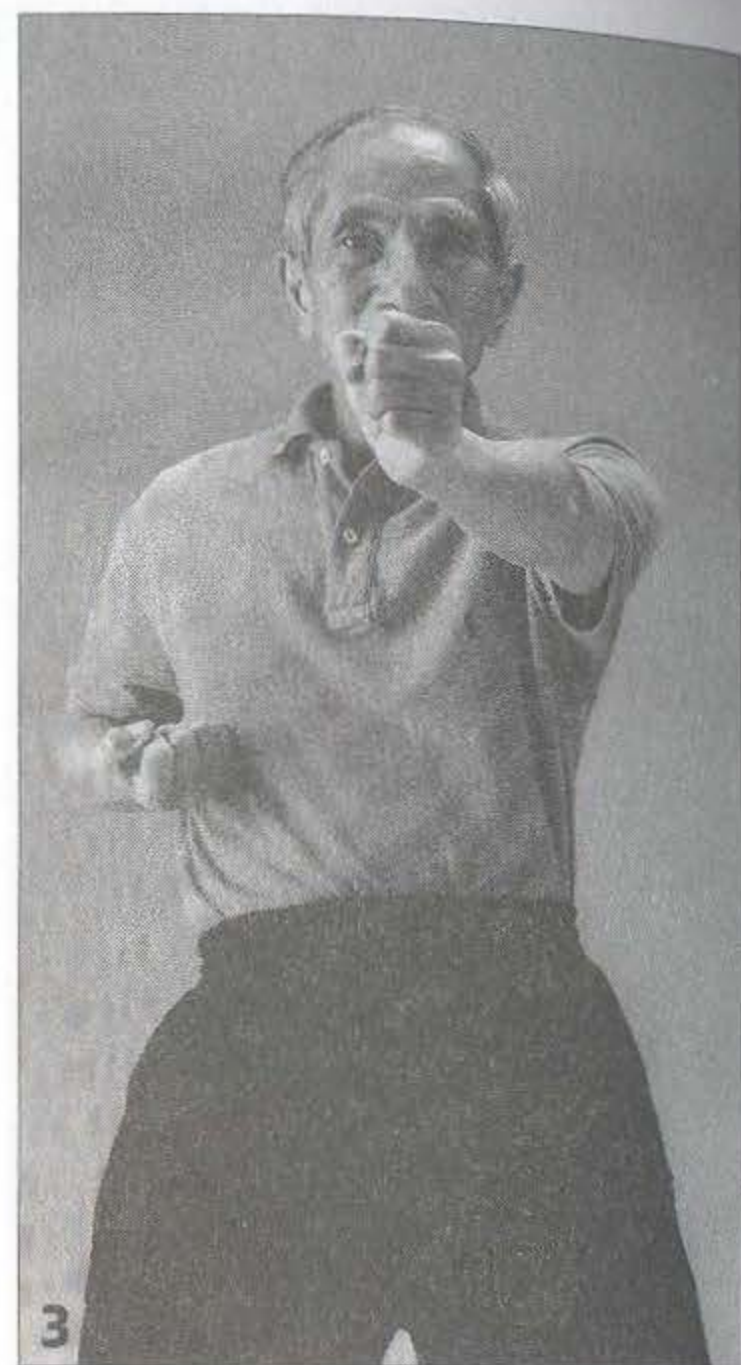
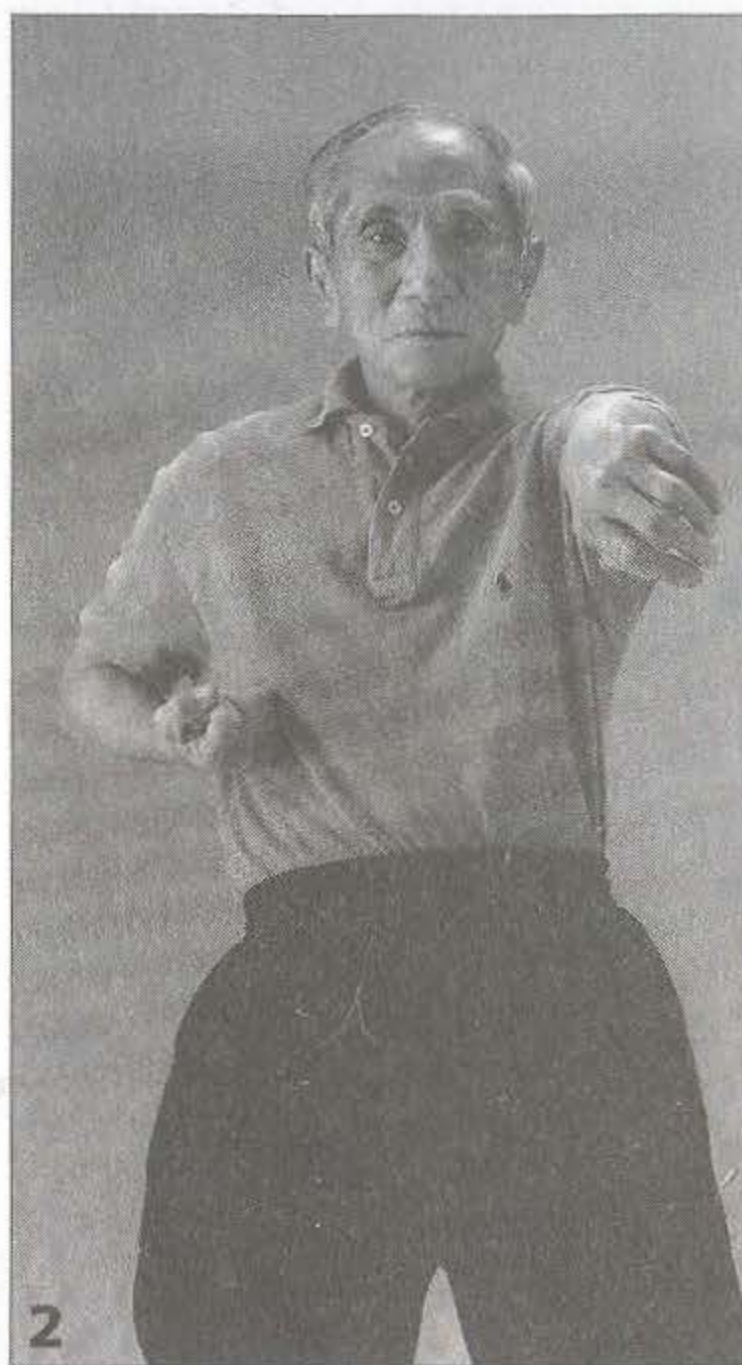
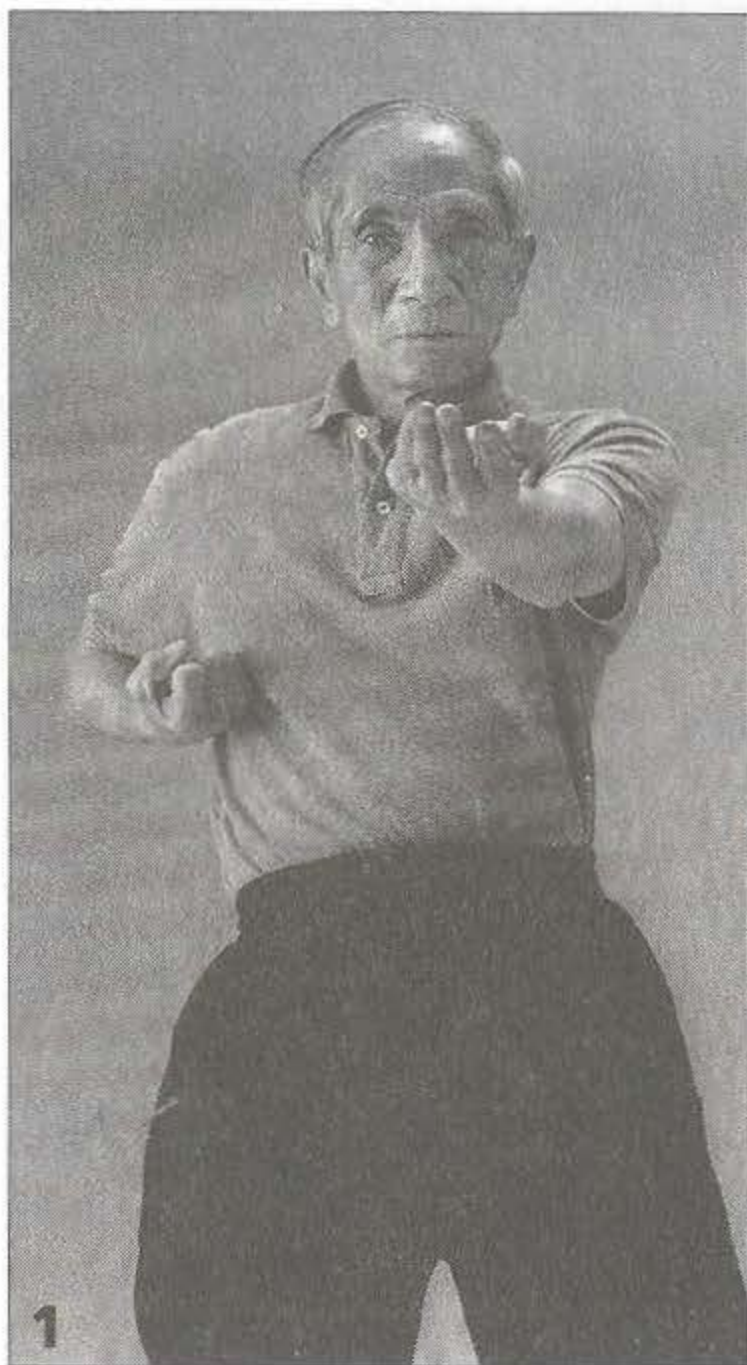


# 拿中線

## ***Mark the Centreline***

- 1** Cross your open hands in front of your body at lower stomach level.
- 2** Then move them up directly in front of your chest. The path of the hands marks the centreline.
- 3** Now draw them back to their resting position.



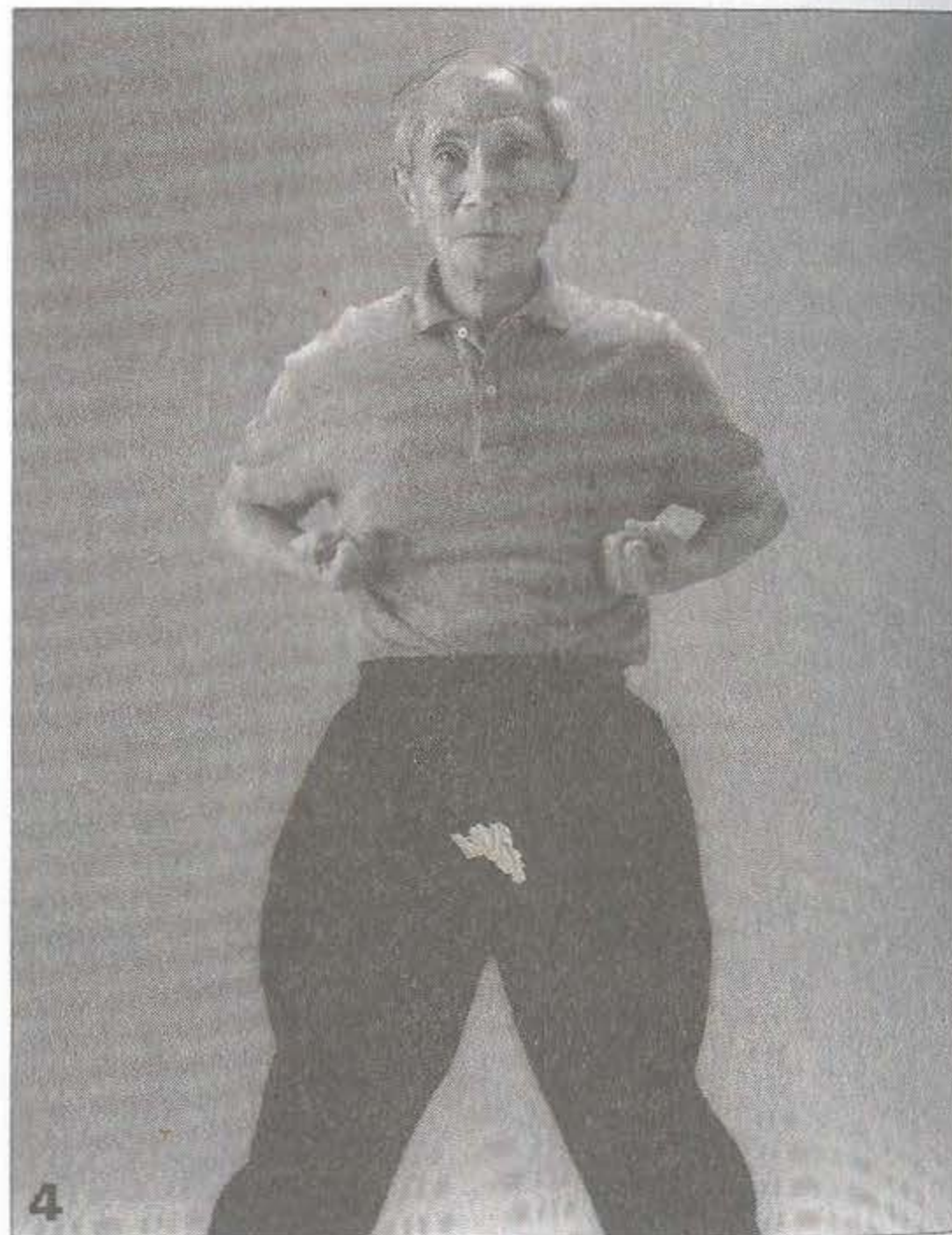


# 收拳

## ***Withdraw the Fist***

- 1** Open your fist with the palm facing upwards.
- 2** Next, curl your hand slightly and slowly rotate the wrist inwards in a clockwise direction as far as it will go.
- 3** Extend your fingers outwards, then slowly pull them into a fist.
- 4** Withdraw the fist back to its resting position.

Repeat same sequence with the right hand.

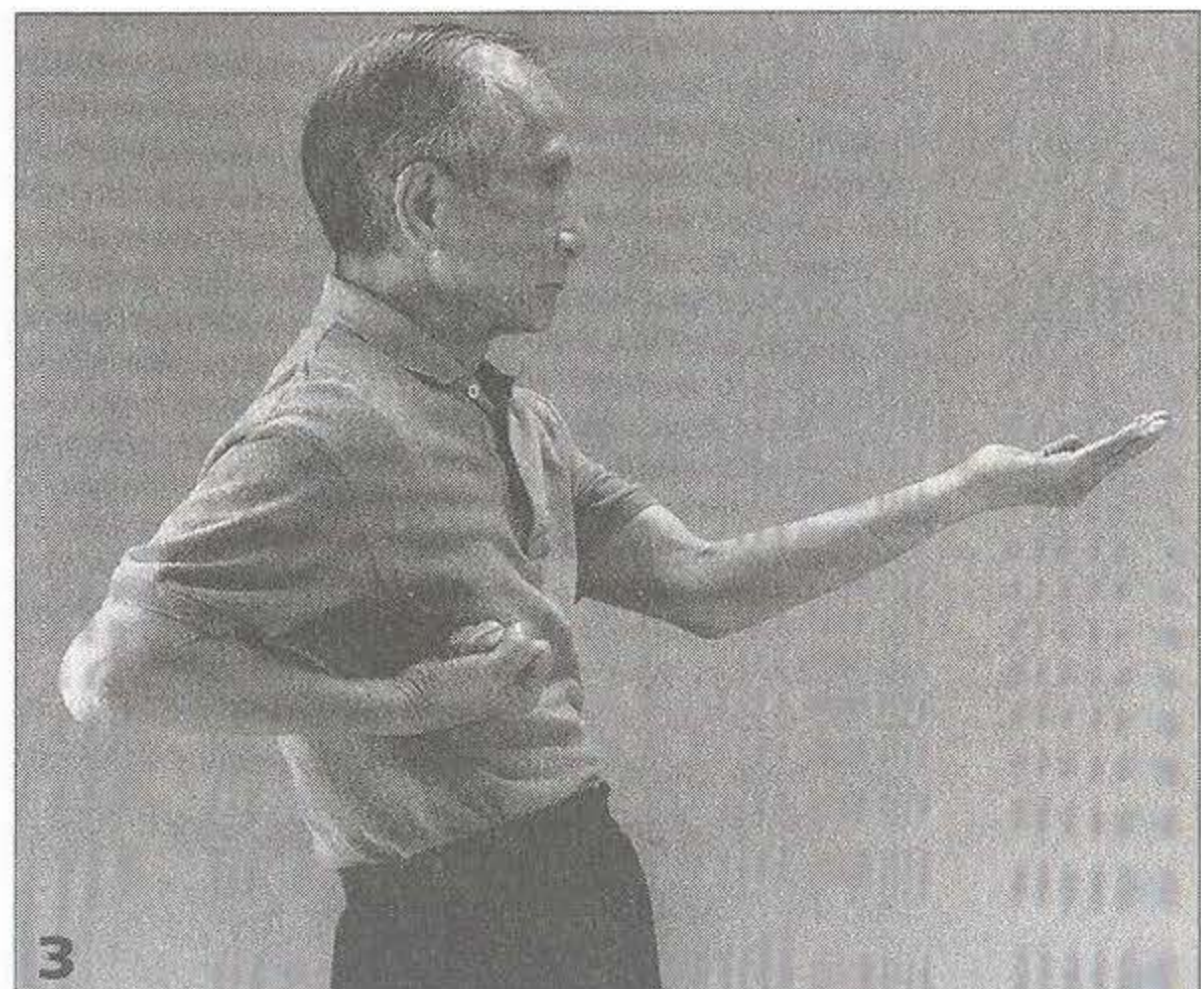
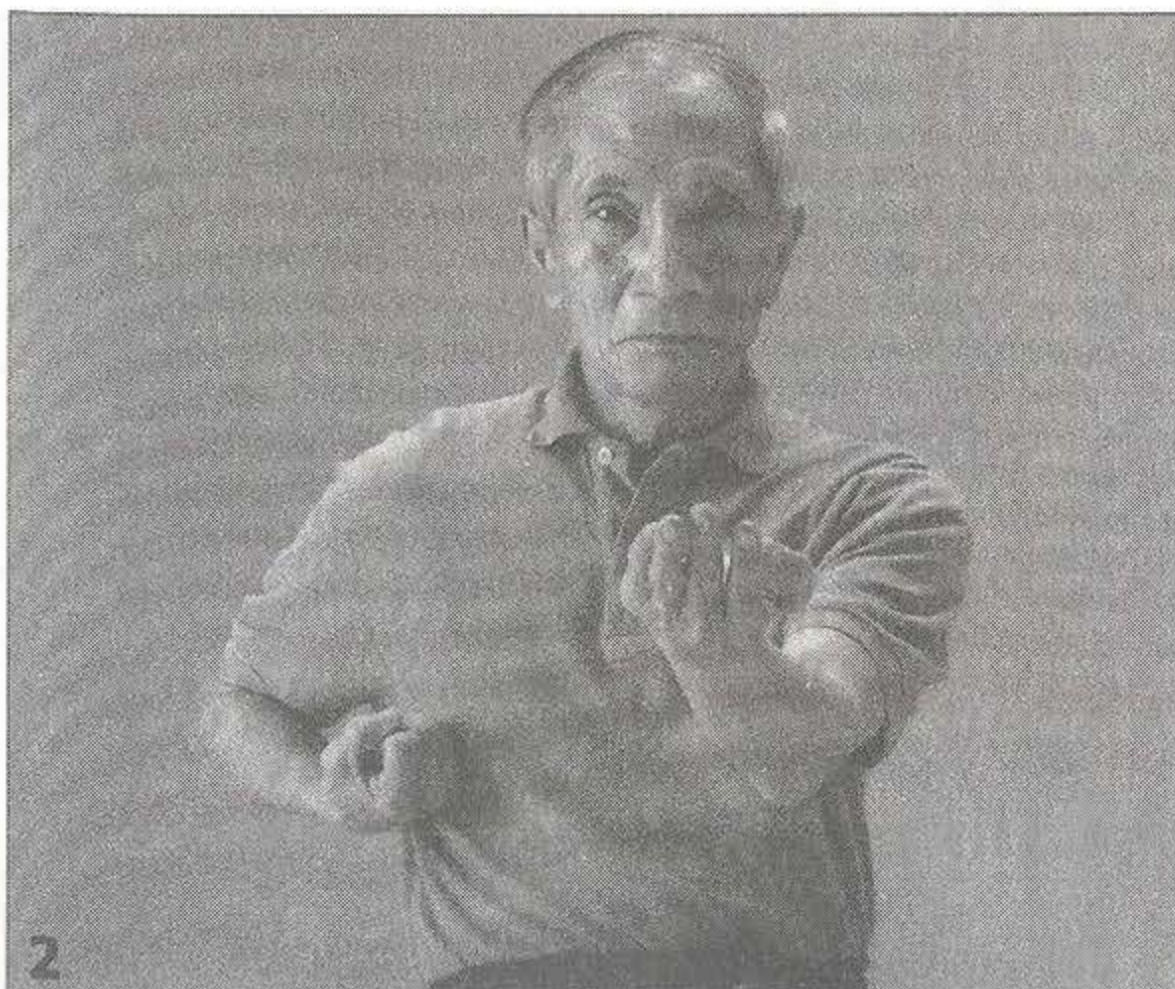
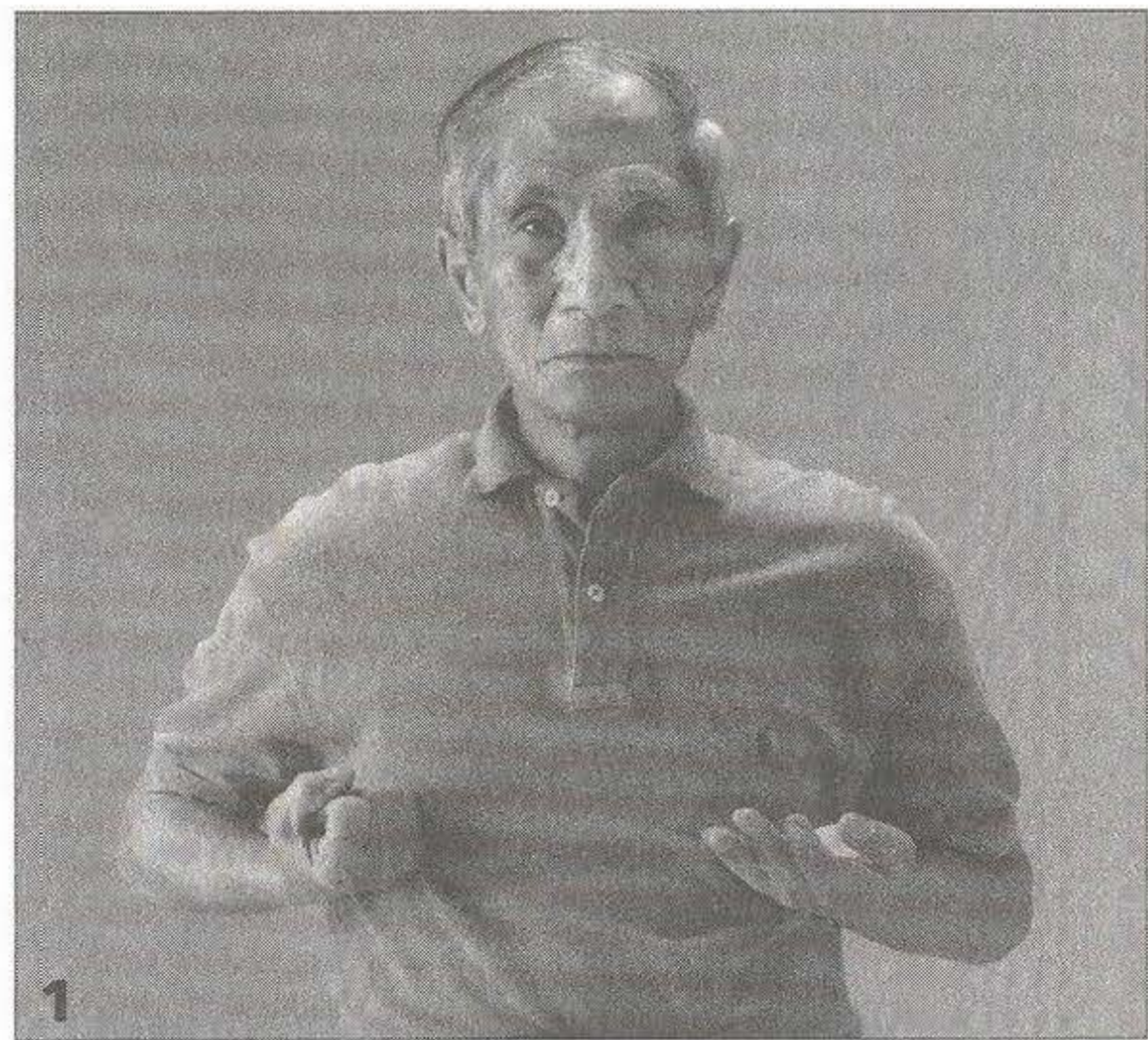


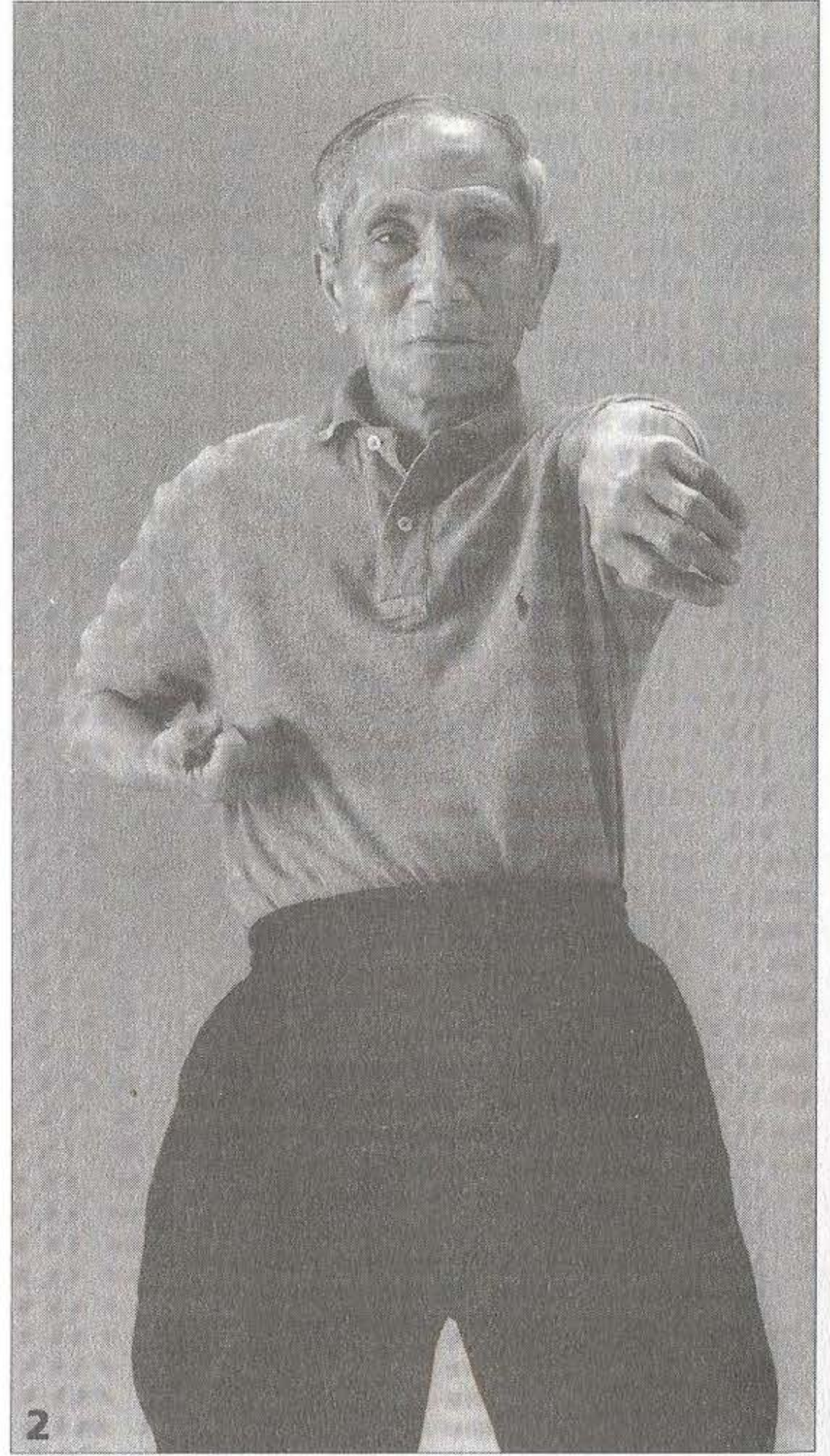
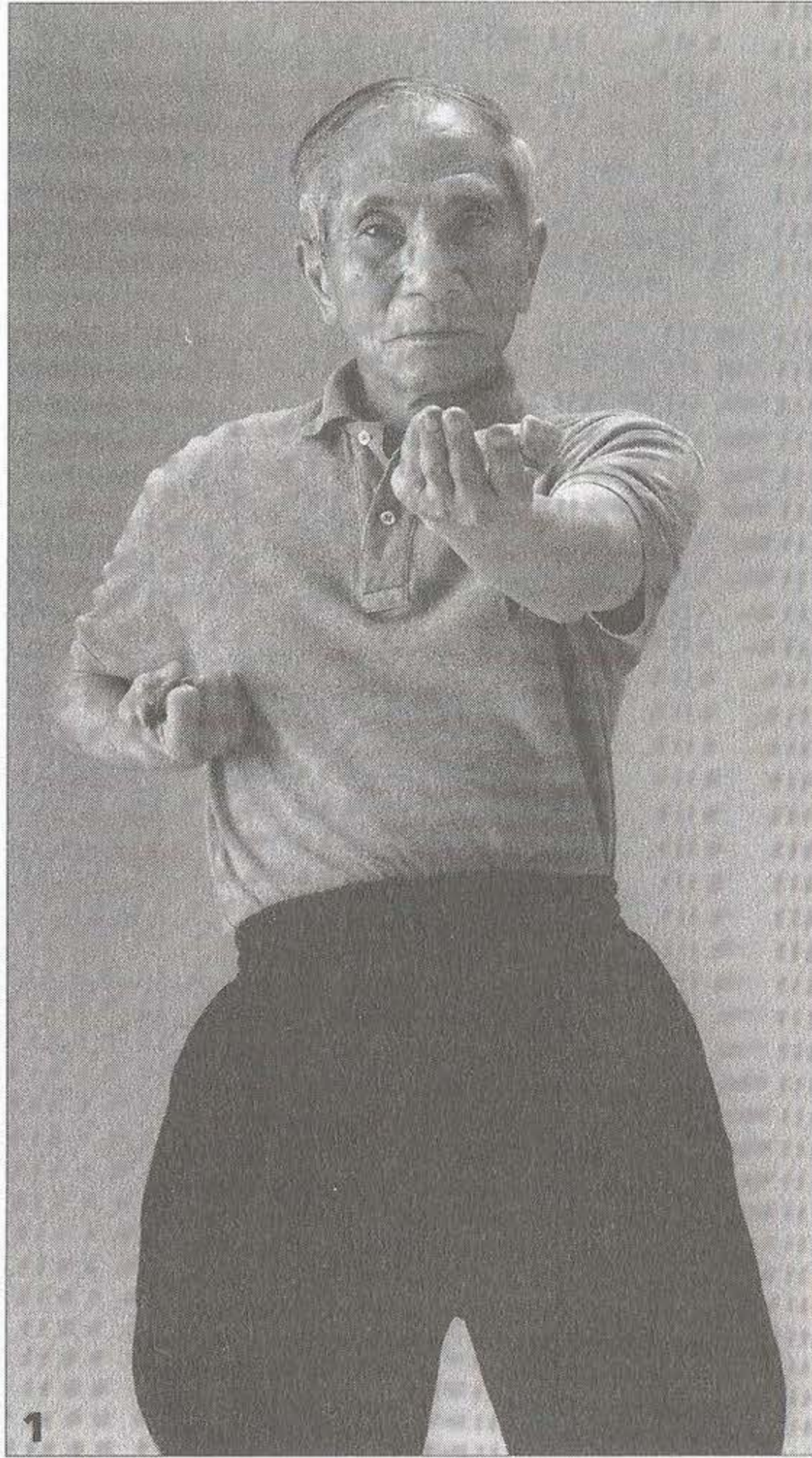
# First Section – Gong Lik

攤  
手

## Tan Sau

- 1 From its resting position, open your left hand and slowly extend it forwards. The tip of your middle finger should stay in line with the centreline.
  - 2 As your elbow clears the side of the body it too should move towards the centreline. Your arm should not be tense, and your energy should be in the elbow.
  - 3 Stop your hand before the forearm crosses over the centreline. Keep your fingers naturally straight, but not tensed or stretched. Your thumb should be naturally bent, but not pressed down.
- This movement should be performed very slowly.





圓手

***Huen Sau***

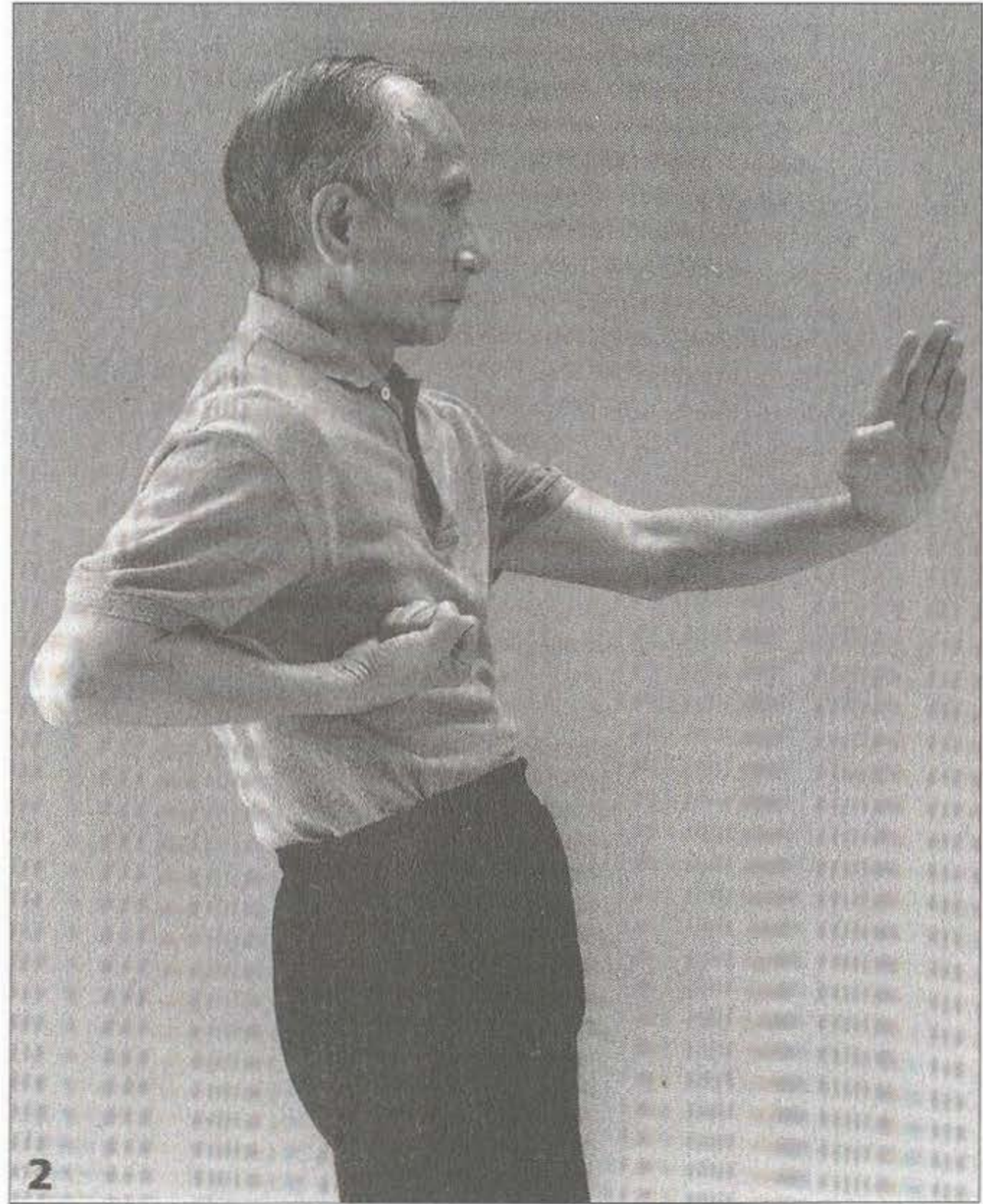
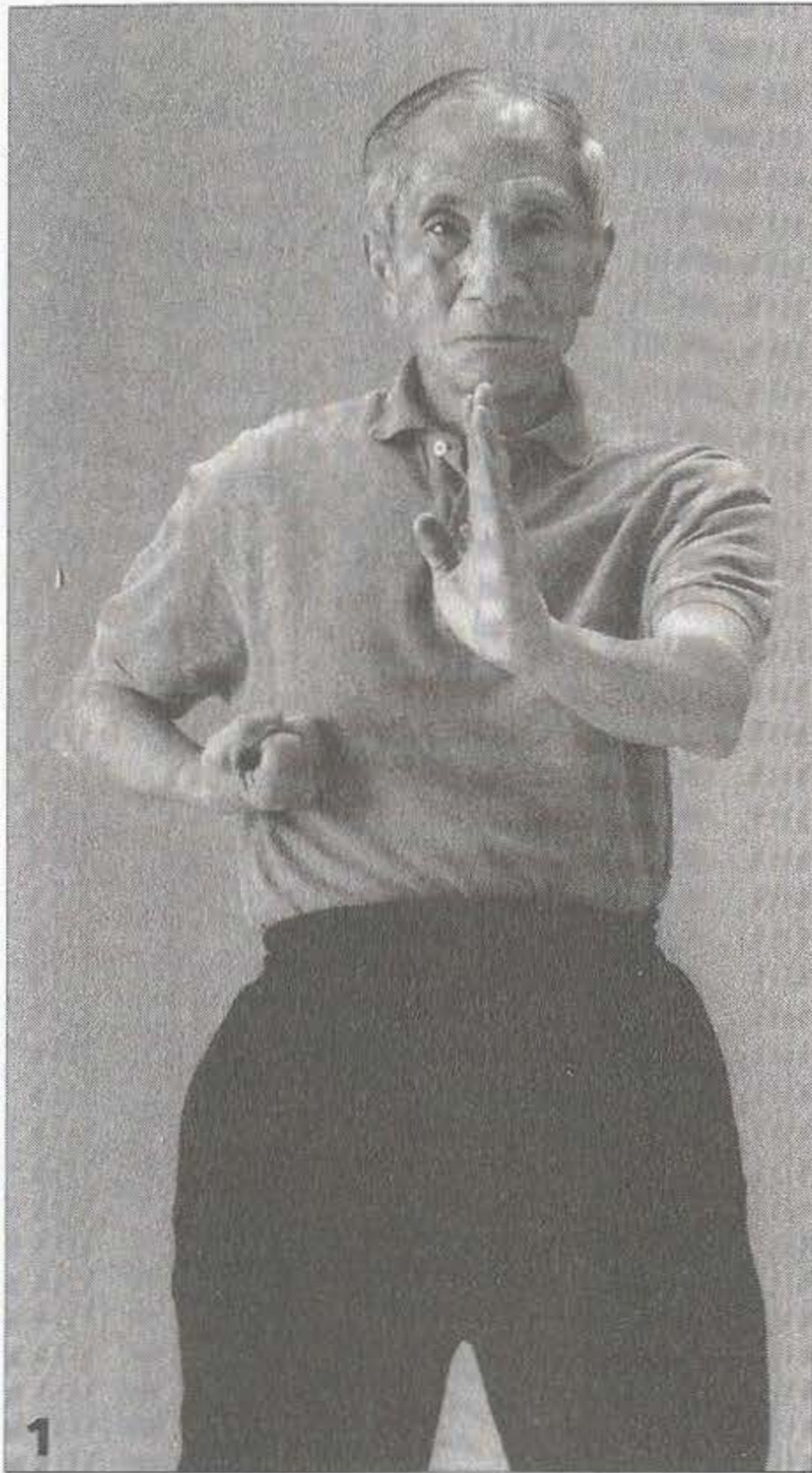
- 1 Relax your elbow and curl your hand slightly.
- 2 Slowly rotate your wrist inwards in a clockwise direction as far as it will go.

Allow your arm to float slightly and extend your fingers outwards and upwards until your palm is facing outwards (see photo 1 opposite).

# 枕手

## *Jum Sau*

- 1 As your palm faces outwards, sharply sink your forearm by chopping down with your wrist joint.
- 2 This will bring your palm to face the side with your fingers pointing up and your thumb bent. This is a small movement, so although your wrist joint will drop, your whole arm should not move down very much. Keep your fingers pointing up and in line with the centreline.

