



# Pa Kua Chang

JOURNAL

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## The Pa Kua Chang of Liang Chen-P'u

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## *Pa Kua Chang* JOURNAL

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### **Purpose and Policy Statement**

In order to keep the Pa Kua Chang Journal an un-biased forum for Pa Kua Chang instructors and practitioners to exchange their thoughts and ideas about the art of Pa Kua Chang, this Journal is totally subscriber-supported and does not affiliate itself with, or receive support from, any particular Pa Kua Chang instructor or martial arts school. In order to help maintain integrity and impartiality, the Journal will not accept paid advertisement.

The Journal is published six times a year. Each issue features an interview with one or more Pa Kua Chang instructors from mainland China, Taiwan, the United States, or Canada. The interviews will report on each instructor's background, current program, training methods and teaching philosophy. By utilizing this format, the intention is to give students an opportunity to get to know prospective teachers and to let teachers possibly gain insights and ideas from learning about the activities of their colleagues.

We will refrain from using titles, such as Master or Sifu, in this Journal. Every school has their own separate definition of these terms and criteria for using these titles. In order to remain impartial and show equal respect to all instructors being interviewed, we felt that omitting the titles from everyone's name was the best policy. We mean no disrespect to any of our contributors or their great teachers.

Chinese names and terms will be romanized using the Thomas Wade system of romanization except when the pinyin romanization is more familiar (in cases such as "Beijing") or when an instructor prefers his name romanized differently. Whenever possible, Chinese characters will be listed at the end of each article for the Chinese terms and names that appear in the article.

The ideas and opinions expressed in this journal are those of the instructors being interviewed and not necessarily the views of the publisher or editor.

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## **Editor's Corner**

Greetings from California! It was a slow process, but we have finally settled in our new California office and are currently busy working on a number of book projects and sorting through all of the notebooks, video tapes, and photographs from my last trip to China in order to layout the next several issues of the *Pa Kua Chang Journal*. My last trip to China was very successful. I collected enough information to keep this Journal going for years to come. All of the teachers I interviewed were very open and cooperative. A special thanks goes out to Bill Tucker who was my guide and translator in Taiwan, Tang Cheong Shing who was my host in Hong Kong, and Tim Cartmell who translated for me in mainland China. Without the help provided by these three gentlemen, the trip would not have been a success. As a result of this trip, in addition to the last issue on Ch'eng T'ing-Hua's Pa Kua and this issue on the Pa Kua of Liang Chen-P'u, you can look forward to the next issue on Sun Lu-T'ang's Pa Kua and future issues focusing on such notables as Chang Chun-Feng, Yin Fu, Chang Chao-Tung, Li Tsun-I, and more.

To launch our book publishing business we will be releasing two new Pa Kua Chang books in April. The first is titled *The Fundamentals of Pa Kua Chang: The Method of Lu Shui-T'ien as Taught by Park Bok Nam* and will be sold with a companion video tape in which Park Bok Nam demonstrates all of the exercises described in the book. The second book is titled *The Pa Kua Chang of Liang Chen-P'u* and is a translation of a book written by Liang's student Li Tzu-Ming. A few excerpts from this book can be found in this issue (see pages 26-30). Future projects include a translation of Sun Lu-T'ang's Hsing-I Ch'uan book and a book on Pa Kua Chang Chin Na written by Zhao Da-Yuan. The photos we will use in Sun's book are of Sun Lu-T'ang himself and are taken from an original copy of the book (which was published in 1915), so the photos are fairly clear. These two books should be ready for publication by early Fall 93. Vince Black and I will be returning to China in March 93 in order to present Li Tzu-Ming with the English version of his book and to meet with several noted Hsing-I instructors to collaborate on an encyclopedic work on Hsing-I Ch'uan. Additionally, I will be conducting further research on Pa Kua Chang for a book I intend to release next year called *The Masters of Pa Kua Chang*. This book will include detailed biographies of the first few generations of Pa Kua Chang teachers and discuss the characteristics of each of their Pa Kua Chang styles.

I apologize for the smaller type face we are using in this issue. Knocking down the type face a notch was the only way that I could fit all the information in. Hopefully readers will not have to strain their eyes too much.

Those who are anxiously awaiting the third installment of the serial article *The Origins of Pa Kua Chang* will have to wait until the next issue. I had intended to run it in this issue, but ran out of space.

### **On the Cover**

Second Generation Pa Kua Chang practitioner  
Liang Chen-P'u.

# Liang Chen-P'u and his Pa Kua Chang

For the past decade 92 year old Pa Kua Chang instructor Li Tzu-Ming has worked hard to preserve his art and promote it world wide. He has served as president of the Beijing Pa Kua Chang Association for over 20 years, has written countless articles on Pa Kua Chang in Chinese martial arts magazines and was the motivating force behind the restoration of Tung Hai-Ch'uan's tomb in 1980-81. Li Tzu-Ming is perhaps the only living Pa Kua Chang practitioner of the third generation. His teacher, Liang Chen-P'u was a student of Tung Hai-Ch'uan and was well known both in Beijing and in his native Chi County, Hebei Province for his Pa Kua Chang skill.

Liang Chen-P'u, whose personal name was Chao-Ting, was born on 12 May, 1863, in Hebei Province, Chi County, Hao Chia village. Liang's father owned a second hand clothing store in Beijing, however, Liang's mother and two brothers lived at the family home in Chi County. In his home village, Liang Chen-P'u practiced *t'an tuei* (springing legs) starting at the age of 7 with Ching Feng-I, however, when he was 14 he left his home and moved to Beijing to learn his father's business selling second-hand clothes. Liang engaged a coach guarded by a local security service to take him to the capitol. On this occasion the coach was waylaid by bandits. The leader of the security service spoke to the leader of the bandits using the jargon of their trade in an attempt to dissuade him. The bandits were new to the area and would not be put off. They did not understand the terms the leader of the security service used and they began to attack on the spot. Although Liang was but 14 years old, he also took part in the battle.

Liang Chen-P'u was skilled at throwing stones as projectiles and as a bandit swung his sword at Liang, he dodged and fired a stone at the bandits wrist causing the bandit to drop his sword. Liang followed up with a sweep, dropping the bandit. He then picked up the fallen sword, and fired off a stone at another bandit's head. The bandit shrieked and rolled about in pain. The group's leader called his companions together and beat a hasty retreat. The security bureau chief was full of praise for Liang, saying that he was greatly talented for one so young. Though he did not show it, Liang was secretly pleased with his own performance, and hoped that the remainder of the ride to Beijing would hold more of the same. Much to his disappointment, the remainder of the trip proved uneventful. Once in Beijing, Liang began to learn his father's trade. As a result of his occupation people called him "second-hand clothes" Liang.

Within a year of arriving in Beijing, Liang had worked himself into exhaustion and became ill. The elder Liang was a frequent visitor to the palace of Prince Su and was an acquaintance of Tung Hai-Ch'uan. He approached Tung one day and asked Tung if he would teach his son, explaining that Chen-P'u was fond of martial arts. When Tung accepted him as a student, Liang was only 14 years old (1877). Tung was a talented teacher and Liang was a hard working student. Liang made quick progress in Pa Kua Chang and not only regained his health, but became an outstanding student of the second generation. He was Tung's youngest student and since he was so young, all of Tung's other students liked him. Since Tung Hai-Ch'uan died in 1882, we can surmise that Liang studied with Tung for a total of 5 years.

Liang's family was of low economic and social status and Liang had to work very hard selling second hand clothes in order to get enough money to feed himself. He spent much of his time working and thus was not as visible in the martial arts circles as some of Tung's other students. We can guess that



**Liang Chen-P'u's tombstone located in the Wan An public cemetery near the tomb of his teacher Tung Hai-Ch'uan**

since Liang was only 19 years old when Tung died, that Liang also spent time studying and practicing with some of Tung's older students. Liang's student, Li Tzu-Ming, states that Liang's relations with Yin Fu, Shih Chi-Tung, Ch'eng T'ing-Hua, and Liu Feng-Ch'un were very good.

When Liang was around 20 years old his parents passed away. For a while he made his living selling second hand clothes, but later he closed the shop and made his living teaching martial arts. While teaching martial arts in Beijing he lived in a wine shop outside the main gate of the city.

When Liang was 25 he returned to his home town for a festival. At the time there was a group of four young delinquents in the town who spent their time terrorizing the locals. One of the townspeople approached these thugs and said, "Liang Chen-P'u is a well known boxer from Beijing. If you can beat him, I'll erect a monument to you. If not, don't show your face around here any more." When Liang came to town to see the festival, the four jumped him and were soundly beaten. The four later became dedicated students of Liang's. It is reported that Liang was courageous and heroic during his life. He was known to have defeated local gangsters in the area of his home village on four separate occasions.

In the late 1800's rail lines were being established in and around Beijing. The northern most station of the Beijing to Hankou line was the Machiapao station outside of Beijing's Yungting gate. The porters there organized themselves into a carrying service and found the business to be quite good. In the Eastern part of the city there was a local thug named Chao Liu, nicknamed the "Golden Dart," who was unusually avaricious. He saw the profitable business being done by the porters and plotted to take over the business by force. Whenever one of the porters disagreed with him, Chao would beat them up. The numerous underlings of Chao's protection service were also all skilled fighters; the porters were no match for them and they knew it.

On April 20, 1899 Liang Chen-P'u happened on the scene when Chao Liu's men were beating the porters with truncheons, scattering them left and right. He ran to the head of the mob of thugs and intervened, at which point Chao Liu came forth and shouted at him, "Who do you think you are! Mind your own business!" Liang replied, "Anyone can intervene in anyone else's affairs. If this is a business matter, then sit down and negotiate. There is no need for violence." Chao Liu retorted, "Look what I have here." So saying he pulled out a revolver. Liang looked and said, "Even though you are armed, you must still act with reason." Chao smiled coldly, and in his best Clint Eastwood voice said, "I could blow you away with the twitch of my index finger, but you're not worth the cost of a bullet. Take this!" So saying he pulled out a nine-section linked whip chain and swung it at Liang's head.

Liang dodged and grabbed the whip, tearing it from Chao's grip. Chao fell, the gun also fell from his grip. Chao's men saw that things had gone awry and encircled Liang, who swung the whip to scatter them. Chao rolled towards the fallen gun, Liang saw him and struck out with the chain whip, intending to hit Chao's hand. Instead, the point of the whip hit Chao's skull, killing him on the spot. At this Chao's men surged forth to take revenge. Liang used his skill at "darting through the flowers to strike the willow" to avoid them, wielding the nine link chain whip until there were none left to fight.