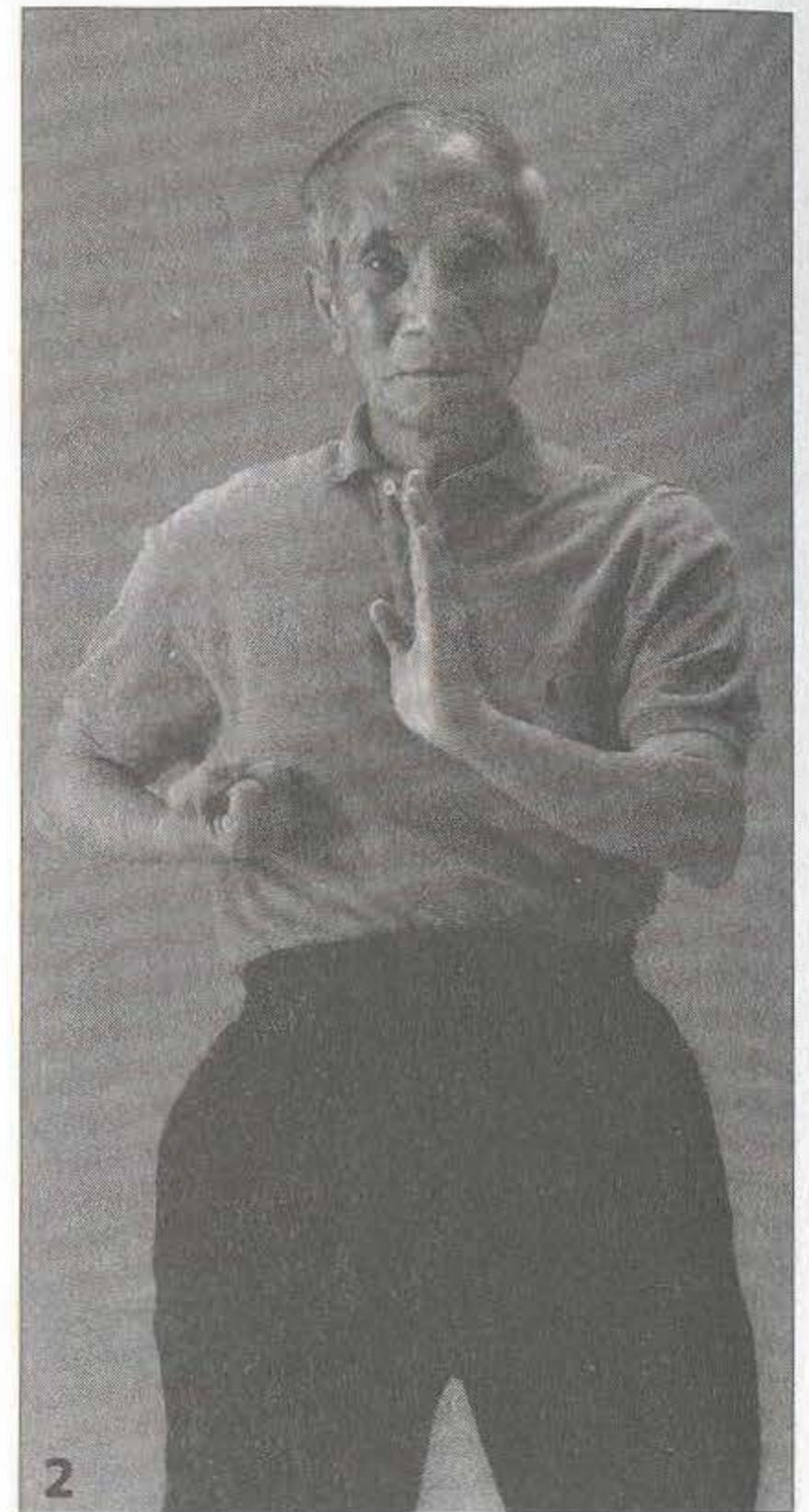
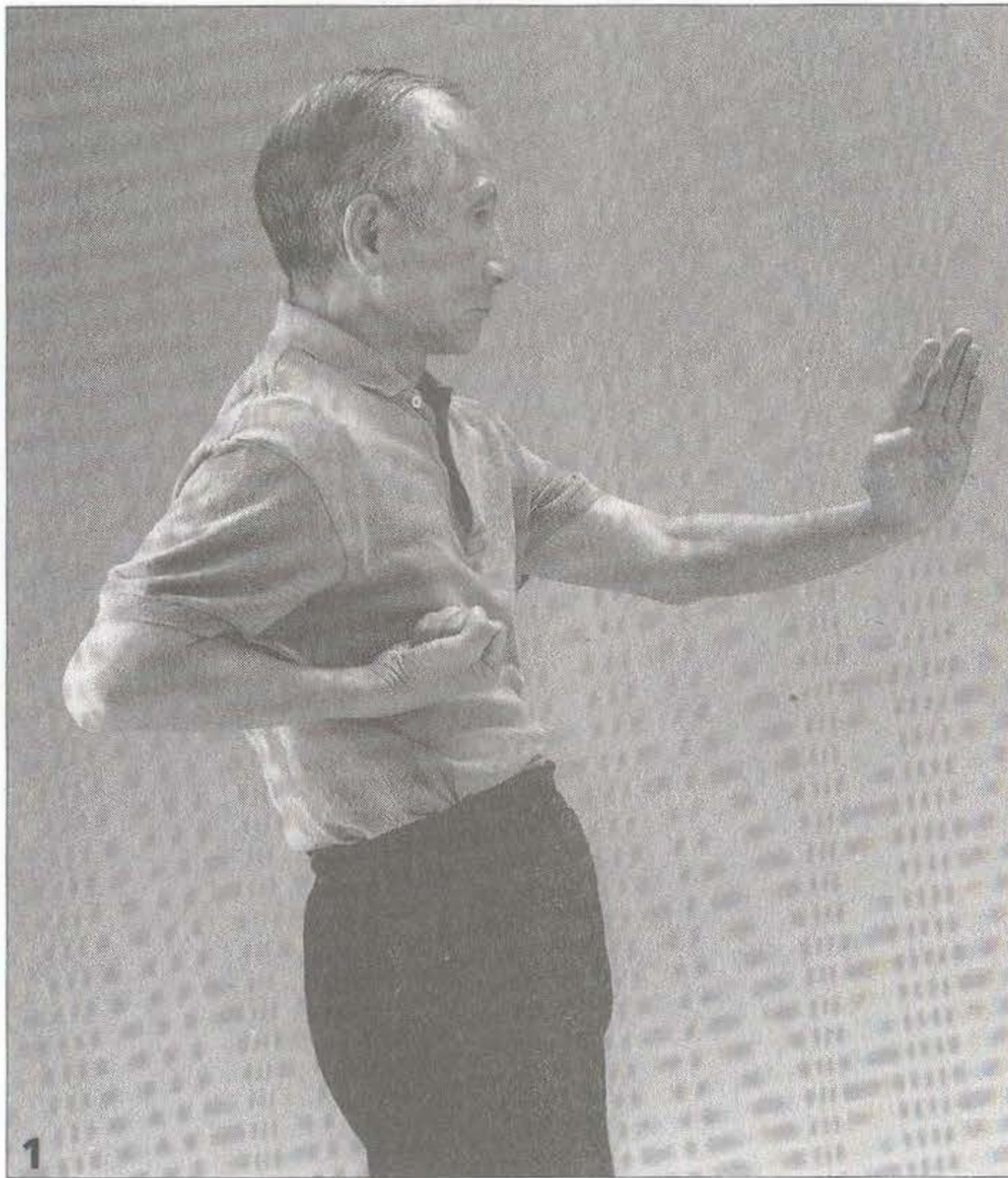


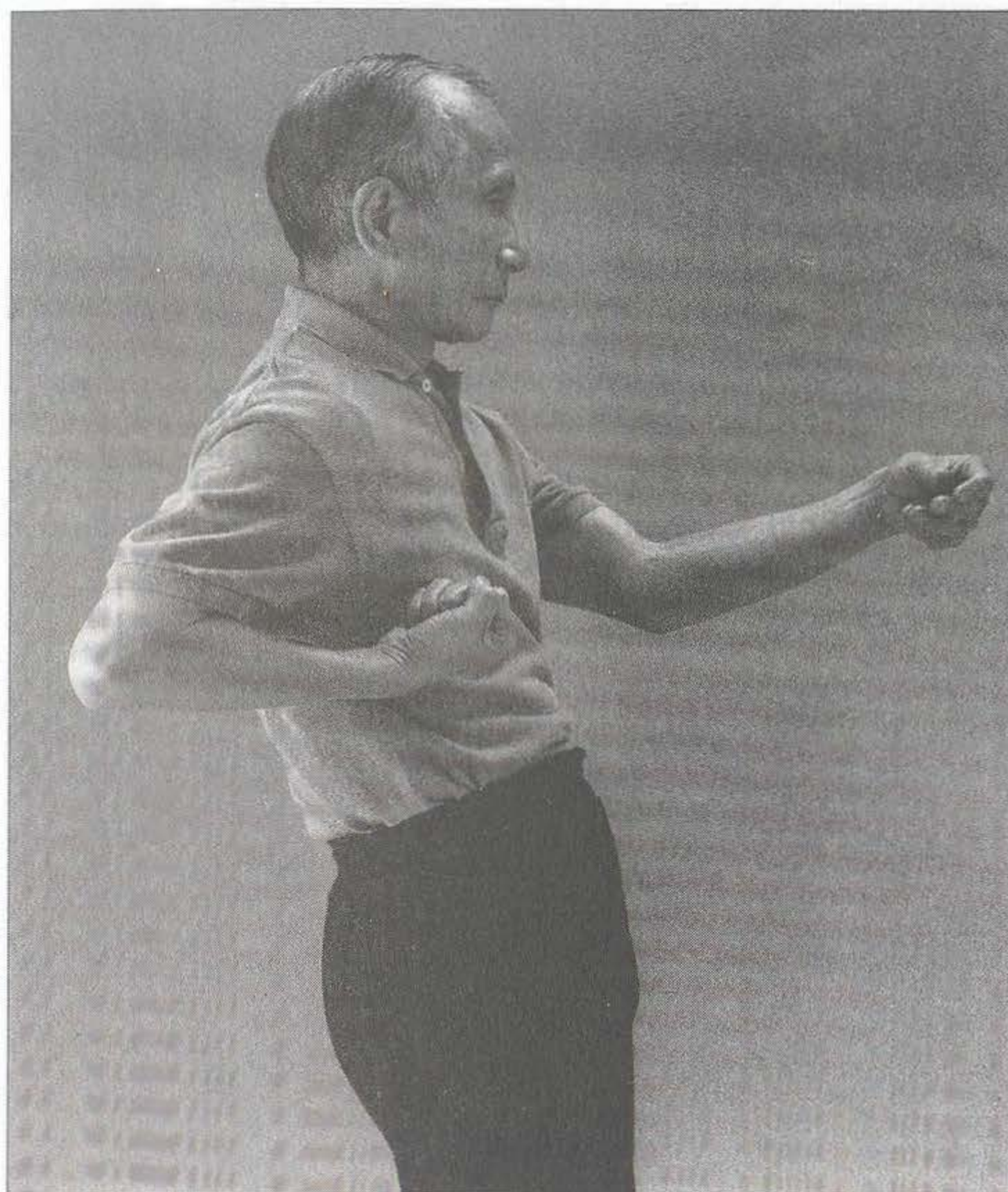
# 護 手

## *Wu Sau*

- 1 Draw your palm slowly back towards your body, maintaining its vertical position. Let your elbow relax and point outwards as you bring your palm back.
- 2 You should stop when your palm is about 8-10 inches (20-25 cms) from your middle chest.

Perform this movement very slowly.



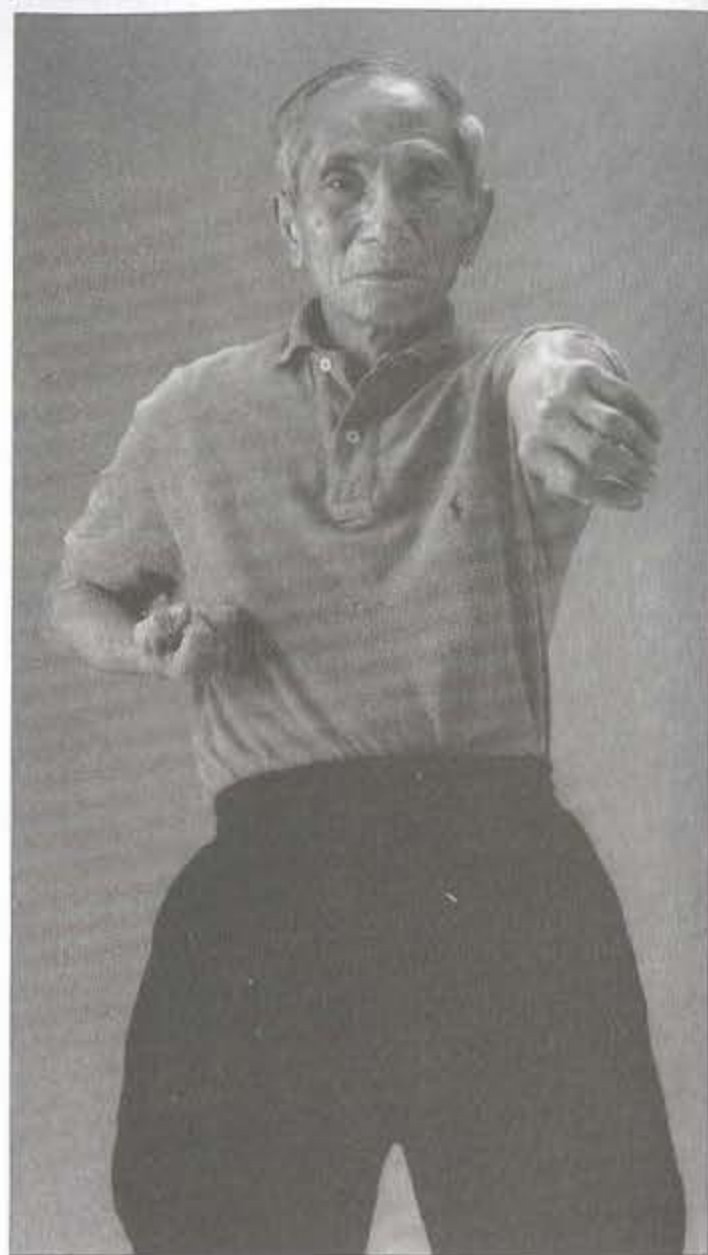


# 伏手

## ***Fuk Sau***

- 1** Relax your wrist and let your Wu Sau drop into the Fuk Sau position by letting your palm fall down naturally.
- 2** Turn your palm so that your fingers and thumb are horizontal to the ground and make a very loose claw shape. The elbow will drop down naturally. Energy should be in your elbow, not your wrist. Slowly extend your arm forward. Your elbow should move in towards the centreline (without going past it) as your arm goes forward. Your shoulders should not move or hunch forward. Do not force the elbow towards the centreline, or you will become tense.

This movement should also be performed slowly.



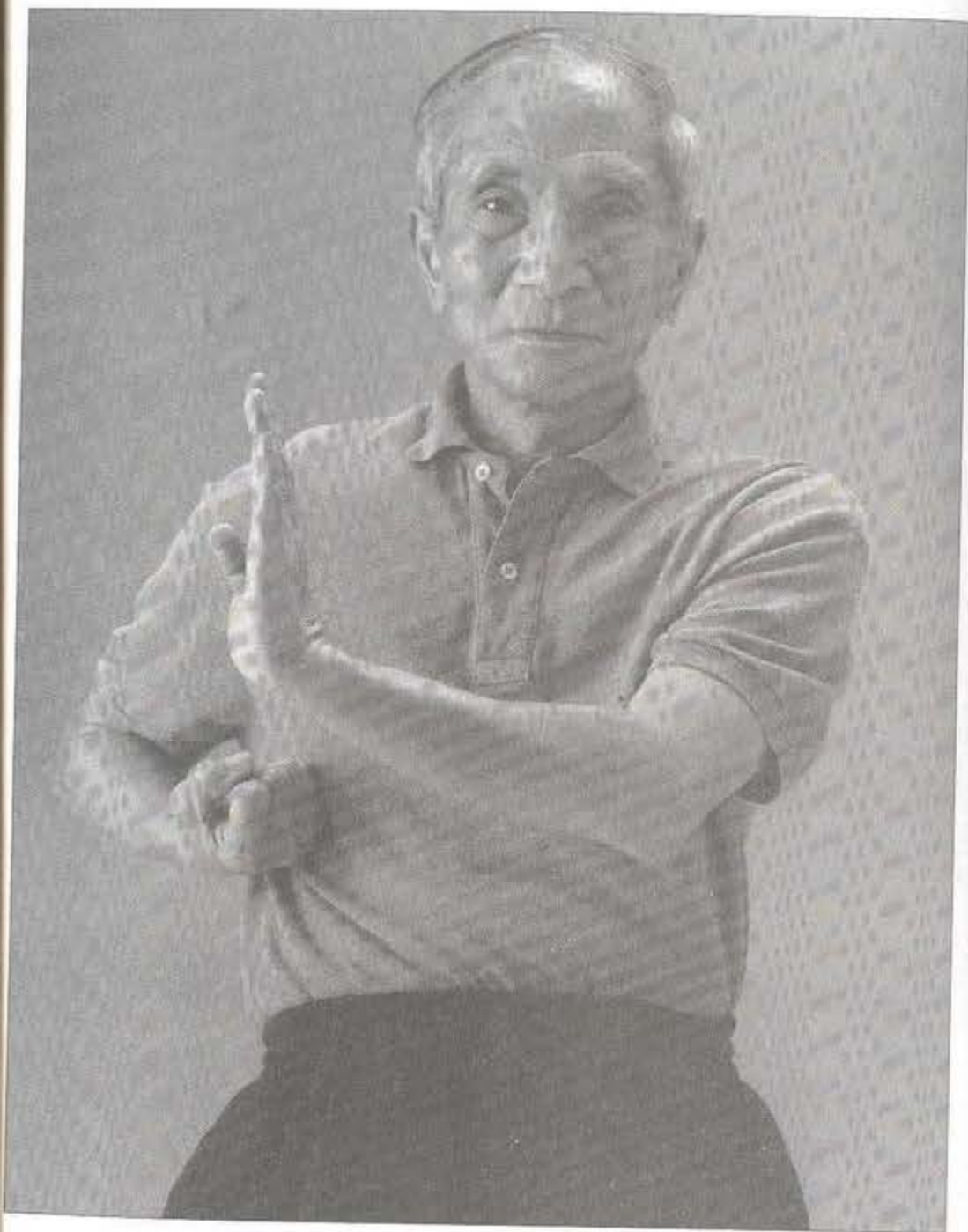
### ***Huen Sau/Jum Sau/Wu Sau***

When the Fuk San reaches its fullest extent, relax the elbow and wrist, and perform Huen Sau, Jum Sau and Wu Sau again. Repeat the entire sequence – Fuk Sau, Huen Sau, Jum Sau and Wu Sau twice more. Your hand should finish in front of your chest in the Wu Sau position (see opposite).



## ***Paak Sau***

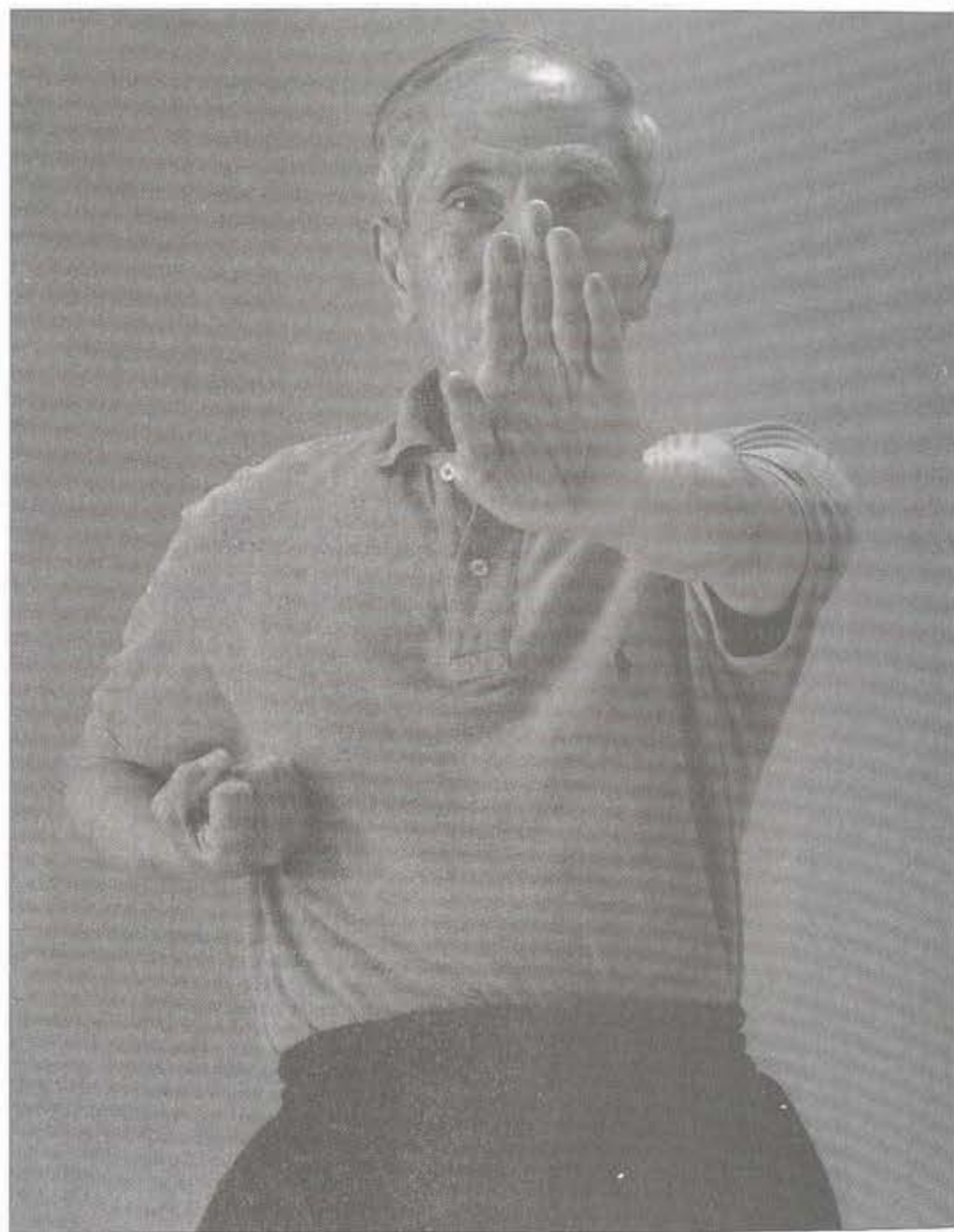
From Wu Sau, relax your wrist and then push your palm quickly out to the right, as if warding off a punch. Your hand should not go past your shoulder, and you should only use energy at the point at which you would make contact with an opponent's energy.

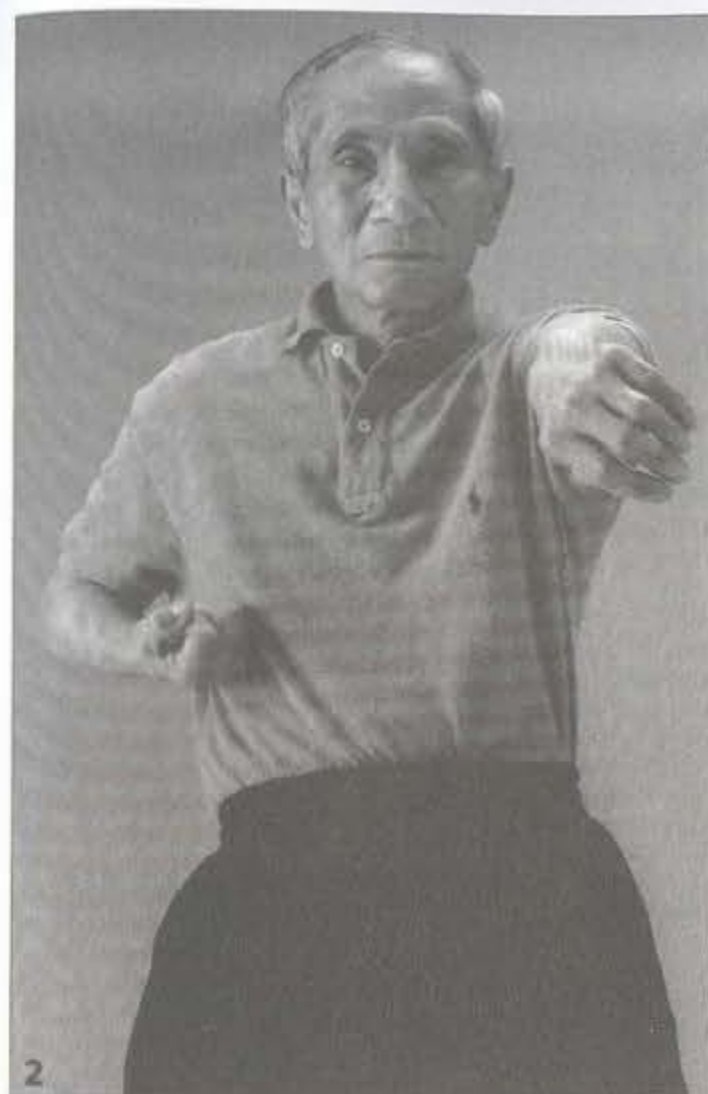
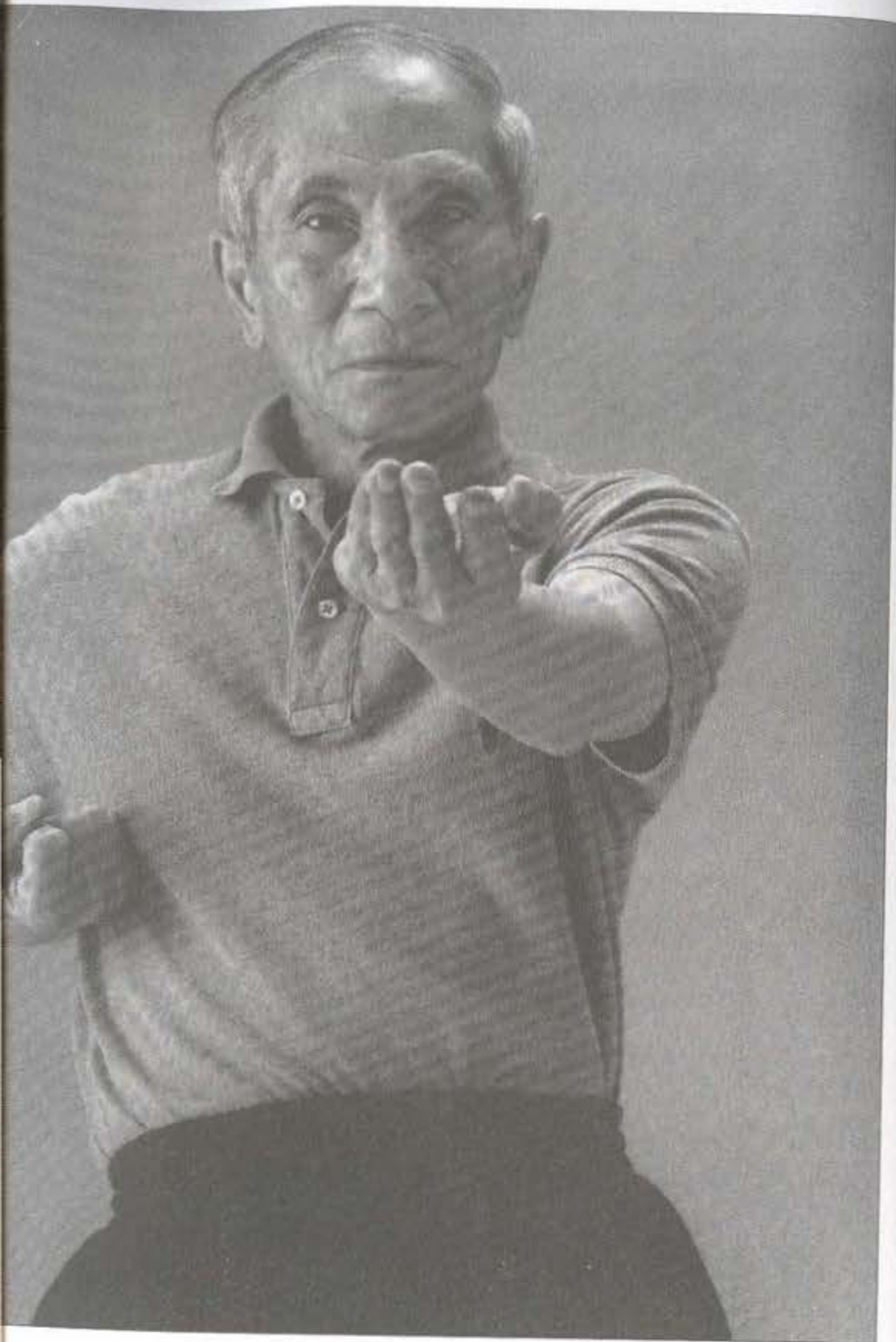


## 直掌

## ***Jik Jeung***

Relax your arm and bring your palm back to the centreline. Now, change the direction of your palm so that it is facing outwards. Then push it forwards from the centreline. Again, energy is only used at the end of the movement.





圓手

***Huen Sau/Withdraw the Fist***

Gather your fingers and circle your wrist as in previous movement, Huen San/Withdraw the fist. Now repeat all the movements from page 71 onwards using the right hand.

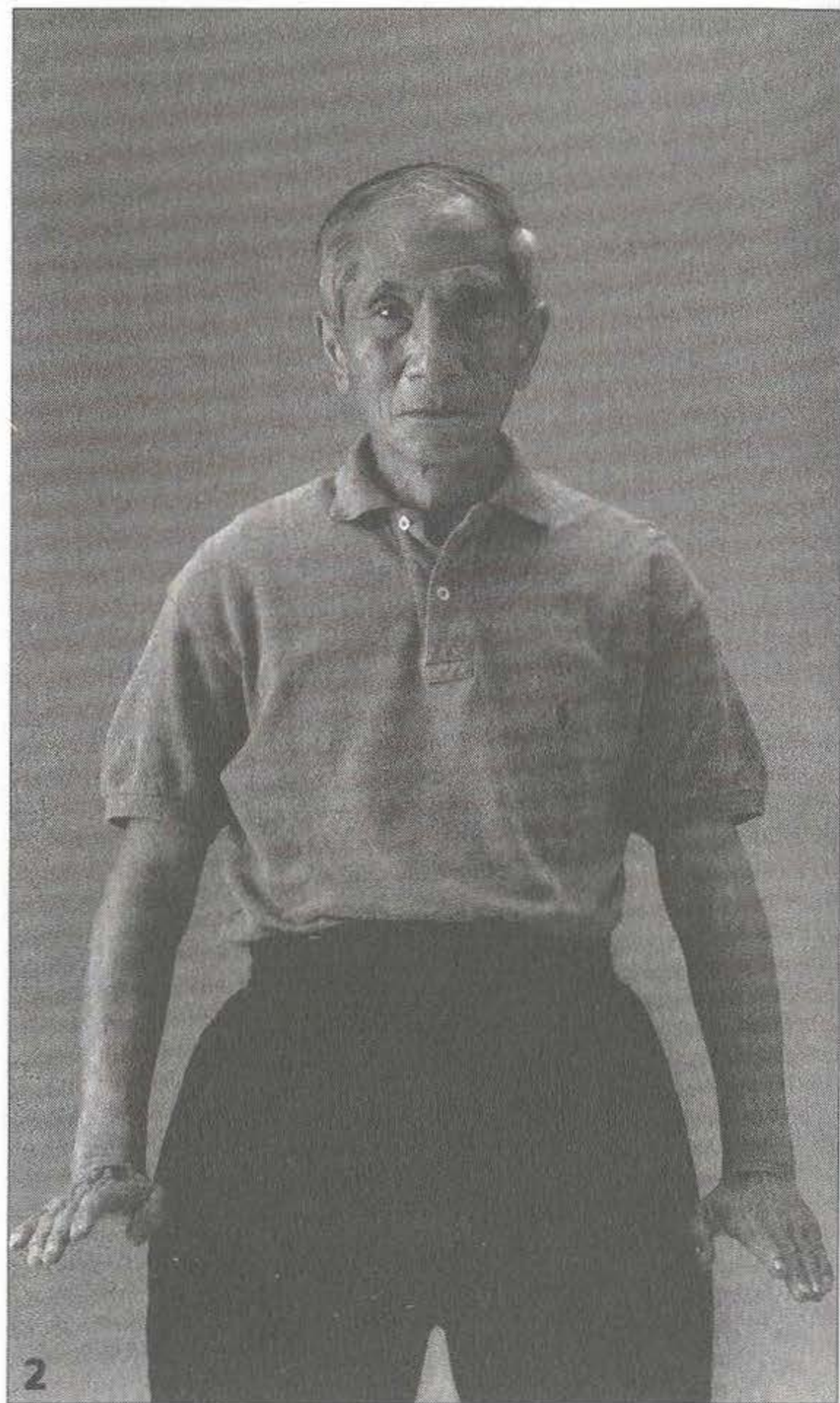
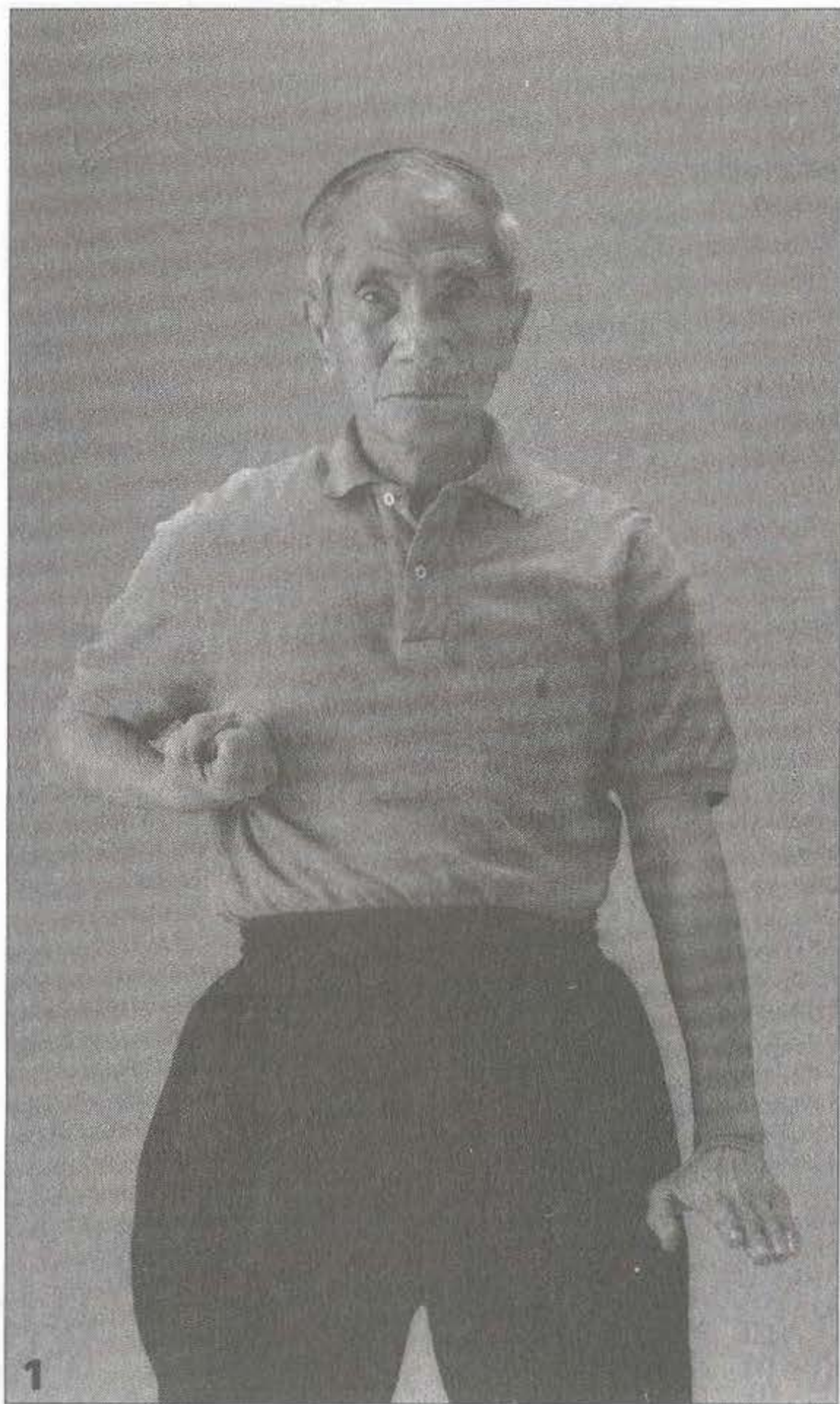


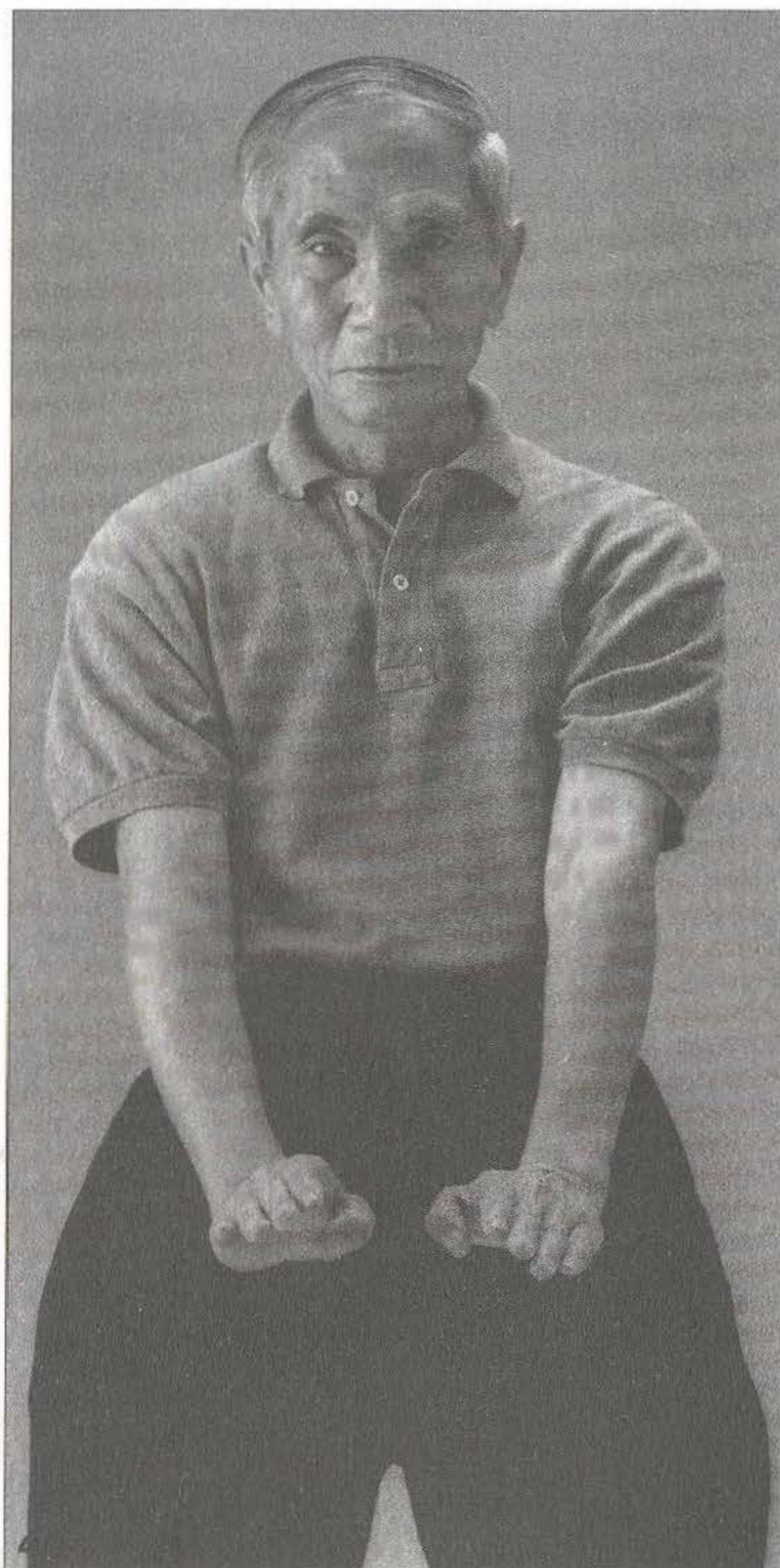
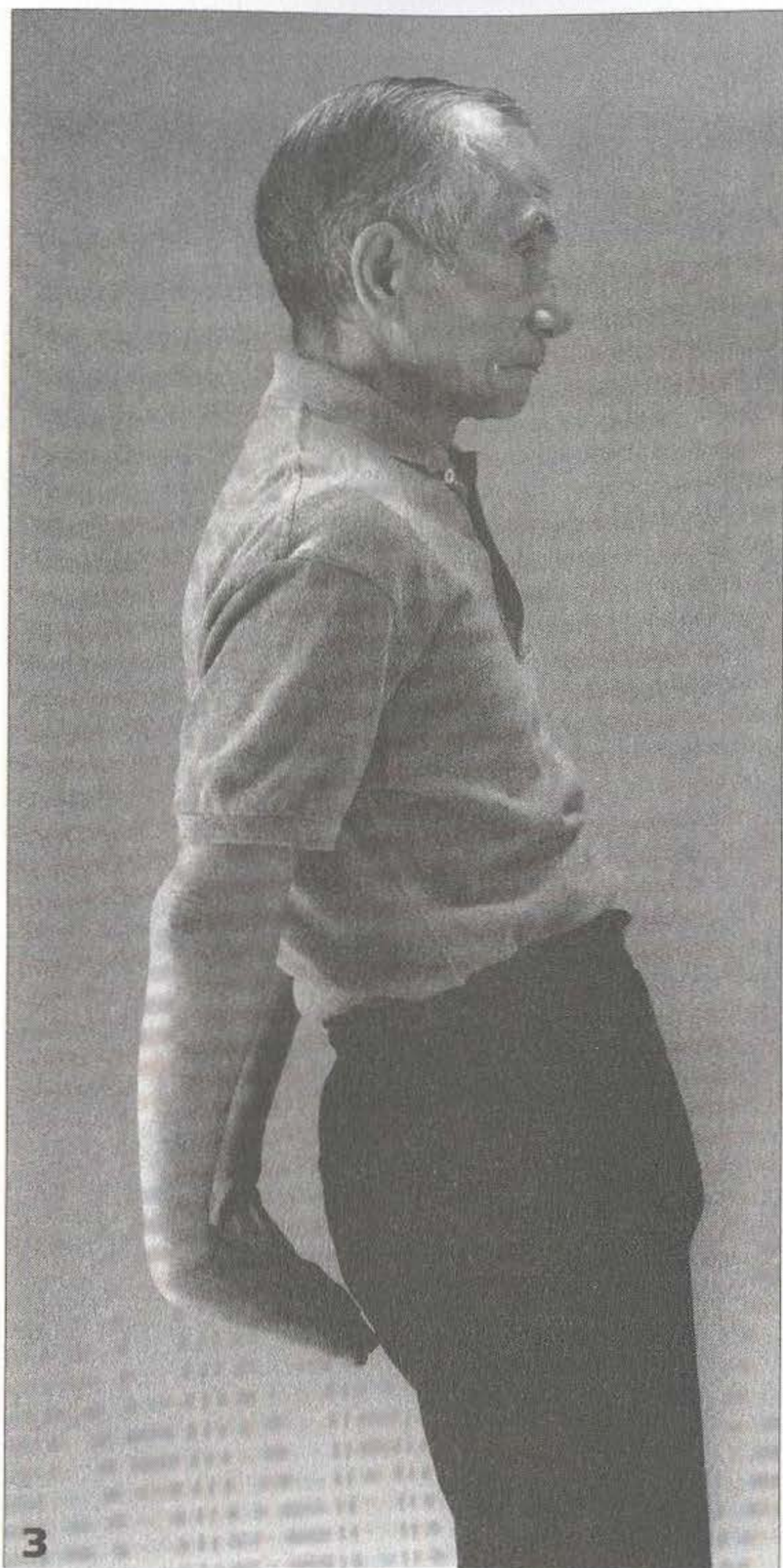
# Second Section – Fa Ging

## 印掌

### **Yan Jeung**

- 1 Open the palm of your left hand, rotate it to face the floor, then push downwards using energy only at the last moment.
- 2 Keeping your left arm in the same position, repeat the previous movement with your right hand.

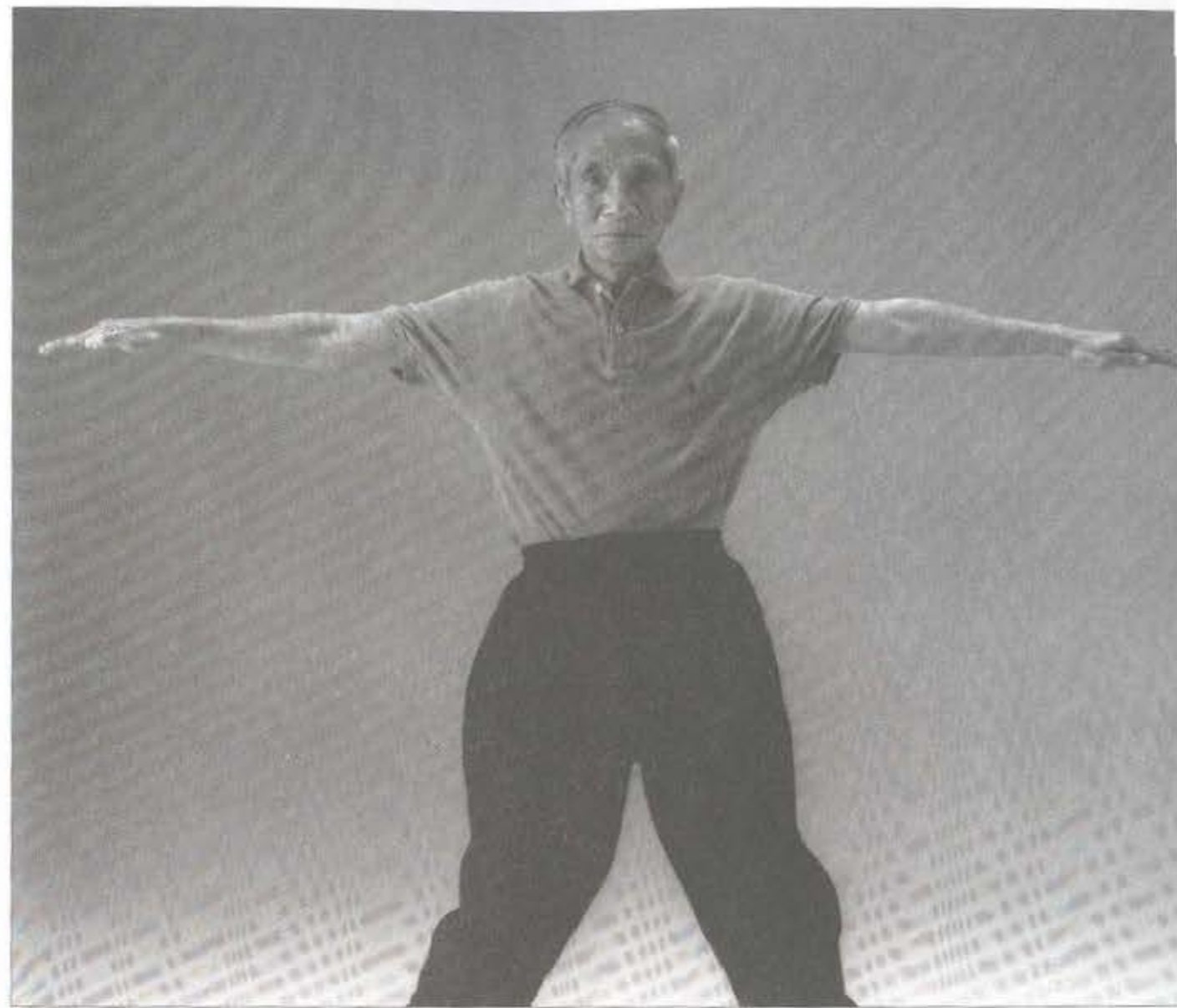
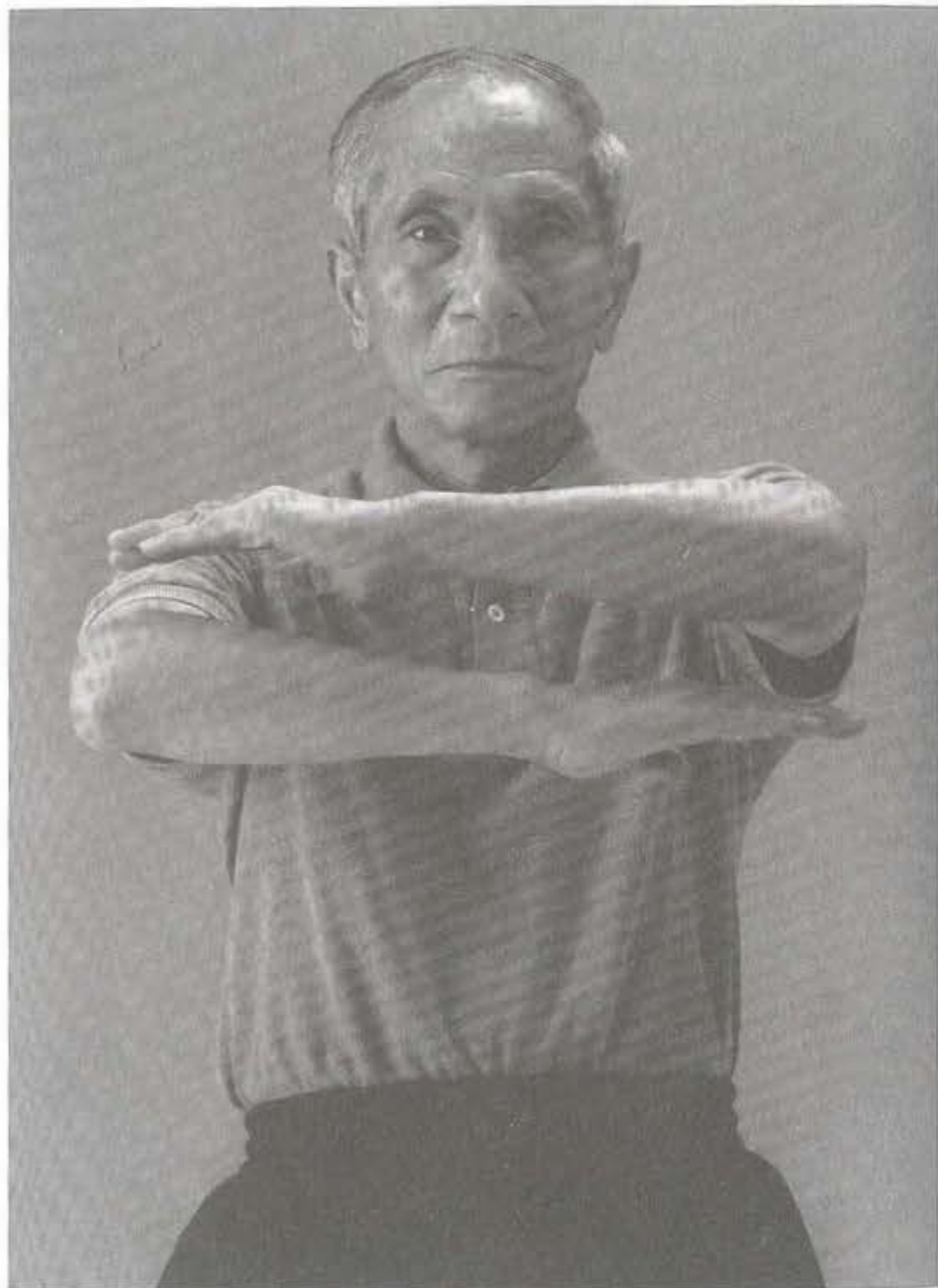




- 3** Relax both hands and bring them up to the small of your back. Now push both hands downwards.
- 4** Bring both hands up to your waist, push them out in front of your body and then push them downwards.