After a while the local constable came upon the scene and, seeing the injured and dead lying about the station, said to Liang, "You really fought quite well this time! Injuring and killing so many people, this court case is going to be your match!" Liang admitted to the altercation and replied, "I

wouldn't think of trying to just walk away from this, I admit that I fought with these people, and I'll go with you to face the legal repercussions." Liang was taken to the magistrate at Wan Ping County, who after a cursory interrogation sentenced Liang to death and put him in jail. It was only due to the efforts of Liang's student Li Kuo-T'ai that Liang's sentence was commuted, Li sparing no coast to have others intervene on Liang's behalf. Even Yin Fu, who was working in the palace as a martial arts instructor and bodyguard and thus had connections, put in a good word for Liang and Liang was pardoned from being executed, however, they kept him in jail.

On July 20th of the same year, the foreign troops entered Beijing to put down the Boxer Rebellion. The Ching court fled the palace and, as a result of the fighting, the jail house where Liang was held was blown up allowing the prisoners to escape. Liang managed to squirm out of his manacles and returned to his home town to live in hiding. After the government was restored, no one seemed to concern themselves with the affair at Machiapao. Liang came out of hiding in Chi County and set up the *Te Sheng* protection service. After the advent of the Republic (1911) Liang started teaching martial arts at the fourteen middle schools in Chi County. He also taught Pa Kua Chang at the request of the Lu Ping County athletics department. Later he opened up another protection service called *Kuei Ying*. Liang Chen-P'u became a well known figure in the area of his home town and was responsible for spreading Pa Kua Chang in Chi County.

Liang Chen-P'u was married twice during his lifetime. His first wife, whose surname was Li was barren due to illness and thus Liang took on a second wife whose surname was Liu. He married his second wife on July 23, 1919 and, when Liang was 56 years old, they had a son named Liang Pao-Yen. Later they also had a daughter named Liang Chun-Liao. Liang Chen-F'u died on 13 August, 1932 at the age of 69. His son died on 6 January 1979.

In 1981, when Tung Hai-Ch'uan's tomb was relocated and reconstructed at the Wan An public cemetery, Liang Chen-F'u's remains were placed in the Wan An public cemetery adjacent to Tung's. His tombstone has a memorial written by Li Tzu-Ming commemorating his courage and virtue. The stone tomb has eight sides according to the Pa Kua.

## Liang Chen-P'u's Students

### Kuo Ku-Ming

Of Liang's 20 disciples, perhaps the most well known in Beijing was Kuo Ku-Ming. Kuo Ku-Ming, whose personal name was Te-Lin, was born in 1887 and was a native of Kuo family village in Chi County, Hebei Province. Kuo was accepted as a student of Liang Chen-F'u when he was 20 years old (1907). Kuo, who remained a bachelor his entire life, had superlative Pa Kua Chang skills. Those who were hit by him said it felt as though they were struck by lightning. When he struck someone, they would leave the ground and fly threw the air several feet, or if they hit a wall, they seem to hang for a moment and then slide down to the floor. His students affectionately called this technique "hanging a picture."

Kuo's knowledge of Pa Kua Chang open hands forms and weapons was deep. Based on his knowledge, Kuo authored 36 "songs" and 46 sayings which are now studied by many practitioners and considered Pa Kua Chang classics. Kuo lived his entire life in Beijing and in Shantung Province. He taught many students. After his death on 14 September, 1968, Kuo's ashes were taken to the Pa Pao mountains. His students later moved his remains to Tung Hai-Ch'uan's burial site. Kuo Ku-Ming's tomb sits beside the tomb of his teacher Liang Chen-F'u.



**Kuo Ku-Ming's tomb sits next to the tomb of his teacher Liang Chen-P'u. Tung Hai-Ch'uan's tomb is in the background.**



**Liang Chen-P'u's student Li Tzu-Ming  
in Beijing, 1991**

### **Li Tzu-Ming**

Li Tzu-Ming was born on June 24, 1900 in Chi County, Hebei Province. Li was from a scholar's family. His father wanted him to become a prominent scholar, however, after an incident whereby he was beaten by a group of local bullies, Li was determined to learn martial arts. When he was a youth he practiced *Yen Ching* Boxing but gave up this style when he was 18 on the occasion of his being accepted as a Pa Kua Chang student of Liang Chen-P'u. Liang was a friend of the family who had agreed to continue Li's martial arts instruction after Li's first teacher had died of disease. Li studied Pa Kua Chang with his teacher from 1918 until Liang's death in 1932.

Li left his home village in Chi County in 1924 to travel to Tianjin to learn a trade. In 1926 while Liang was visiting Tianjin, he introduced Li to one of Yin Fu's top students, Ching Yuen. When Liang left Tianjin, Li stayed and studied Yin Fu style Pa Kua Chang from Ching.

From Tianjin, Li went to work in Liao Ning where he spent approximately 12 years. During the war with Japan, Li Tzu-Ming engaged in subversive activity against the Japanese and continued practicing his martial arts. In 1938 Li moved to Beijing to work in a bookstore. After the war, Li continued his underground work for the communist movement. In 1949 Li became a manager in the Beijing Food Stuffs Industry. After Li's teacher had died, Li continued to practice his art, however, he kept mostly to himself regarding his Pa Kua Chang practice.

Li Tzu-Ming started teaching Pa Kua Chang to members of his own family in private while he was still fairly young, however, he did not accept any formal student outside his family until he was 74 years old (1974). During the Cultural Revolution in China it was forbidden for teachers to teach, or students to practice martial arts. However, there was a group of seven students who begged Li to teach his Pa Kua. Li had always kept to himself and practiced on his own, but because he was getting older and he wanted to pass on his art, he agreed to teach. He was afraid that if he did not start teaching students, his Pa Kua Chang system would be lost.

Zhao Da-Yuan was one of the original seven students

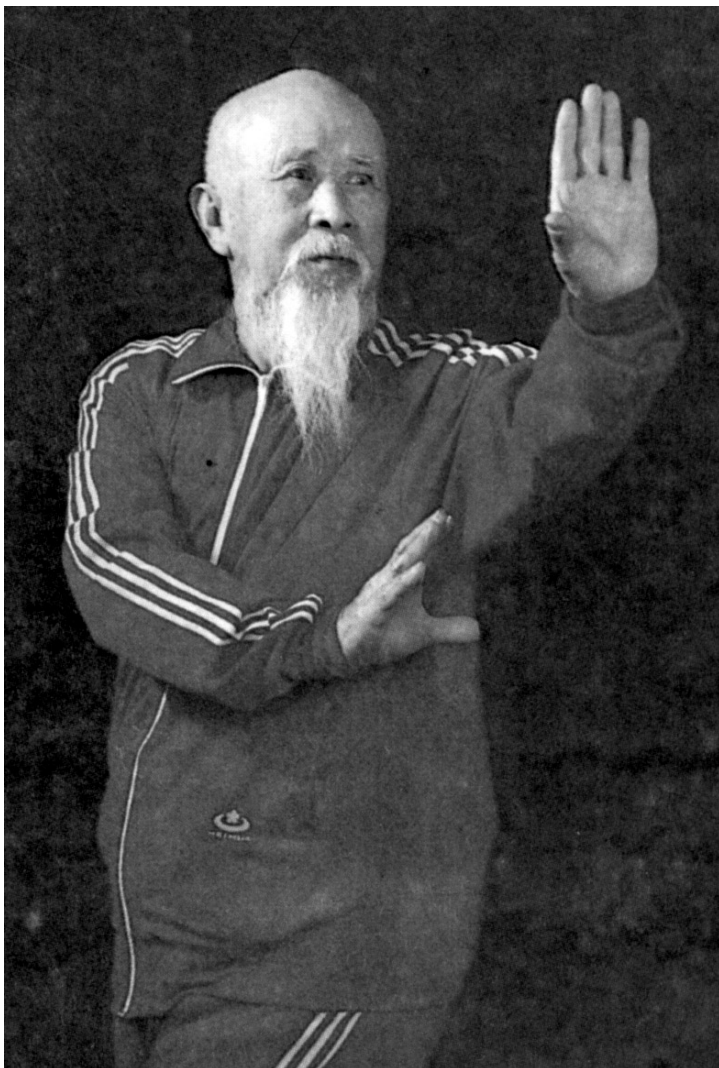
accepted by Li Tzu-Ming. In an interview conducted with Zhao in October of 1992 in Beijing, Zhao stated that during the Cultural Revolution in China a teacher had to be very brave to accept students and teach martial arts because it was forbidden by the government. Zhao had studied T'ai Chi with Wu Tu-Nan prior to meeting Li. The T'ai Chi class would meet very early in the morning and practice until 7 a.m. Since there was no school to go to during the Cultural Revolution, Zhao wanted to practice more martial arts. He had a friend who lived across the street from Li Tzu-Ming who knew that Li was skilled in Pa Kua. Zhao and some of his friends begged Li Tzu-Ming to teach Pa Kua and Li finally agreed.

Zhao said that there were many people who wanted to study with Li when he first began teaching, but most were afraid that they would get caught and punished by the government. Seven students were brave enough to defy the government and study with Li in secret. Five years later Li accepted all seven of these students as his first group of formal disciples. These students had all studied other martial arts prior to studying Pa Kua Chang with Li, however, they wanted to study with Li because they felt like he was an exceptional teacher. Zhao states that Li's knowledge of the principles of the art and his ability to explain them clearly was better than any other teacher he had met. With Li, a student would not only learn the movement associated with the style, but would also learn exactly why a movement was performed and how it exemplified the principles inherent in the style. Zhao added that Li's standards were very high and he was a strict teacher.

Over the past few decades, Li Tzu-Ming's Pa Kua Chang has spread to over 30 cities in China and to many foreign countries.



**Li Tzu-Ming, circa 1955, practices with the  
Wind and Fire Rings**



### Li Tzu-Ming demonstrates Pa Kua Chang's characteristic guard posture

Li has students in Japan, Singapore, Norway, Australia, and the United States. One of Li Tzu-Ming's students in the United States, Vince Black (see article on page 10) states that, "Li is a scholar and a gentleman and as such had only a few incidents in his life where he was bullied to the point that it resulted in him having to use his boxing skills. It was because he was a scholar and diplomatic gentleman that he presided over the boxing association for over 20 years in Beijing. There are always countless disputes between different boxing factions within a society and he was always able to mediate and resolve them, thereby preserving the unity of the organization." There was one short account of an incident that Li mentioned to Black when stressing the importance of simple basics in combat.

There was a time about 20 years ago when a Pa Kua Chang boxer came to Li's district to challenge him. The man's courage was bolstered by the fact that Li was near 70 while he was much younger and more agile. The man was counting on outmaneuvering the older boxer and, hopefully, put a new feather in his cap with the victory over a boxer of high esteem. The man circled to Li's left until he was behind him with Li only turning his waist left to follow. Li adhered to principles passed down from Liang Chen-P'u and when the younger boxer moved in from behind him, Li, with only one adjustment step, a three-quarter turn of the waist to the right, and a single penetrating palm, sent him sprawling. The man quickly got to his feet and ran away.

### Liang Chen-P'u's Pa Kua Chang

Liang Chen-P'u had approximately 20 close students. After 1949, there were only a few of them left teaching in Beijing. Two of the most well known of Liang's students in Beijing were Kuo Ku-Ming and Li Tzu-Ming. In an interview conducted in Beijing in October 1992, one of Li Tzu-Ming's top students, Zhao Da-Yuan explained the training methods inherent in Liang Chen-P'u's Pa Kua Chang system.

Zhao explained that the first priority in Pa Kua Chang training is to cultivate the internal. Once the body is strong internally, then one can practice the external aspects of the art. He said that if the student only puts emphasis on muscles and outer strength, it is like putting a big strong cannon in a little tiny boat - as soon as the cannon is fired, the boat sinks. To this end, the first exercise practiced in the Liang Chen-P'u system is *nei kung* circle walking.

The Pa Kua *nei kung* practice consists of holding a series of static upper body postures while walking the circle. Zhao explains that while this practice in Pa Kua is considered to be similar to the *Chan Chuang*, or standing practice, trained in Shaolin or Hsing-I, there is one important difference - in the Pa Kua practice the practitioner is moving. Since Shaolin training has had a heavy Buddhist influence, during their standing meditation they pull the spirit inside the body and focus inward. Pa Kua Chang has had a Taoist influence in its circle walking practice and since the Taoists are concerned with becoming one with Heaven and Earth, they do not like to stand in one place and focus inward as in the Buddhist practice. The Taoist believe that if you practice a meditation while you are moving, you can better blend with the patterns of nature and absorb the *ch'i* of Heaven and Earth. Zhao continues by saying that nothing in nature stands still, everything is always changing and thus if the practitioner is moving it is more natural. Therefore, moving *ch'i kung* has more advantages than *ch'i kung* performed standing still. He states that this does not mean standing still is bad, he simply points out that since the "ten thousand things" in nature don't stand still, it is better to move.

Although most of the popular "internal" arts practiced today cannot be directly traced back to Taoist sources, one reason they are commonly referred to as "Taoist" arts is that their principles are in line with Taoist philosophy. Zhao says that when the practitioner is holding a static posture, but continues to move around the circle, there is stillness in movement and movement in stillness. The internal leads the external and the external matches the internal. The external trains the form and the internal trains the *I* (intention) and the *ch'i*. When walking the circle holding static postures, the internal and external are trained together, however, the internal leads the external. In Shaolin, or Buddhist, training the internal and external are trained separately. Zhao says that this is not natural. He states that the Taoist method of training the internal and external together, with the focus on the internal, is more natural and thus more advantageous.

When the practitioner begins the *nei kung* circle walking practice there are three principles to focus on. The first is correct form, the second is a free, unrestricted flow of *ch'i*, and the third is a full feeling of power in the body. Working on the correct circle walking method is also emphasized. There is not special breathing which accompanies this practice, however, the practitioner works to keep the breathing smooth and even while walking.

Zhao Da-Yuan believes that the key element in this practice, the element that makes it "internal," is the link between mind and body. He explains that when the average person contracts a muscle, 45 to 50 percent of the muscle fibers in that muscle fire. A trained athlete, or a person who repetitively works a set of muscles performing a certain task, may contract about

70 percent of the muscle fiber in a given muscle for a given purpose. His theory is that if the practitioner holds a static posture, or moves slowly as in T'ai Chi, and cultivates a mind/body connection in this practice, he will be able to develop the ability to get more muscle fiber to contract at the same time for the same purpose. He states that if the practitioner trains the *I* (intention) and has a highly refined physical awareness, the mind can better focus and control the body's function.

Zhao states that each of the walking postures has a specific influence on the body physiologically and energetically. Because of this, his teacher would require individuals who had specific health problems to practice one or two of the eight postures more than the others. Zhao, who has a great interest in studying the body and its physiological development through internal martial arts practice, states that the relaxed static upper body posture combined with the circle walking and the mental intention form a very effective health maintenance system. The circle walking *nei kung* practice is not an easy. In 1983 Zhao was appointed to teach the Beijing Wushu team, who were noted as being great athletes in superb physical shape. However, holding postures and walking the circle quickly wore them out.

After practicing the *nei kung* circle walking, the practitioner in Liang Chen-P'u's Pa Kua Chang system will learn the "Old Eight Palms" (*Lao Pa Chang*). While the walking method and *ch'i kung* were the primary focus in the *nei kung* palms and changing was secondary, in the Old Eight Palms, the changing becomes primary because by now the student should feel comfortable with the walking. The walking now becomes the secondary focus, however *ch'i kung* is also trained in this form because the movements of this form also promote *ch'i* development. Zhao points out that if the intent, physiological movements and mechanics are correct, there will always be internal *ch'i* development. In practicing the Old Eight Palms the student studies how to change smoothly and works on obtaining a clear understanding of the martial applications and the *ching* (refined or trained strength) associated with each technique.

Zhao emphasizes that in Pa Kua Chang the student does not learn a technique for the sake of having another technique in a "bag of tricks" to perform mechanically and by rote memory whenever confronted by an opponent. The student learns the technique so that he can understand the patterns of change and the *ching* associated with the technique. When the student learns how the *ching* is applied and internalizes the pattern of movement associated with the change, he can then learn how to vary the technique and apply the *ching* spontaneously in any situation which would call for that application. After the student has learned how to change smoothly, the instructor will teach eight martial applications for each of the eight palms.

Whereas the student worked to ingrain the three principles of correct form, unrestricted *ch'i* flow, and fullness of power in the *nei kung* circle walking form, the student of the Old Eight Palms has eight principles to work on. The first three Old Eight Palm principles are the same as the three principles associated with the *nei kung* form. The fourth, fifth, and sixth principles are: changing smoothly, understanding the martial applications, and understanding the *ching* applied in the martial applications as described above. The seventh principle is understanding the theory or the method.

Understanding of method is only taught after the student has a firm grasp of the first six principles in the Old Eight Palms form. This principle entails the student training to understand how the eight directions (four corners and four sides) are employed in their yin and yang expressions. Zhao explains that there are 8 basic ways to use each of the four corners and each of the four sides. Each of the four corners and each of the four sides have four yin expressions and four yang expressions. Given eight directions with eight methods



### **Zhao Da-Yuan with Li Tzu-Ming and his wife in 1991**

associated with each, one can create 64 different ways of expressing or changing a given technique. In this stage of training the instructor will take apart each of the eight palm methods of the Old Eight Palms form and explain how they are employed in fighting in relation to the eight directions and the yin and yang changes so that the student will begin to understand the method and theory of how this fighting system works.

The eighth and final principle that the student will work on in the Old Eight Palms form is understanding the martial changes. The "principle of change" in martial technique is the study of how an opponent might change in order to counter a given technique which the practitioner has applied and how the practitioner might change the technique to effectively counter anything the opponent might throw at him as a counter to his original attack. The student studies how the techniques change, how the *ching* changes, and how the flow of the technique's pattern of movement can change. Once the student has a firm grasp on the manner in which all of the 8 palms, and each of the 8 techniques associated with each palm, changes, then the student will move on to the next level of practice.

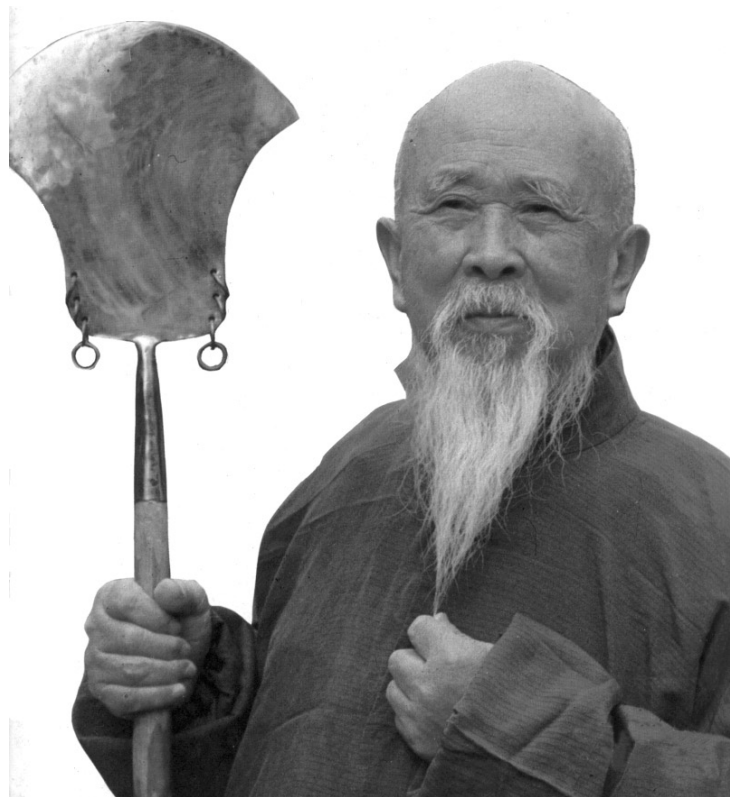
The next level of practice Zhao calls "single movement practice." This practice involves performing single movement techniques repetitively. The major focus of this training is the use of *fa ching* (to transmit or issue refined strength) and the study of how *fa ching* is applied. The student will learn how each technique is used in fighting by studying the optimum angles to apply *fa ching* in each technique. In this practice

there are three sets of short forms which the student will learn. The first form has 8 techniques, the second has 13 techniques and the third has 24 techniques. In these forms the student will again step through each of the eight principles which were practiced in the Old Eight Palms form.