## Wan Lan Sau

Bring your arms directly up to the middle chest so that your forearms are at shoulder height with your left arm on top. Your arms should be folded over each other but not touching.



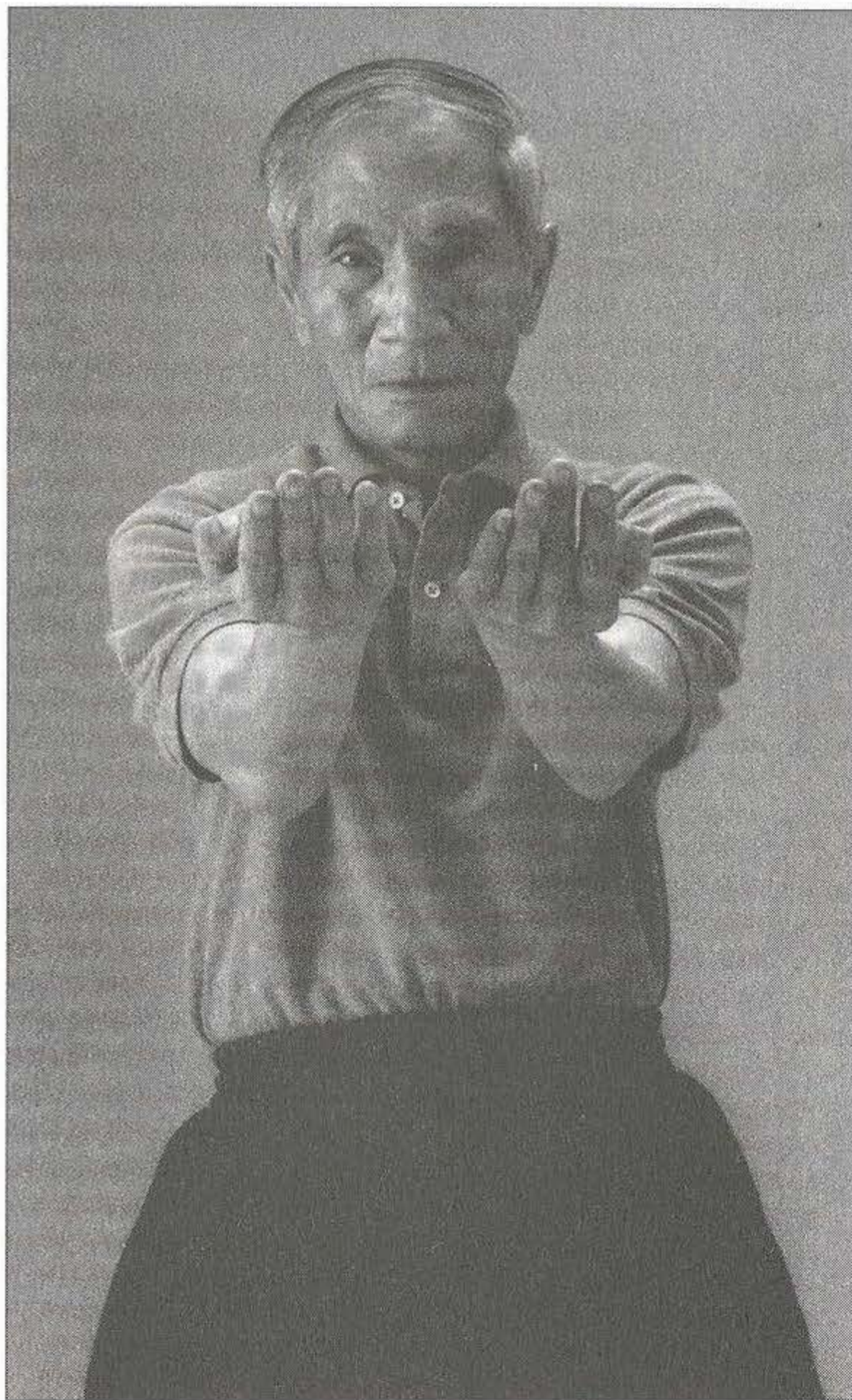
辟  
手  
掌

## Pek Jeung

Extend your arms outwards so that your hands follow a straight line out from the body. Just before your arms are fully extended, release the energy in your wrists as if chopping an opponent's throat. Your body should remain still, only your arms move.

## Wan Lan Sau

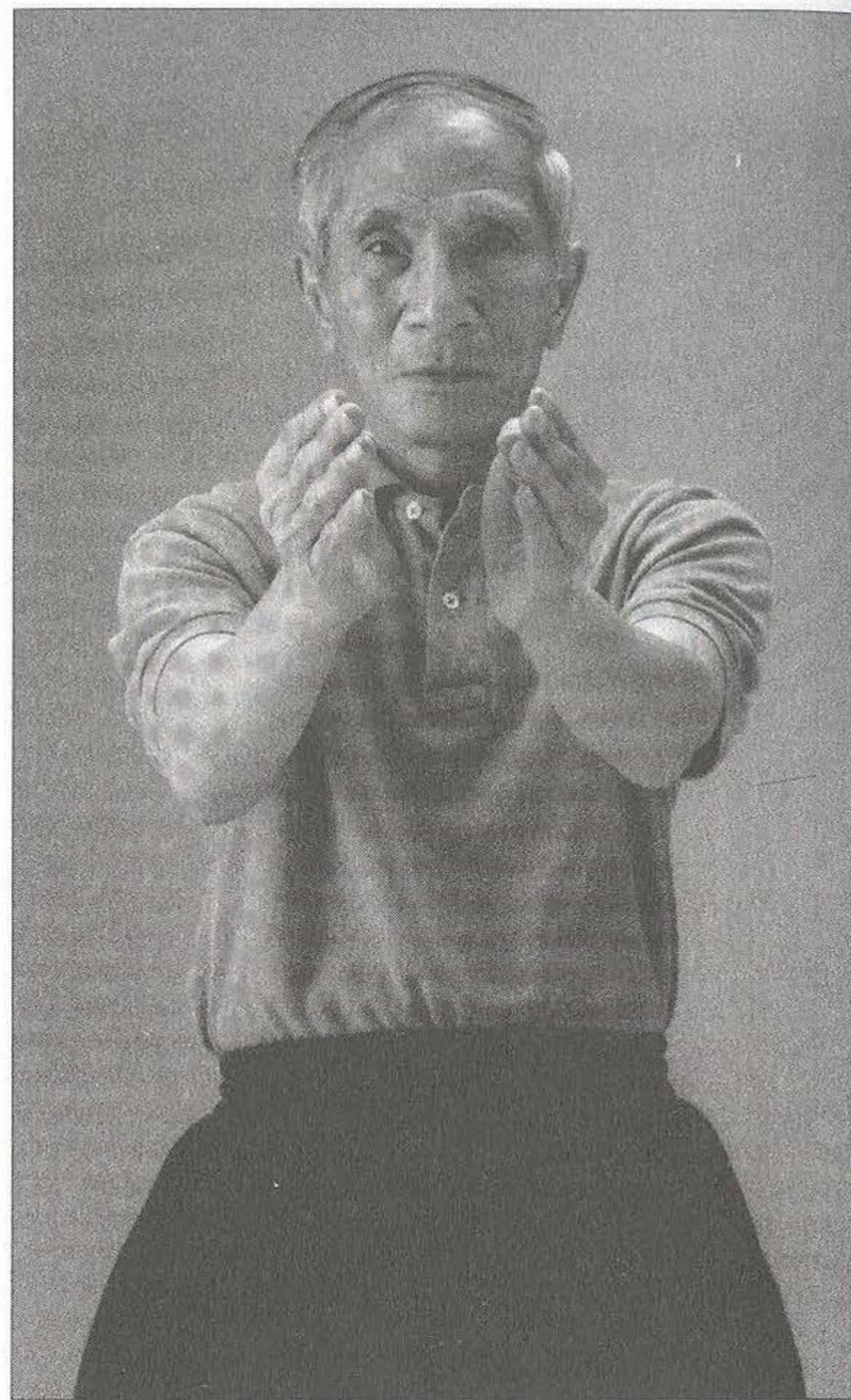
Return your arms to the previous Wan Lan Sau position (see left) but this time your right arm should be on top.



雙  
又  
空  
手

### ***Double Jut Sau***

Let both of your elbows sink down so that they are on either side of the centreline. Your palms should be relaxed and extending slightly outwards. Now sharply sink both wrists down so that your palms are facing each other. The forearms hardly move during this movement.



雙  
又  
攤  
手

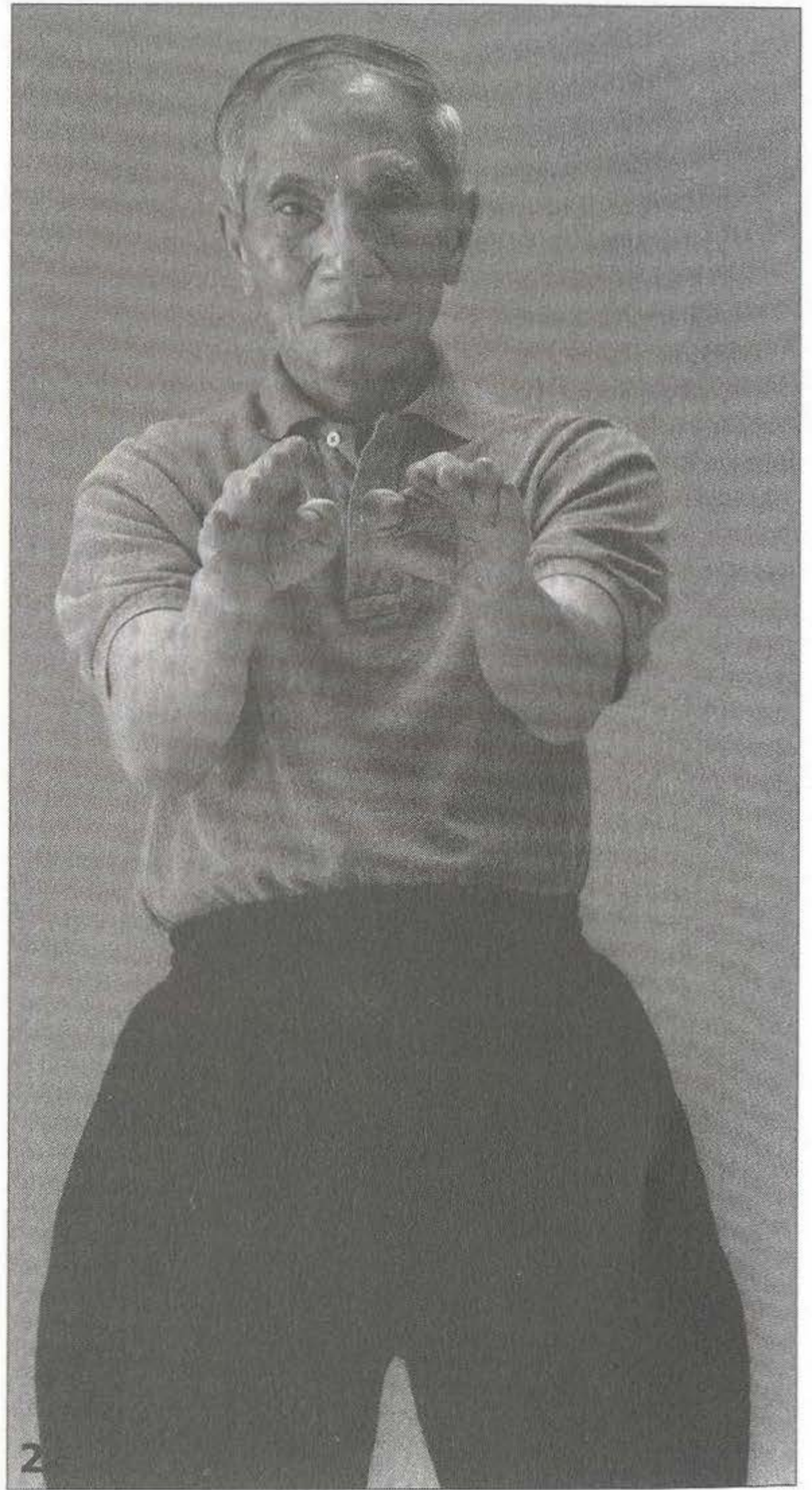
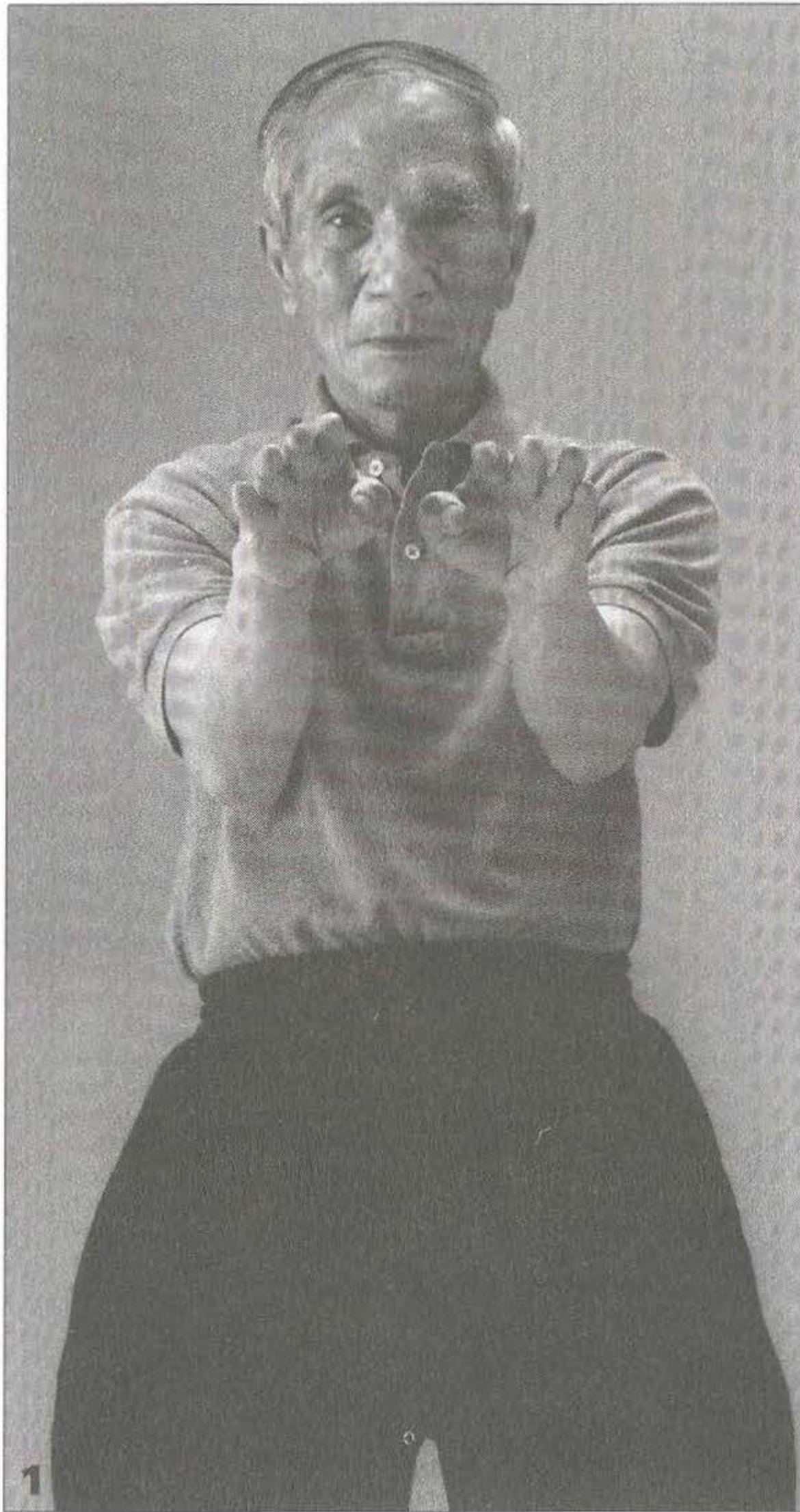
### ***Double Tan Sau***

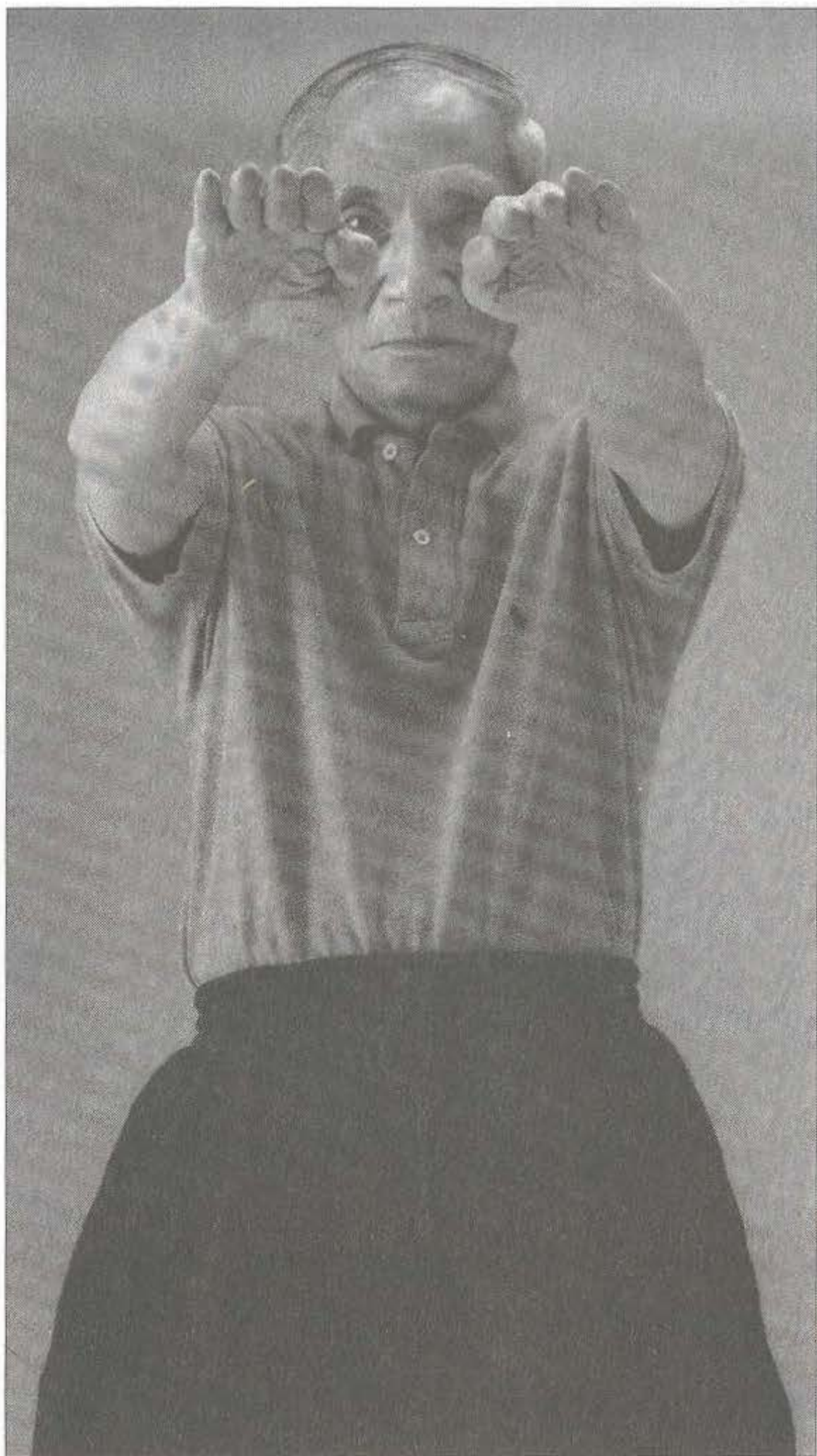
Turn your hands so that your palms are facing upwards.

雙  
叉  
空  
手

***Double Fuk Sau/Double Jut Sau***

- 1 Relax your hands and turn them so that your palms are facing downwards.
- 2 Jerk your hands backwards and slightly downwards, along the line of your forearms, in a small movement. Make sure that your elbows do not open outwards.

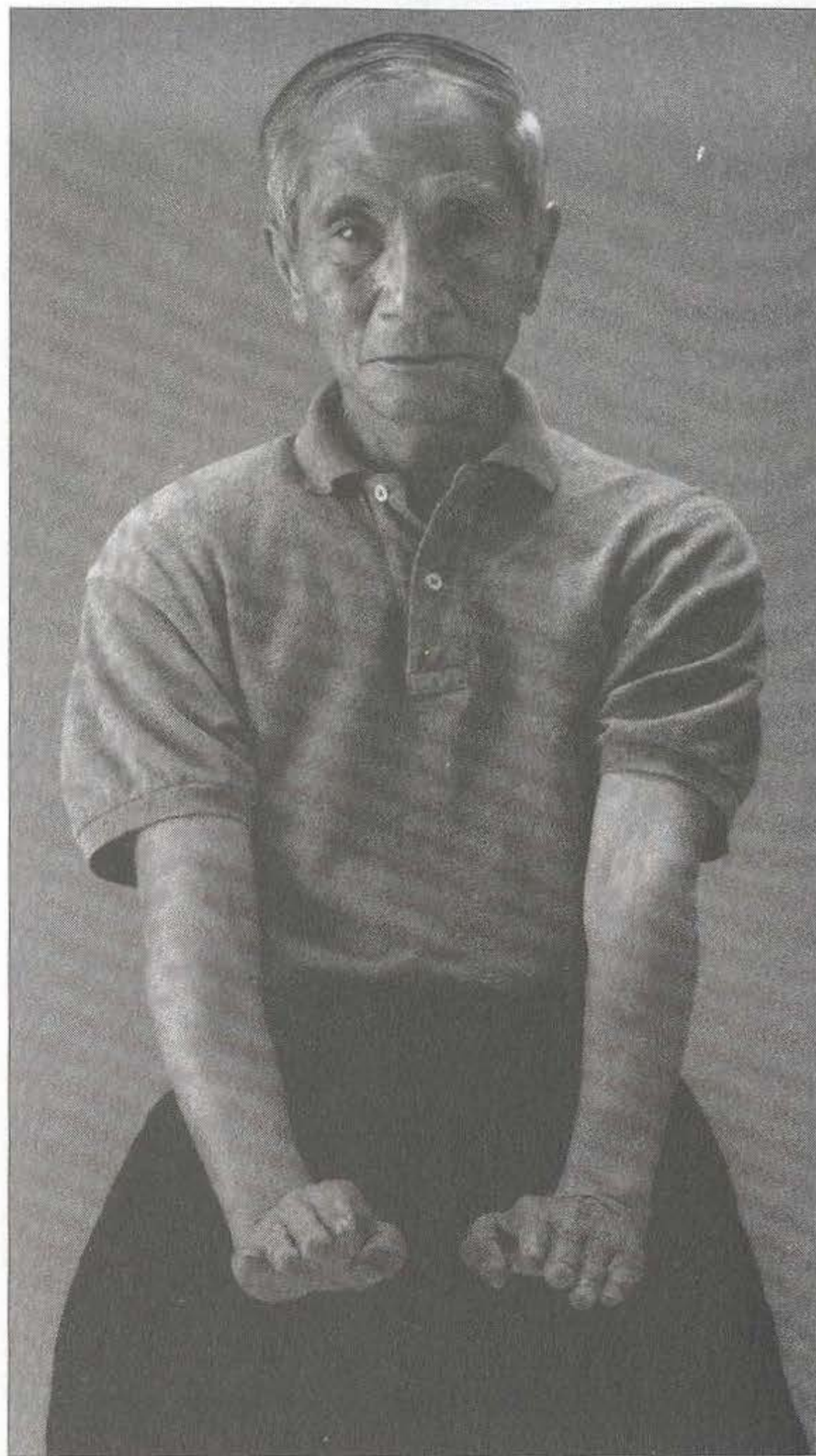




雙  
叉  
標  
指

### ***Double Biu Jee***

Thrust your hands forward at eye level, as if you were attacking your opponent's eyes. Push energy to your fingers at the last moment.



雙  
叉  
空  
手

### ***Double Jut Sau***

Keeping your arms straight, push your hands downward in one smooth movement, until they reach below your waist. Your arms should be slightly in front of your body, not dropped straight down to the side.

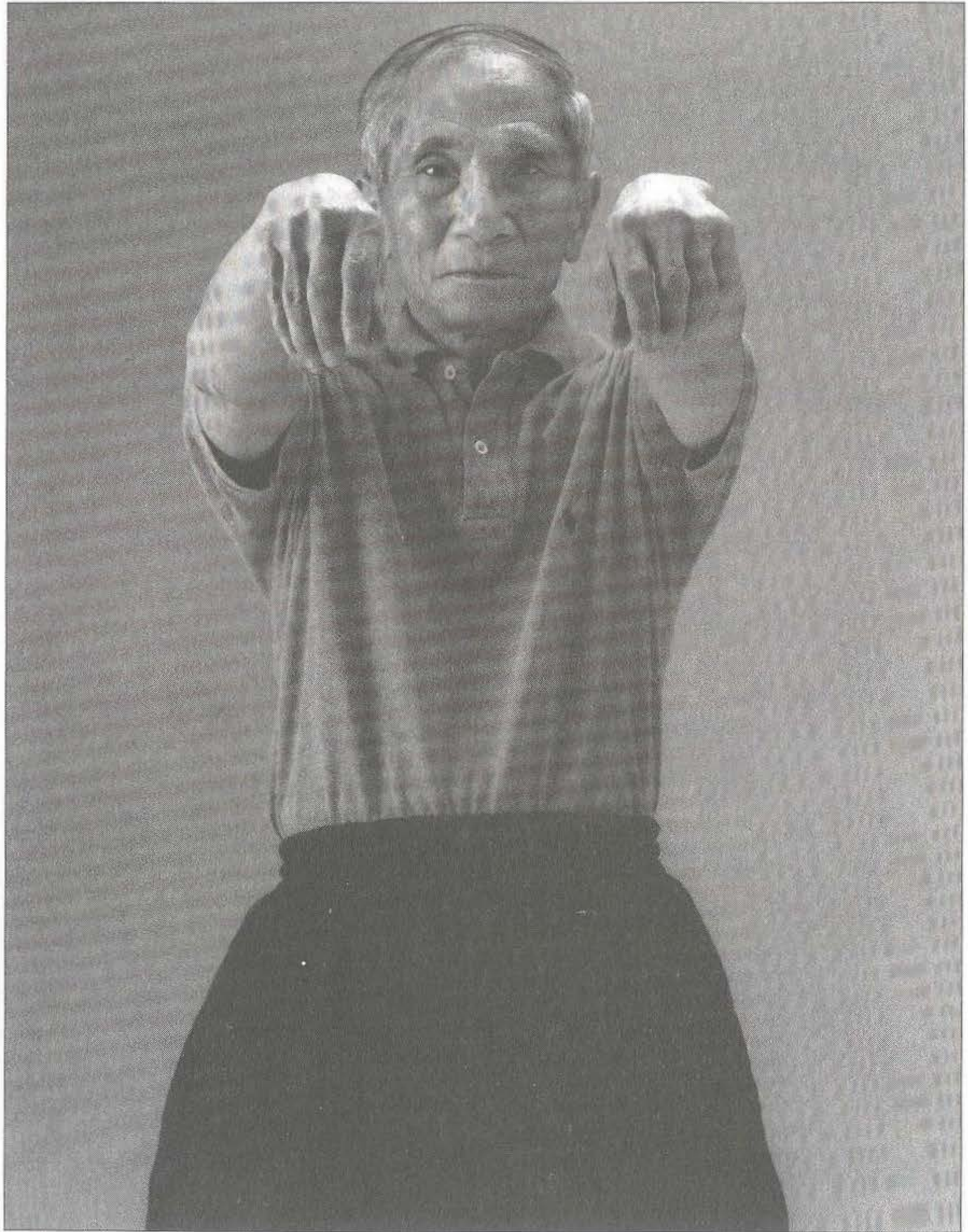




## ***Withdraw the Fists***

Close your fingers in a loose claw shape and bring your hands straight back up to shoulder height.

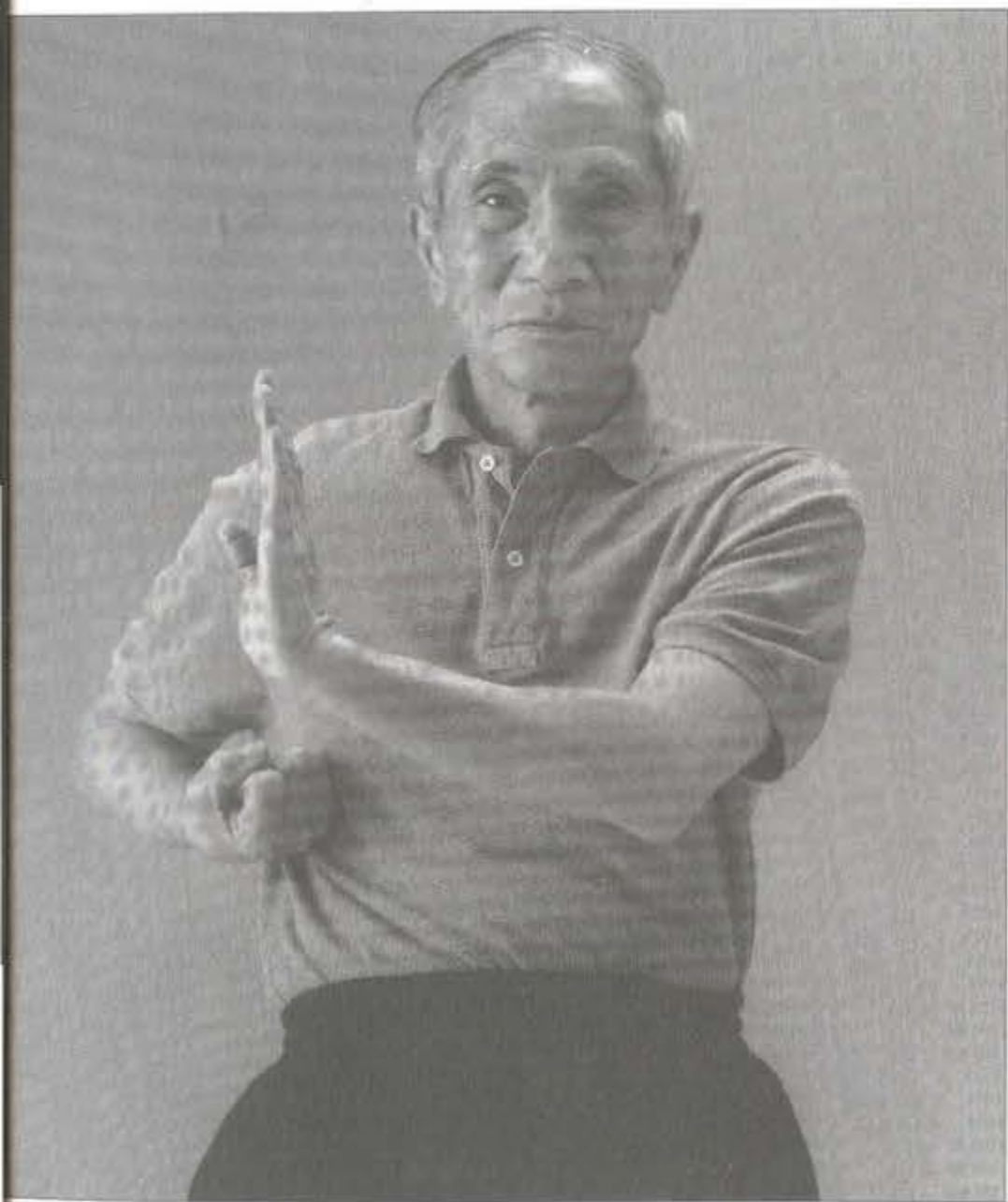
Now perform Heun Sau (see page 72) with both hands simultaneously before withdrawing your fists to the resting position (see page 70).



# Third Section – Basic Skill Training

## Paak Sau

Bring your left hand to the centreline and Paak to the left.

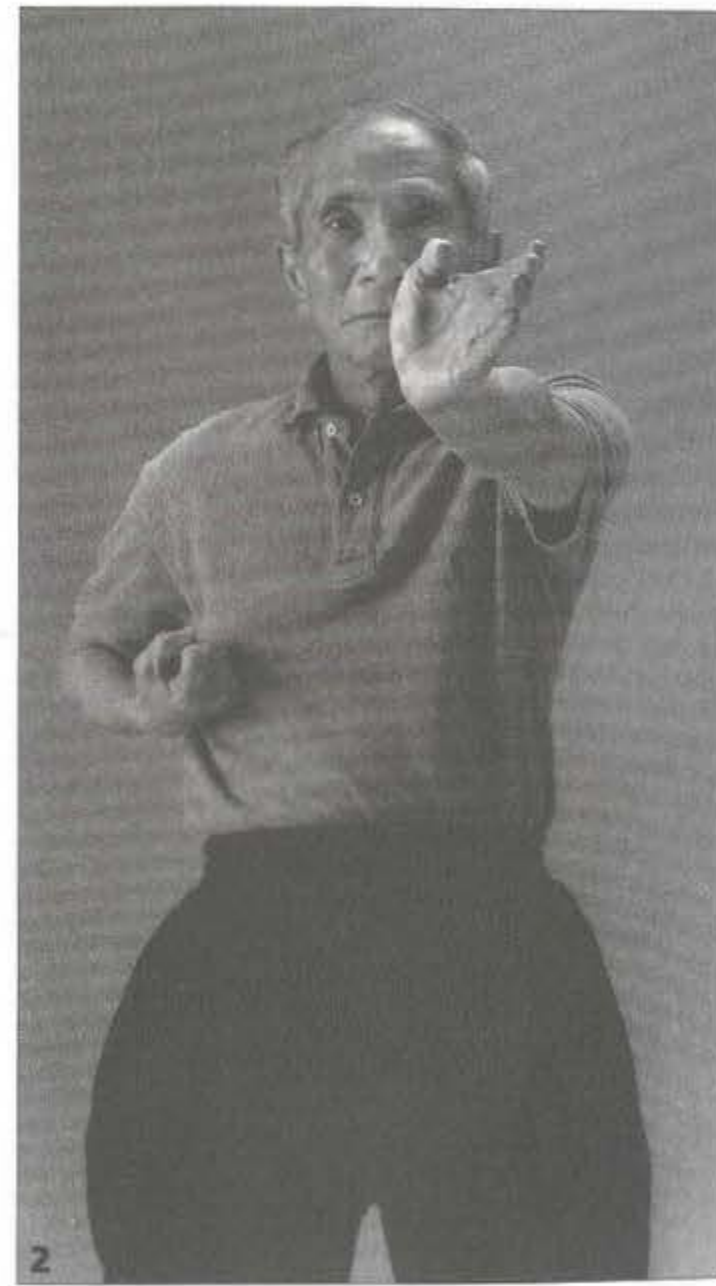


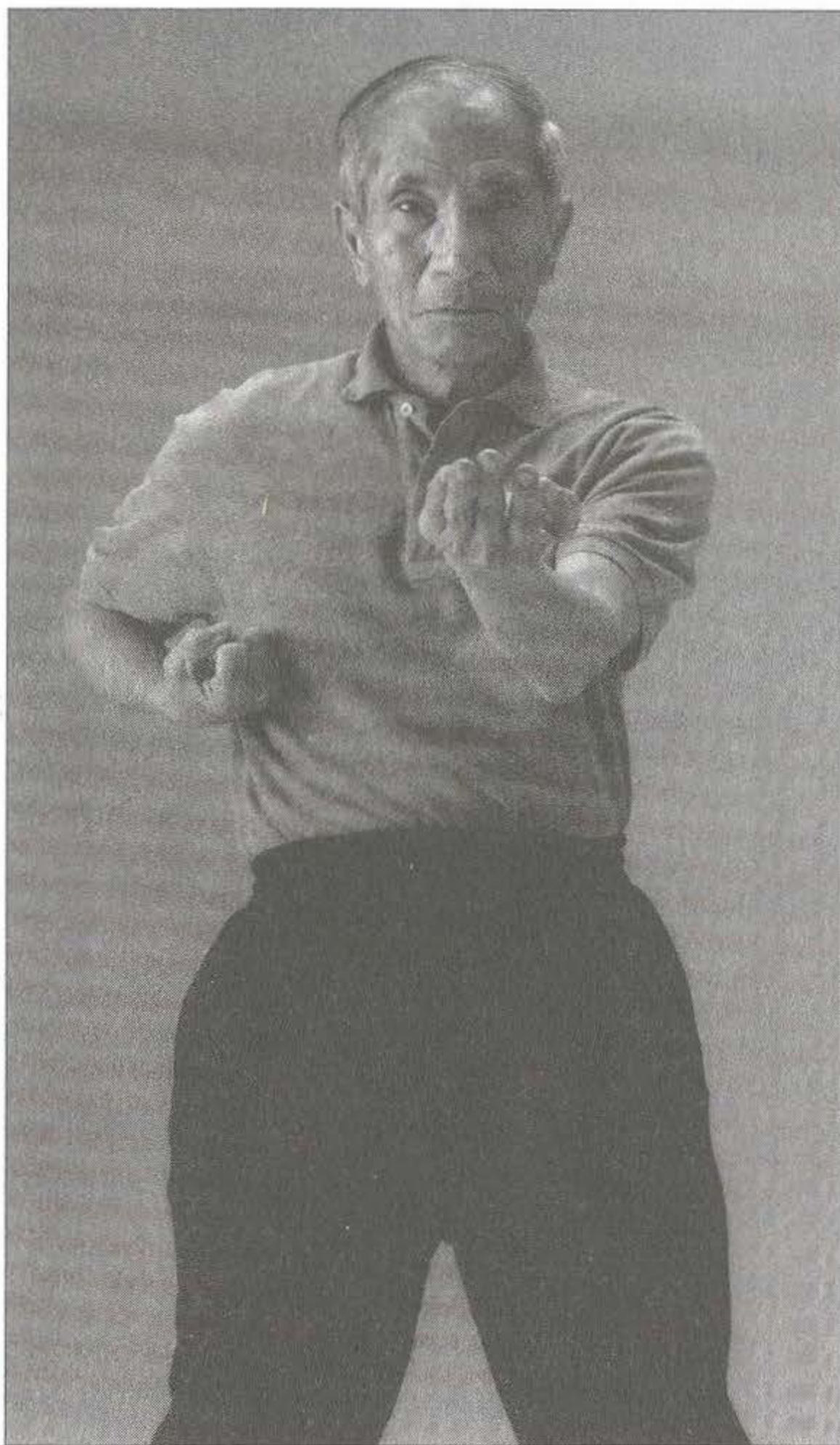
## 橫掌

## Wan Jeung

- 1 Continue with your left hand and perform Wan Jeung.
- 2 Your hand should be horizontal with your fingers pointing to the left.

Do Huen Sau and Withdraw the Fist and then repeat all the movements on the right side.

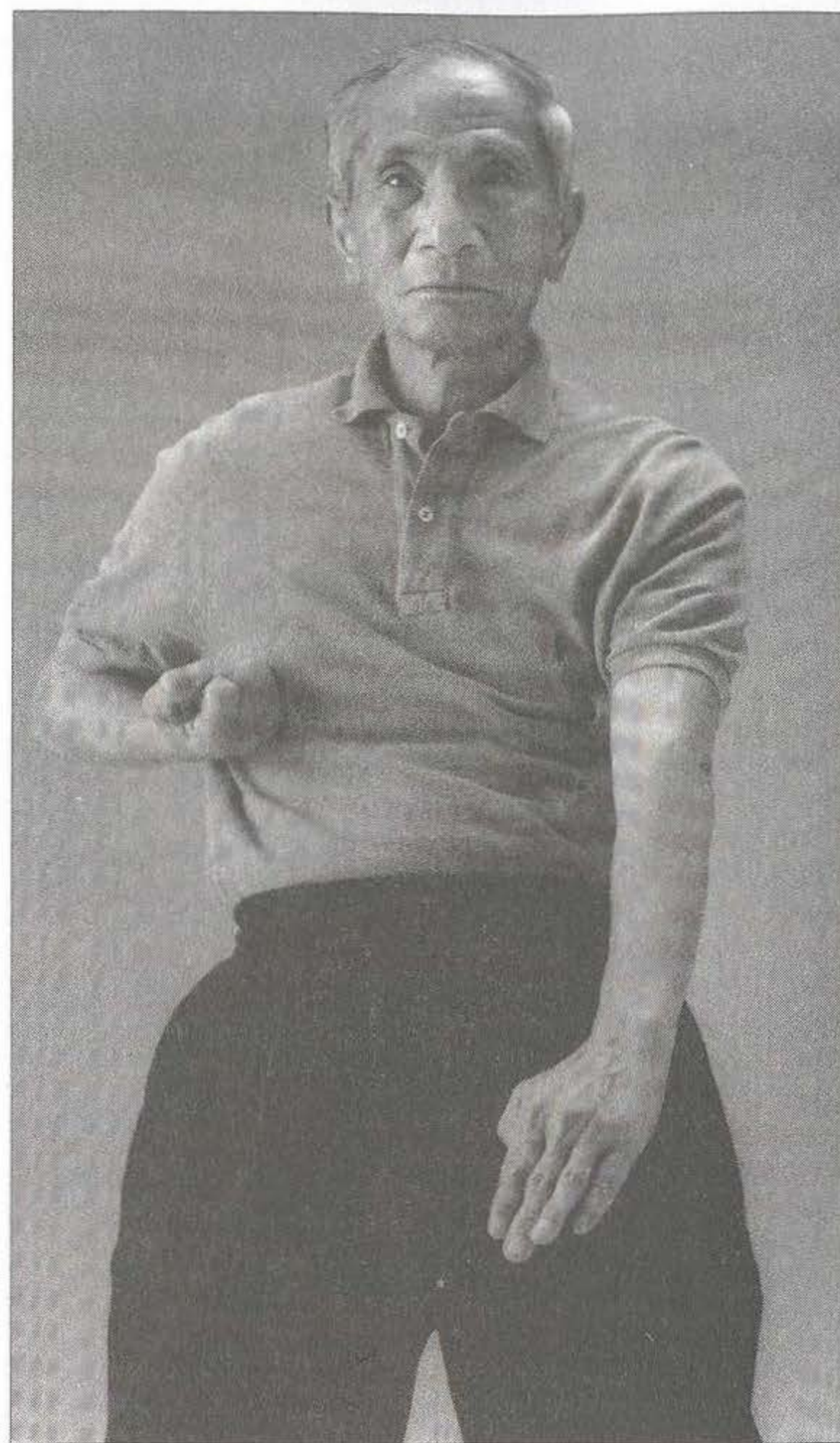




攤  
手

### ***Tan Sau***

Bring your left hand forwards, palm facing up, elbow at the centreline.