When learning the application of these techniques the student will concentrate on methods of defeating an opponent quickly. Zhao states that Pa Kua Chang fighting is not like the fighting one will see in martial arts tournaments. These tournaments are "sport" events, they are not based on doing serious damage. The goal of the Pa Kua fighter is to destroy the opponent in the shortest amount of time possible. There is no trading of blows back and forth. Once the fight begins the Pa Kua fighter continues to move and change until the opponent is finished. The techniques in this "single movement practice" are designed to be quick and powerful. For a technique as simple as a straight palm strike the student will learn how to change and issue power depending on the movement of the opponent.

In the Liang Chen-P'u Pa Kua Chang system as taught by Li Tzu-Ming, a student will get all they way through the *nei kung* circle walking, the Old Eight Palms, and the "single movement practice" before being accepted as a disciple. At this point the student will begin to learn the 64 movement linked circle walking form which is the core form of the system. Zhao states the in this form the student will learn to take the walking, connection, and intention training in the *nei kung* form, the ability to change smoothly developed in the Old Eight Palms form, and the *fa ching* power that was trained in the "single movement practice" and learn how to change smoothly and quickly so that the *ching* never "cuts." Execution of this form requires a continuous display of speed and power.

After proper execution of the 64 movement linked circle



**Li Tzu-Ming with the Monk Spade**

walking form the student will learn the 64 movement straight line Pa Kua set. There are 8 forms each containing 8 techniques practiced in a straight line. In this set the student learns that correct motion has a rule, studies movement within the principles of correct motion, and learns how to change in accordance with these principles. This set of 64 techniques also forms an arsenal of applications which the student will employ in fighting along with his circle walking methods and changes. The 8 straight line forms were designed with the idea that for every move the practitioner might execute, there are only a certain number of possible counter moves an opponent has available. The next technique in this form addresses the most likely counter one can expect from an opponent based on his reaction to the original attack. Within these eight forms there are striking, kicking, throwing, and *chin na* techniques.

At the next level of practice the student will focus on Pa Kua *chin na* techniques. Zhao says that this practice is divided into three sections. There are eight small techniques, eight middle techniques, and eight big techniques. The eight small techniques are, what Zhao calls, "dead hand" techniques. "Dead hand" implies that the opponent has grabbed you and thus his hand is not moving. Zhao states that this is the easiest time to apply *chin na*. The eight middle techniques are more difficult to execute because these techniques are applied when both of the opponent's hands are "alive." This means that his hands are moving, as when he is punching, and the practitioner intercepts the punch and applies *chin na* to control the opponent. The eight big techniques are also "live hand" techniques, however, where in the application of the eight middle techniques the student learns how to control the opponent, in the eight big techniques the student will learn how to really injure the opponent. The eight big techniques involve applications which pull apart tendons, break bones, misplace joints, or even kill the opponent.

Zhao, who teaches *chin na* techniques to the secret police in Beijing, has written an extensive book on Pa Kua Chang *chin na* practice. This book won rave reviews in China because it not only includes many effective *chin na* techniques, but also



**Li Tzu-Ming practicing Liang Chen-P'u's Pa Kua Chang**



includes a detailed study of the human anatomy in relation to *chin na* techniques. Zhao examines the structure of the joints and how they work anatomically and physiologically in order to give the reader a better understanding of how and why the *chin na* techniques work. (This book is currently being translated into English and will be available from High View Publications later this year.)

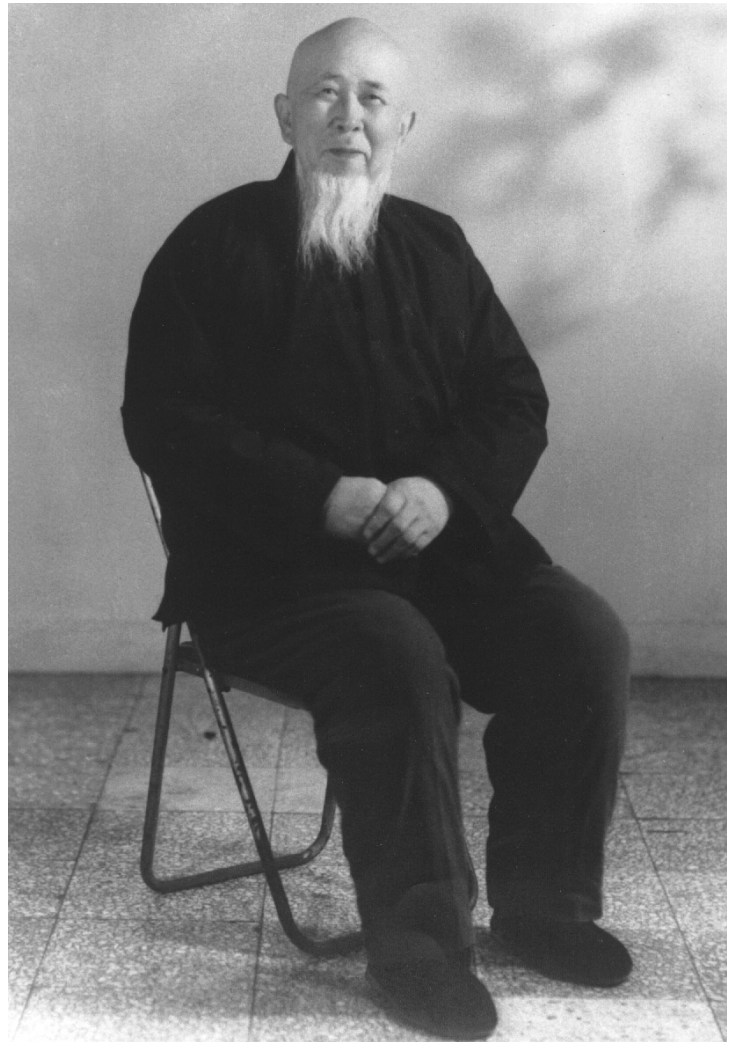
After *chin na* practice the student in Liang Chen-F'u's system will concentrate on studying Pa Kua Chang throwing techniques in detail. The eight basic throwing methods the student will learn are quite different from throws one may encounter in wrestling or judo. Many of these throws involve locking of joints before the throw is applied and thus when the throw is executed the joint will be broken. Zhao explained that the throwing methods are separated into yin throws and yang throws. The yang throws are executed when the practitioner moves in to throw the opponent. The yin throws are executed when the opponent is trying to throw the practitioner and the practitioner reverses the throw. Each of the throwing methods are practiced with left and right entering techniques.

After working for a sufficient amount of time with the throwing techniques, the student will learn eight different two-man forms and will also begin to practice free fighting. Zhao emphasizes that the eight two-man forms are not like the choreographed forms that one will see demonstrated at modern wu shu events. For each of the movements the student might execute in these forms, his partner will choose to execute one of eight different techniques in response. In turn, the student will choose one of eight different techniques to execute in response to the opponent's move. Practiced in this manner these two-man sets become loosely structured free fighting. Eventually even the loose structure is abandoned and the practice does evolve into free sparring.

Following the two-man forms practice the student will learn a number of different advanced circle walking forms. Each of these forms is designed to train a specific aspect of Pa Kua Chang skill. In one form the student might concentrate on improving speed while maintaining "soft" *ching*. Another form is practiced with a focus on using "hard" *ching*. While Zhao would not elaborate on these forms he stated that there are a lot of forms the student will learn at this stage. All of these forms are different, there are no repeating palms or kuas. All are traditional forms designed for specific training requirements, they all have a different focus and emphasis. No movements repeat and each movement has a specific purpose.

In conjunction with the advanced forms the student will also learn short and long weapons as well as *tien hsueh* (acupuncture point stabbing) forms and methods. In the *tien hsueh* practice the student learns what points to hit and what hand forms are most effective on the various points as well as what angles and directions to hit the points. Additionally the student will learn what will happen to an opponent when hit on a given point and how to heal the damage done when certain points are hit. In this practice there are two categories of points which are studied. One category covers those points which are simply vulnerable to being hit while the other category consists of points which are located at nerve junctions.

As you can see by the brief outline given above of the Liang Chen-P'u Pa Kua Chang system, the training method is very thorough and, as you might imagine, to complete this curriculum requires many years of hard training. One might wonder if all of these forms and methods were part of what was originally taught as Pa Kua Chang by Tung Hai-Ch'uan. I cannot answer that question, however from my experience interviewing Pa Kua Chang practitioners in Beijing I can state that a system of Pa Kua which is this detailed and complete is not uncommon in Northern China. The systems of Yin Fu and Ch'eng T'ing-Hua as they are taught in Beijing have this much, if not more, material.



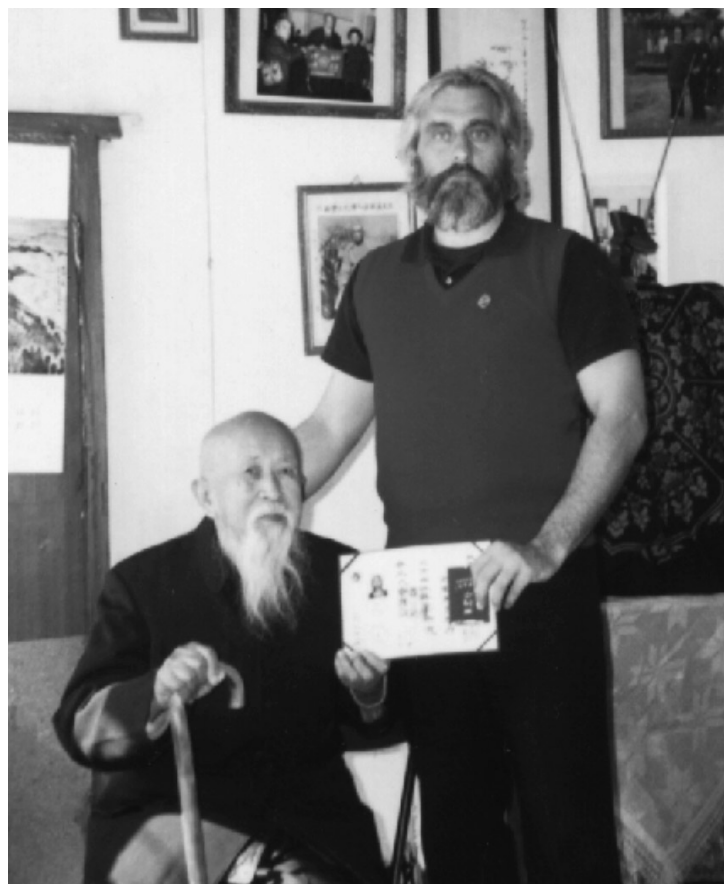
### Chinese Character Index

梁	振	蒲	Liang Chen-P'u
董	海	川	Tung Hai-Ch'uan
尹	福		Yin Fu
程	庭	華	Ch'eng T'ing-Hua
史	繼	東	Shih Chi-Tung
劉	鳳	春	Liu Feng-Ch'un
郭	古	民	Kuo Ku-Ming
李	子	鳴	Li Tze-Ming
趙	大	元	Zhao Da-Yuan
內	功		Nei Kung
意			I
站	椿		Chan Chuang
老	八	掌	Lao Pa Chang
精			Ching
發	精		Fa Ching
擒	拿		Chin Na
點	穴		Tien Hsueh

# Vince Black Talks About Fighting, Healing, and Li Tzu-Ming's Pa Kua Chang

When Hsing-I Ch'uan teacher Hsu Hong-Chi, first met Vince Black, he took one look at him and said he could tell that Vince was, what he called, a "bad boy." Vince states, "I don't know, it could have been the broken nose or the scar between my eyebrows or the chipped tooth, but he could look at me and tell that I had been into a few things." Vince Black's enormous size and rough exterior are indeed intimidating at first glance. I don't know anyone who would not look at Vince and say, "I'd want him on my side in a bar fight." However, apparently there were those who didn't say that because the broken nose, scar between the eyes, and chipped tooth were earned while Vince was employed as a bouncer in various "biker" bars in Arizona.

While Black first earned his stripes through the practice of Kajukenbo, an art which would probably appeal to most bar bouncers, he branched out from these roots through the study and practice of T'ai Chi, Hsing-I, Pa Kua, Liu He Pa Fa, and several other Chinese, Filipino, and Indonesian martial arts styles. In the process he has also become a licensed practitioner of Chinese Medicine and one of the country's most talented bone-setters. Traveling through his 25 year journey in the martial arts and Chinese medicine Black has developed some unique insights into the teaching and practice of these arts. In this article we briefly outline Black's martial arts background and then present the reader with a lengthy interview in which Black shares some of his experience, insight, and philosophy about the practice and instruction of martial arts and some



**Li Tzu-Ming handing Vince Black his certificate of membership in Li's Pa Kua Chang Association.**

information about his Pa Kua Chang teacher Li Tzu-Ming.

Vince Black began studying the martial arts in the early 1960's with a Kajukenbo instructor in Yuma, Arizona. After a few years of practice he had earned a reputation as a good fighter. Kajukenbo is a very direct, hard hitting, rough, and brutal fighting method which is very application oriented and therefore most of the training in his teacher's school was performed with a partner. There are forms in Kajukenbo, however, Black's teacher emphasized the two man and close quarters multi-man techniques and therefore it was difficult to practice the art alone.

In search of an art that he could practice by himself in order to develop power and technique, Black took a look at T'ai Chi. His first introduction was through Yearning K. Chen's book. This "internal" art intrigued him, however, he was unable to unravel the essence of this art by looking at the book. There were many questions left unanswered.

In 1968 a Canadian T'ai Chi instructor, Kevin Cochran, was visiting Yuma. Some of Black's friends had made fun of this "whimpy" style and so Cochran willingly showed them how it was used. Cochran got the best of Black's friends and so they called on Black to come and show this T'ai Chi guy what real martial arts was all about. When Black went to see Cochran he noticed that the Canadian had a copy of the T'ai Chi book he had been trying to unravel. They began to speak about what was written in the book and about T'ai Chi and its application. Instead of walking away from this meeting with another fight under his belt, Black had found himself a new teacher and a new art to study.

Cochran came to Yuma each Winter. Black studied the long form of Yang's T'ai Chi when Cochran was in town and then worked the remainder of the year to refine what he had been taught. Through his study of T'ai Chi he gained a great appreciation for the internal style, however, he wondered whether or not there was a system which would combine the softness of T'ai Chi with the explosiveness of Kajukenbo. Robert Smith's book on Hsing-I Ch'uan indicated that Hsing-I might be just what he was looking for.

Searching for a Hsing-I Ch'uan teacher in the United States turned out to be an exercise in frustration for Black. After searching for several years he had decided that if he was going to learn Hsing-I, he would have to go to Taiwan. Just before he was ready to leave, in 1974, he was visiting with his sister in the Los Angeles area and saw a sign on a store front which read "Hsing-I Kung Fu." It turned out that this school was hosting a Hsing-I instructor who had just arrived from Taiwan and would be teaching there for a couple of months. The teacher was Hsu Hong-Chi, a Hsing-I student of Hung I-Hsiang. This was Hsu's first trip to the U.S. and Black was so impressed that he stayed in California to study with Hsu until Hsu went back to Taiwan.

This first introduction to Hsing-I Ch'uan and Hsu Hong-Chi led to a eleven year relationship with Hsu. Black studied with Hsu when Hsu came to California, hosted Hsu at his school in Yuma (Hsu had asked Black to open up a Hsing-I school in 1978), and went to Taiwan on numerous occasions to study with his teacher. Early on in his relationship with Hsu, Black had become intrigued with the Chinese medicine which Hsu practiced and taught. Wanting to find a medicine teacher who he could study with on a frequent basis, Black began a clandestine apprenticeship with an old Chinese acupuncturist in Arizona, Ma Gong-Wong, for two years.

With the knowledge of Chinese medicine which Black had gained from his two teachers, he began treating students at his school in Arizona for free. Hsu had encouraged Black to practice his medicine, but not charge money because he was not licensed. By 1982, Black was treating 4 or 5 students, or friends of students, a night and decided that if he could get a license this might be a profitable business. He had heard that California was licensing acupuncturists and so in 1982 he moved to San Diego and enrolled in a three year program in acupuncture college. After graduating from school in 1985 and passing the state licensing boards in 1986, Black opened a clinic in San Diego which he owned and operated until the Summer of 1992.

In addition to studying Hsing-I and Pa Kua with Hsu Hong-Chi (Hsu died in 1985), Black's thirst for knowledge has led him into relationships with a number of other skilled instructors. He has traveled to Taiwan, the Philippines, and Mainland China on numerous occasions in order to study both his healing and self-defense arts. The details of each of the relationships Black has forged with medical and martial instructors around the world are too great to examine here. However, it is worth mentioning that other than Hsu, Black has had two instructors he has worked extensively; York Y. Lu (Chen Style T'ai Chi and Liu He Pa Fa) and Li Tzu-Ming (Pa Kua Chang). Additionally he has had the benefit of studying briefly with such notable instructors as Liao Wu-Chang (push hands and fighting skills), Fu Shu-Yun (Pa Kua Chang and Hsing-I), Liu Wan-Fu (Pa Kua Chang and Hsing-I), "Brother" Abe Kamehoahoa (Kajukenbo), Felimon "Momoy" Canete (Doce Pares Escrima), and Li Kui-Chang (Hsing-I). Black has also worked with instructors teaching various Filipino and Indonesian martial arts and has had the originator of the Kajukenbo system, Adriano Emperado, living in his home for the past eight years.

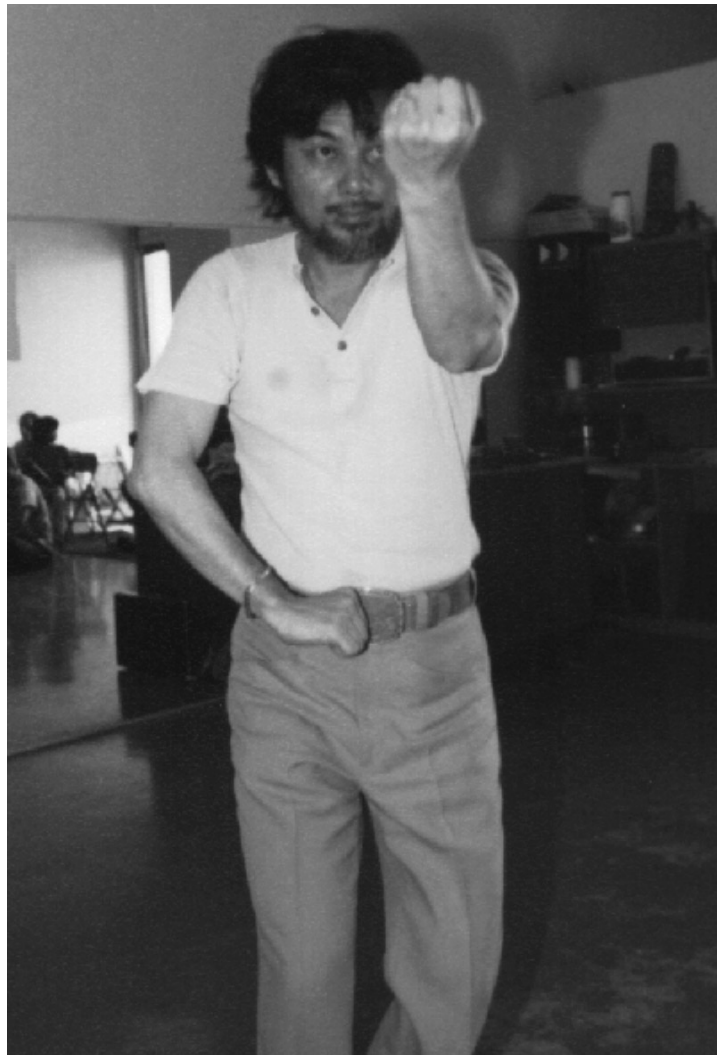
Recently (January 1993) Black moved his family to Tucson, Arizona, and currently teaches his arts in Tucson. The following interview was conducted with Vince Black in October of 1992 in Pembroke, Virginia.

**I know that you spent a number of years working as a bouncer in "biker" bars in Arizona. Could you talk a little bit about what that experience was like in terms of what you learned about the reality of fighting.**

The reason I was bouncing in the bars was so I could put my arts out there in a way that I could use them realistically. I wanted to confirm the validity of the stuff that I was working on. It was also in that part of my life when I liked rock and roll and that sort of thing, so there was a propensity to habit these places anyway.

My first formal teacher had always trained me in the bars because he was a jazz pianist and we spent every night in the night clubs. I learned a lot about a fighter's mentality from him by being in those bars. It was an environment that was exciting in a manner very much like underwater diving. The potential for encountering unusual creatures and danger at any moment was always there. The suspensefulness of being in the bar adds an element of realism to what you are doing. It is dark, the lighting is unusual, and it is loud. It is not the well lit, well padded, martial arts school setting. There is no one there that is going to stop the fight, that's the bouncer's job. The bar environment puts you into a very real setting and gives serious meaning to your executions - they are not just performances.