攔  
手

### ***Gaan Sau***

Relax your elbow and drop your hand down in a shallow arc.

### ***Tan Sau***

Bring your hand back up into the Tan Sau position (see above left).

# 圓手

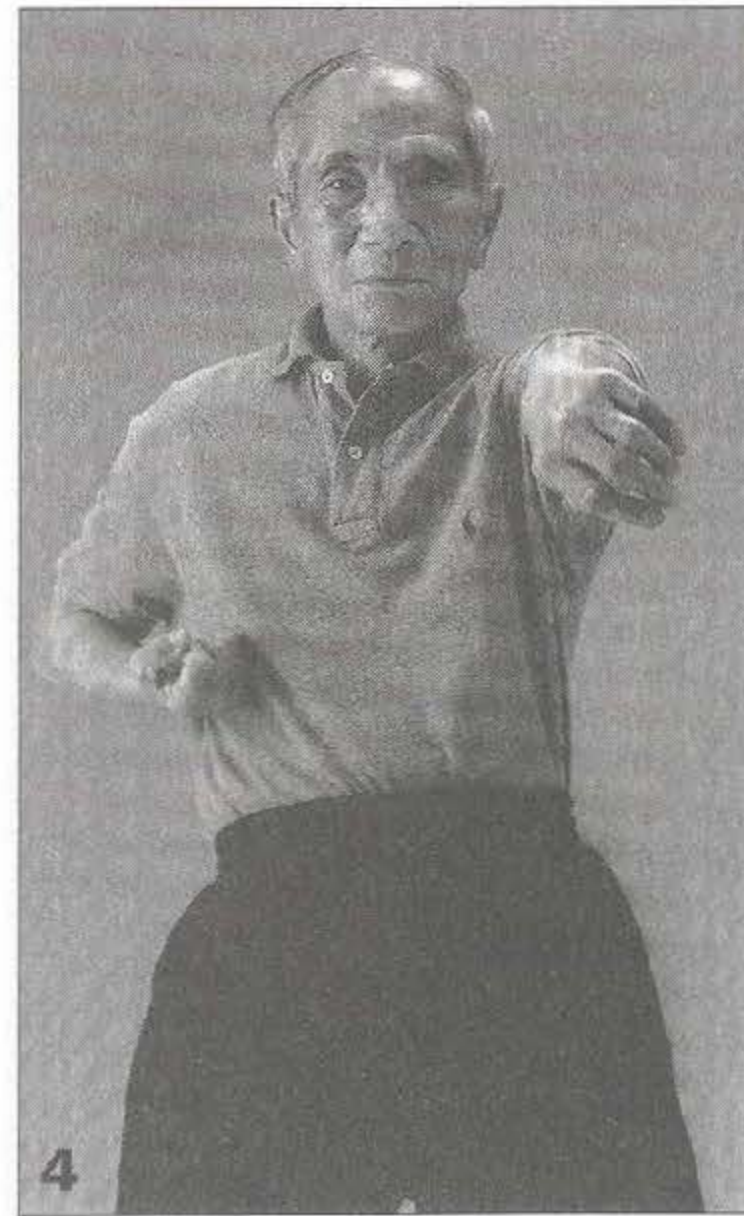
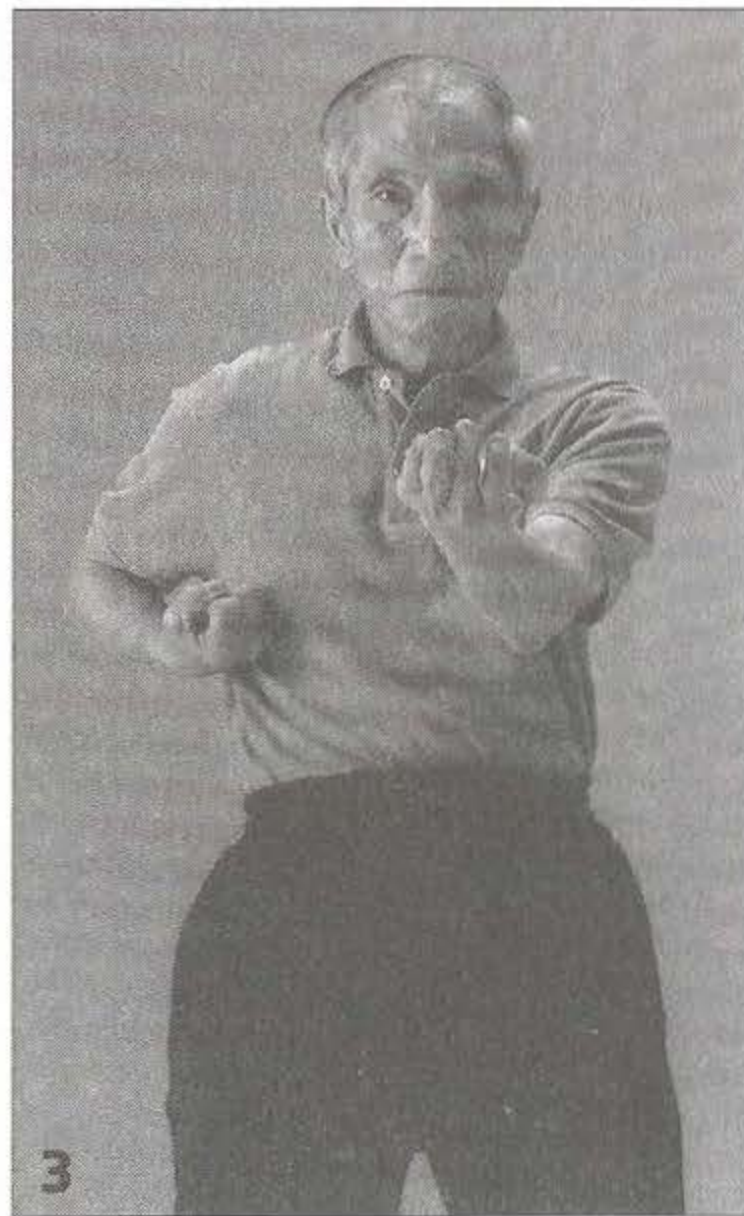
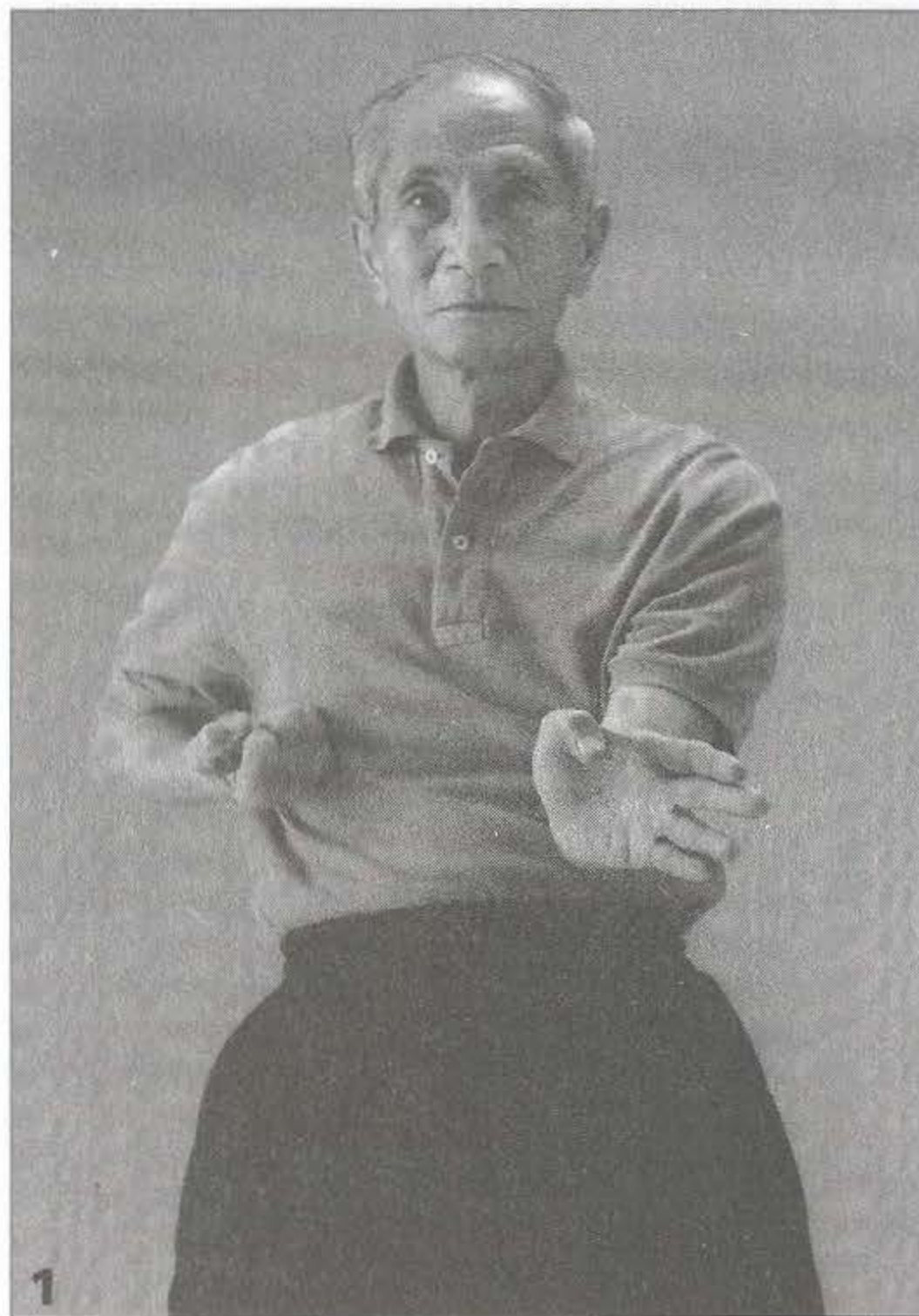
## *Huen Sau*

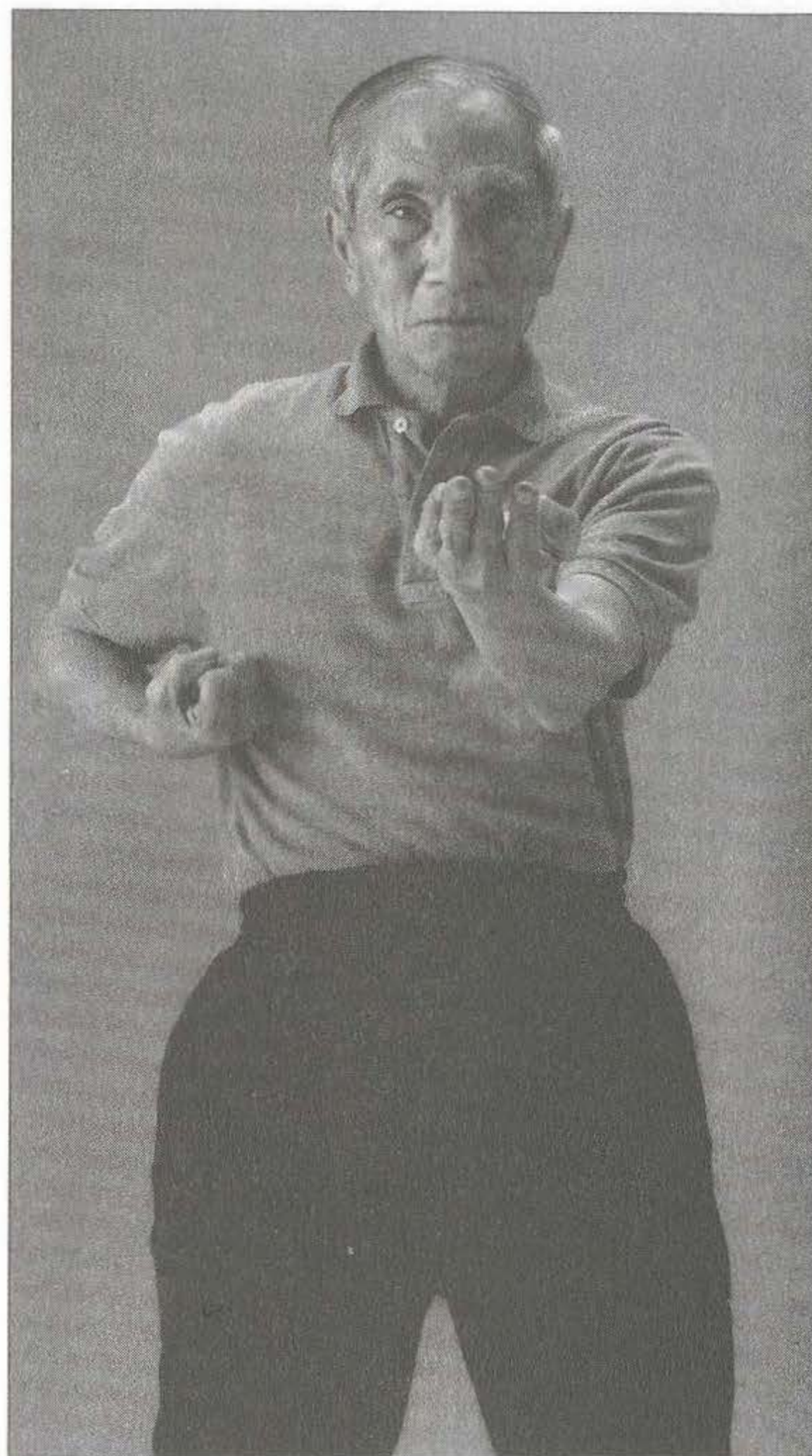
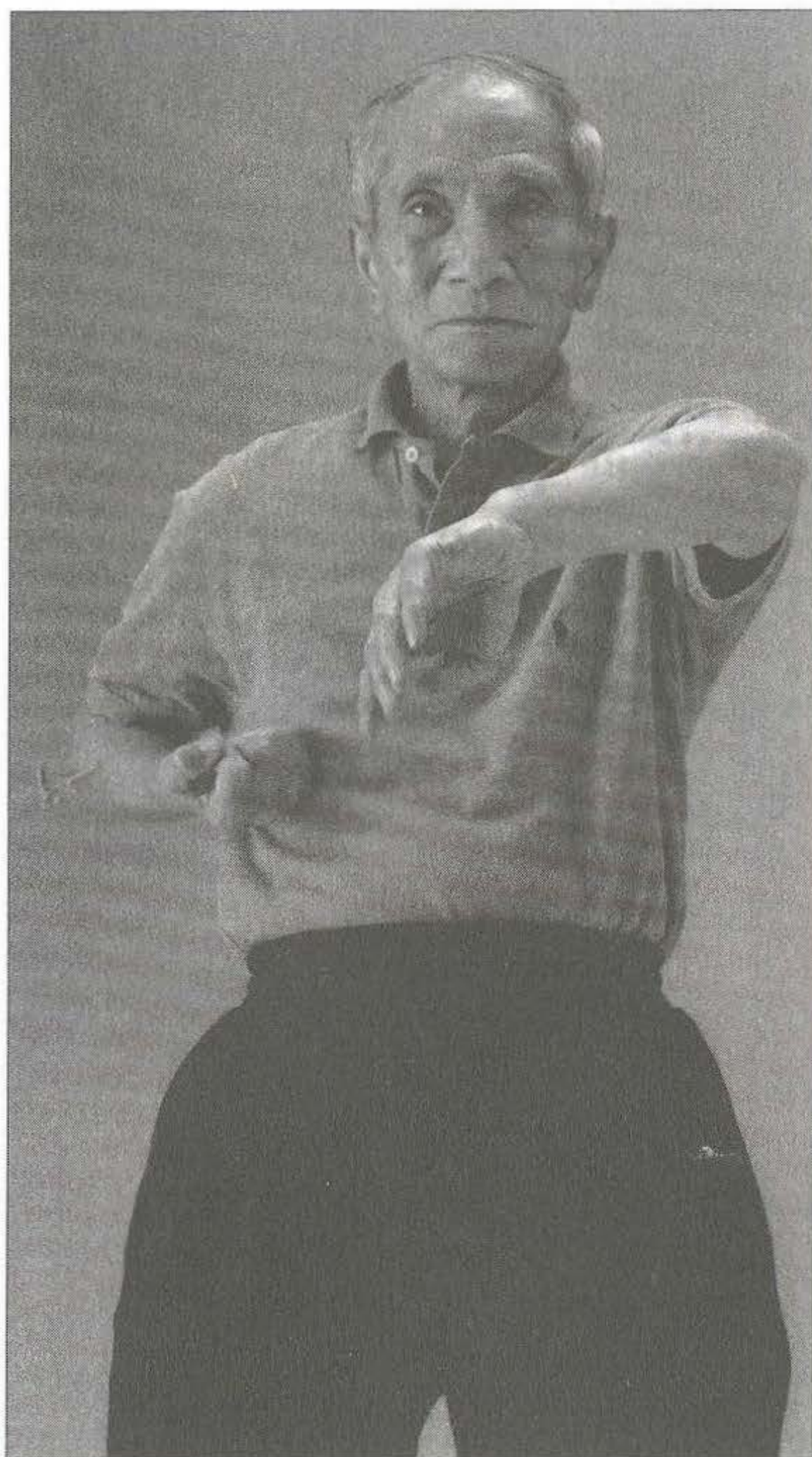
**1,2** From Tan Sau, do a low Huen Sau, using the same circling of the wrist movement, but when nearing the end, push out and down with the palm releasing energy.

**3** Then go straight back to Tan Sau.

**4** Do the high Huen Sau and then Withdraw the Fist to come back to the ready position.

Repeat Tan Sau/Gaan Sau/Tan Sau/Huen Sau for the right hand.





膀  
手

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### ***Bong Sau***

Bring your left hand out, wrist in the centreline, elbow higher than your wrist, upper arm parallel to the centreline.

Make sure your wrist is loose and your shoulder is neither raised or tense.

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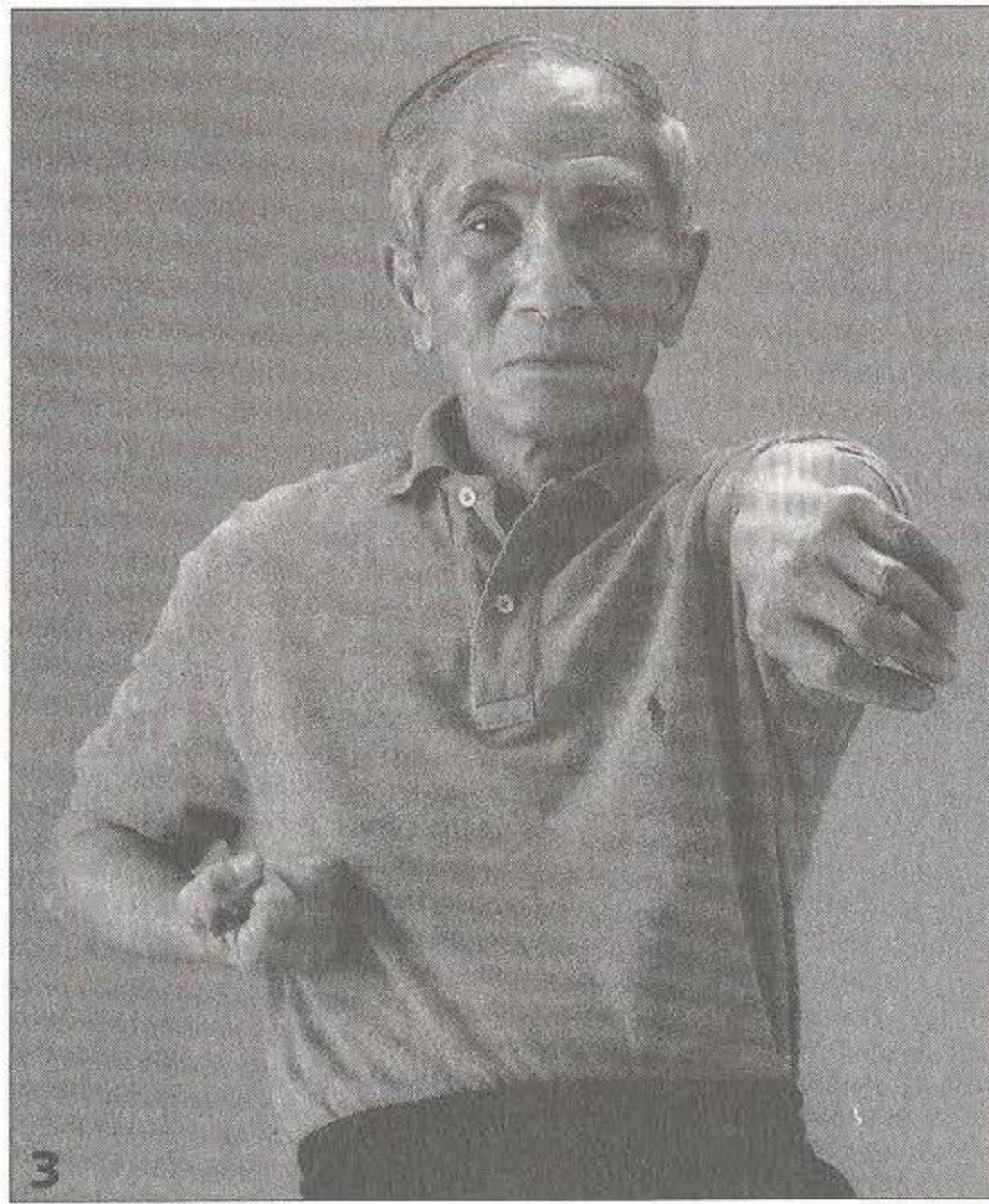
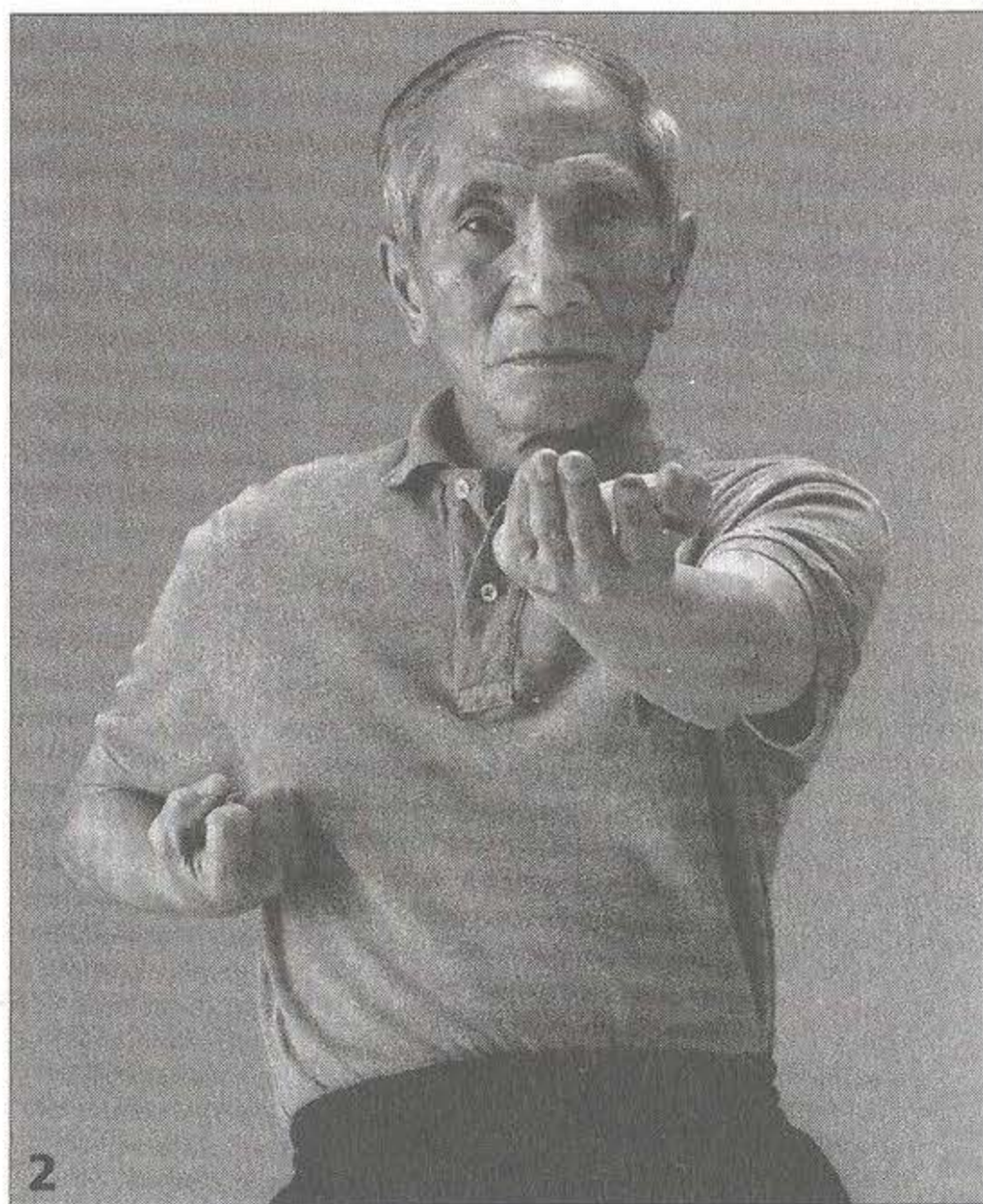
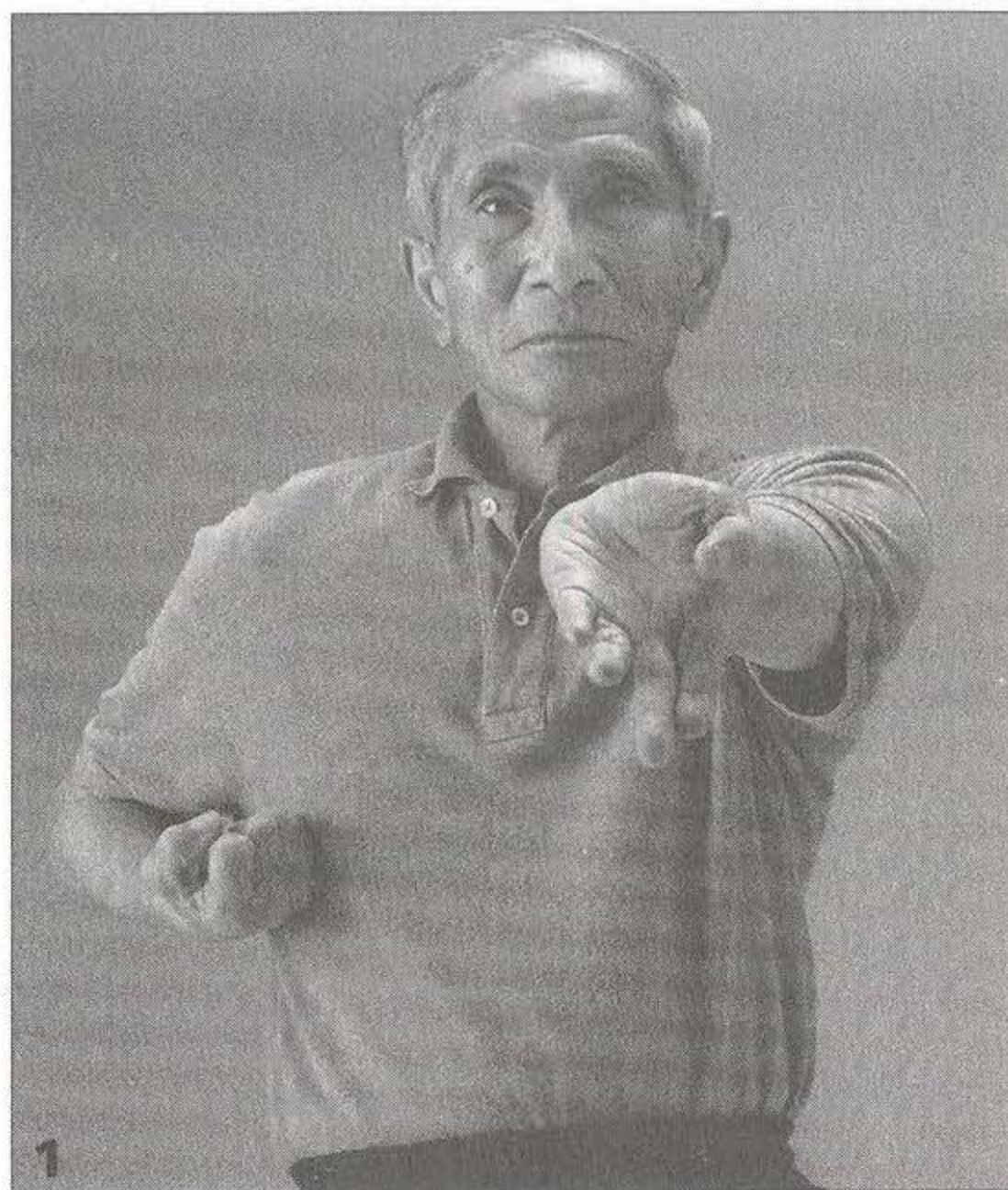
### ***Tan Sau***

From the Bong Sau, drop your elbow to the centreline.

# 低掌

## *Dai Jeung*

- 1** Push your palm forwards straight out from the middle chest, striking with the heel of the palm, again using energy at the last moment. Your palm should be upside down with fingers pointing towards the ground.
- 2** Draw back your hand to its resting position by first gathering a fist.
- 3** Repeat the Bong Sau/Tan Sau/Dai Jeung on the other side.

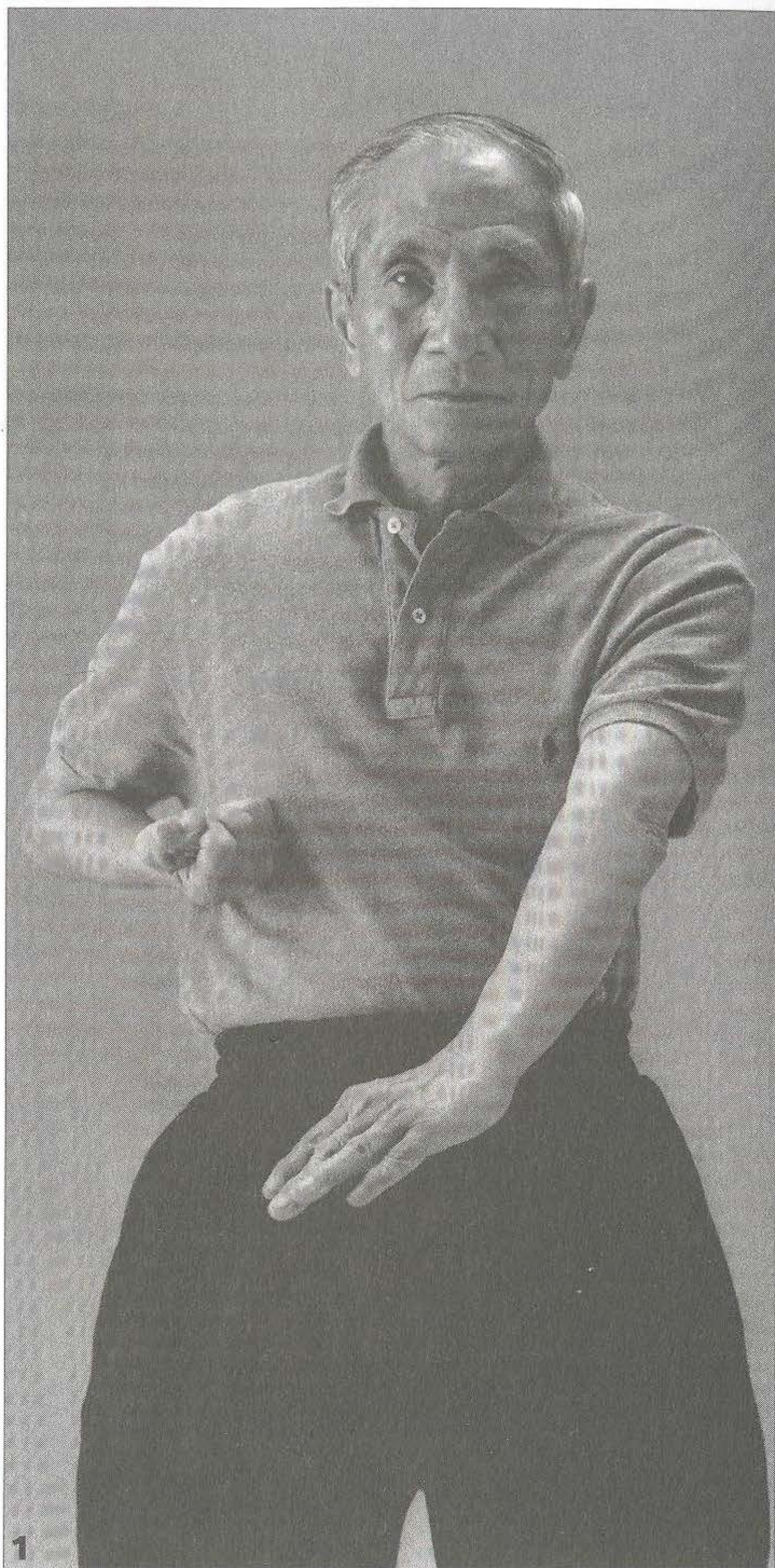


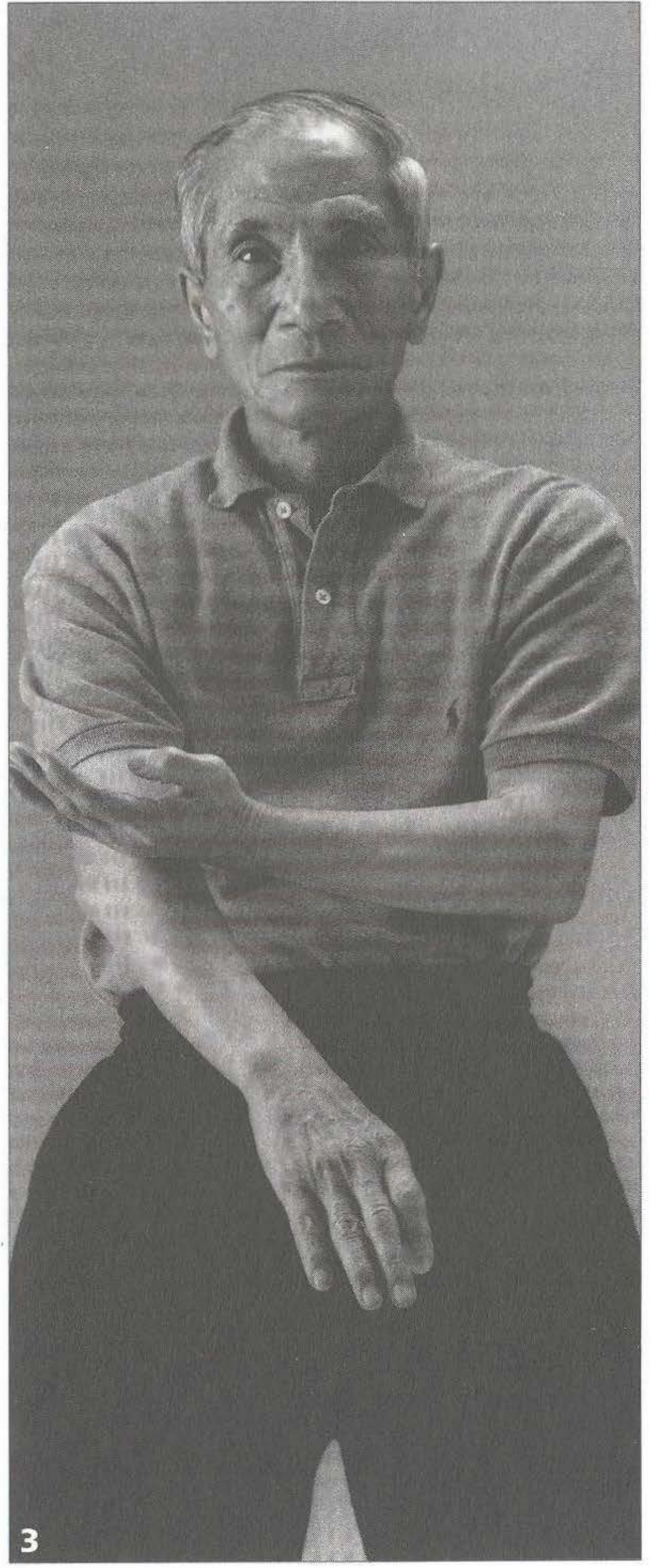
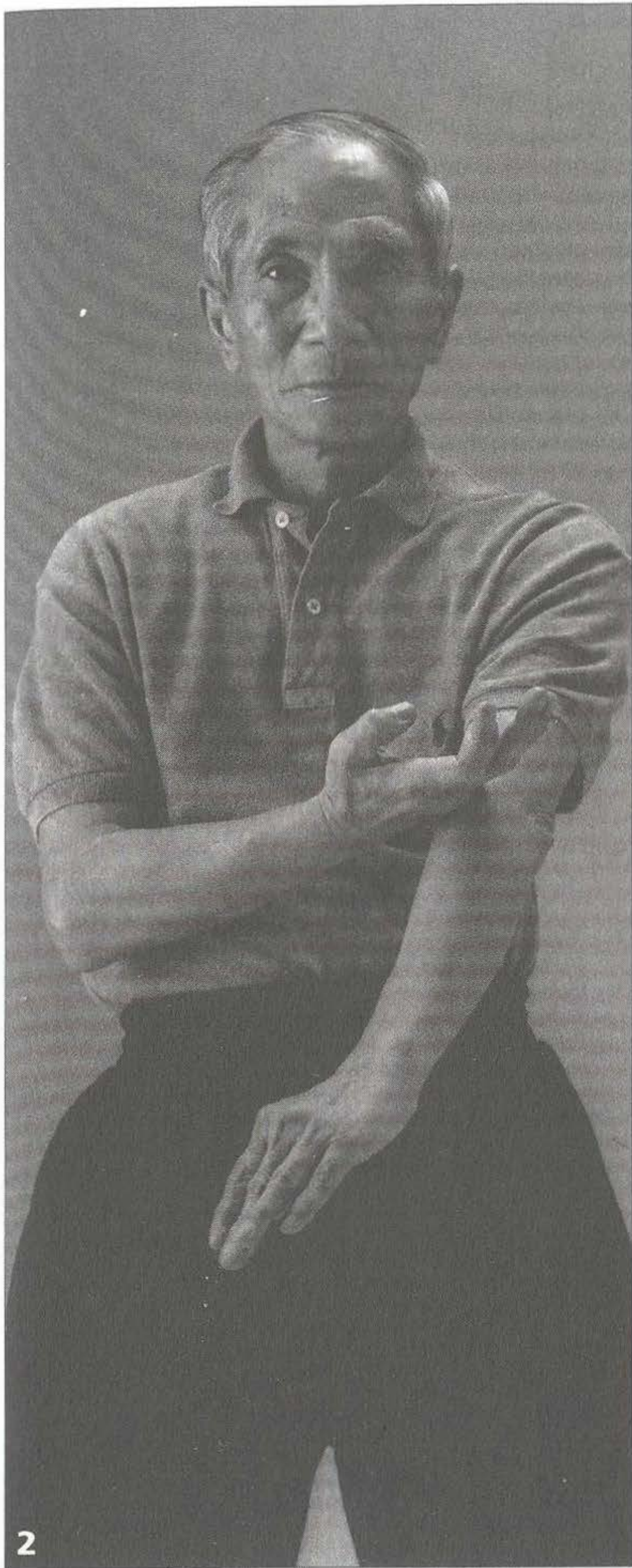
# 鐘手

## *Chaan Sau*

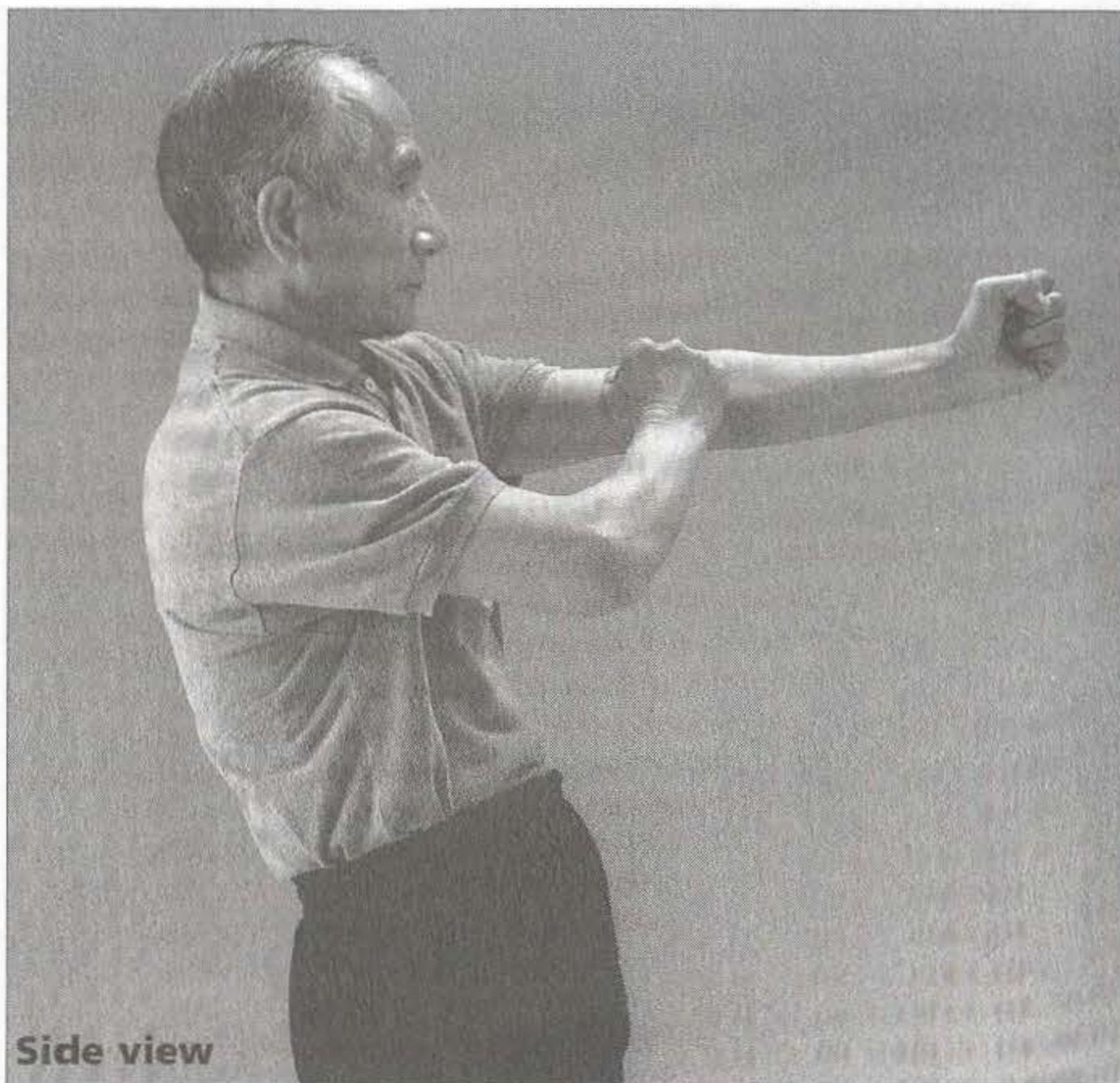
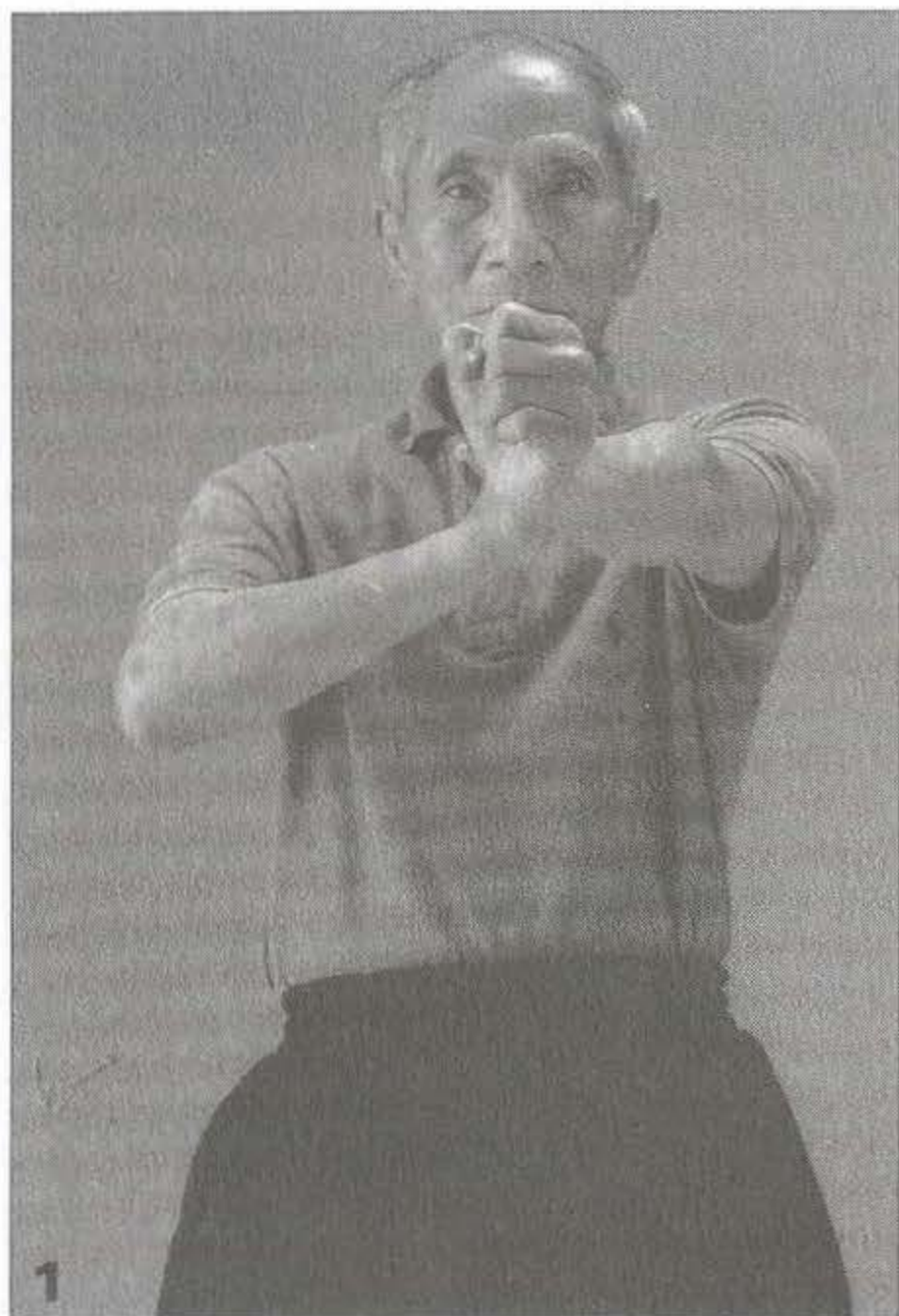
- 1 Bring your left arm down.
- 2 Place your right hand at the top of your left forearm.
- 3 Sharply draw back your left arm and clear it by sliding the right hand along it simultaneously. Your hand positions are now reversed.

Repeat the movements on the right and then once more on the left. Finish with your right hand down and your left hand up.





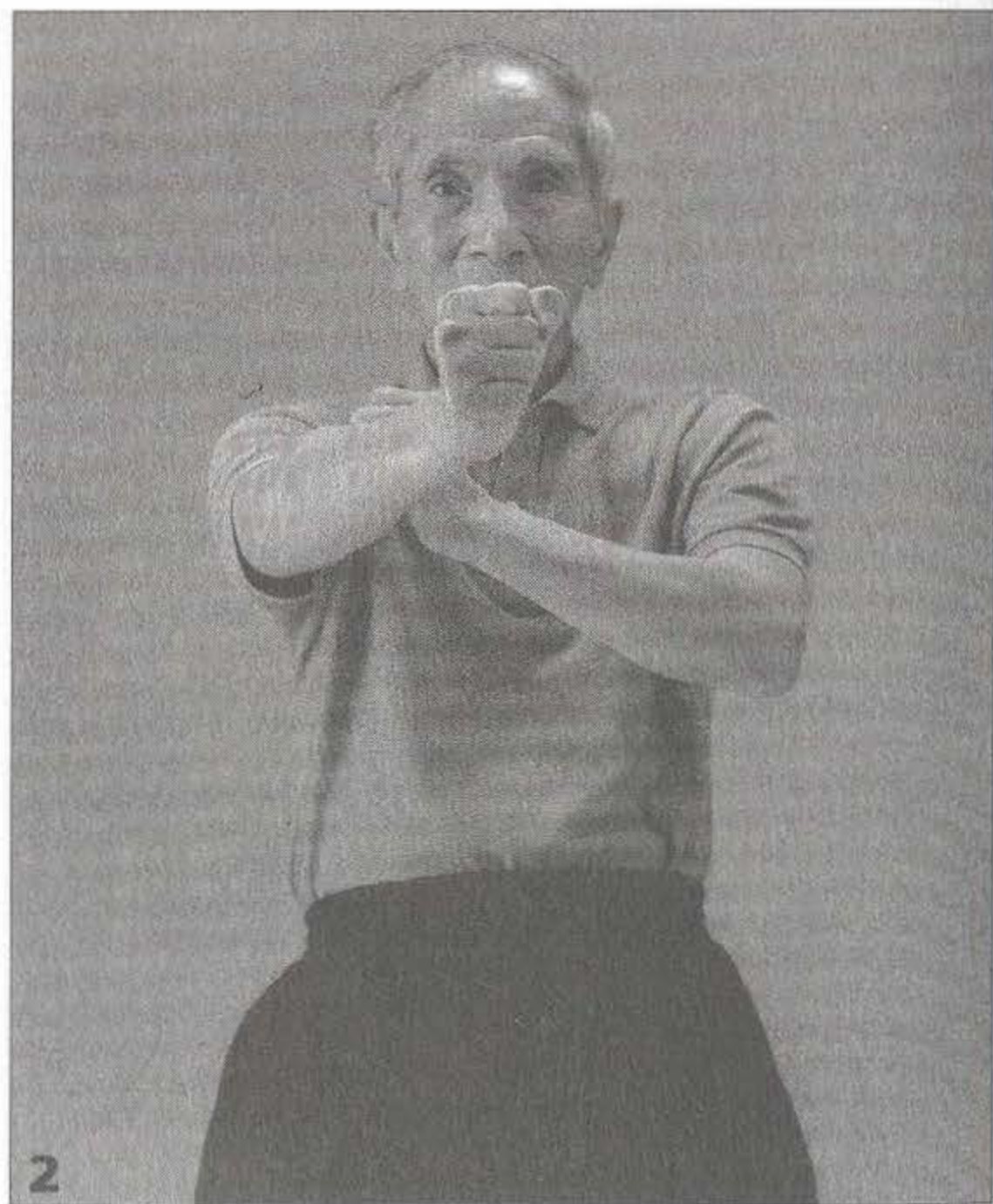


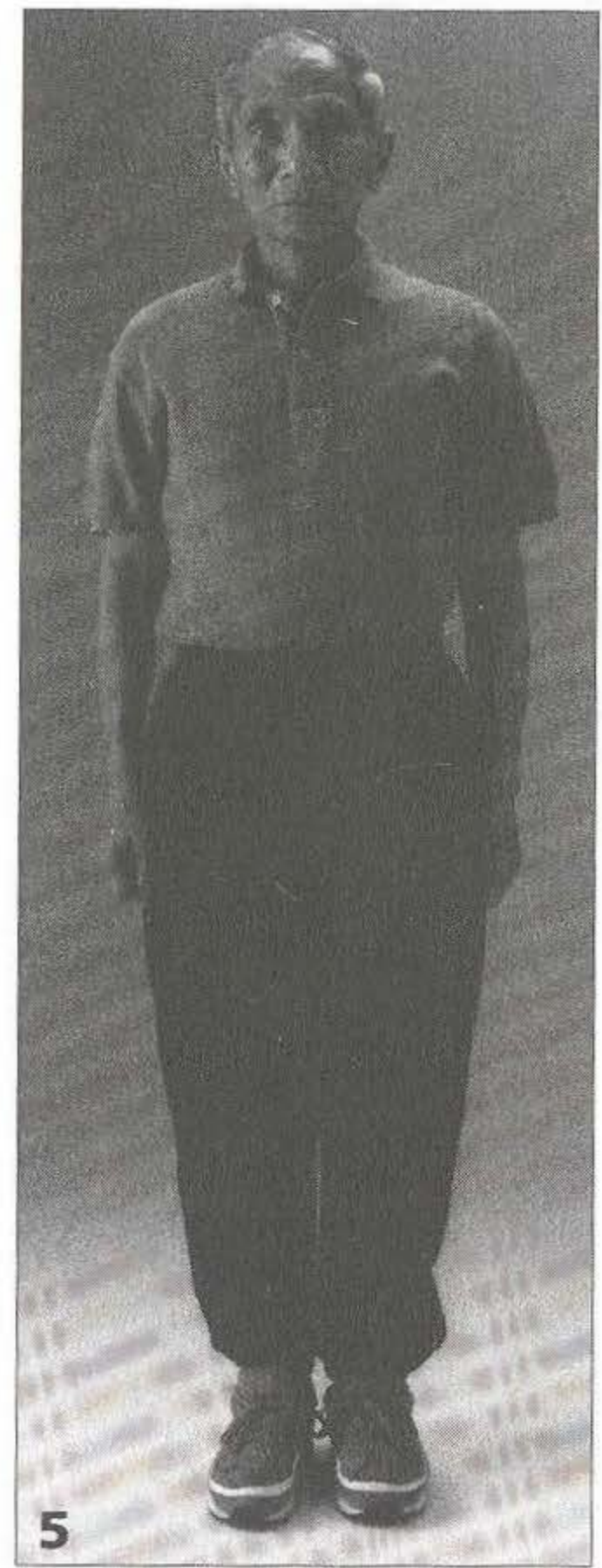
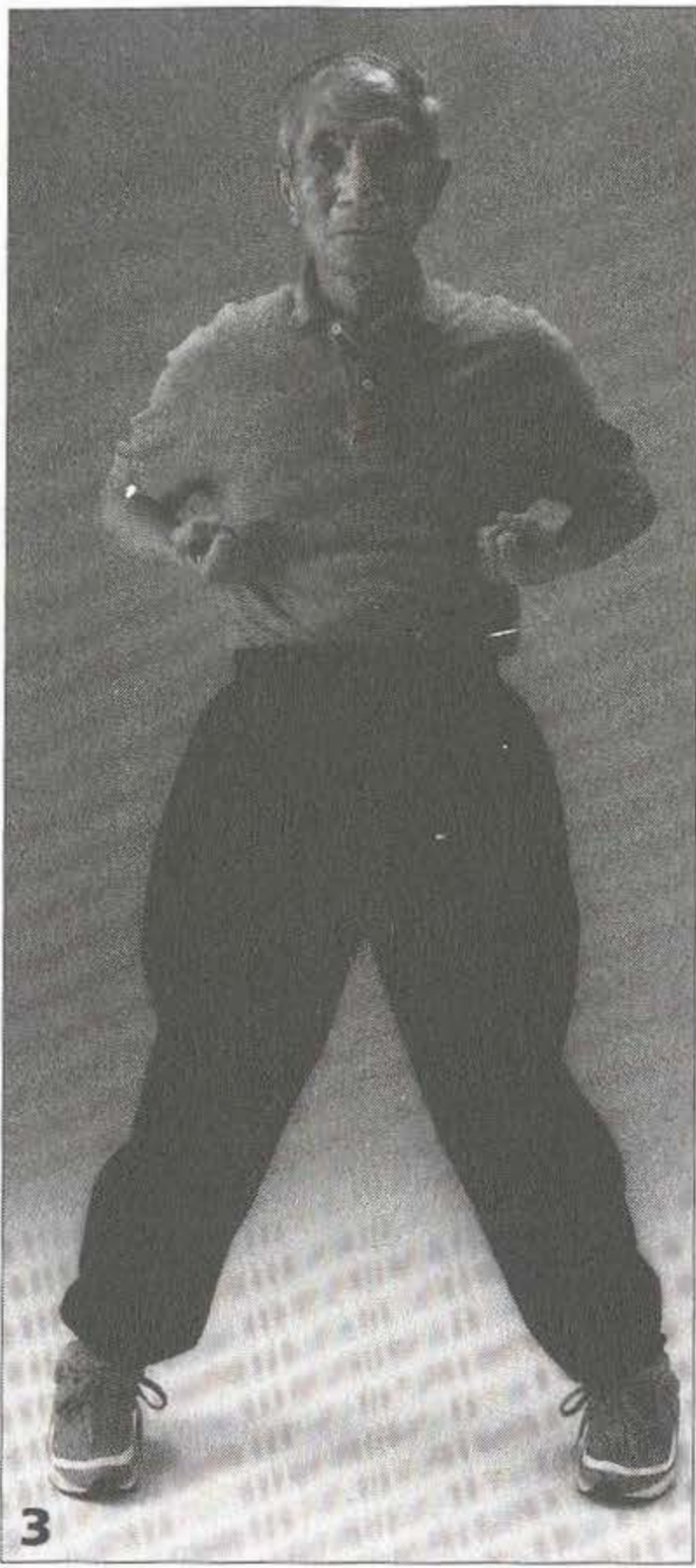


# 冲拳

## ***Chung Kuen***

- 1** Punch with your left hand, simultaneously drawing your right hand back behind your left hand.
- 2** Repeat twice more, each time changing hands.

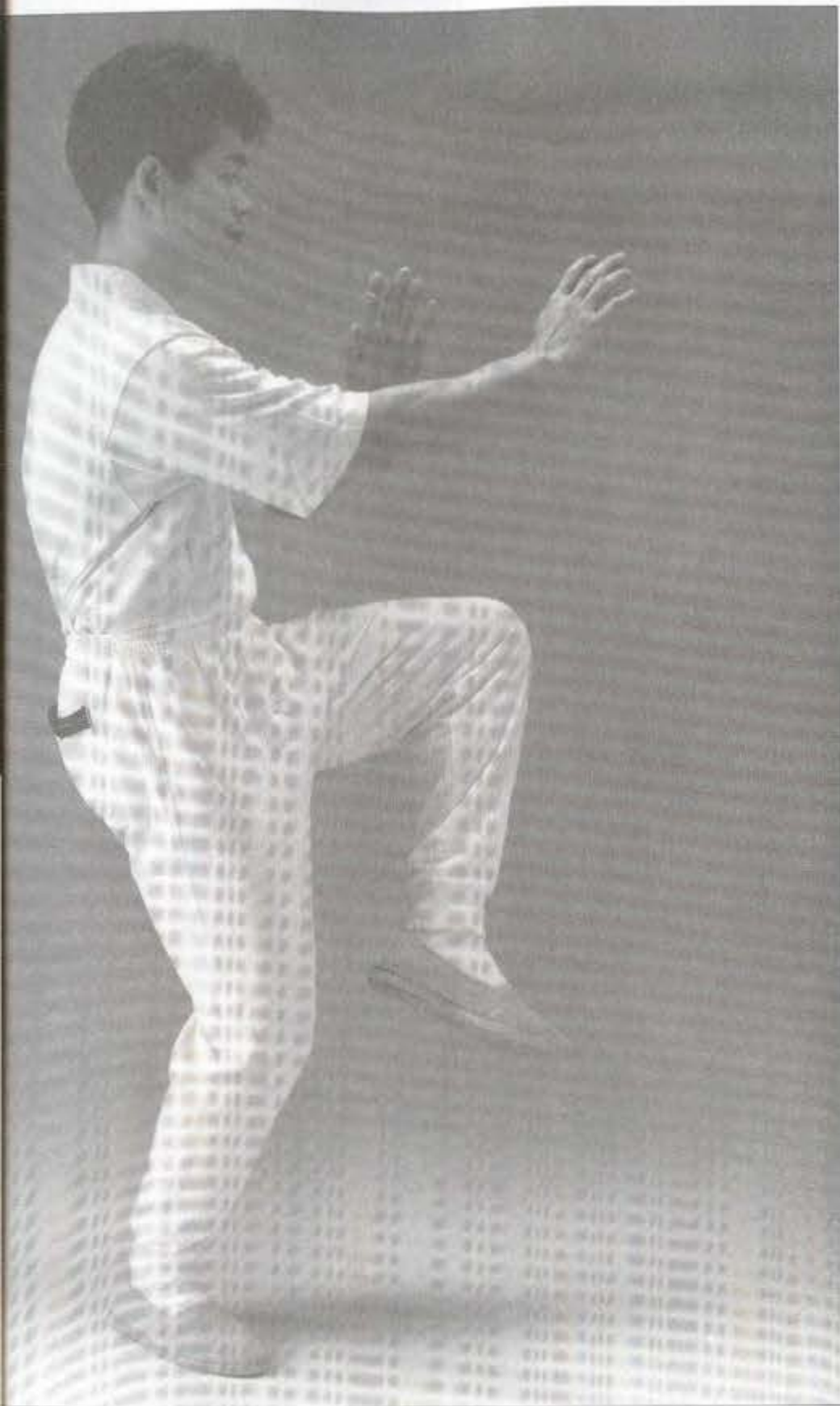




**3** Withdraw both fists back to the resting position.

**4** Bring your feet together and straighten legs.

**5** Finally, open your palms and push them down. Relax.



## One Legged Stance Training

When practising Wing Chun, leg training and footwork are very important, and you will find the Standing Position a very effective way of developing your stance. It can be practised on its own, as demonstrated below, in a stationary position. However, as your legs grow stronger, you can stand on one leg to practise your Siu Lim Tao.

- 1** Stand still, shift your weight to one leg and then lift up your opposite leg to waist level. Your raised leg should be loose and relaxed. All your energy should be concentrated on the leg you are balancing on. This leg is slightly bent with your weight sunk onto your upper thigh. Your back should be straight, not leaning forwards or backwards.

Your hands should be at your body's centreline with one slightly in front of the other (as in Wu Sau – see page 74). It doesn't matter which hand is in front.

When one leg becomes tired, change to the other leg. It is very important that your whole body remains relaxed. If you feel your shoulders becoming tense, check to see if your weight is sunk down. When your weight is on your upper thigh, then the rest of your body should feel relaxed.

- 2** If you find it difficult initially to lift your leg up completely, you can rest your foot lightly on the floor, keeping the weight on your back leg. As you become stronger, you can try lifting your leg up for short periods, increasing it slowly.





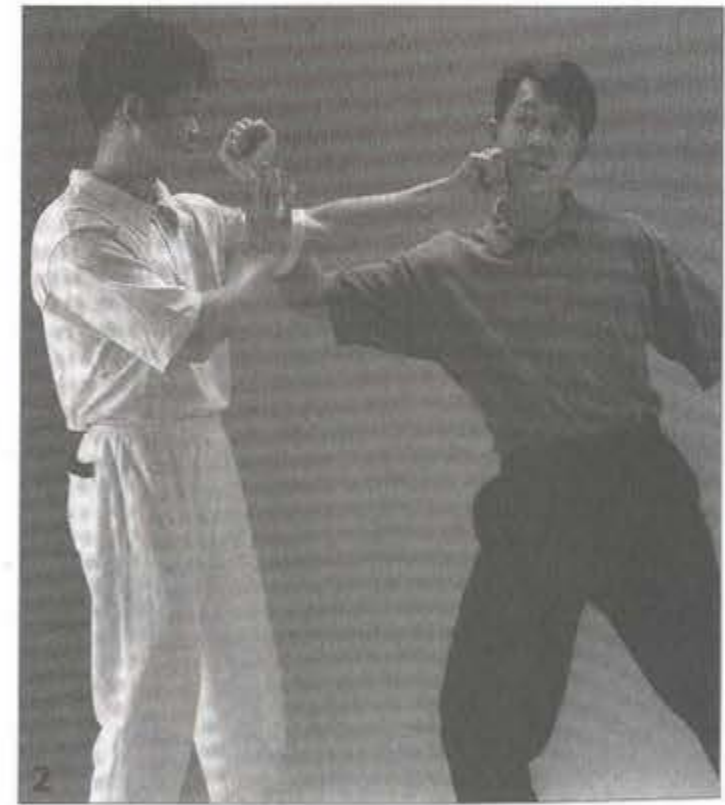
# Using Siu Lim Tao for Self-defence

Once you are practised in the movements of Siu Lim Tao as described and illustrated in the previous chapter, you can then go on to apply the movements to self-defence situations. Various applications of the movements are explained and illustrated below.

攤  
手

## **Tan Sau vs Punch**

- 1** Attacker punches at Michael (on left). Michael uses Tan Sau to meet the attack, quickly pushing forwards, making contact at his opponent's wrist. He causes his opponent's fist to slide off target while making him fall forwards.
- 2** Without pulling his hand back, Michael's Tan Sau becomes a punch, striking his opponent on the jaw.



伏手

***Fuk Sau***

Michael's Fuk Sau 'rests' on his opponent's arm. His forearm and wrist are relaxed but he uses enough energy to support the Fuk Sau so that it just touches his opponent's arm. It should not push down or to the side, or his opponent will feel his strength and use it against him.

Fuk Sau is used to sense an opponent's energy, so that when he or she moves to attack you will feel it. Fuk Sau can also be used to protect your centreline if your opponent is pushing forward.



# 拍手

## *Paak Sau and Jik Jeung*

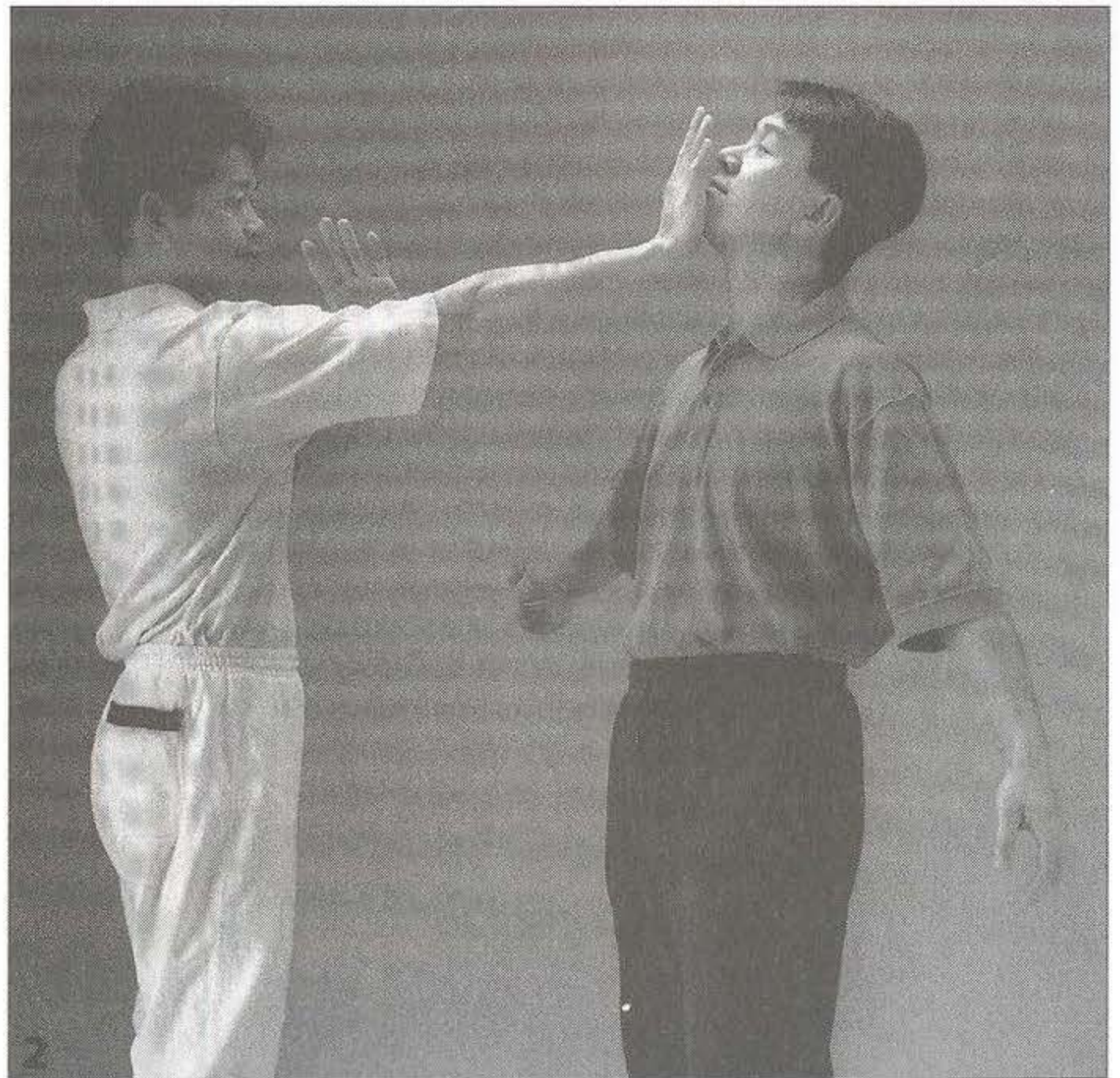
**1** Opponent punches at Michael's face. Michael uses Paak Sau, slapping his attacker's forearm sharply to the side, making the punch travel harmlessly past the intended target. The forearm should be the point of contact for the Paak Sau since it travels slowly compared to the fist and is an easier target.



# 直掌

## *Jik Jeung*

**2** Having slapped his opponent's forearm, Michael's hand immediately relaxes and changes to a palm strike (Jik Jeung). Since his opponent's weight is moving forwards, the force of the strike is magnified.

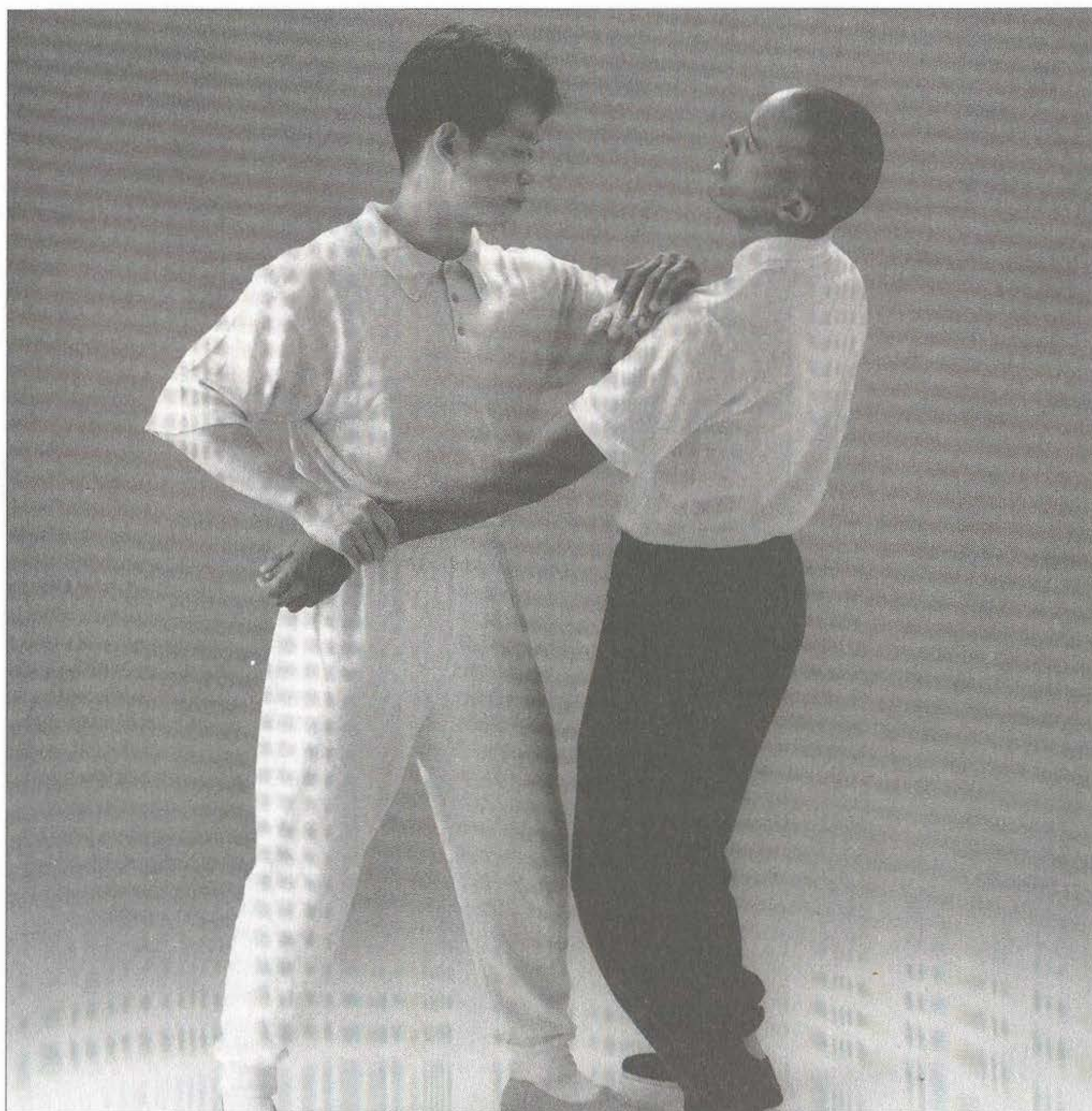


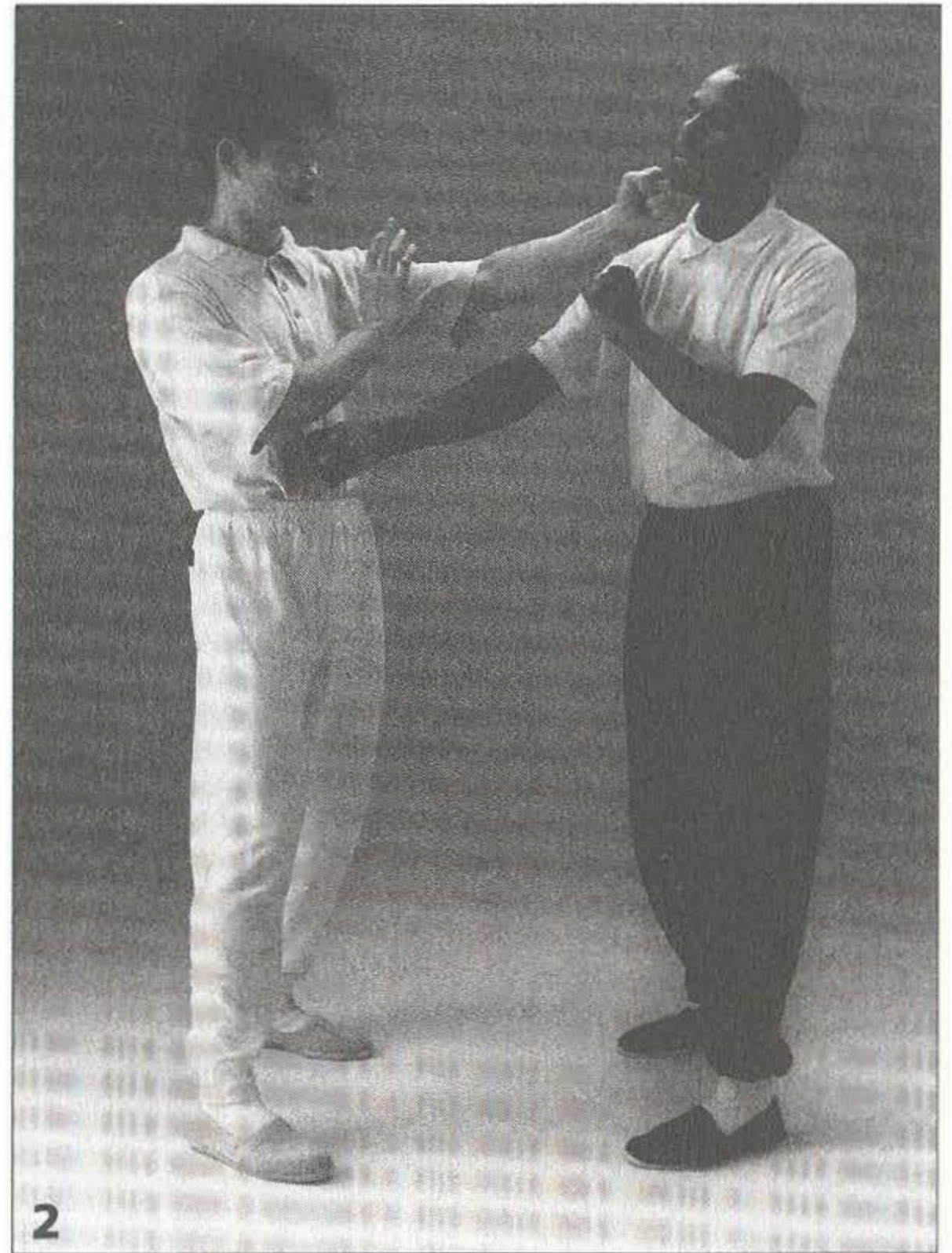
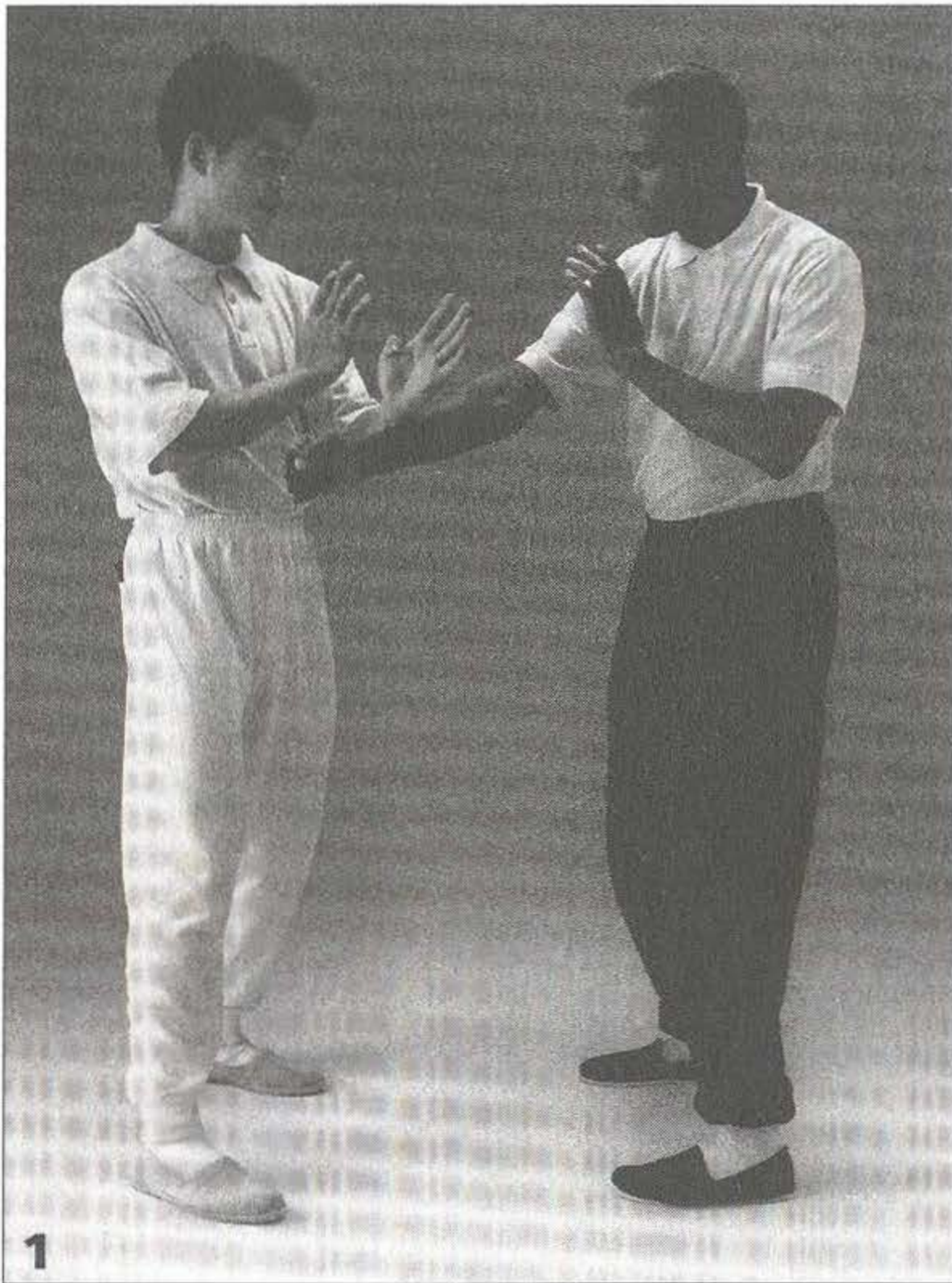
橫  
攔  
手

***Wan Lan Sau***

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Wan Lan Sau is a covering technique that is used to trap your opponent's arms or control certain positions. Although both arms are used in Siu Lim Tao, this application uses only one arm. Which arm, left or right, is determined by the situation. Here, Michael traps his opponent's arm against his chest by pressing forward with Wan Lan Sau in order to make sure that his opponent has no space in which to move.



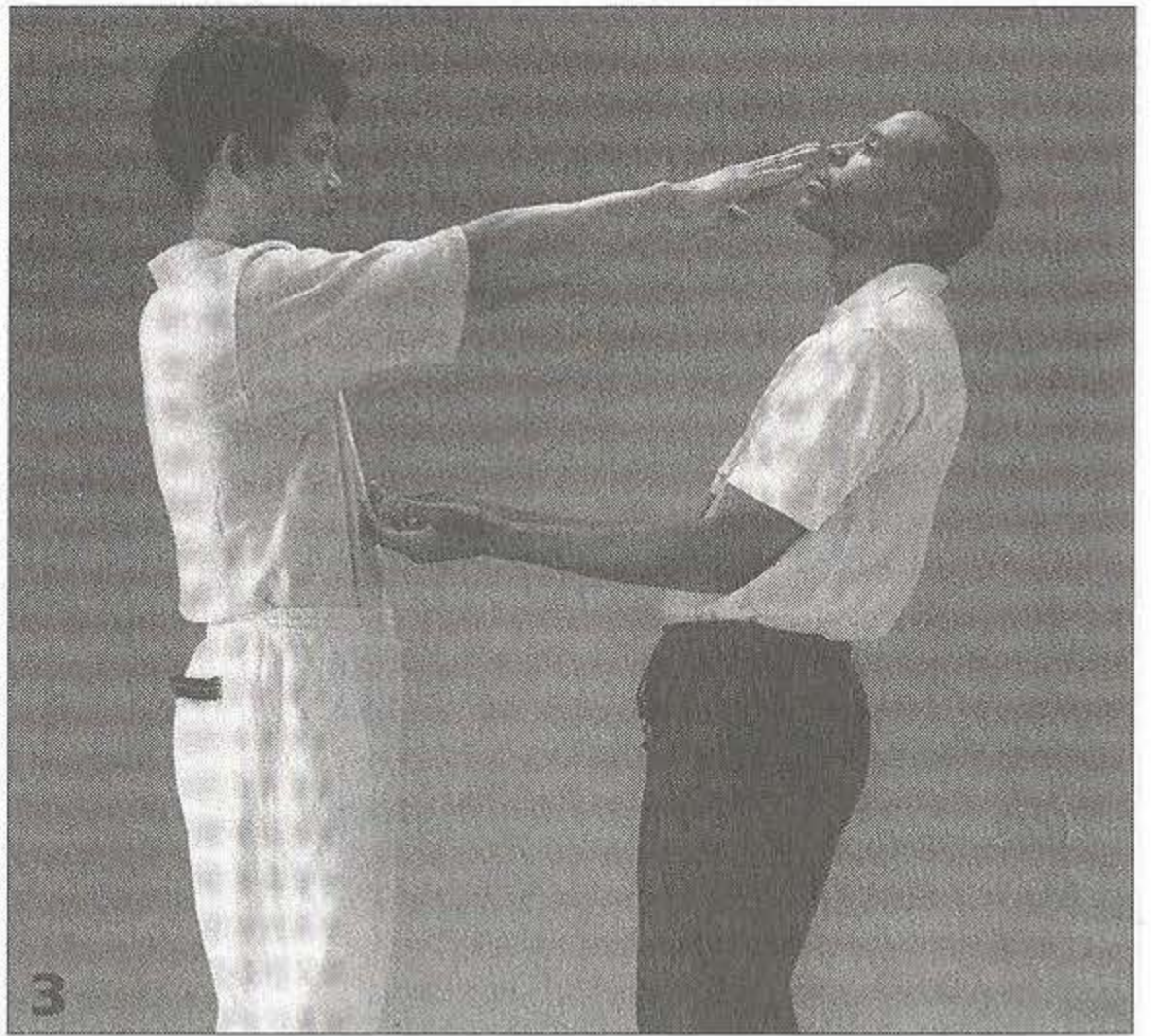
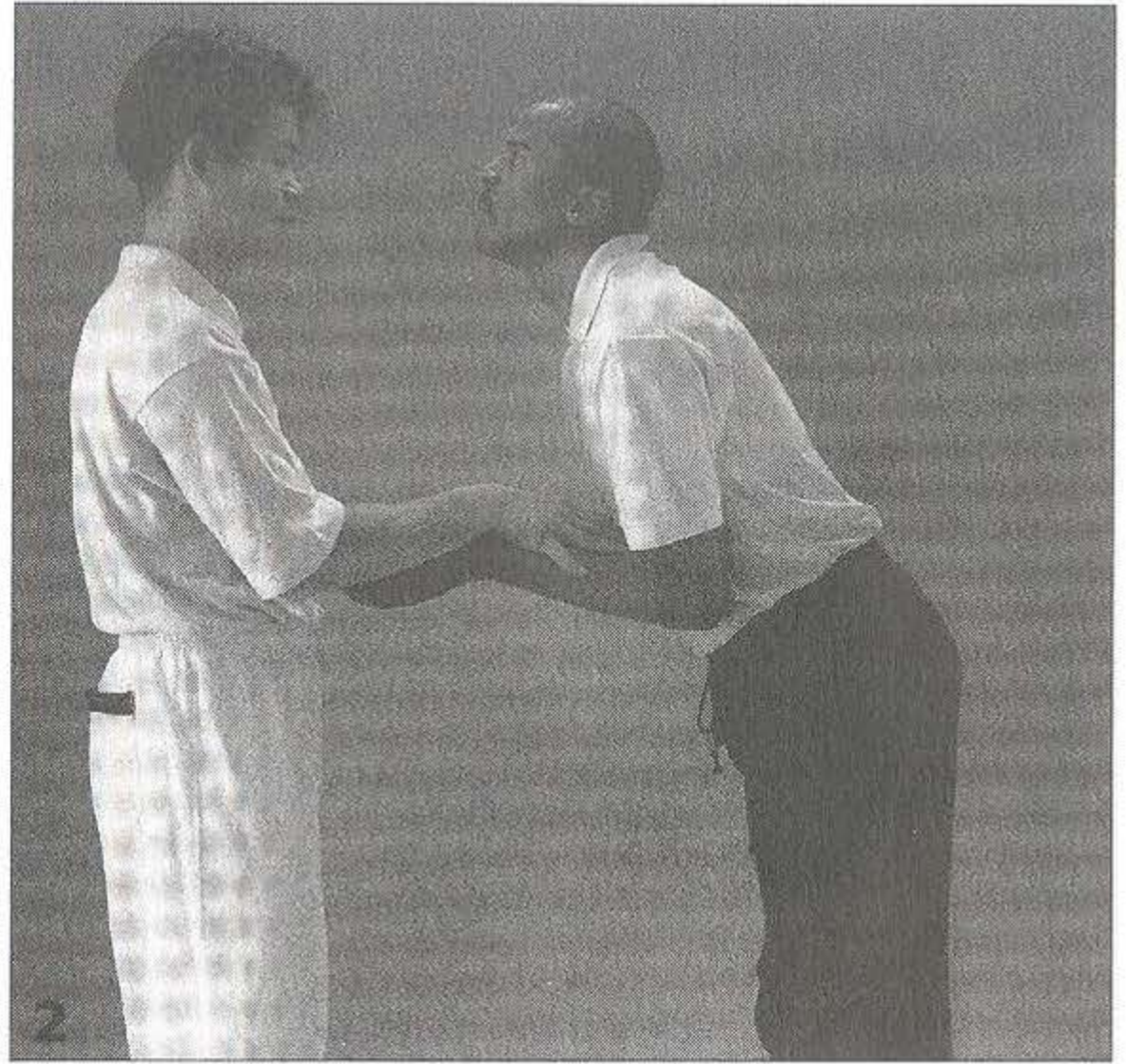
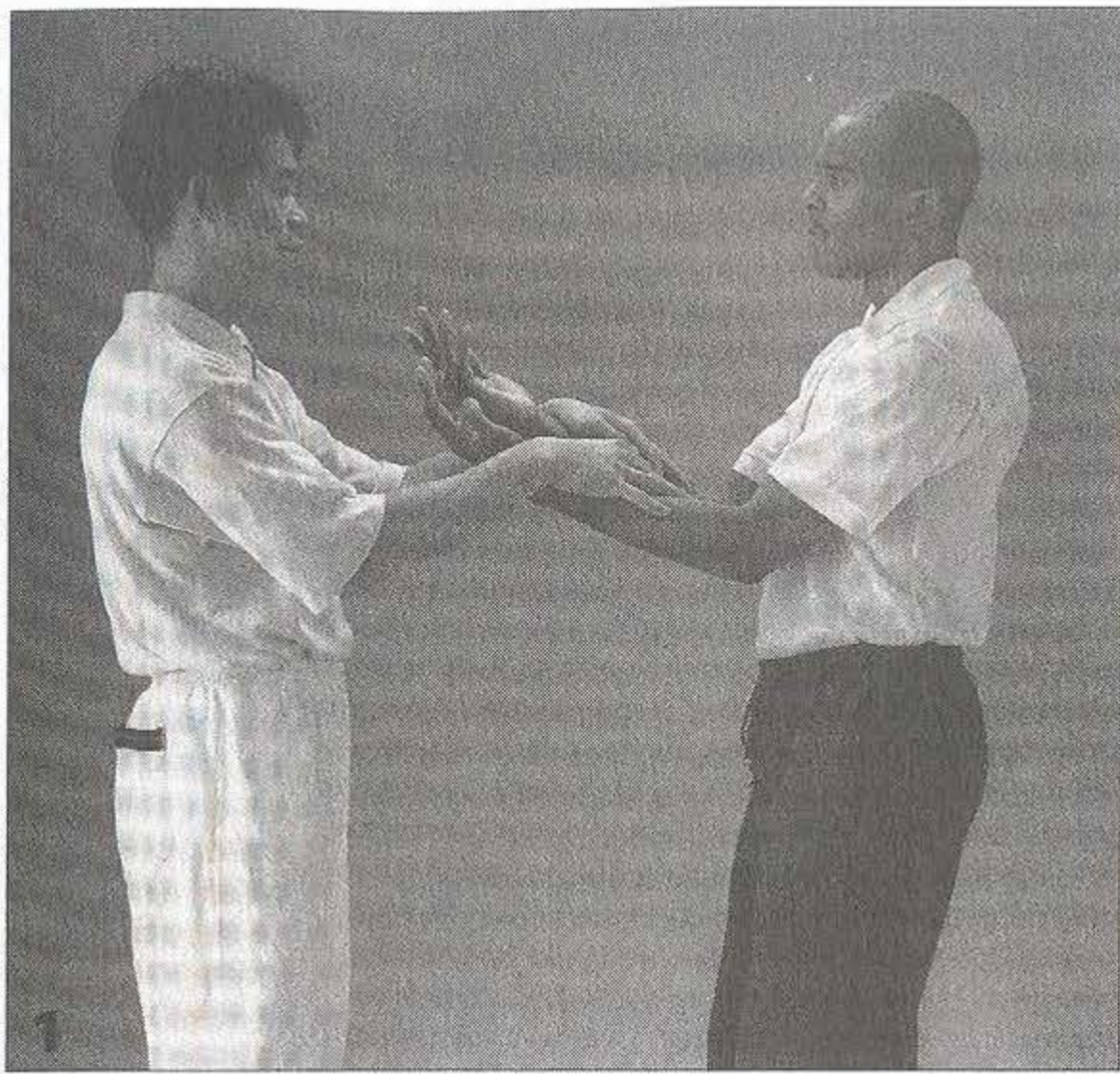


枕  
手

***Jum Sau vs Punch, Counter with Punch***

- 1** Opponent punches towards Michael's stomach. Michael turns 45° and uses Jum Sau to direct the attack downwards and to the side. Jum Sau is a sharp downwards 'chop' with the wrist, not the whole arm, and is used only when your opponent is giving you energy. The Jum Sau makes contact at a point midway between the wrist and elbow and does not chase the hand down. In this way you will not expose your centreline if you miss your opponent's arm.
- 2** Having gained a good position, Michael now strikes forward with a punch.