To understand fighting in the martial art sense of cultivating my spirit, character, and testing my faith in my art, I needed that daily laboratory of "anything goes." I needed to walk into it voluntarily, but I needed to be in a position where I was

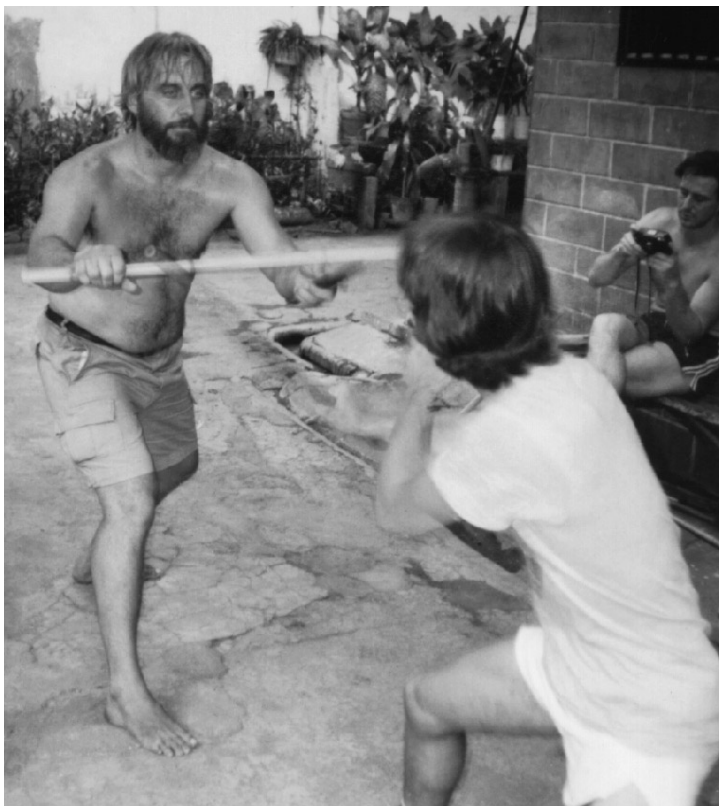


### **Vince Black's first Hsing-I Ch'uan teacher was Hsu Hung-Chi of Taiwan**

restrained to a certain degree by some sort of parameters so that I was practicing an art and not just street brawling. The parameters I had there were related to the fact that I worked at the place. It was my job to do the right thing.

I could have just gone out to fight at the bars, or wherever, but that would be more like a non-martial artist just studying fighting, its not martial arts. It would be much easier to go out and just sucker punch people and fight without commitment to ethical restraints. You couldn't really do that if you are working in a place. So, the precise setting of bouncing in those bars allowed me to be in the danger zone, but it still kept certain restraints on me. I was not allowed to be as unethical or creative as the people I was dealing with. Certainly the people I was dealing with could be extremely creative in their aggression and they were very crafty.

The potential for a confrontation turning into a real fight has to do with your mind set. Often the bar patrons didn't want to listen to me and they didn't want to keep the peace, but I wasn't allowed to swing on them first. So, my ability to deal with them lay primarily in the fact that they saw I was willing to deal with them. Some of them were fairly formidable people, but when they saw that I was ready to deal with them, even though I was just holding the line and wasn't going to make the first move, that mind set overcame many of the potential fights. A lot of martial arts is just that, it is the character developed in invoking that mind set - to hold that line no matter what the cost. The exercise of holding that line every night with the one or



### **Vince Black trains with the stick and knife in the Philippines**

two, or four or five, different people was the part that was the most developmental for me.

As far as getting in a lot of fights ... there were not *a lot of* fights, but there were a few fights. Usually if you handled the one fight rather well, that would go a long way in negotiating with others to avoid future fights. The fighting itself, if it is done right, is very short and very sweet. You primarily keep your cool. If you are going to be effective over a long period, if you are going to go back and habit the same place, whatever you do has to be just. You are inviting more problems if you are not just.

When confronted, the first thing you have to do is know how many people you are fighting and be very conscious of your surroundings. You have to be able to know who of the four or five people you are fighting is the most dangerous and you have to keep him foremost in your mind. You take him out first. He will usually have one main support guy and then there are two or three little feeders that run around with them. The feeders are usually not too much of a problem, but you still have to learn how to spot them, then keep an eye on them.

Once I spot the main guy there are two ways I tend to play it. It depends on the situation. If he is an intelligent person, I can appeal to that by dealing with him very directly and letting him know, in some subtle way, that I know he is the main guy. Other times, if I think that he has no scruples or intelligence, it is better to let him stay in the dark on that until things start to happen and then take him out first. Usually if you take out the main guy, the others will quit. His shadow very often will still try to come in on you, but if you can take the main guy out very quick and just cover the shadow, even if there are three or four other guys, they tend to do nothing. It is that kind of group psychology that I applied to bouncing in a bar. You also have to figure that they are all going to be unpredictable. They are usually on drugs or drunk. It is that unknown factor that keeps your mind wide open and active.

The techniques tend to be those where you can take the guy out in two or three moves that are in the same two or three

second period. One thing you cannot do is hop around like they do in the tournaments - it can't be done like that night after night without mishaps. You have got to go in, stay in, and get the job done in two or three seconds. In my early training we would do combinations on people that involved three to six moves, each one being a heavy blow to a vital area. We worked them down from eight seconds to four seconds. All of our combinations had to be in a four second range.

My teacher, being a musician, would keep a meter box counting on the side. When our technique started, the ticking would start and we had to be finished with the opponent, off of him and covering within four seconds. Once we got one technique down to four seconds we could move to another technique. That was crucial in dealing with the bar stuff when I did have to use it. Being able to take that main guy out in four seconds was really what predicated that the others would decide not to make any trouble. But, again, there is always the factor of unpredictability.

If you assume that you've convinced the others not to fight because you took the main guy out in two seconds, that is a big mistake. You always assume that if others are still standing there, they are coming for you, so you might as well go over and take them out. Sometimes, when trouble does come down, you don't wait for the others standing in the group to come for you after you take out the first guy. You go ahead and take them out right away. Everyone that comes together, goes down together. It is that kind of philosophy. But, on the other hand, you don't over do it. You try to be just. You can't use the maiming techniques that you would use in a real self-defense situation because you are on the job. It is not the same as if they were trying to rob you. You can't go to the eyes or take out the throat, or use some technique that would in some way damage them permanently. You could not damage a vital organ and expect not to have repercussions. But you could break a bone or something like that.

My Kajukenbo teacher always felt that in a serious confrontation, even if the actual physical interaction was brief, it might be more prudent to break at least one bone, like a collarbone or rib, something that will force the guy to spend the rest of the evening in the emergency room or at home and think about it all. This can sometimes prevent him from too much "drinking and thinking" and dwelling on you in some inebriated and devious manner.

### **So having had this experience, how did it change your approach to the martial arts you were studying?**

It set an extremely high standard for me. I wanted to make sure that anyone that I was going to study from was able to bring their art to that level. I also knew that most of them couldn't do that. You can spot the ones that can and can't. Sometimes when you get with older people, they are very good at concealing their real treasures so it is not very prudent to judge older people based on how good they appear, but you can judge based on what is coming across in their class. You can judge whether their students have anything or not. When you see people that have been with the teacher for 3 or 4 years and they are his main guys, you can look at them and tell. It is a safe bet that if the senior students don't have it, it is probably a waste of time to study with that teacher if what you want is reality. A wise man once said that if you want to know the worth of a tree, you judge it by its fruit. When the fruit comes out and it is not viable, you don't want to waste your time with it.

I used the experience I had gained in the bars when I looked around for internal arts teachers and I didn't see much in this country that was real. My first T'ai Chi teacher was a young man from Canada. He was absolutely real from day one and was very willing to show you that his T'ai Chi was the real thing. Yet, he wasn't someone who would go out of his way to

show someone. He just had no qualms about doing that if it came to it. The first day that I met Kevin, he made it very clear that he knew what he was doing.

Later I thought that I would go and learn from some Chinese teachers thinking that the old Chinese men must really be good. I found some that were good, but I also found out that whether they were good or not didn't seem to make much difference if they could not teach what they were doing. I learned very quickly that most of the T'ai Chi people in this country were only interested in the "hairs" as my teacher would say. The real beast was long gone. So everyone was giving just the appearance of the art. I think the reality of the bar experience helped me to find the right teachers. I was able to differentiate between those that knew how to use the art and those who were doing something that just looked like the art.

A few years later when I met my Hsing-I teacher, Hsu Hong-Chi, he took one look at me and said he could tell I was, what he called, a "bad boy." I don't know, it could have been the broken nose or the scar between my eyebrows or the chipped tooth, but he could look at me and tell that I had been into a few things and so he gave me a taste of his power. I had never been hit harder in my whole life and I have never been hit that hard since. I knew right away that he knew what he was doing.

I also knew he was good because I could see that all the people he was teaching who had been studying Hsing-I with him for a while had pretty good skill. Compared to others in the martial arts community their skills were very realistic. They were not tournament trained. They could go to tournaments but would probably get kicked out for excessive contact. They were not trained in the "sport" finesse to win games and play by rules. But they certainly had the ability to take care of anyone in a real situation who was trained to win those tournaments and play by those rules.

The beauty in learning the Hsing-I art was that the fighting ability really and truly came from the Hsing-I. So many martial artists who practice T'ai Chi, Kung Fu, or Karate practice all of these forms and all of these movements, but when they go to fight, they might as well have been in a boxing gym the whole time because that is all that comes out. I was very impressed that their Hsing-I techniques used in fighting looked exactly like what they used in their forms and when they went full speed it only made it that much worse on the opponent. They didn't have to modify them for the "street." The purer the form, the more effective and powerful the technique.

You always have some people who are not natural fighters and there were some of those in Hsu Hong-Chi's class, but they were in there plugging away, having a good time, training hard and developing some skills. If their heart is not into the fighting, they are not going to be a good fighter. That is completely all right, because they are getting what they want out of it. You can't make someone fight if they don't want to. You look into a class of maybe twenty people practicing this particular style of Hsing-I under Hsu Hong-Chi and you might find four or five that are never really going to be fighters because it is not really in their heart to be that way, but they are learning the techniques and can perform the skills. When it comes down to the spitting blood part, they are not really interested at all in experiencing that.