# 雙又空手

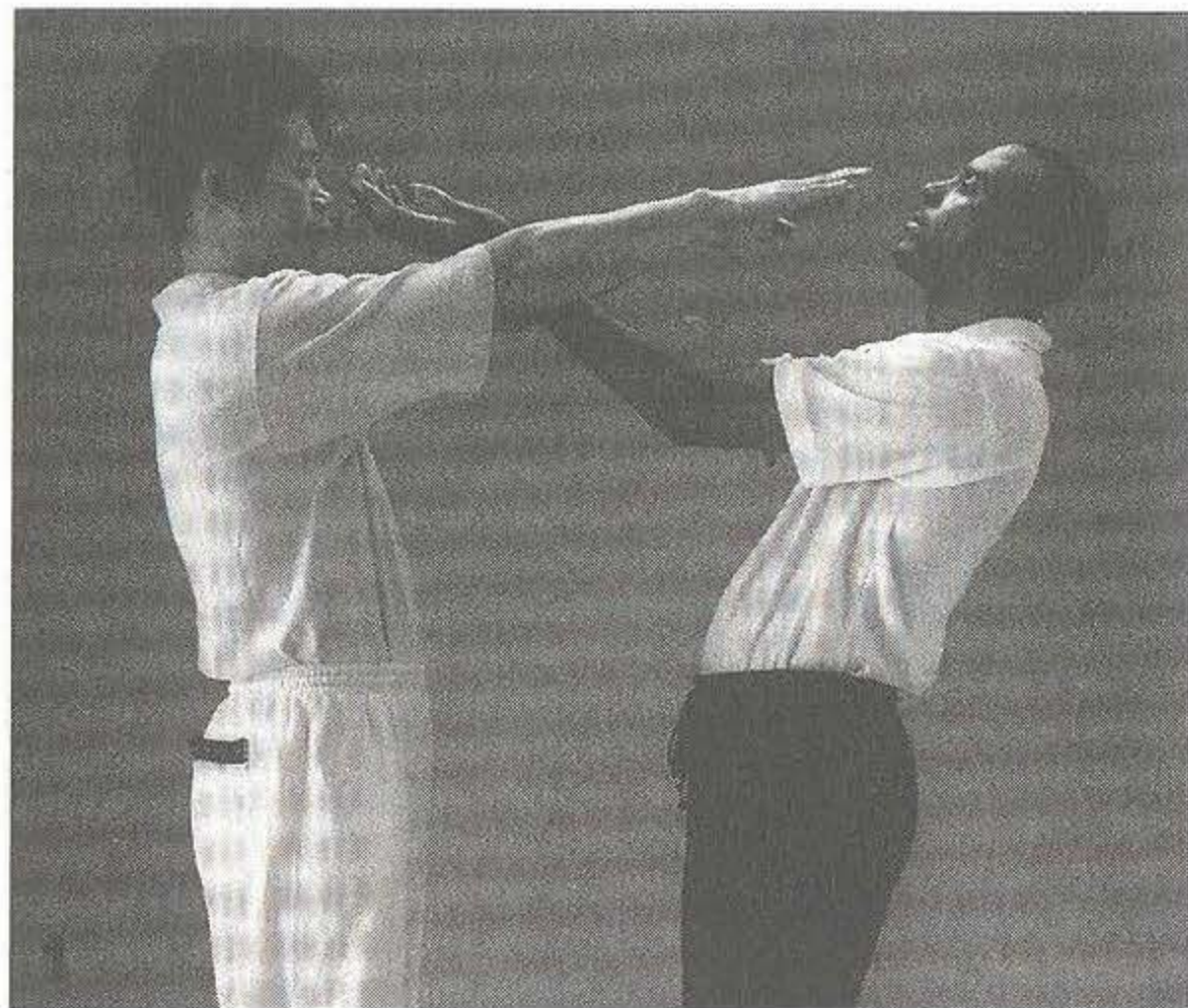
## ***Double Jut Sau and Double Biu Jee***

- 1** Opponent faces Michael with both arms extended in front of him, as if he is about to attack Michael's throat. Michael places a Fuk Sau on each arm and relaxes.
- 2** When his opponent starts to move his arms, Michael feels the motion from his relaxed Fuk Sau position. He responds by changing from Fuk Sau to Double Jut Sau, sharply pulling his opponent forwards and down. While performing the Jut Sau, Michael is careful to keep his elbows in so as not to pull his opponent onto himself.
- 3** Having completed the Double Jut Sau, Michael performs Double Biu Jee, making sure his fingers are relaxed until the point of contact when he thrusts his energy to his fingertips.

雙  
又  
空  
手

## *Double Jut Sau*

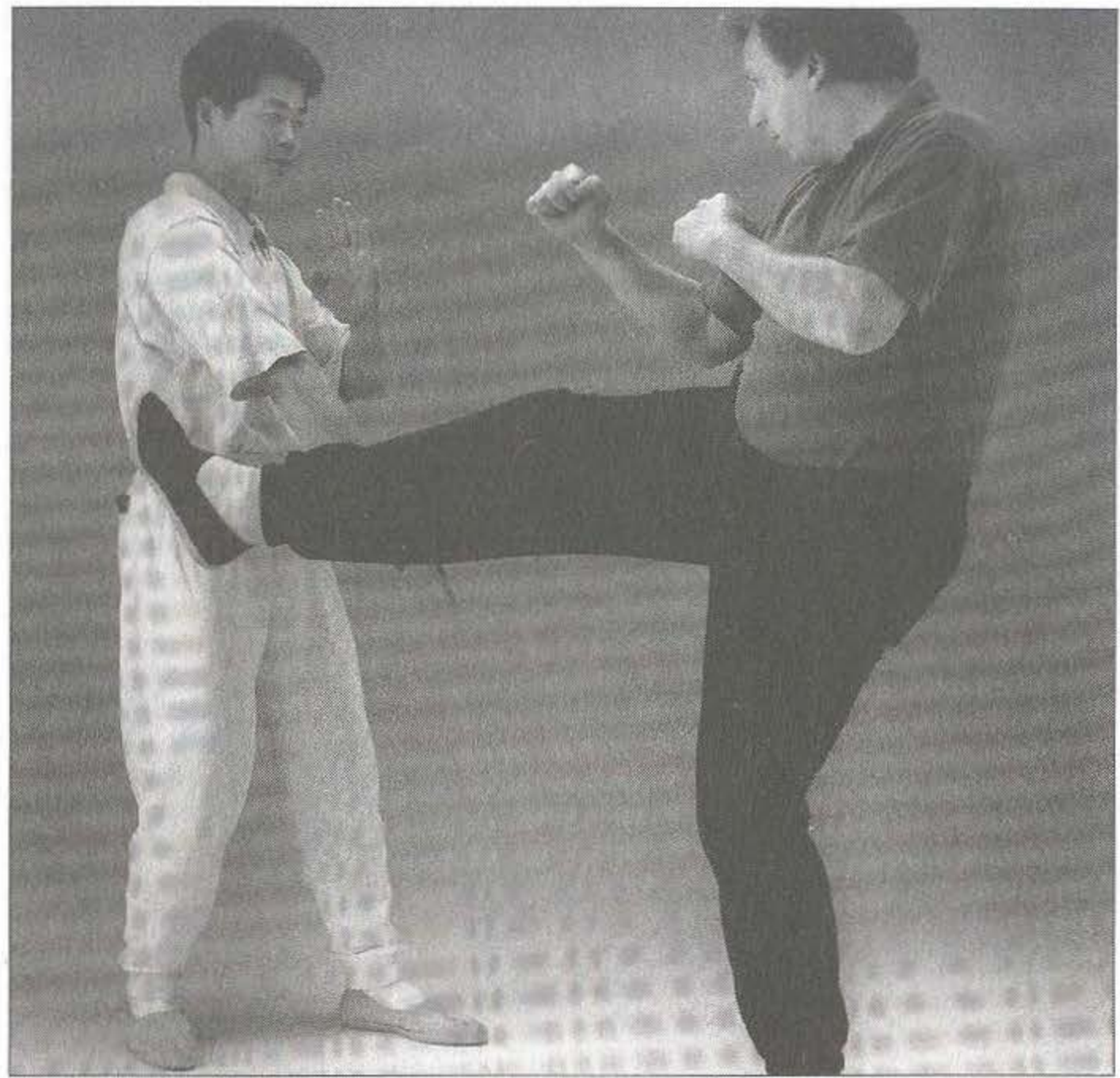
- 1 This application follows on from the *Biu Jee*. As Michael attacks the eyes, his opponent sharply jerks his head backwards to try and avoid the strike. As he does so, his arms rise up and become tense.
- 2 When the upward movement of his opponent's arms ends, but while he is still tense, Michael sharply applies *Double Jut Sau*, sweeping downwards in one strong movement. Once again, he pulls his opponent off balance.



# 攔手

## ***Gaan Sau vs Kick***

Gaan Sau is used to defend the lower body (but not the legs). As his opponent begins to kick, Michael starts to turn his waist 45° and his Tan Sau changes to Gaan Sau. As the Gaan Sau reaches the end of its arc, it makes contact with his opponent's leg, thus deflecting the kick past its target.

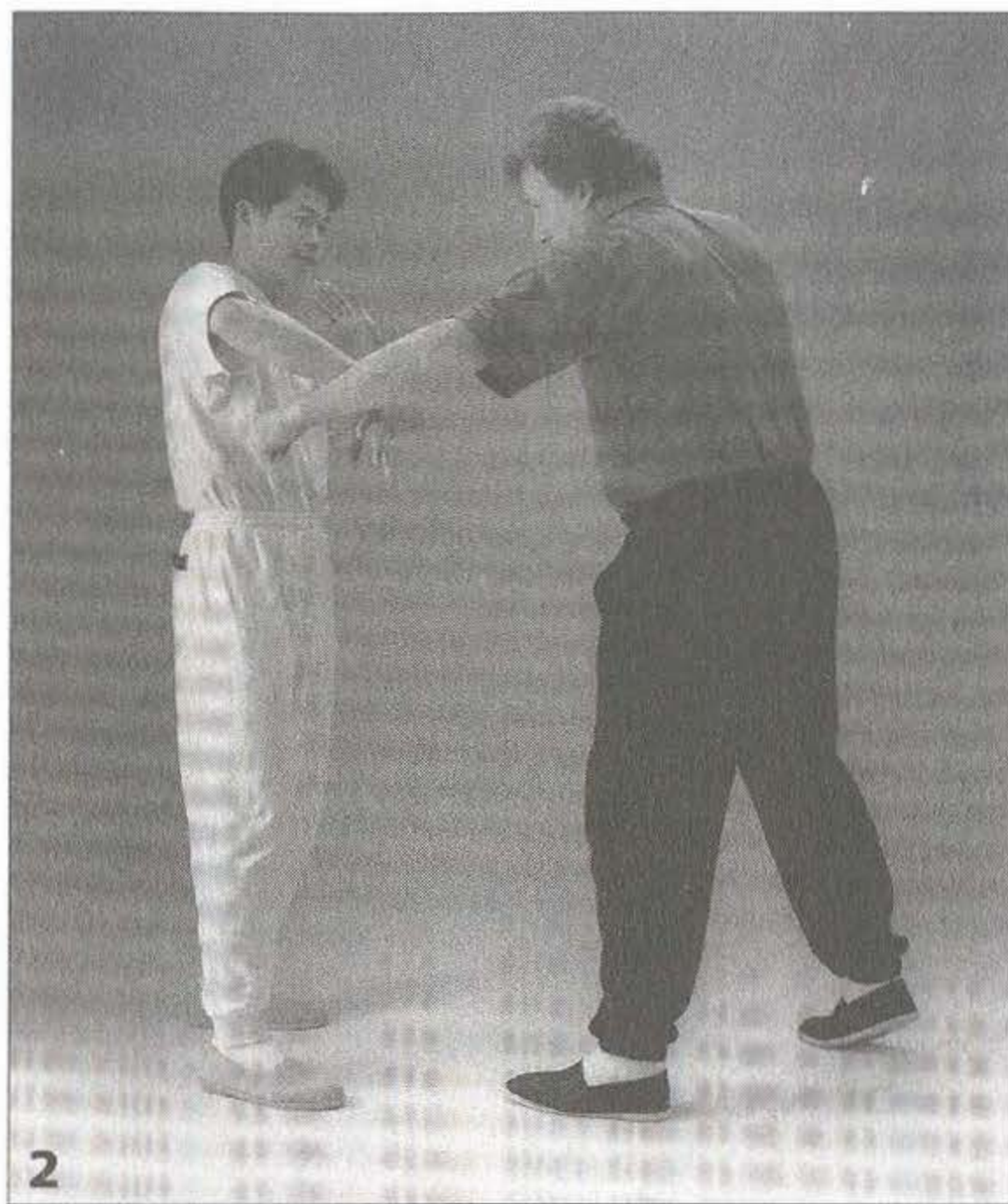
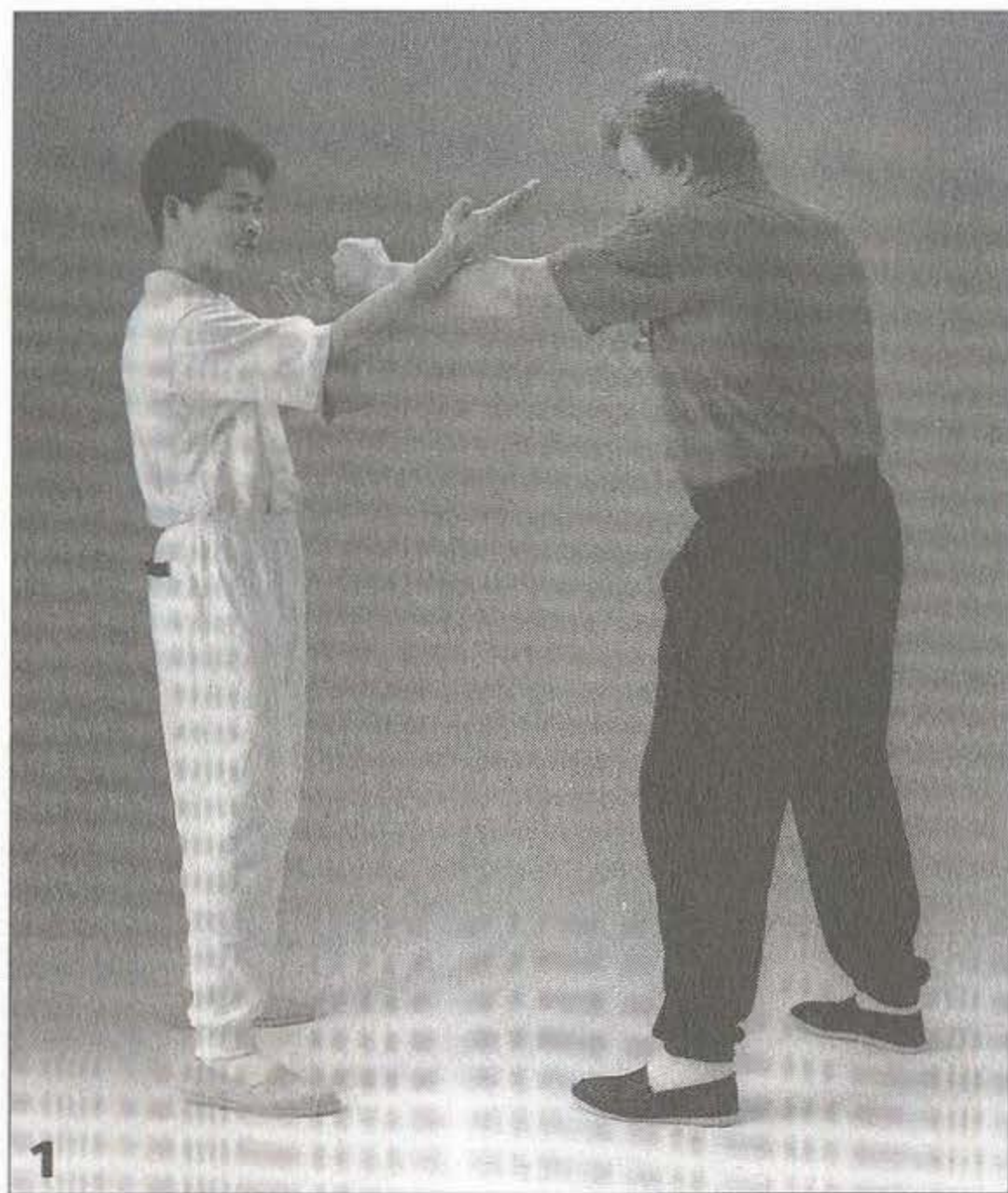


# 攔手

## ***Gaan Sau vs Low Punch***

This time as his opponent punches Michael steps forward, slightly to the side (so creating a 45° angle). His Gaan Sau deflects the low punch to the side. The step forward closes the distance to his opponent, and so allows him to counter-attack more easily.

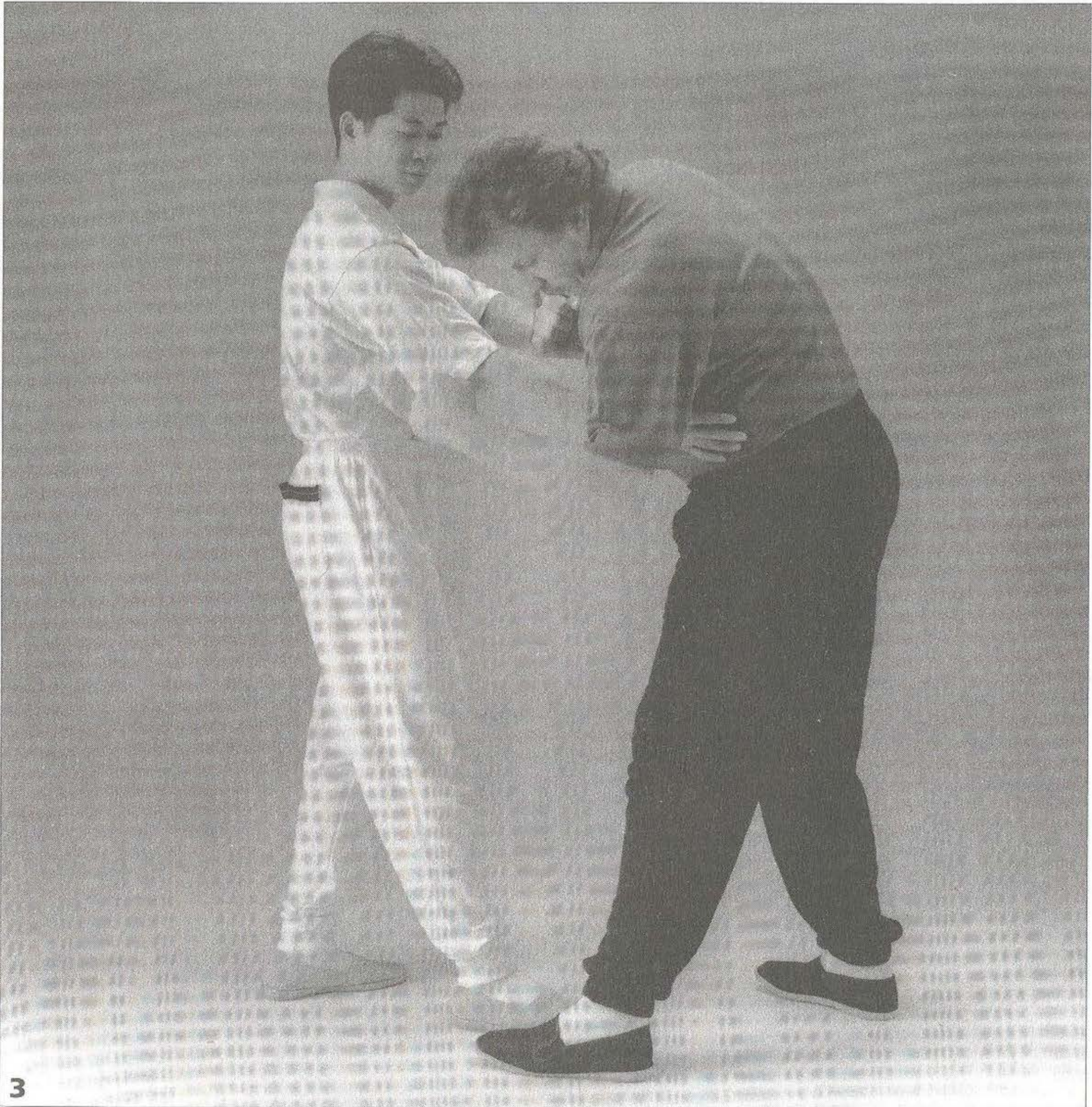




# 圓手

## ***Huen Sau vs Punch***

- 1** Opponent punches at Michael who uses a Tan Sau, but this time he makes contact with his Tan Sau on the outside of his opponent's arm.
- 2** As his opponent pushes his fist forward, Michael lifts his elbow and rolls his wrist around his opponent's arm so his arm is now on the inside of his opponent's. As he performs the Huen Sau, he makes sure he does not push the arm downwards, alerting the attacker, but directs it outwards. This is a very 'soft' technique and his opponent should feel as if he has punched at thin air. Note that Huen Sau is only used when you feel your opponent's energy coming forward. Otherwise you can leave yourself open to attack.

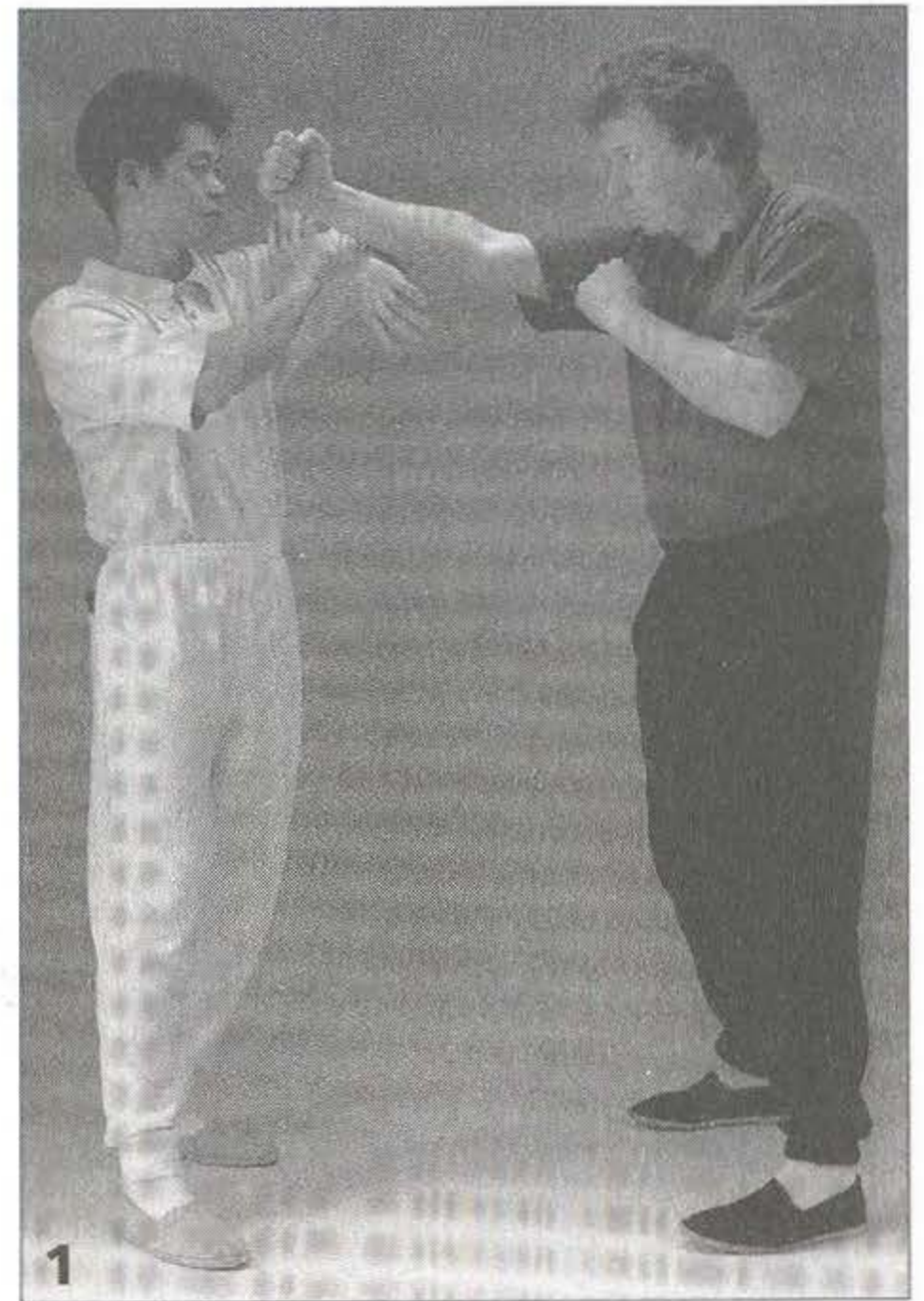


**3** Michael's opponent is now unbalanced and he topples forwards. This gives Michael the chance to change to a low palm strike, hitting his opponent's lower ribs. As he strikes, his left hand changes from Wu Sau and covers the right hand of his opponent.

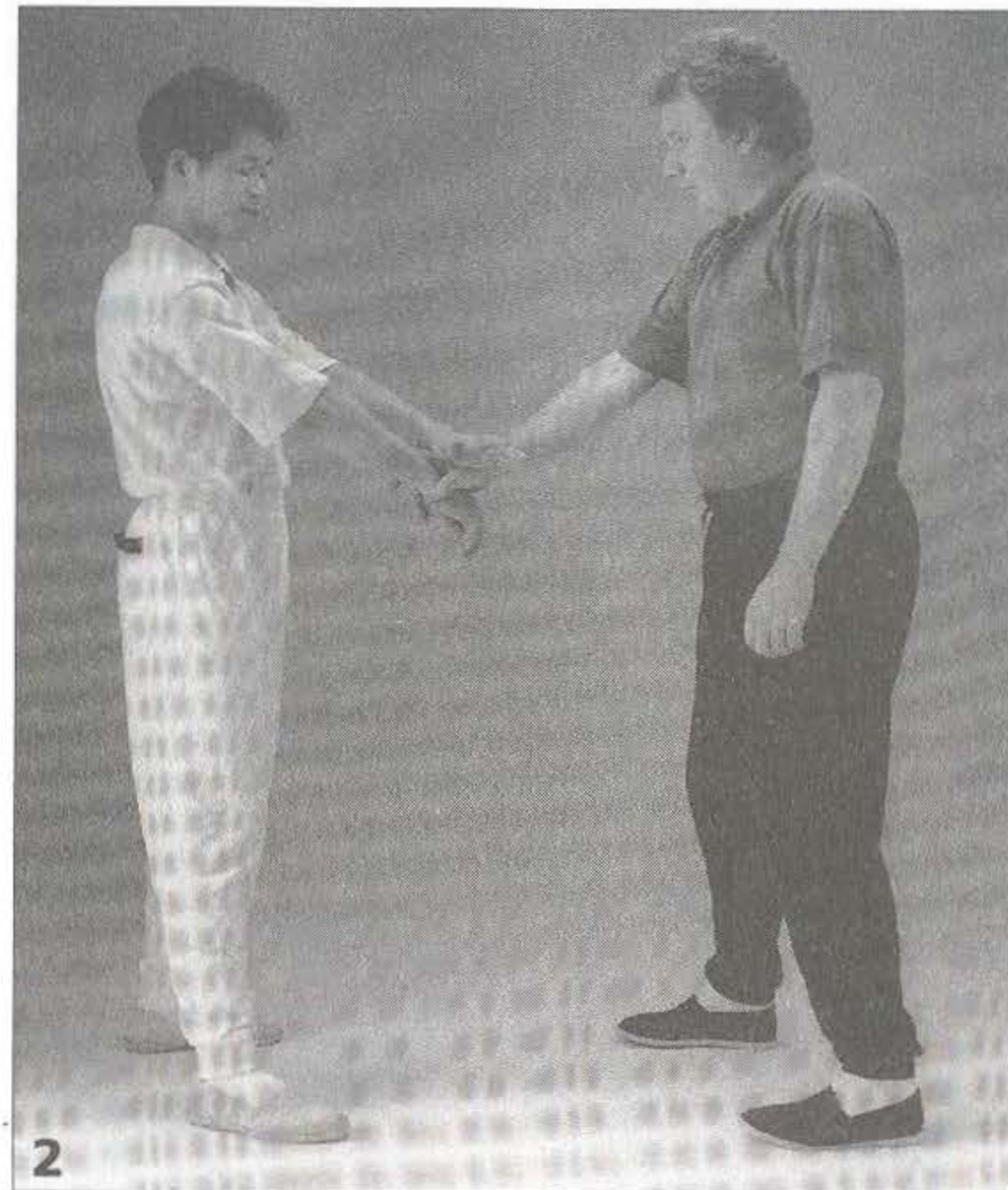
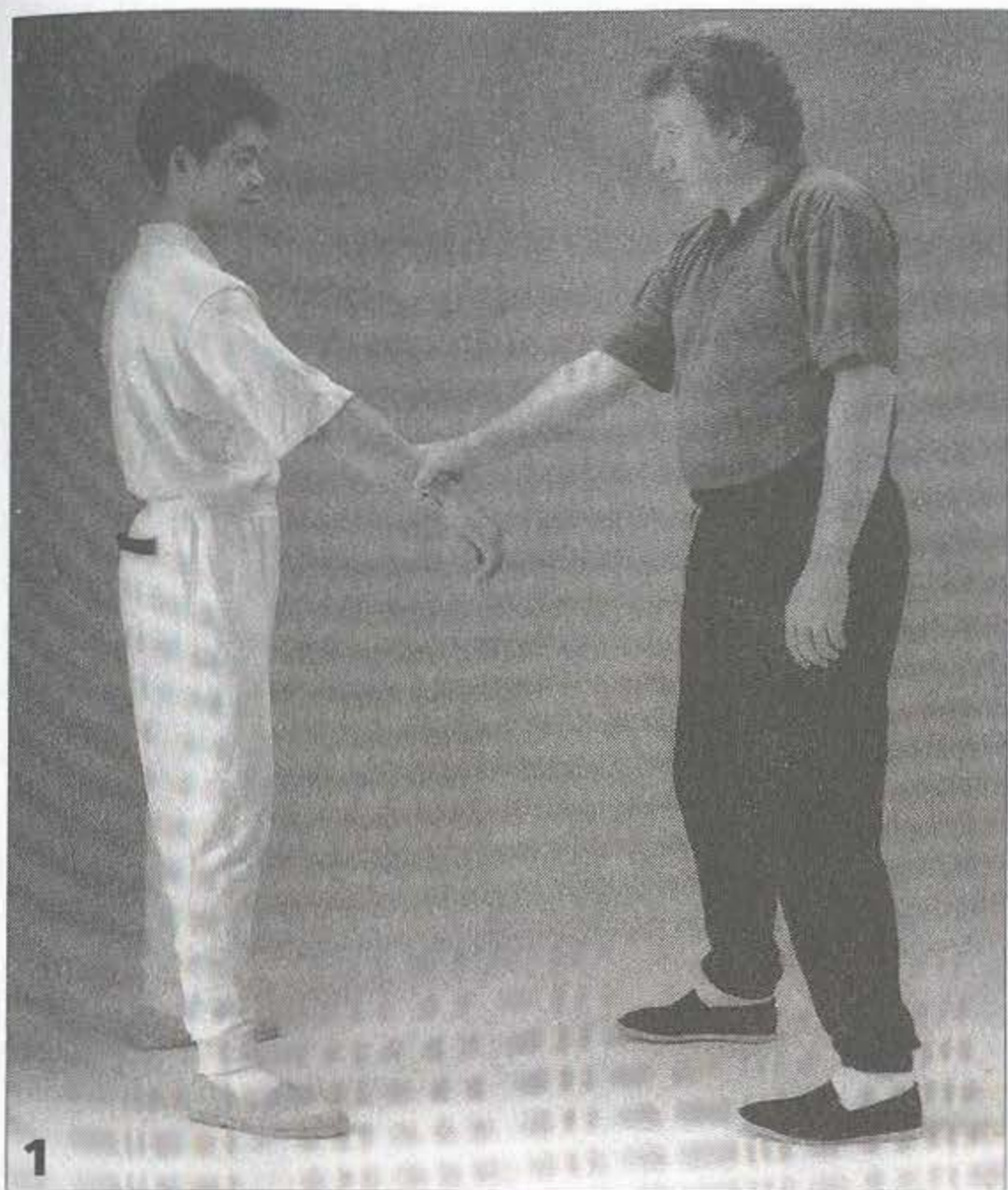
# 膀 手

## *Bong Sau, Lap Sau and Pek Jeung*

- 1** Opponent punches at Michael who turns 45°, his weight on his left foot. Michael raises his left Bong Sau and covers his centreline with a right Wu Sau.
- 2** Michael then uses his Wu Sau to change to Lap Sau where he grabs his opponent's wrist and sharply jerks it down and outwards to pull him off balance and move his arms out of the way. Turning 45° helps ensure that your opponent is not pulled onto your body when you are performing this movement.



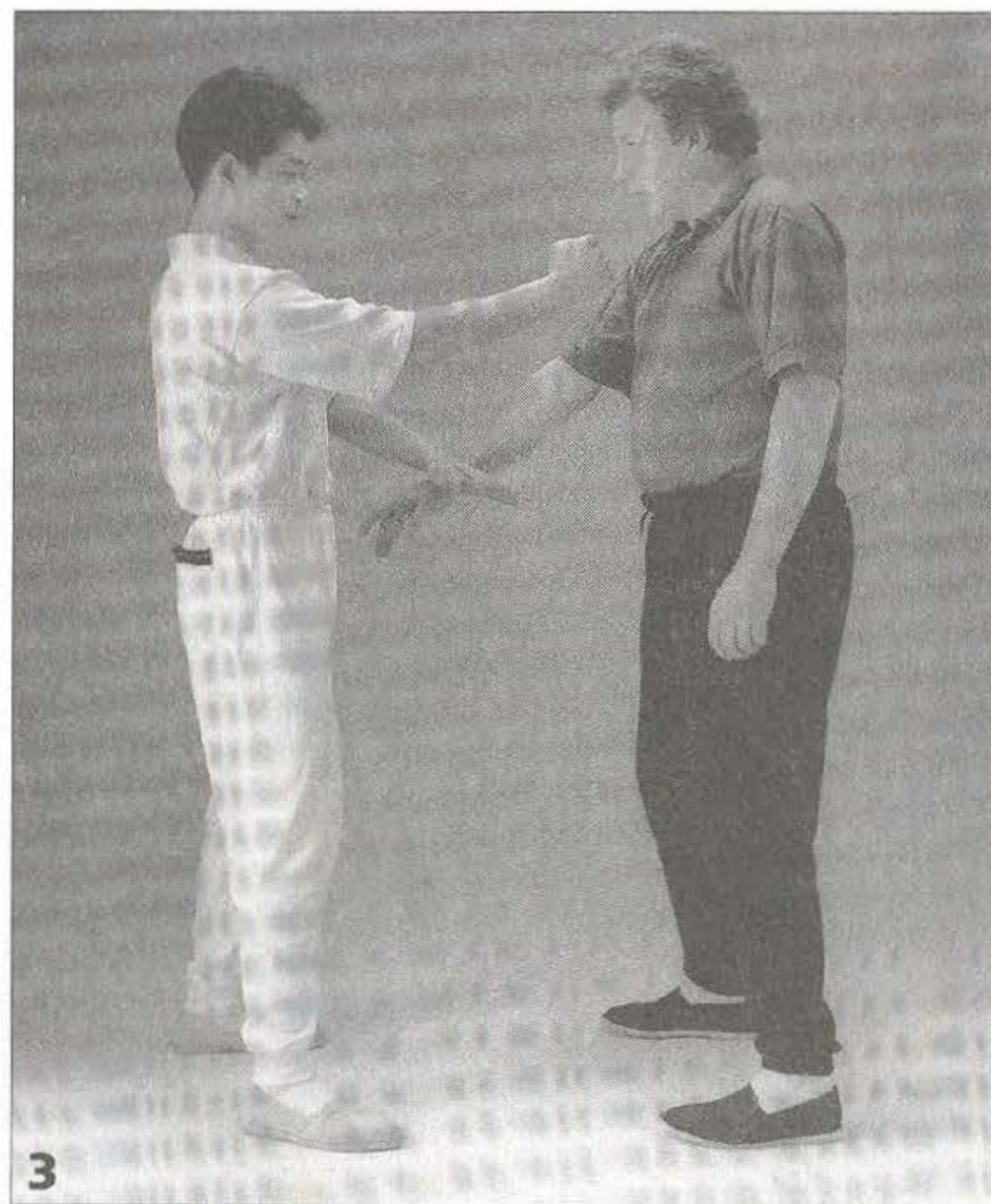
- 3** Finally, Michael attacks with Pek Jeung, extending his arm into his opponent's exposed throat. When applying Lap Sau just the right amount of energy is used to move the arm, allowing the Pek Jeung to come through.

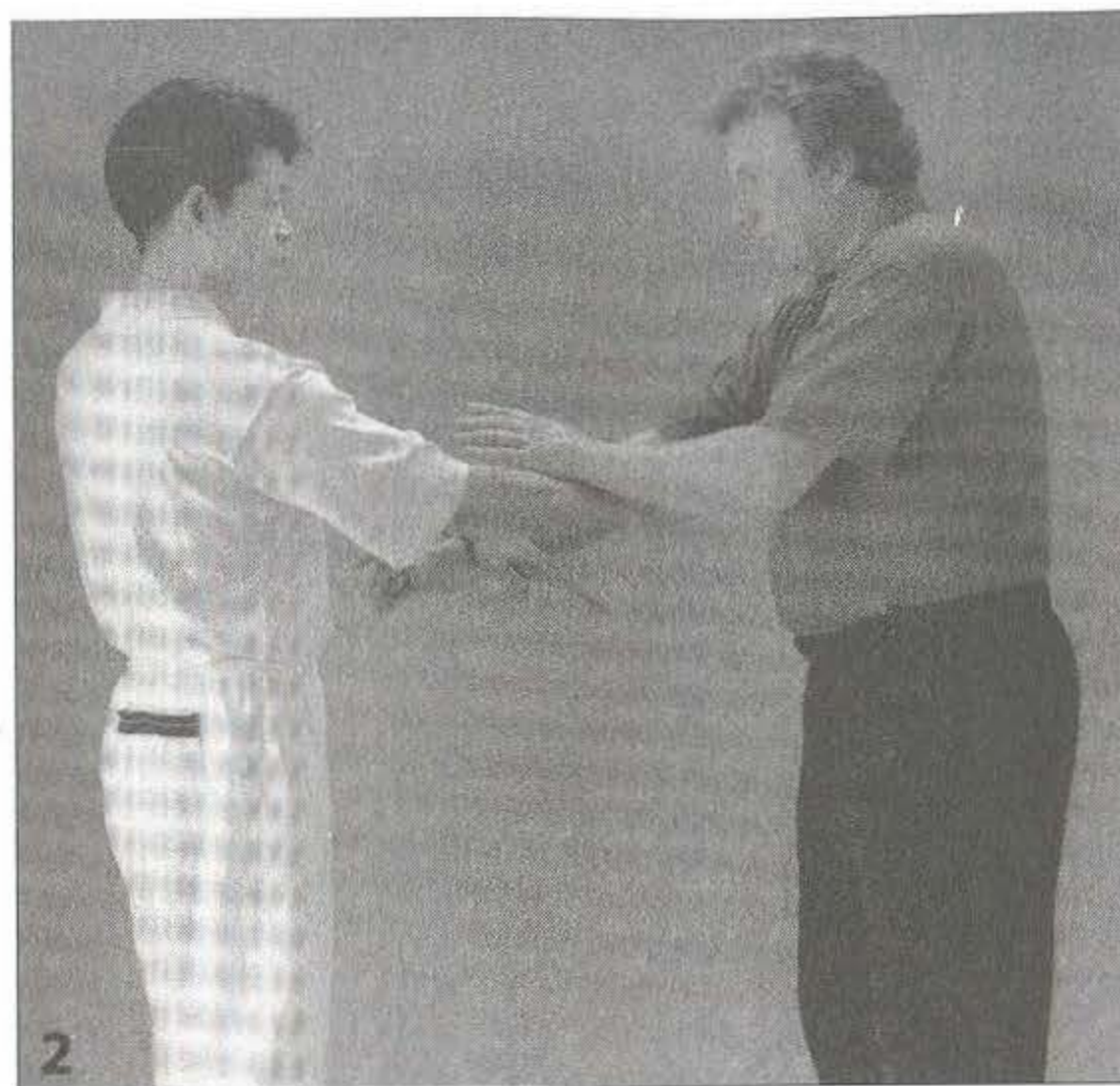
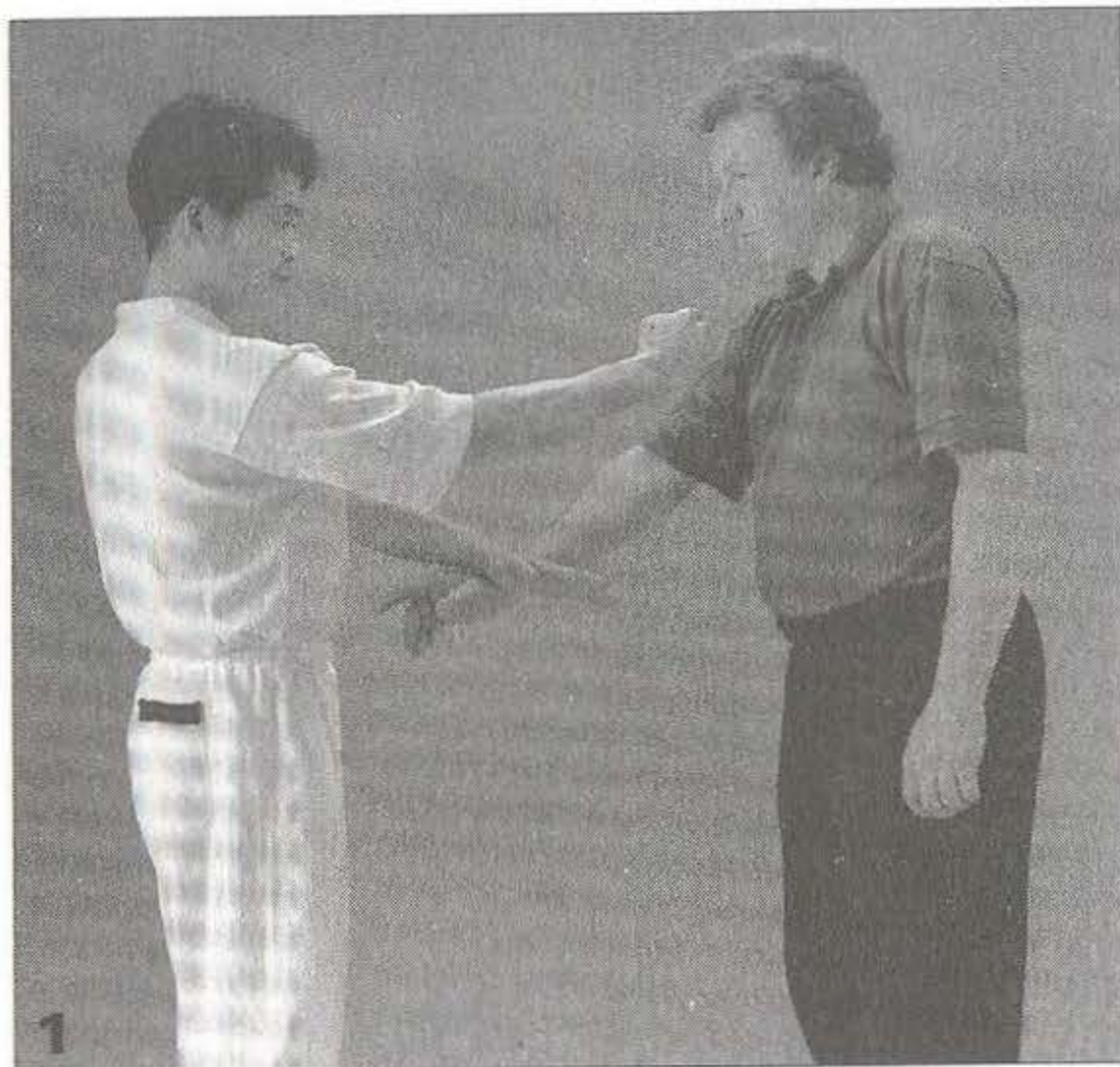


# 鏟手

## *Chaan Sau*

- 1** Opponent moves to grab Michael's wrist.
- 2** However, before he can close his grip, Michael quickly uses Chaan Sau to sweep his hand clear.
- 3** Using his free hand Michael punches his opponent.



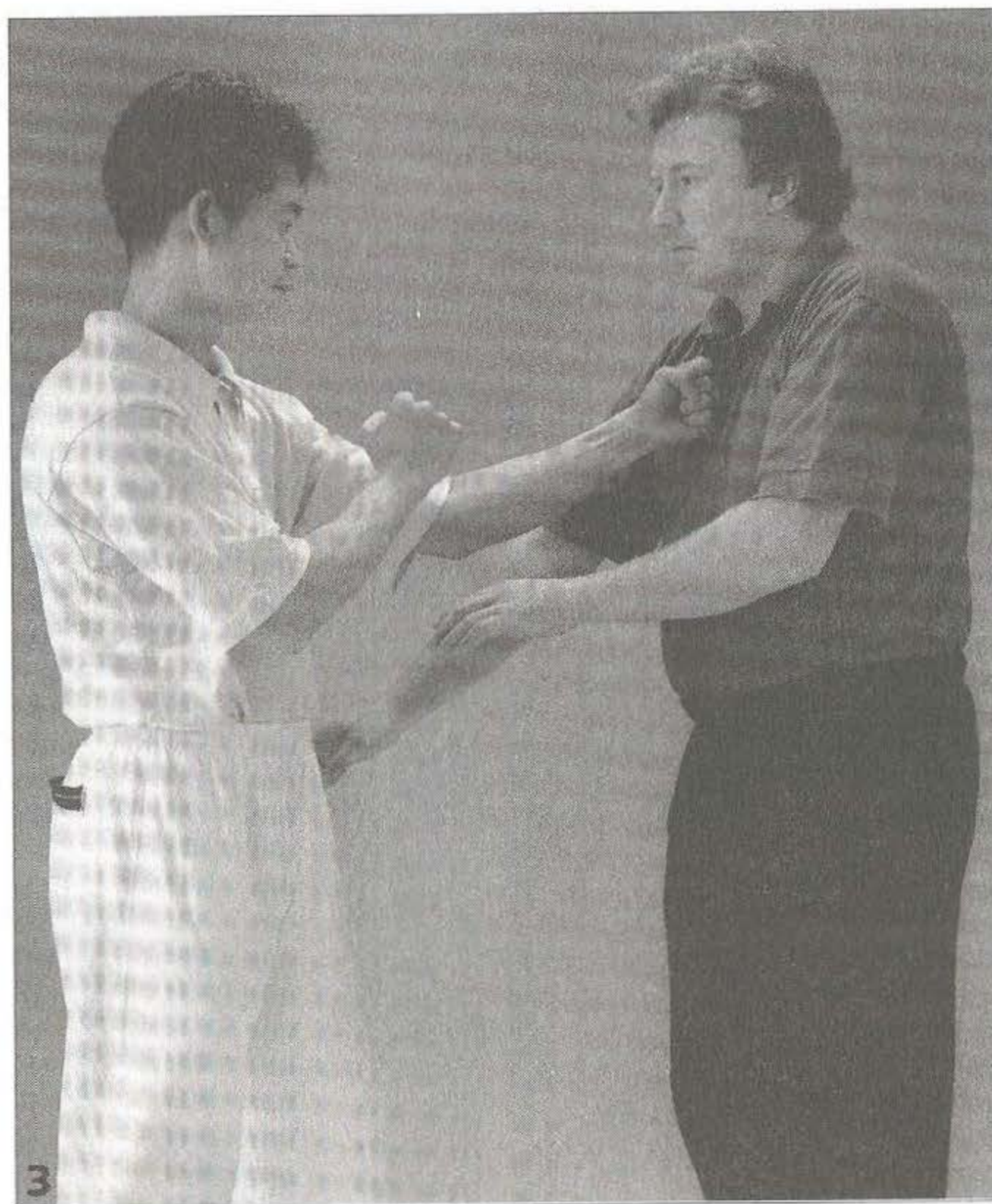


冲  
拳

## ***Punching***

Wing Chun punches are very hard to stop. If blocked, the other hand immediately punches so that the punches come in a continuous cycle.

- 1** Michael punches his opponent.
- 2** His opponent blocks the punch with Lap Sau.
- 3** Michael immediately punches with his other hand, not allowing his opponent time to raise his own hands to defend himself.



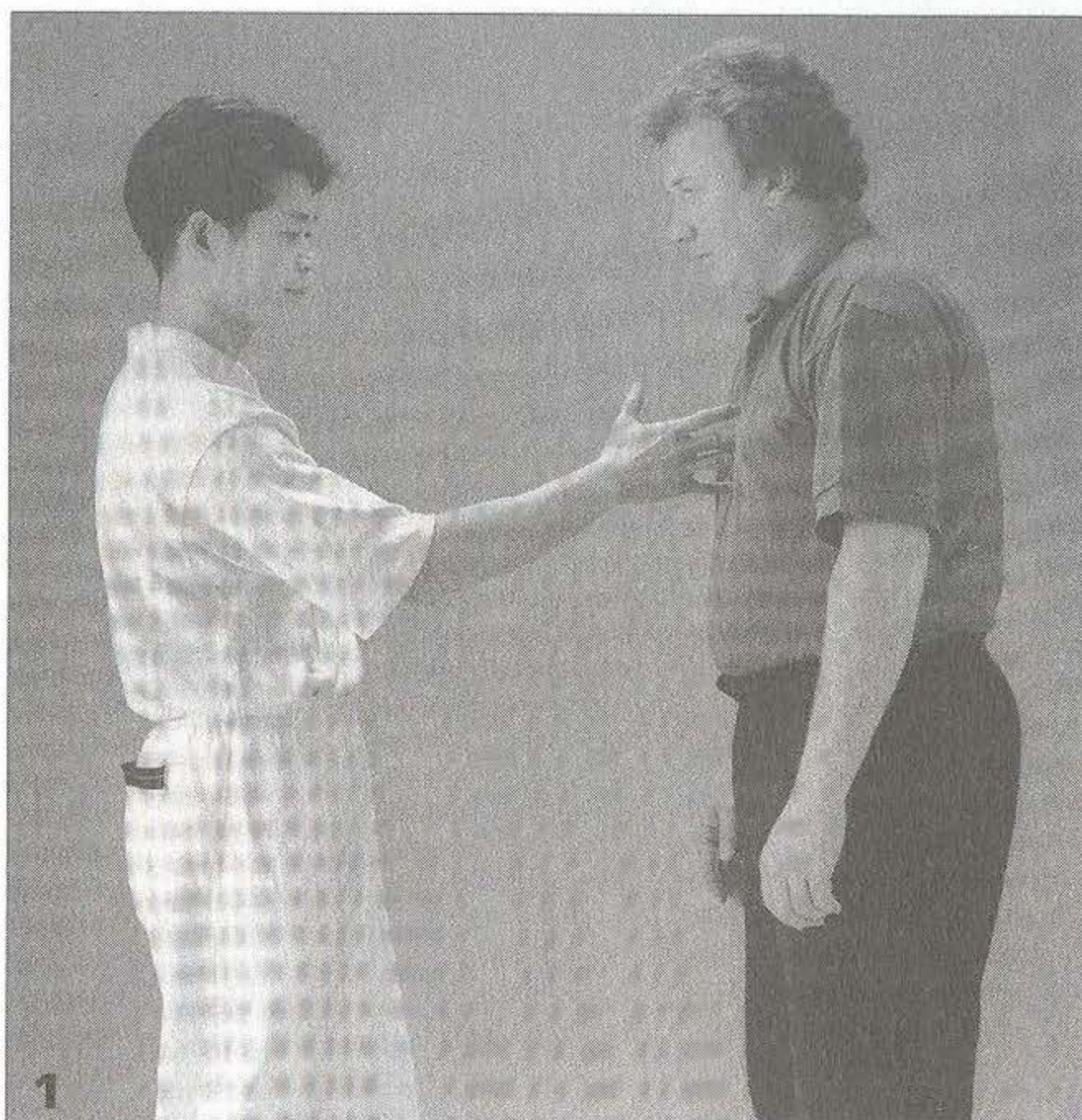


# 寸勁

## **Chun Ging – One Inch Punch**

Wing Chun punches are deceptively powerful. Beginners often make the mistake of using energy at the wrong time and are therefore unable to focus their power. The power in the Wing Chun punch comes in the very last moment of the strike, and a powerful blow can be delivered from a distance of one inch or even less.

- 1** Michael lightly touches his opponent's chest with his fingers. He remains calm and relaxed.
- 2** Then he closes his fingers into a fist and sharply punches forward, focusing all his energy into his fist. He slightly turns his waist into the punch whilst maintaining a solid stance. As soon as the punch is completed, he relaxes again.





# *Chi Sau – Sticking Hands*

Chi Sau is a very important part of Wing Chun. (Chi means 'stick' and Sau means 'hands', together they mean 'Sticking Hands'.) You can almost say that if someone's Chi Sau is not good, their Wing Chun will not be good.

Students of Wing Chun need to develop sensitivity and correct skill, and this is why Sticking Hands is practised. It is an exercise in which people work in pairs to train their technique, position and sensitivity. It allows both partners to learn the basics of fighting skill without hurting each other. Both partners should be relaxed and should not try to hit each other. They should be focusing on their positioning and the correct use of energy.

You can practise either Single or Double Sticking Hands. Beginners start with Single Sticking Hands before progressing to Double Sticking Hands.

To start the sequence there is a regular pattern which the two partners perform, as demonstrated on the following pages.

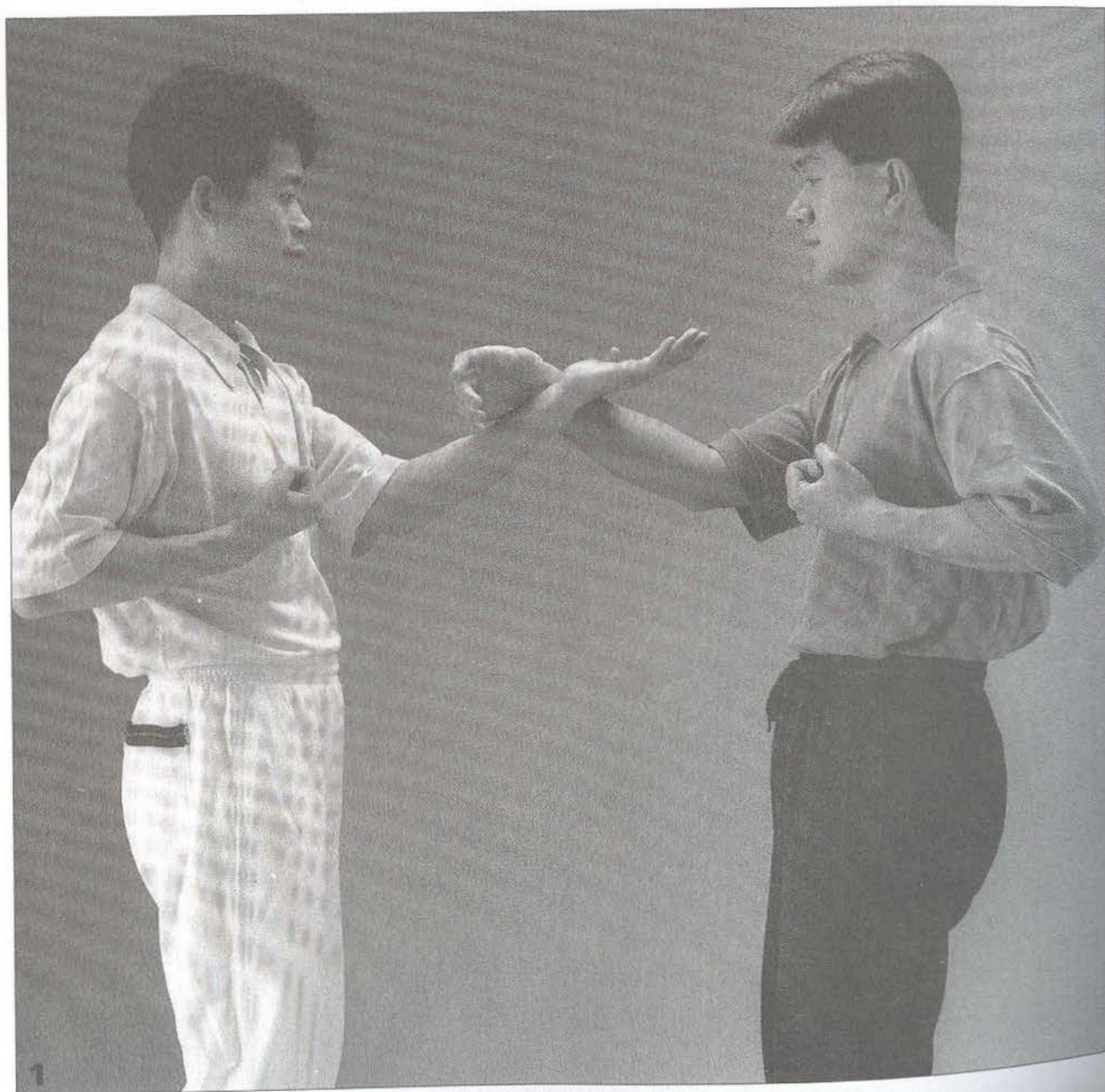
*Michael (on left) and  
Darryl performing  
Double Sticking hands.*

粘手

## Single Sticking Hands

1 Michael (on the left) uses his Tan Sau with his palm facing upwards and his fingers facing his opponent. He maintains contact with his partner's energy. Tan Sau is kept at the body's centreline. When his opponent changes position, Michael must also change.

Michael's opponent is using Fuk Sau. His wrist is bent and contact is kept against Michael's forearm during the Sticking Hands, changing when Michael changes. In this position neither partner is using energy.



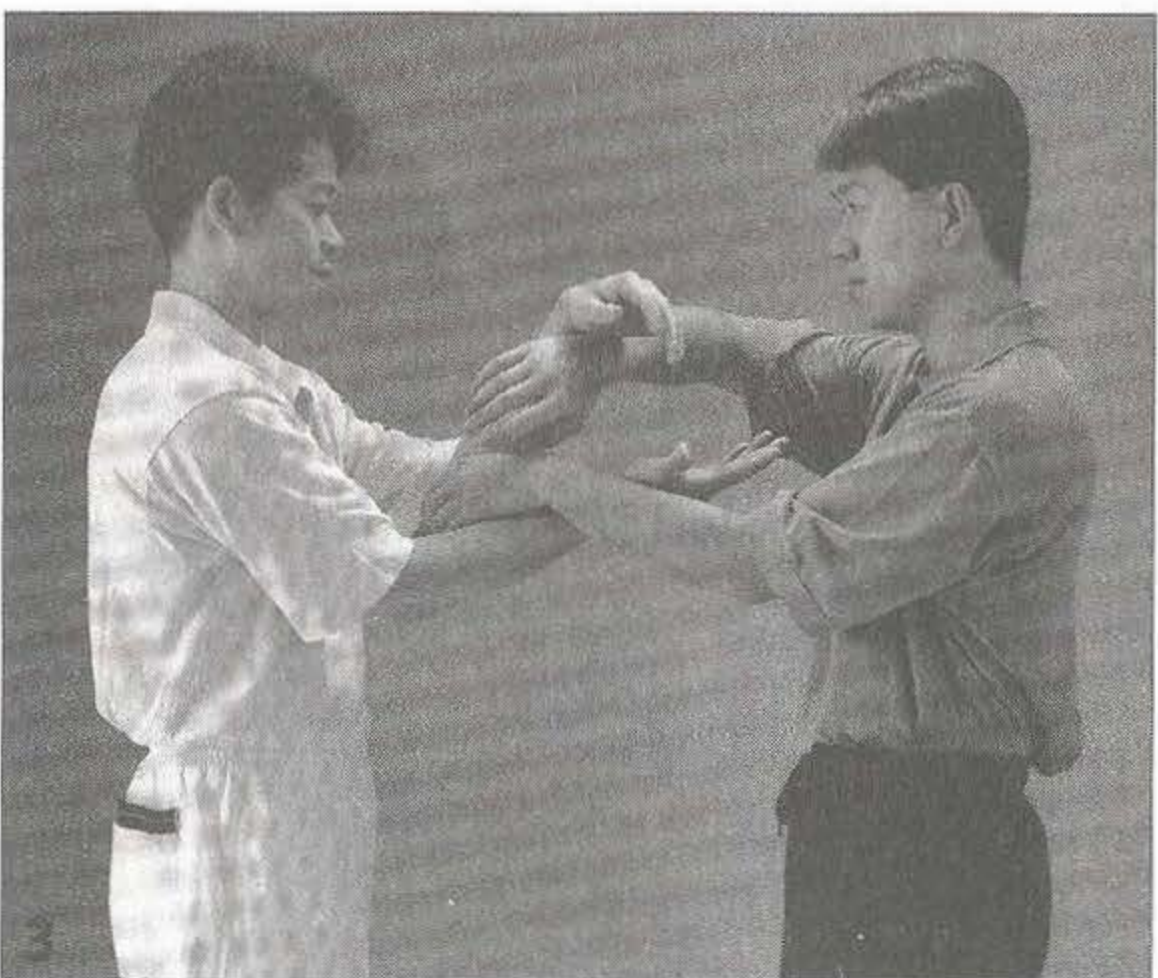
**2** Michael attacks with Jik Jeung, aiming at his opponent's lower chest. His opponent blocks with Jum Sau. In this case it is Michael attacking and his opponent defending.



**3** Michael's opponent now attacks, punching towards Michael's face. Michael defends with Bong Sau. He blocks with his forearm but keeps his wrist relaxed. The energy is in the upper arm.

The two partners then return to the first position (**1**) and the whole sequence is repeated again and again.





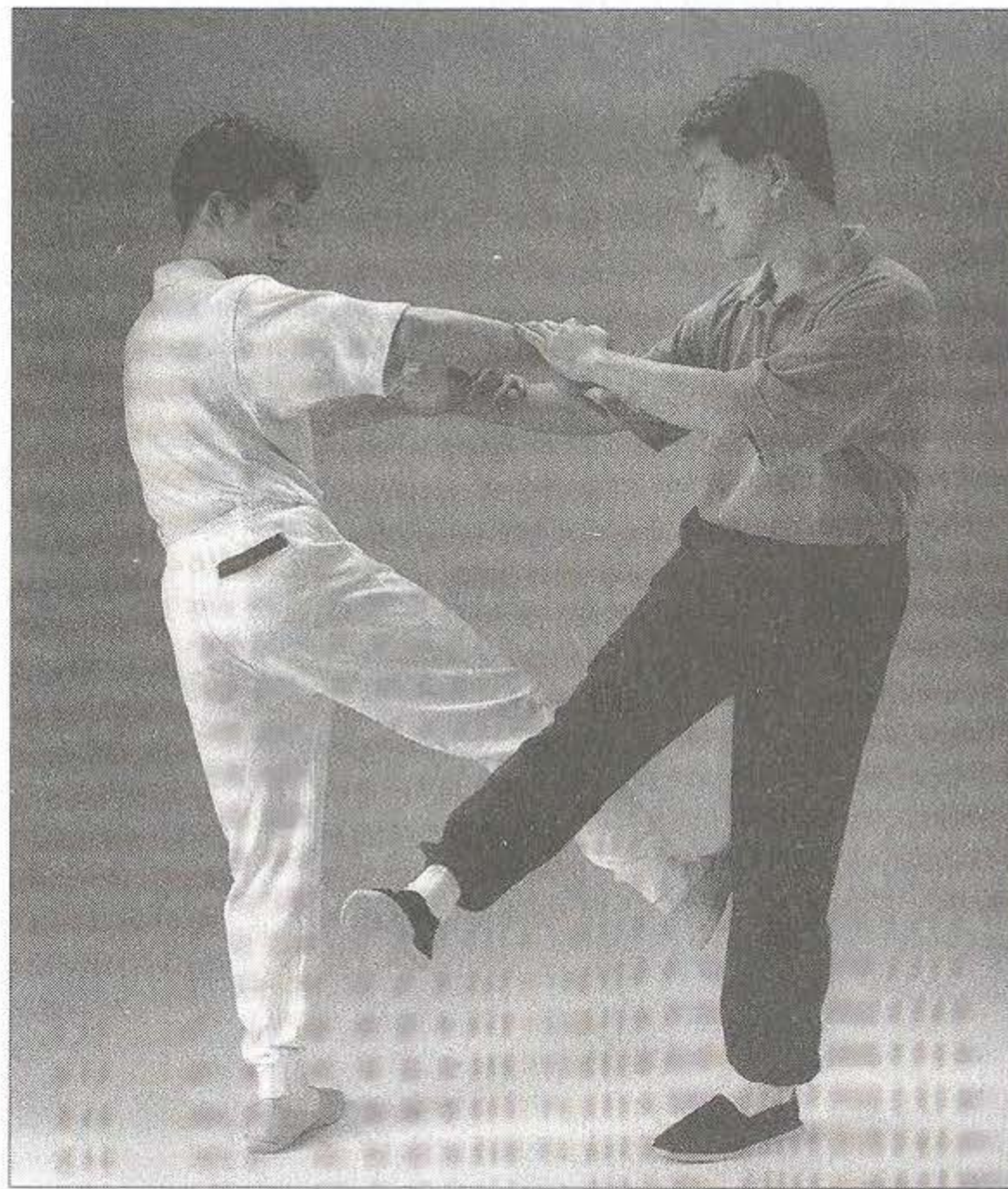
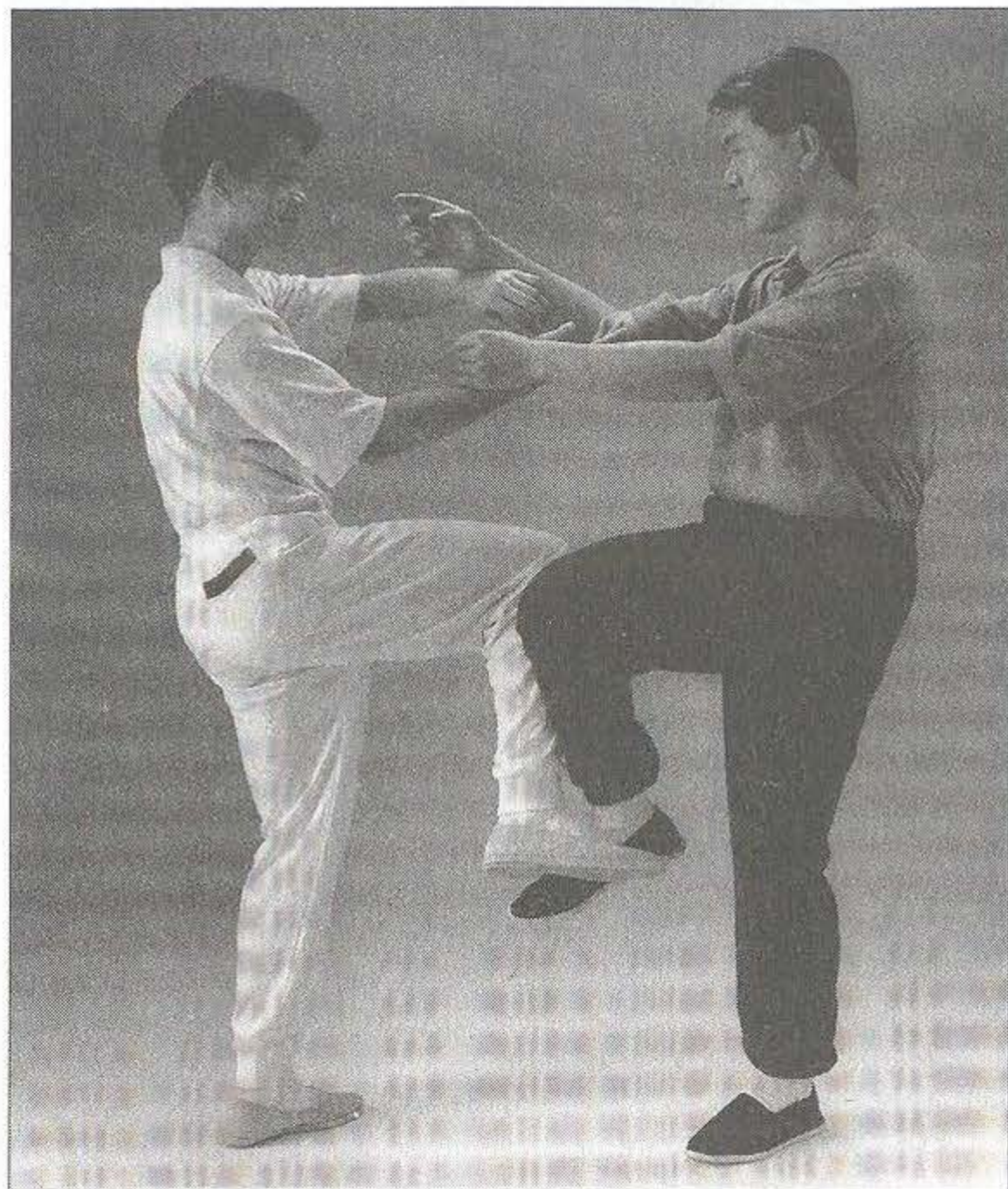
雙  
手  
粘  
手

## Double Sticking Hands

For Double Sticking Hands, the partners will again use Fuk Sau, Tan Sau and Bong Sau. There are different ways to do Double Sticking Hands but there is not room here to go into all the variations. This is just a starting sequence.

**1** Michael uses Tan Sau and Bong Sau. Both of his hands are inside his opponent's. He uses Bong Sau with his upper hand and Tan Sau with his lower hand. His opponent uses only Fuk Sau to make contact with Michael. Both of his hands are on the outside of Michael's. Both partners proceed to roll their hands up and down. Michael changes his Bong Sau to Tan Sau as he moves down. As his other hand moves upwards, his Tan Sau changes to Bong Sau. His partner continues to use Double Fuk Sau and keeps light contact with his wrists.

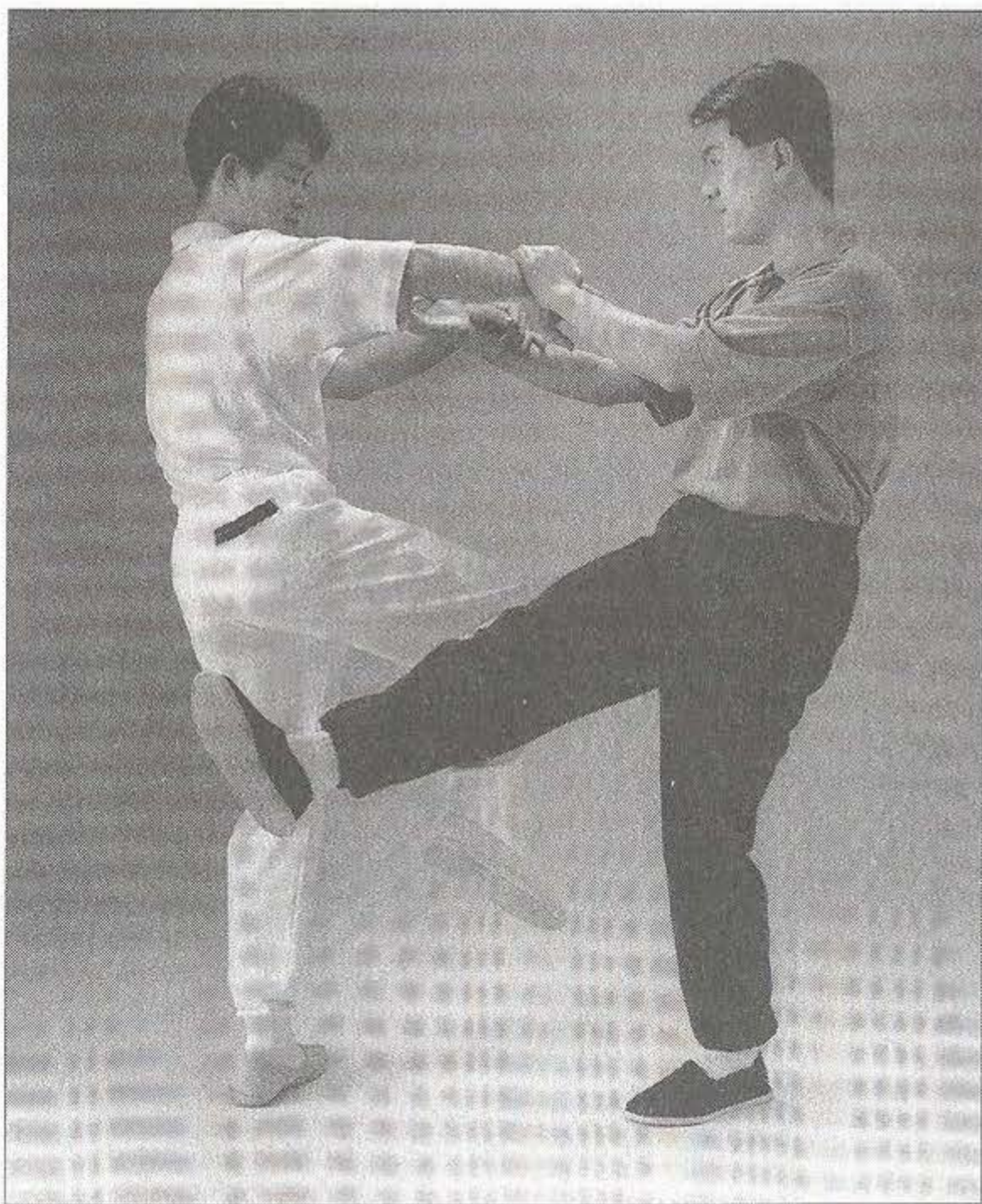
**2, 3** Another method of Sticking Hands is to use one hand on the outside and the other on the inside as shown here. As you become more experienced in Sticking Hands, you will naturally move from inside to outside and from Single to Double Sticking Hands in your practice.

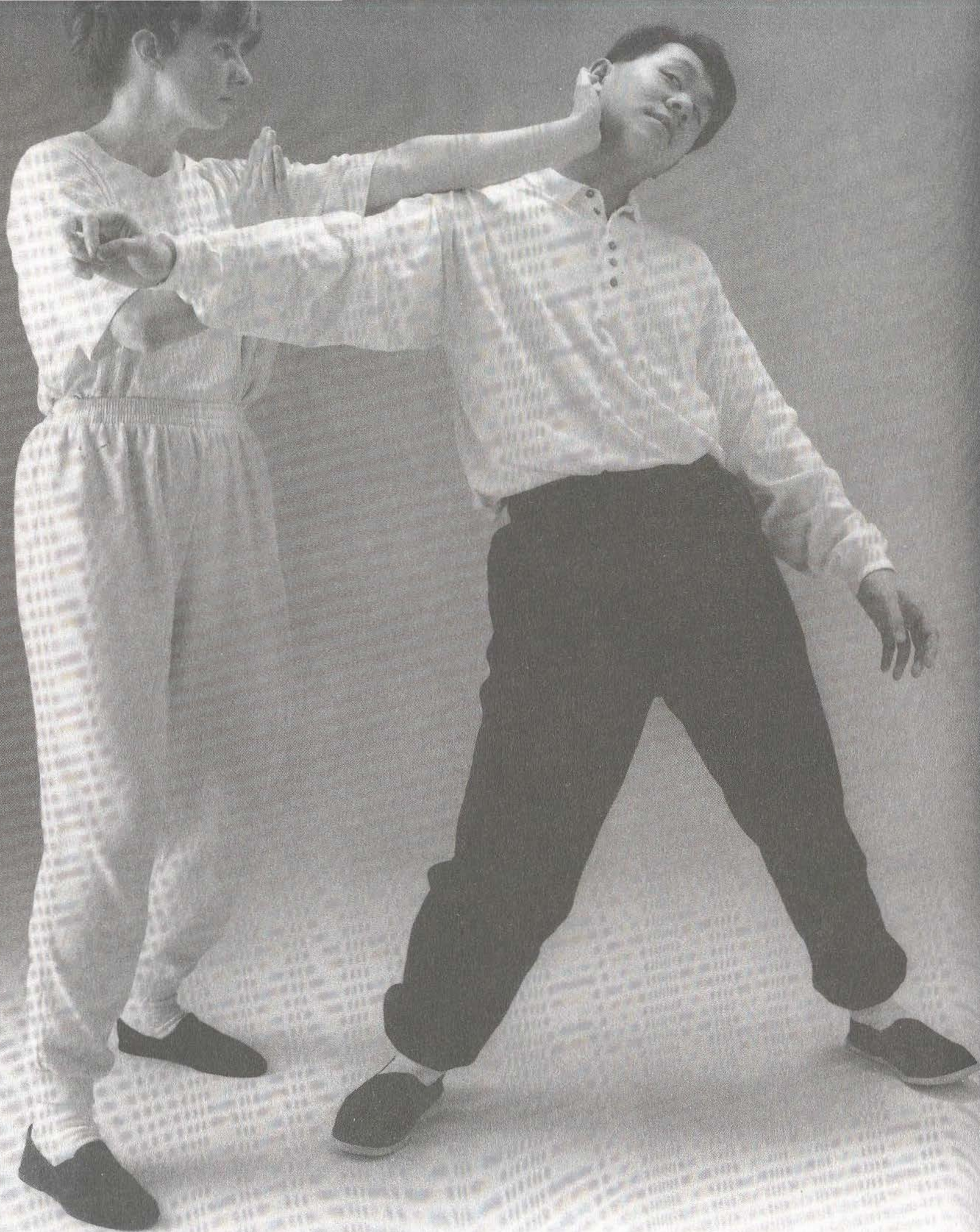


柔  
手  
脚

## ***Sticking Legs***

There are some advanced levels of Wing Chun which use the legs for practice. This is called Sticking Legs and is also practised with a partner. The hand movements are the same as in Double Sticking Hands. The legs must stick together and attack each other as the hands do in Sticking Hands. This requires good balance and strong legs. This type of training trains the whole body.







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# *Self-defence for Women*

Although there is now some doubt as to whether Wing Chun was actually founded by a woman, there is no doubt that it is an ideal martial art for women to practise. Perhaps you have walked down a dark street late one night and suddenly found yourself being followed by a strange man. You start wondering what he wants ... money or worse. You want to get out of the situation as quickly as possible so you begin to walk faster. So does he. Suddenly he grabs your shoulder. What do you do? Most likely you would be unable to do anything because you are not used to coping with this kind of situation.

There are many threatening situations in which women can find themselves. It could happen suddenly, even in your own home. What can you do to defend yourself? People always think of women as being weaker than men, but if a woman knows some self-defence, she can develop confidence and improve her personal safety. Wing Chun skill teaches you how to use the least amount of energy to defend yourself and how to keep a good position in which you can attack an enemy's weaker areas or acupuncture points. Everyone, no matter how strong, has weak areas that are easy to strike. Attacking these points can make a person lose power and even collapse.

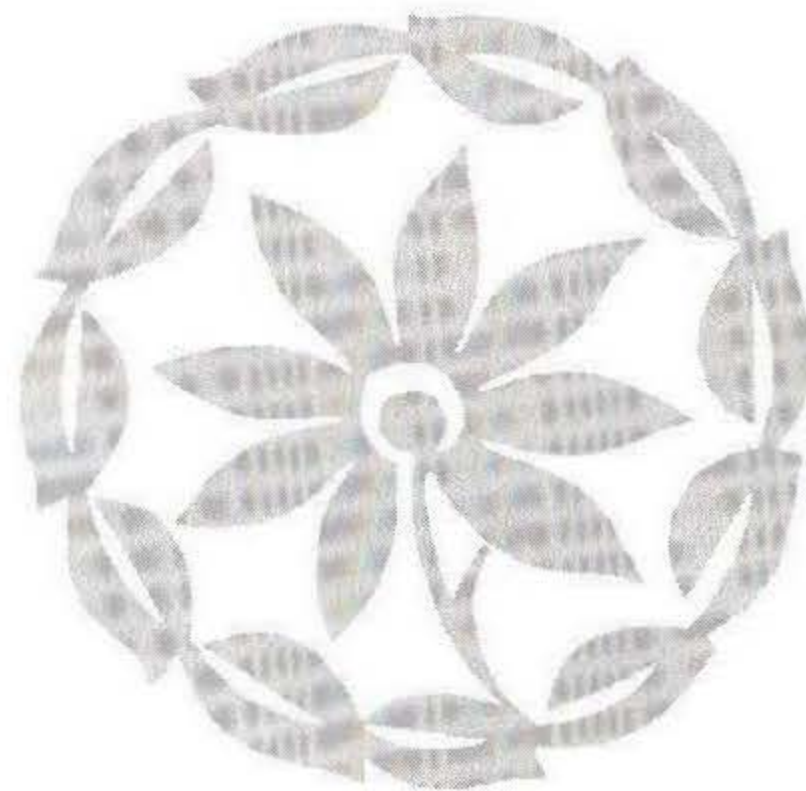
Wing Chun considers how to save energy and keep the mind calm so that you will not panic when danger arises. Many people are good at fighting in practice, but when danger actually appears they panic, which can make them lose energy. However, in Wing Chun

*Jessica uses a Wang  
Jeung to defend herself*

training, particularly in Sticking Hands, you are practising self-defence all the time. If you find that you can defend yourself when your Sticking Hands opponent tries to attack, you will feel that you have good skill and sensitivity. Sticking Hands familiarises you with the fighting situation and builds up your sensitivity, allowing you to relax. This relaxation is an important key to Wing Chun. Without relaxation, a person loses their sensitivity and it is easier to attack them. Practising Siu Lim Tao will develop not only your stance but also help you to relax and let your energy develop. Sticking Hands will help you to put this into practice.

Wing Chun is particularly good for women because it relies on sensitivity, not strength. Sometimes I find that students who are physically very strong have more difficulty than those who are smaller. My Sifu, Ip Chun, and my Sigong, Ip Man, are both very small and ordinary looking. If you met them in the street you would never think that they were martial artists. People may think the same about you.

The self-defence techniques in this chapter are especially suitable for women. They should give you plenty of ideas and will be of practical use should you find yourself in a threatening situation. They could even save your life.