You would find that the top forty-five percent of Hsu Hong-Chi's class are all very effective fighters and then another thirty percent were so-so fighters. In contrast, in karate schools you will usually only find five or ten percent that are effective with their stuff. T'ai Chi classes have even less. Most of them are just "wanna-be's." Most of them don't even have an inkling of how to manifest those attributes of their art that made the art famous and preserved it over the years and allowed these people to pursue it. Hsing-I really seems to be a method to develop the full expression of the art with more of its students

than most of the other arts I've studied or examined.

### **What would you say are the characteristics of a very good fighter?**

A good martial artist or a good fighter?

### **A good fighter, someone who you see in the bar or on the street and say, "I'd better watch this guy." A guy who you would have considered the "main guy" in a group you were dealing with as a bar bouncer.**

The fighter, a good generic fighter, is someone who does not have anytime to spend worrying about injury or getting hurt. That is the first thing and that is one of the hardest things, or rarest things to find in people. Even people who fancy themselves as fighters, if they think that they are going to get hurt, they don't take the next step or they will hesitate. A fighter is someone who does not fear injury at all. It does not mean he is reckless, it just means that he accepts injury as part of the game of combat.

We could take it a step further and quote Emperado who always tells his students that in order to become a true Kajukenbo practitioner they have to become "friends with pain." On the surface that does not sound like much, but he explains it as: when you see a friend coming, you don't just say "Oh" and accept your friend to come, you see him and your heart jumps and is happy, your energy lifts and your spirit lifts and you move quicker towards him. When you see pain coming towards you, you have that same feeling. It is like, "this is real life, this is reality, this is the guts of what we are" and you get a joy and look forward to that pain because you know that pain is going to guide you to a greater truth. So with Emperado and the Kajukenbo system, they literally become friends with pain. When you watch Kajukenbo being done you can see that that is indeed what they are up to.

Nowadays when I embrace Kajukenbo, my personal preference is not necessarily to become friends with anymore of the pain, it is more that I accept it. Maybe it is because I am over 40 now and the pain stays with me longer. But I am an old acquaintance of pain. To recognize it and to not be intimidated by it and to know that you are probably going to get a good dose of it when you jump in there and not think even once about it - that is the first commission for being a good fighter. It is just like, if you enjoy seafood, there are bones in that fish and you have to accept that. You want the fish, you have to accept the bones. In that same manner, fighting requires an acceptance of pain and injury.

If you can leap that pain hurdle, then timing and alertness



**Vince Black practices push hands with the "monkey boxer" Liao Wu-Ch'ang in Taiwan.**



**Adriano Emperado, the originator of the Kaju Kenbo style, has been living in Vince Black's home for the last eight years.**

are next. The ability to look into someone's eye and know what is going on in there, that is the second part of a fighter. If they can recognize the seriousness of a situation or the measure of the opponents commitment to what is happening in that fight, that is a quality of a good fighter.

After those two things, no fear of pain and keen alertness, it breaks down into the geography, the psychology, the mathematics, and the physiology, or sciences, of fighting. The person's placement in relation to the enemy is geographic. The physiological aspects of how they are set, how they are moving about, and how they are shifting weight should be taken in. Then there is the psychology of what they are conveying in that body posturing, which you should also pay close attention to.

You should try to read what kind of weapons the person is carrying. Are they a kicker? Are they a puncher? If they are a puncher clearly, then they have two weapons, that is the mathematics of things. A long legged person with good balance who walks with good stride and hip angulation, is probably a good kicker and so now you are talking about at least four weapons. If they tend to keep everything in independent mobility with these weapons, then you are talking about combinations and it can get very complicated.

If the fighter is conservative in their movements and their inter-relationship between their four corners, then they will be using smaller numbers in the math of their fighting. They restrict themselves in the components they use in combat. You have to read it either way depending on the physical attributes, those things you cannot generalize on. It comes with experience. You have to experience people with the different expressions and each one according to their temperament.

Like a good soldier who has taken many a life, the good fighter is going to be quiet. He is not going to be advertising. A real fighter does not advertise. But he doesn't hide or camouflage himself, he is there if you look at him if you know what to look for. The people that advertise, they are usually not that much of a problem. It is usually a fluffing of the feathers.

**So as a martial artist how would you handle someone who you would recognize as a real fighter as opposed to someone who is just "fluffing his feathers?"**

The fluffing feathers fellow, usually you can just let them fluff. They will fool the people that don't know and that is good enough for them. They will settle for that and I will settle for that.

There are mean spirited people who can fight and then there

are true polished martial artists. Polished martial artists you usually don't have to fight with because they do not fight for petty reasons and I try my best never to give someone a reason to feel they have to fight with me. A true martial artist will not fight for stupid reasons, but a mean spirited person will. They can reduce the quality of your life many fold just by them wanting to live in that mean spirited world. If you want to tangle with them, then you have to live in that mean spirited world with them for a brief moment. Real fighters need to be taken very seriously. If you have to take them out, you take them out very quickly. I don't think that I can generalize beyond that in specific ways to deal with them.

Fighting is a complicated thing and I don't see any real reason to fight, especially over philosophical conflict. Fighting really comes down to, "Here we are stuck in this moment that was really unintended." If the fight is unavoidable, then it needs to be very quick and very final, and hopefully just. Dealing with fighters is not an easy issue, you can't encapsulate it into one simple formula.

**You, more than any other person I have met who has been studying and teaching martial arts as long as you have, are continually pursuing new teachers and examining different styles of martial arts. Most teachers that I have met, once they become a teacher, are no longer interested in being the student. You are a teacher, but continue to be a student as well. Could you talk about that?**

I think that a lot of people basically love to be the teacher more than they love to learn the art. My teachers were always hard on me. After a while I became accustomed to having that pressure of the father figure over me all of the time, molding me and moving me along and motivating me. To this day I think I am just more comfortable having that father figure.

Technically speaking, I do not need a lot of information anymore. The arts that I study have come full circle in many ways and with teachers like Li Tzu-Ming, the gaps are being rapidly filled in. What I get from teachers now is how to grow up, how to mature, and to take my art to the rest of the world in a way that is mature and rich in philosophy beyond my own years. These days, if I spend time with a teacher, he or she will be 75 or 80 years old. In some ways this is painful because I have three teachers that are around 90 and they will all be dying soon. Their passing is not going to bring me any kind of repose or fulfillment, I will have to find someone else to fill their shoes and it is very hard to fill the shoes of a man like Li Tzu-Ming or Liao Wu-Chang who have spent almost a century in their arts. But I know they are out there.

If I can find a teacher and develop a heart to heart relationship, then we have a true relationship. They will tell me the truth, they will chew me out, and they will put me in my place if I am training in the wrong way or thinking in the wrong way about training.

**Other than finding these elder teachers to study with, I know that you also like to spend time with your peers sharing information and studying the arts. Most teachers with your experience are not willing to do that. Could you talk about that?**

Many of us came into these arts with some sort of defect or an insufficiency in the social dimension of our life and martial arts helped us to cope with that. But unfortunately it is not uncommon that someone integrates the strengths of their martial art to keep some of their social defects in tact. Some of it, I think, comes from watching kung fu movies and getting romantic about this whole kung fu teacher-disciple thing. When one has these illusions of grandeur which are being supported with meager talents in relationships which are built on slanted reasonings, there is an inward sense of vulnerability about one's belief system and the world view that is created.

Martial arts instructors are not quick to open themselves up to analysis by other instructors. As such, we have this semi-hard shell that we put on as our armor of defense and we hope we can somehow prevent people from finding the chink in our armor. As long as we do not let people get too close, they will not be able to tell just what is in that armor. So we have people who lean on the names of their teachers; sort of like a pedigree - naming these famous people who are somehow distantly connected to them and they try to find meaning in that. It is something that we have all fallen prey to, including myself.

If times were more simple, like when these arts were created, and you stayed in one place for a long time and had endless hours to spend with your teachers, the endless hours would reveal to you the myriad of mysteries of martial arts. Questions could be answered and people could get a much fuller picture of what we are pursuing in the martial arts. Today we cram our classes into two hours after work and then we have to rush home and take care of the family and we don't see our teacher for two more days and we are trying to cram a lifetime of knowledge into two or three classes a week. The nature of life in America is that most of us move around and change jobs and wives and families and everything is always changing rapidly. We lack the stability that our ancestors in the marital arts had. Because of that, all of our questions about marital arts never get brought up, much less answered.

When I try to accumulate fifteen or twenty years of knowledge the best I can from the teachers I can find and squeeze time with, I know that doesn't even touch the degree of insight that I could have had if I could have sat in a little village without distraction and spent my life with one teacher who didn't have to worry about competing with other teachers or me going off to college or anything else. He could kick back and we could go over life in general in the context of martial arts and pull in all of those spaces. Lacking that in our lifestyle, I think that it is absolutely necessary that those of us who have accumulated a certain amount of knowledge do get together, humble ourselves and leave ourselves open for criticism, open for finding the chinks in our armor and correcting the fallacies that we hold and be able to admit that we don't know everything and that none of us have this "master's" total understanding of these things that we have been pursuing. Only in that way can we take these arts to a high level in this country.

People think that they can hang with one famous guy for two or three years and thereby we are all supposed to assume that he has this "total knowledge." It is kind of an absurd thing. I never for a moment believe that people of my genre in the martial arts are capable of doing that in these times. So we need each other. By getting together and clashing thoughts, concepts, theories, as well as hands and feet, it serves to refine what we are doing and maybe get us closer to the truth.

**You have studied, and continue to study, arts which other practitioners of the Chinese "internal" arts might consider to be "inferior" or at least not aligned with the principles of the "internal" styles. They might read this article and say, "How can he study all of these things and keep them straight?" What would you have to say to that?**

You know the old proverb that there are many paths to the top of the mountain and that every path sees a different landscape, but once you get to the top of the mountain you realize that they are all looking at the same land and standing on the same mountain. One side of the mountain is cold, the other side is sunny and so those people who travel those paths are going to be in disagreement on the nature of the journey all the way to the top.

It is natural that people with a limited amount of knowledge do not understand the mountain. They only know one path up to the top and one path down. They have a good way to get

there and they deserve respect for their one path. I have been fortunate. I have been able to study with masters of the arts that I have studied. In the Escrima I have been privileged to be in the company of the man that created the Doce Pares club in the Philippines in the 30's. He was in his 80's when I had the opportunity to study with him, so I got to see the finished product of all those years. He was very capable of performing in his art when he was in his 80's and he did it masterfully. He can still do it and he is now around 90. I also have the privilege of being able to continue studying with his American protege, Tom Bisio, regularly.