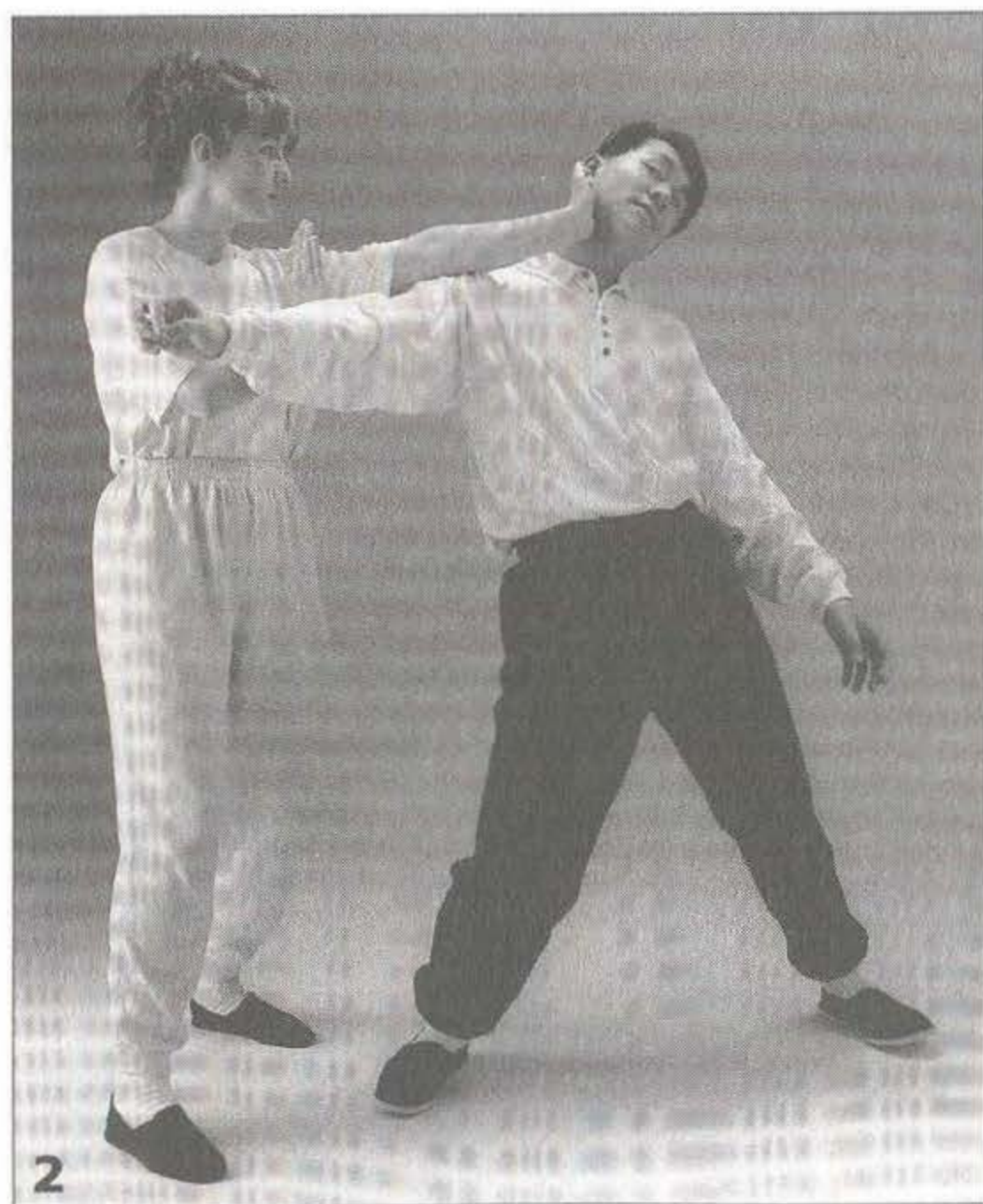
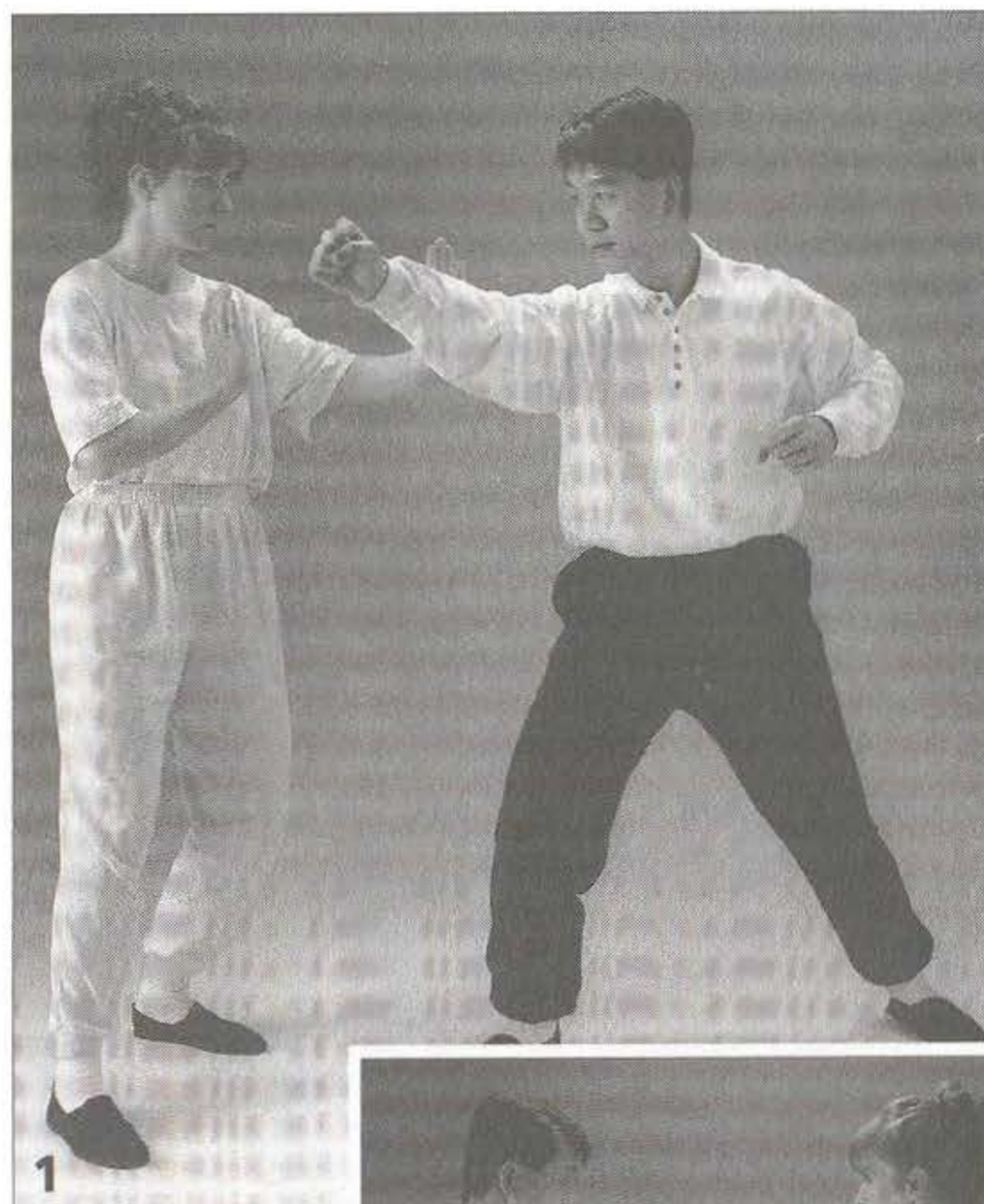


# Practical Applications of Siu Lim Tao for Self-defence

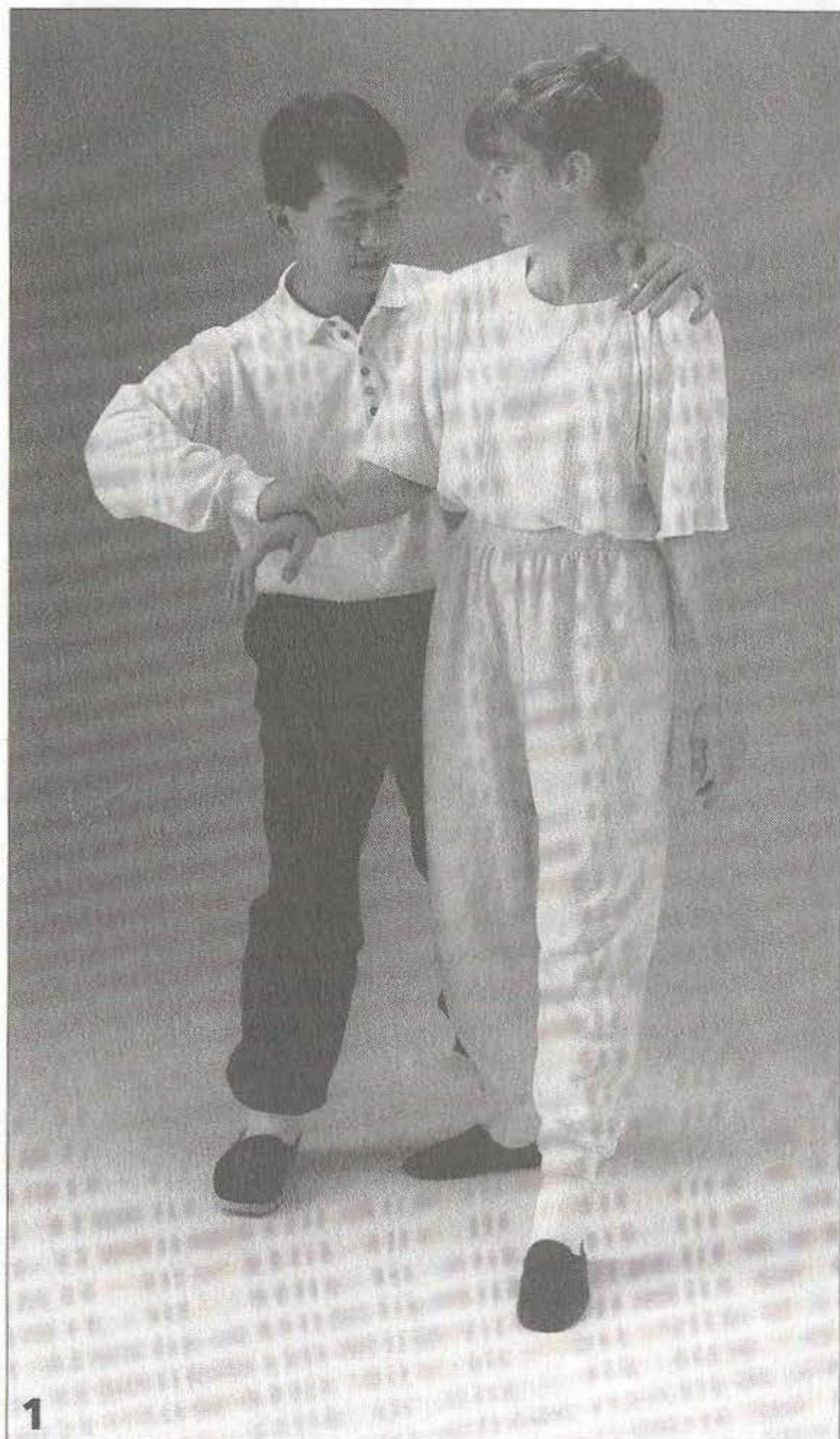
## 拍手

### **Paak Sau vs Punch**

- 1 The attacker steps forward and punches towards Jessica. She turns 45° and uses Paak Sau (to the elbow, not the wrist) to direct the punch past her. Remember that Paak Sau is a sharp, slapping action, not a heavy push.



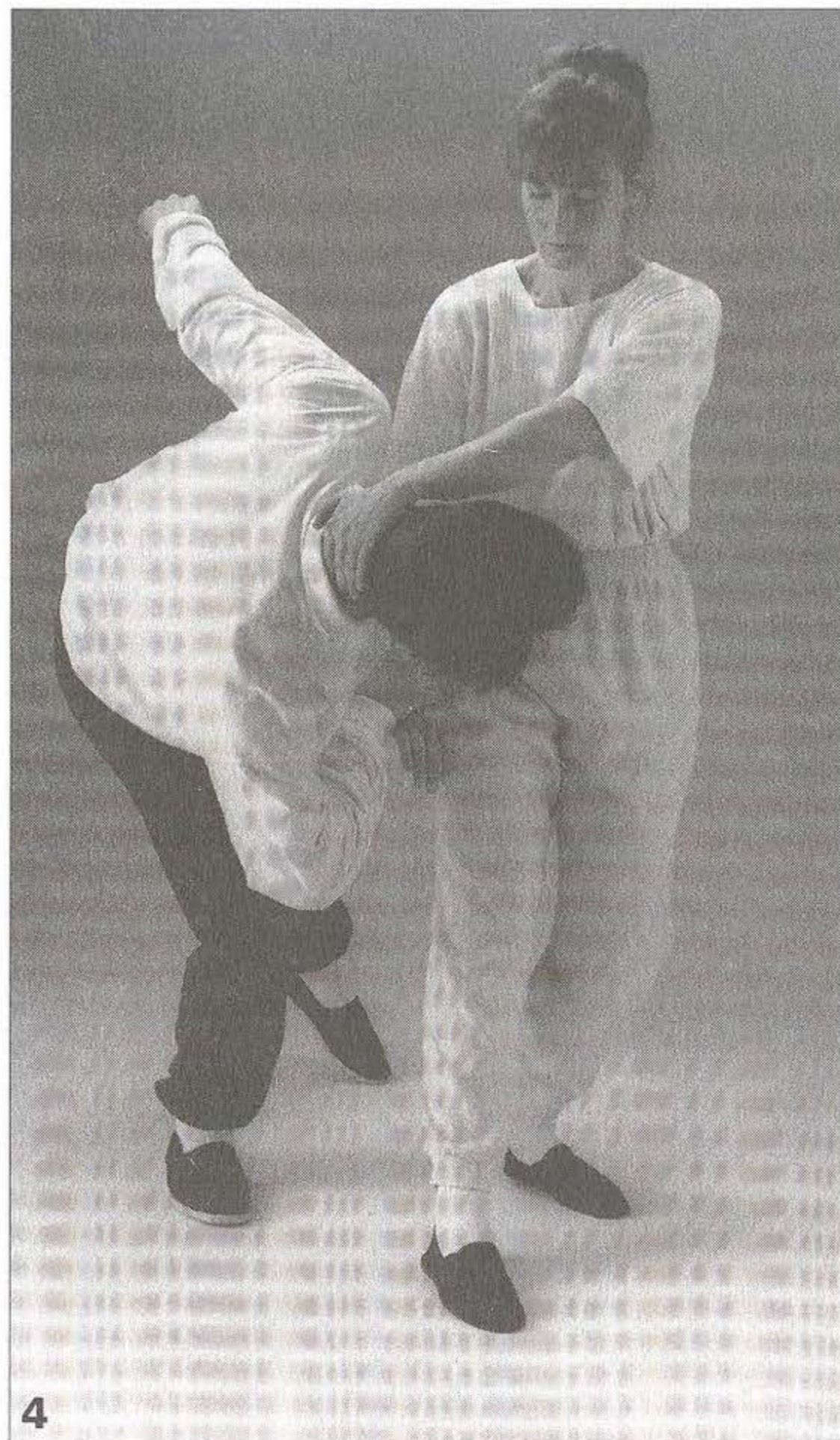
- 2 Jessica quickly changes her Paak Sau into a palm strike (Wang Jeung) while covering her attacker's punching arm



# 橫掌

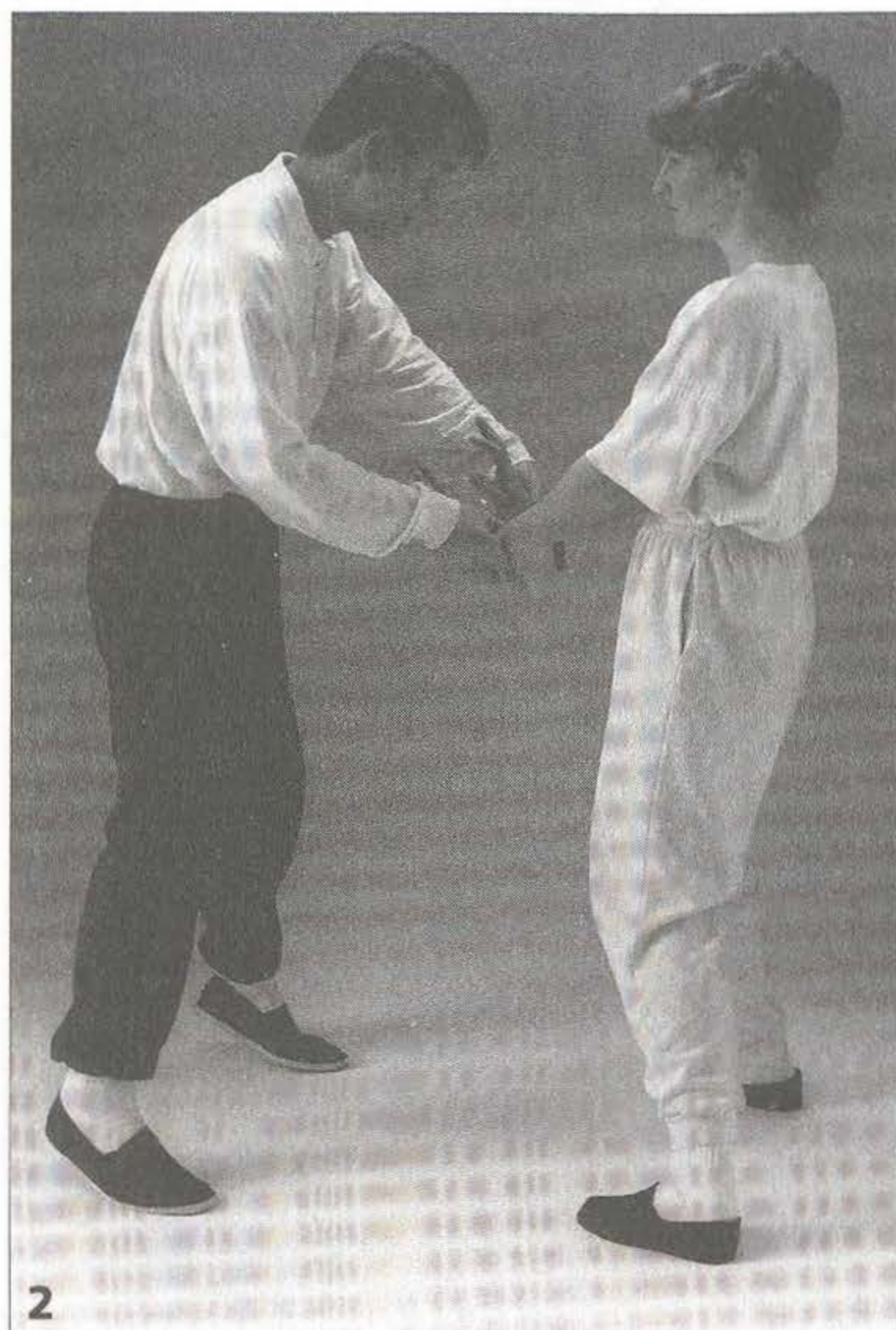
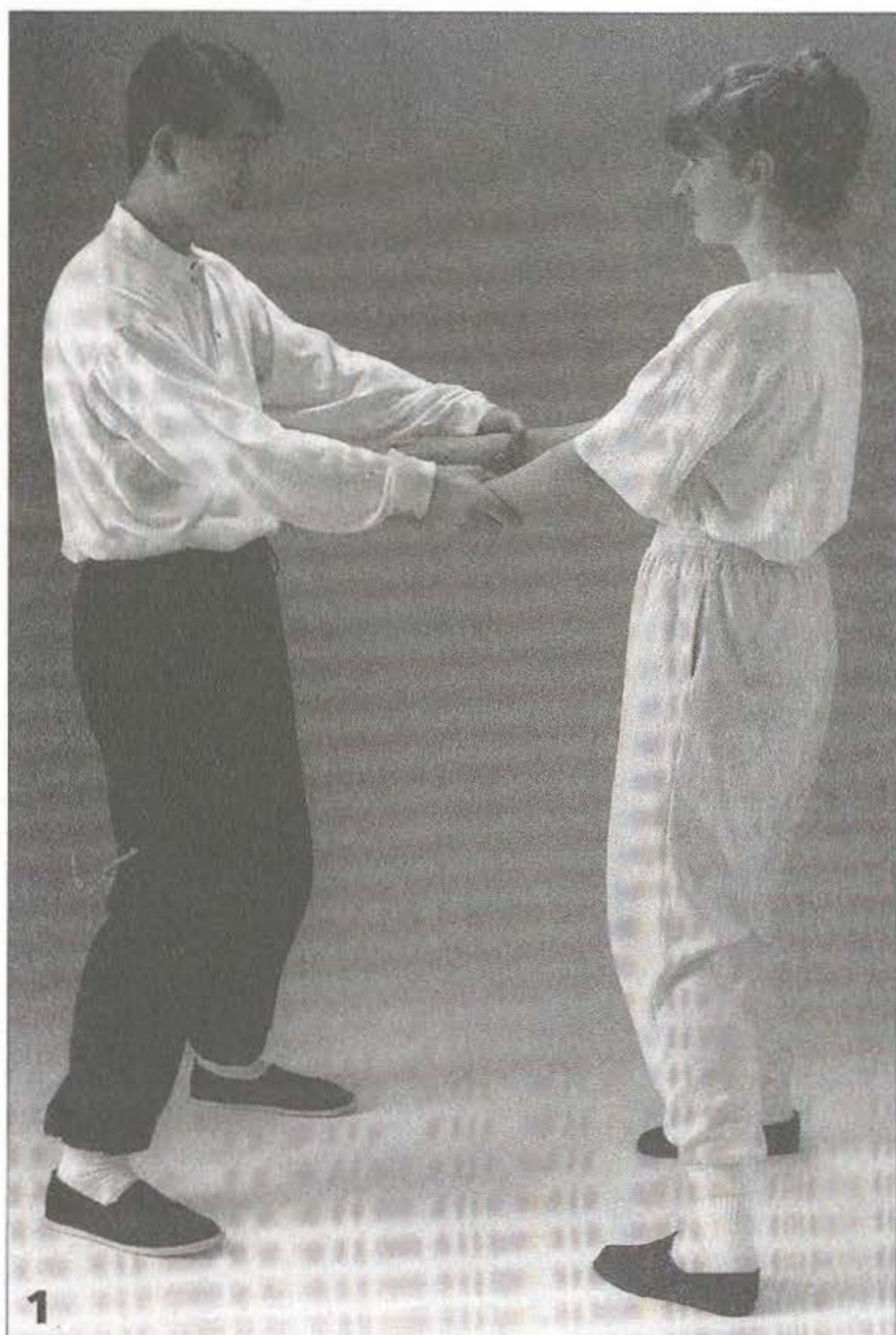
## ***Yan Jeung vs Grab from Behind***

- 1 The attacker moves up behind Jessica, grabbing her shoulder and wrist. She turns slightly before realising what is happening.
- 2 Jessica then steps forwards and applies a forward Yan Jeung.



**3** The forward step combined with the jerking energy of the Yan Jeung pulls her attacker off balance so he stumbles forward. Jessica then uses her free hand to control his neck.

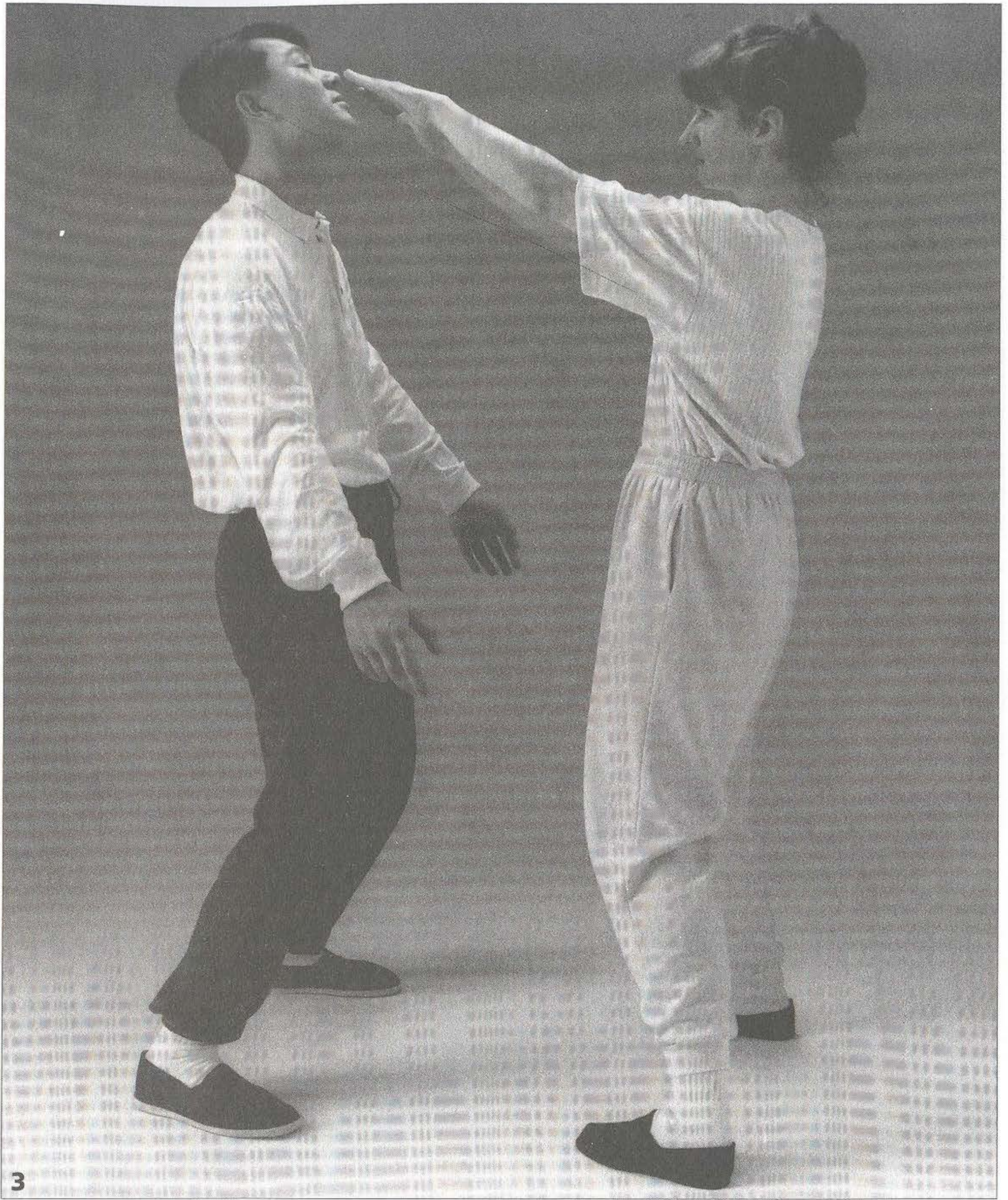
**4** Jessica sharply pulls her attacker forward, making him fall to the ground.

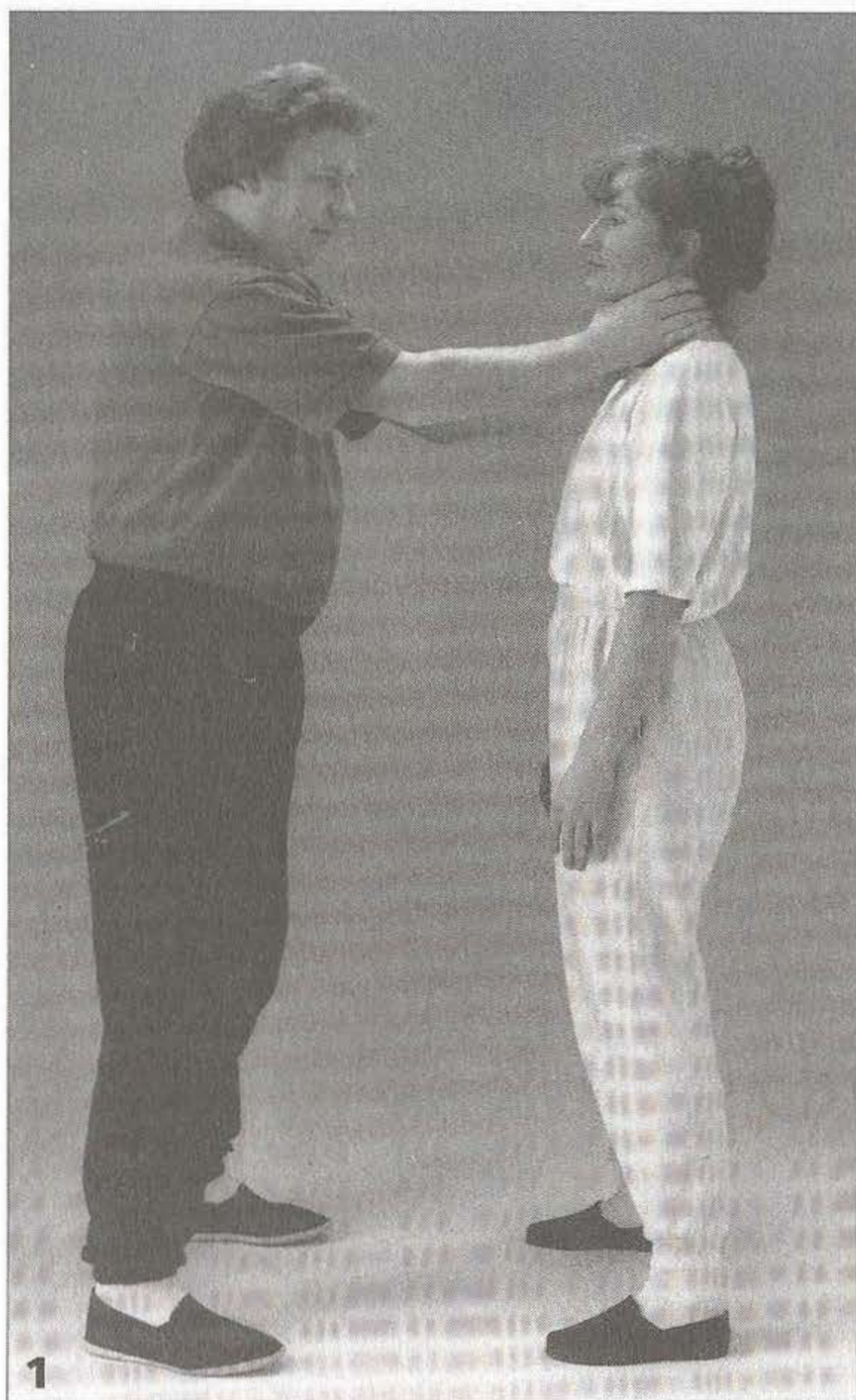


雙  
又  
空  
手

***Double Jut Sau and Biu Jee  
vs Wrist Grab***

- 1** The attacker grabs hold of Jessica's wrists.
- 2** Jessica remains calm and does not try to pull away from her attacker. She then uses Double Jut Sau to pull him forward and off balance.
- 3** With her hands free she then attacks his eyes with Double Biu Jee.



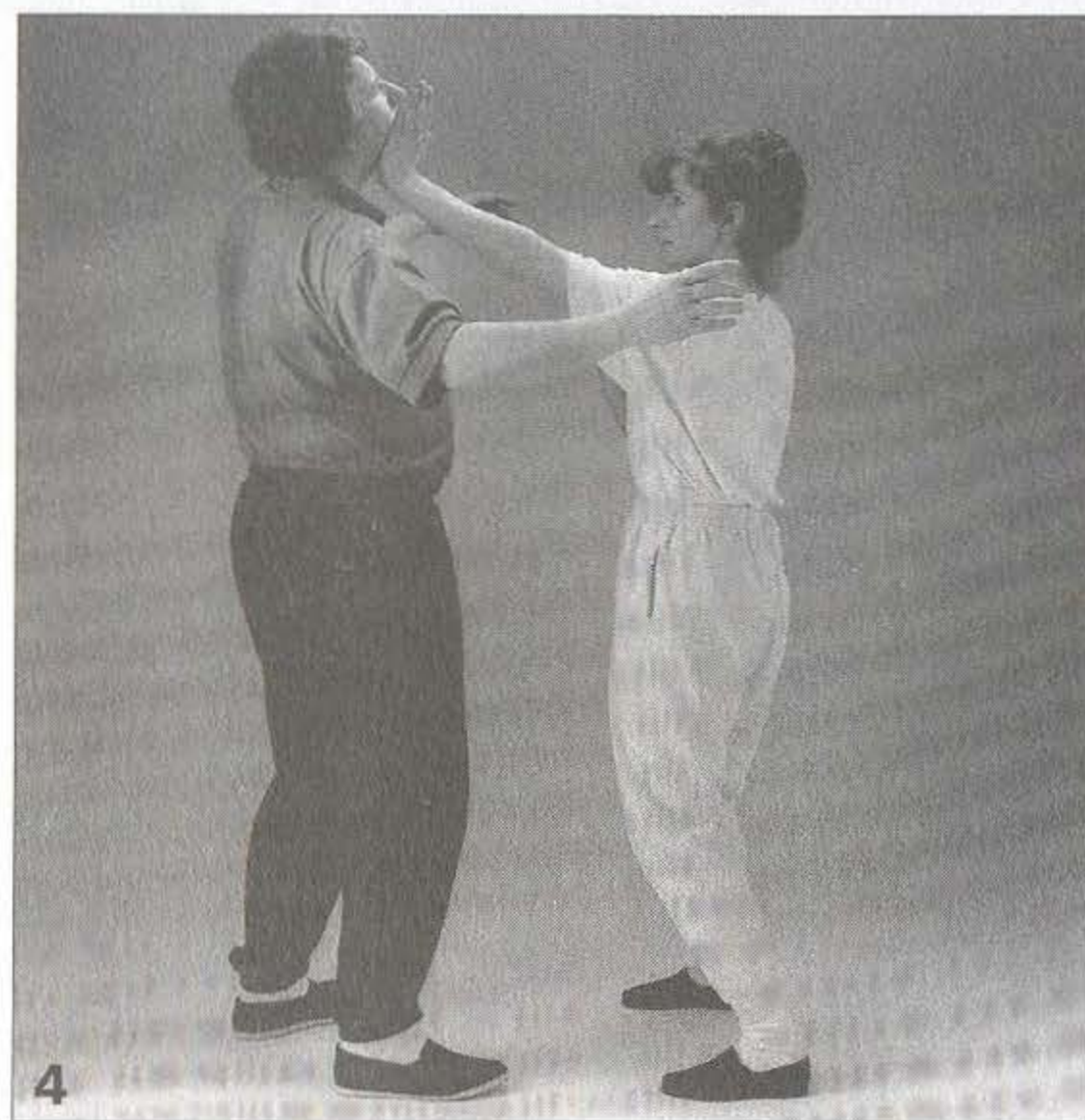


# 攔頸

## ***Lap Geng vs Strangle***

- 1** The attacker grabs hold of Jessica's throat with both hands and attempts to strangle her.
- 2** Jessica does not panic or try to pull his hands away as he is too strong. Instead she attacks his weak point, his neck, pulling his head slightly sideways with a sharp jerking motion with her right hand. Her left hand comes up in preparation for the attack. As he is concentrating on his hands, his neck is quite vulnerable and pulling it causes him to lose his balance. No matter how big or strong the person, it is easy to pull them down from the neck, causing them to lose their centre of gravity.



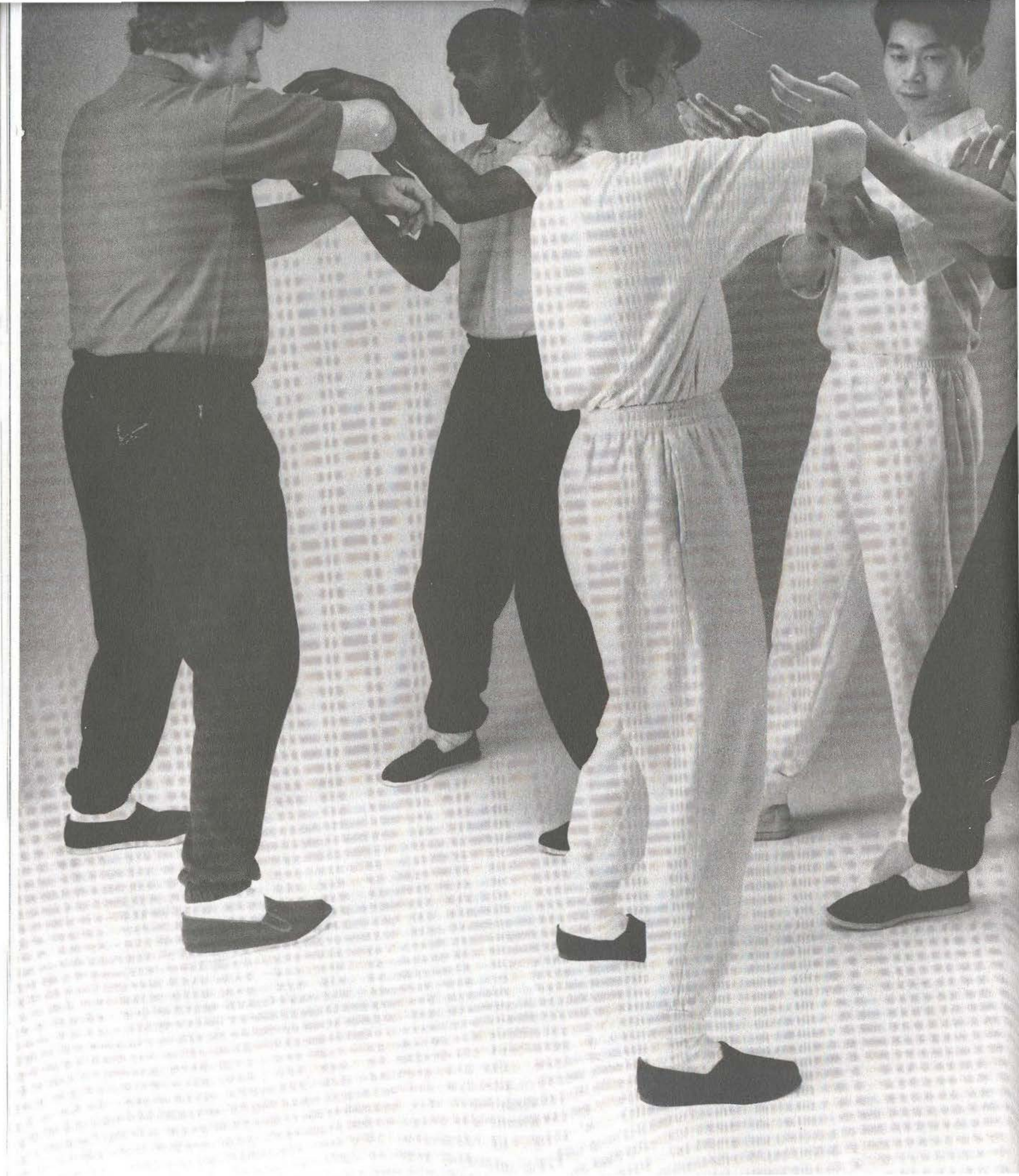


**3** Jessica pulls her attacker forwards with her right hand while making initial contact with her left hand on her attacker's jaw line.

**4** Next, Jessica uses a palm strike to hit his face. The pulling magnifies the effect of the palm strike, making the attacker release his grip and stumble backwards.

**5** Jessica then aims a low kick at his knee which is now very vulnerable. Her hands have dropped into Wu Sau to protect her centreline.







*Qigong –  
Internal  
Training in  
Wing Chun*

Why then do we learn so much fighting skill, some of which can cause serious injury, if martial arts are designed to stop fighting? The answer is simple – if you don't understand fighting skills, you won't be able to stop someone who wants to fight or attack you. If you can control your opponent without getting yourself injured or without hurting them, this is the ideal solution. This means that you have very good martial art skills. It is easy to beat someone up, but to control a situation and a person is harder. Just because a person can drive down the motorway very fast does not make them a good driver. Anyone can do that. However, if you can drive well on a narrow and winding road, changing gears to cope with the conditions, controlling your car without causing any accidents, then you are a good driver. It is the same in martial arts.

Take, for instance, the case of a person who decides to buy a dog. The dog he chooses is very aggressive so the owner beats the dog in order to change its behaviour. This, however, is not a good way to educate the dog. It will be frightened of its owner and some day may well turn on him and attack him in revenge. This form of treatment requires no skill on the part of the owner, just aggression. Education, on the other hand, takes time and patience – as does learning a martial art.

This is where the importance of Qi (energy) comes in when learning a fighting art. Without developing Qi you will find yourself feeling aggressive and bad tempered. Internal training must be done slowly with a relaxed mind and attitude. This will increase your Qi and help it sink to your Dantien, the area just below the navel where all your energy is stored. When you practise you create more Qi. This is your life force and it maintains your health.

Qigong is related to traditional Chinese medicine and combines breathing, postures, movement and meditation to generate the right energy, restore health and promote a state of well-being. The term

Qigong is a combination of two words. 'Qi', usually translated as 'energy', is used to describe anything relating to 'feeling' or 'energy'. Qi is the vital energy that maintains our lives; without it we become tired and ill. The 'gong' part means 'work' or 'exercise'. When you go to your office or factory, this is 'gong'. Working with your mind or your strength in this sense is the same as exercise. So Qigong means 'exercise with your vital energy'. It is also referred to as 'Breathing Exercise', 'Longevity Method' or 'Internal Training'.

## **Qigong and Siu Lim Tao**

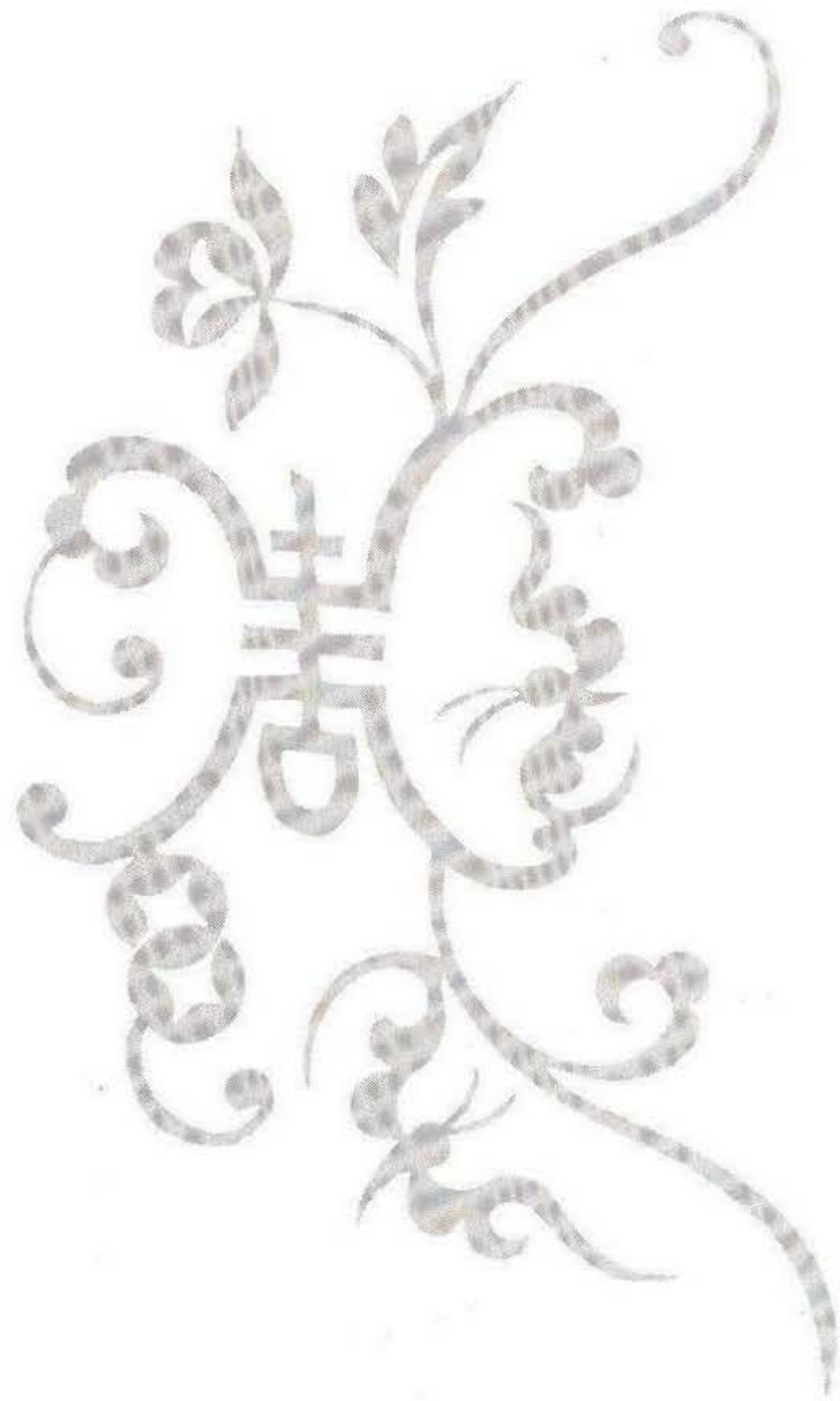
In the first section of Siu Lim Tao, you should practise as slowly as possible for at least ten to twelve minutes each day. I remember in the beginning when I studied, I took forty-five minutes to do the Siu Lim Tao. The hand on the clock moved faster than my own hand. This training is very hard, particularly on the legs, which start to shake, but afterwards I felt good. The longer you practise in this way, the better stance you will develop and your Sticking Hands will improve because your footwork will be strong and steady.

In the first part of Siu Lim Tao, you keep your body still and your back straight so that the Qi sinks to the Dantien. The chest and shoulders should be relaxed and the hands should have very little energy, just enough to keep the position when you are moving forwards and withdrawing the hands. However, when you need to use strength, such as in Jut Sau, you should use it, but you must relax before you use the energy. Once you are finished using the power, you must relax again. This is the principle of Wing Chun and you must follow this in order to be successful.

Your mind should be calm and empty of thought and your muscles relaxed. Breathe normally through the nose, not the mouth. As you practise your Qi will develop, your strength will increase and

you will find that your mind is calmer and more balanced. You will not easily become overexcited or distracted by other things.

In today's society there is so much stimulation that it is easy to become disturbed and chaotic. This constant excitement is not good for the mind or the body. It can cause stress, making us lose our focus. In order to handle fast movements or fighting in Wing Chun, we must be calm. The first part of Siu Lim Tao trains the body internally by helping you to develop a calm mind and stillness. Then, when someone attacks you, you will not panic. With continued practise, more Qi will develop and good health and a positive attitude will follow.



# *A Final Word*

I have studied Wing Chun for over twenty years and in that time I have benefited greatly, not just on the martial arts side but also through its philosophy which has helped me a great deal in understanding life. Often when I am faced with difficulties, I will think about Sticking Hands. Why not take one step back and give yourself more room? You will find another way out. If you are being pushed, there is no need to push back, just let the energy go. We learn from practising the form that the centreline is very important. The same is true in our everyday lives. There are many things we either like or dislike, but we cannot just do the things we like and avoid those we don't. We need to keep ourselves in the centre in order to balance both sides.

I look at my Sifu, Ip Chun, who is now in his seventies and enjoys life because his Wing Chun training makes him healthy and its philosophy guides him in how to live.

I hope this book not only teaches you some self-defence and fighting skills but also makes you understand that your life and health are the most important things that you possess.

*Michael Tse*

## Glossary of Terms

Baat Jam Dao	Eight Cutting Knives
Bagua	Eight Trigrams
Biu Jee	Wing Chun's third form 'Thrusting Fingers'
Biu Ma	Wing Chun Thrusting Steps
Bong Sau	Wing Arm Block
Chaan Sau	Shovel Hand
Chi Sau	Sticking Hands
Chun Ging	One Inch Punch
Chung Kuen	Wing Chun Centreline Punch
Dai Jeung	Lower Palm Strike
Fa Ging	Releasing Power
Fuk Sau	Resting Hand
Gong-Lik	Internal Energy
Heun Sau	Circling Hand
Huen Ma	Wing Chun's Circling Steps
I Ching	Book of Changes
Jaat Ma	Horse Stance
Juen Ma	Wing Chun Turning Stance
Jum Sau	Sinking Hand
Jut Sau	Jerking Hand
Kwan San	Inside/Outside Hand
Lap Sau	Grabbing Hand
Luk Tim Boon Kwun	Six and a Half Pole techniques
Muk Yan Jong	Wooden Dummy
Paak Sau	Slapping Hand
Pek Jeung	Chopping Palm
Siu Lim Tao	Wing Chun's first form 'Reducing Thought'
Tan Sau	Palm Up Block
Tsum Kui	Wing Chun's second form 'Sinking the Bridge Arm'
Wan Lan Sau	Bar Arm
Jan Jeung	Palm Strike
Wu Sau	Guarding Hand
Yan Jeung	Palm Strike
Yee Chi Kim Yeung Ma	Basic Wing Chun Stance
Yin and Yang	Soft and hard, positive and negative

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