I have been honored to have the creator of the Kajukenbo system living in my home for almost a decade and as part of my family. I got the inside view of him and what he thinks and why he thinks what he does and how his art came to be created. Traveling with him I have had the opportunity to meet the other founders, his collaborators in his system, and get some of their thinking. I have also met many of his old classmates who studied before him with many of his teachers he first studied with. So I have gotten to see the highest level of that art. I got to see the top of the mountain through that path.

Hsu Hong-Chi had to be one of the finest practitioners of Hsing-I that I have ever met. He was someone who would not hesitate to demonstrate the full expression of his art for you, but then turn around with his knowledge of medicine and bone setting skills and show you how the medicine interfaces with his fighting art.



**Vince Black in Shanxi Province, China, with Hsing-I instructor Li Kui-Chang**

I got to sit and study in depth many of the ramifications of the Pa Kua system with Li Tzu-Ming who is, I think, the only living third generation practitioner of that style. In his diminishing years I think I had the rare privilege of being the last student to sit and go over all the details of the art and the whys and the wherefores of it. So I got to view that art from the top of the mountain with him.

Some people think that the arts are not compatible and are not modules that can be integrated into the same "system," that is, the practitioner. If they were to sit in the same place that I was with these people, they would not look at it that way. Usually people who deal with the negatives and try to fragment and separate different parts of the big picture, are not sitting in a place where they have a good view of the whole thing. I sympathize with them. I can accept their position because I know that they are doing the best they can sitting where they are and working with the view that they have. But it is their lack of knowledge that gives them this limited view of their possibilities.

#### **How would you define the so-called "internal" arts?**

Internal arts are the wise way. If someone can have everything exactly the way they want it, the internal arts would be the way to do it. It is the wise way to go about training. It is training from hindsight and hindsight is 20/20 or better.

There is a modality of movement in microbiology where a small one-celled animal having no visual guidance propel themselves through their liquid world. They live in a world of darkness, even in sunlight. They bump into something, move



**The Brothers Canete. Vince Black studied Doce Pares Escrima with Filemon "Momoy" Canete (sitting on the far left) one of the style's originators.**

a little laterally, bump into it again, move a little more, bump again and continue bumping, moving and bumping until they can go forward some more. There is no plan, there is no vision, they can't see down the road. A lot of martial arts that are not internal arts seem to be more like the bacteria in that they give you a few tools, and they teach you how to propel yourself and how to move laterally. They lack a vision of the whole path and how to get to the other end.

Internal arts, to me, seem to have been created by men who had been down the road and on hindsight redesigned their way of developing their own students to avoid a lot of the unnecessary beating and the unnecessary types of moves that, while they may enhance a person on the intermediate level, they hinder him on reaching the top or the next higher level of skill.

What the internal arts seem to do is filter out all of the lower level goals, all of those intermediate goals and just focus on getting that high level of performance. As such, this is an abstract type of thinking about what we are doing. This is why people who have another pragmatic skill like boxing can't appreciate the martial arts the way we do it because they are much more like the bacterial movement. They have to get punched in the head at least a hundred times before they figure out how to effectively apply a front hand defense, and before they figure out the kind of footwork they need. Hopefully, an internal boxer will only get hit ten times before he has got that down because his method has prepared him almost to the "T" before he gets himself into a real live situation and has to do the fine tuning. Ideally, all of his equipment is in place before he gets to that point. It is the meticulous training method of developing the interior of the person, but not completely through he exterior world. It is developing the interior of the person first rather than put him in trial and error and let him get punched until he figures out how not to get punched. It is that internal method that is part of the composite definition.

Another part of that definition refers to a type of power. However it is a power that is not just developed in internal boxers. Anyone who develops refined, natural skill at whatever they are doing, can internalize it. The thing that sets internal arts apart is that we use primarily internal criteria as our first and foremost requirement and guideline. We try to subtract some of the external aspects of training and not use them. We specifically develop the internal.

While you can use external ways and get there, very often in the martial arts you are too beat up by the time you get there. It is unfortunate that you look back and see all of the injuries and the battering that you took just to get to that point. If a person has a good internal method and a very good teacher, they can get there without taking that battering and still achieve an unbelievably high level of skill. It is in that "shooting for the stars," but with a method, that really defines the internal arts. The amount of detail and the amount of requisite personal touch that is required to get to that intimate level of knowledge and insight makes it desirable for the teaching environment to be a small group with a dedicated teacher.

Internal arts do not lend themselves to mass production. In that too lies some of the meaning of the term internal. It implies a very closed from the outside type of removing from the populace in order to take time to get into these details. Internal has a lot of aspects. Another aspect of internal that needs to be addressed is that focused attention to the state of being - to the spiritual state of the being. When I say "spiritual" I am speaking in oriental connotation, not religious terms in the Western sense. It is the person's state of mind in harmony with what is going on around them that results in an ability to act spontaneously and correctly in any given situation. Nothing clouds their body's ability to respond to that environment. Cultivating the ability to cope with what is going on without getting into some extreme form of emotionalism reflects proper



internal qualities.

It can easily be argued by any martial art that internal control is their goal. While that maybe the goal of all of them, it is achieved with greater facility if you stay focused on that from day one of your training rather than going through all of these less mature stages of emotionalism in fighting spirit in all of these other forms of excitation that accompany these other methods of training that we don't call internal arts. But clearly, in Kajukenbo there is a certain type of adherence to a certain mindstate that makes you at one with the moment and fearless to confront those four or five people and take whatever happens in stride. The samurai spirit speaks of this internal stillness as well. So while it is not only the internal arts which speak of this goal, the internal arts want to shoot straight to that goal and they want to remain in that intention from the beginning level all the way up.

It is very helpful for the internal boxers to have this internal, natural setting. This is why it has become so popular. The internal schools tend to be more informal, family style, and casual. This, to me, is another aspect of the internal style.

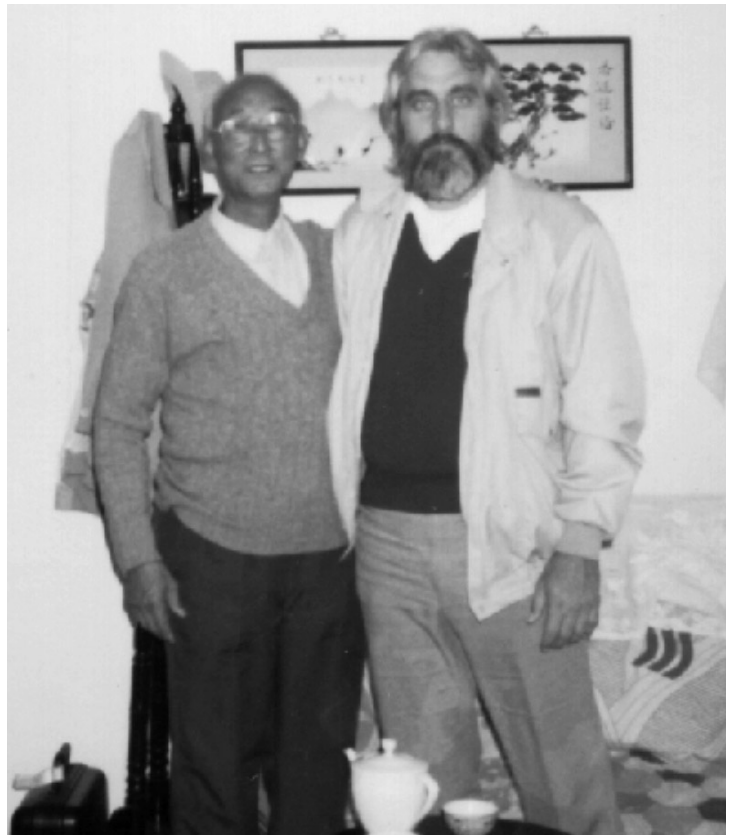
### **Would you say that at the top of the mountain all martial arts become internal?**

Yes, they are. At the top of the mountain everything can be internal. You don't make it to the top otherwise. If you can't internalize it before you get there, you will likely tumble down before you reach the top. While there are people that are at the "top" of some system here or there, I don't want readers to get the idea that I think they are all internal. There are many people who are not internal who are running organizations and teaching and have rather grandiose titles. And there are internal arts people who are not really internal. They are truly the skin and the hair. The beast is not in there. So there is no easy way to know if that person is there or not. For us to know the answer to questions like that is very difficult and that is another aspect of the internal. I think a word like "intangible" is a very operative word in this definition of internal. Subliminal and intangible - things we cannot put our fingers on or get a grip on.

The space between the lines in a poem can give greater meaning to that poem. The ability to read between the lines when trying to determine if someone has that internal quality or not is an absolute necessity. The subtlety of internal principles and internal ways of training in and of themselves allow for many charlatans to come into play and in several different forms. A common type of charlatan are those who claim to "just teach for the health or the spiritual reasons" and never addresses the martial aspect. This is a gross misconception by someone who is undeveloped in the full breadth of the art.

The spiritual, philosophical, emotional, and intellectual content of a persons abilities in their art comes through physical attributes and in overcoming physical obstacles and challenges that define that particular style or art. One cannot skip the trials and tribulations of the martial path and say, "Well, I'm not going to do those, I'm just going to be spiritual." Presenting yourself as a T'ai Chi instructor when, in fact, you couldn't defend yourself if you wanted to is not right. If you are using the martial arts as your vehicle and you can't unravel the riddles of the physical questions, you only know how to dance like it and imitate old masters. You imitate the outside of this person, but never want to fall down or get pushed down or feel a punch or a pull or a lock. You put on the animal skin, do the dance, but you are not really a tiger.

There are a lot of problems in transmitting the knowledge of internal boxing. To integrate or to move forward with all these different dimensions of the human being in the context of a particular art is the most challenging part of the whole process. To get them to all move forward together. It is so difficult that most teachers who's livelihood depends on having



**Vince Black in Tianjin, China, with Pa Kua Chang teacher Liu Wan-Fu**

a lot of students cannot take the time to develop all of these things together and move them forward together. So most people often don't get the real message.

Our lifestyle does not afford for the teachers or the students to take the time they need in training. People are too busy paying rent and making money and trying to stay afloat in the commercial world of martial arts. There are a lot of problems in finding teachers and getting the right instruction and finding the time to practice and having the personal inclination to get that objective achieved.

Over the years I have watched some very fine teachers of internal arts quietly practice their art in their backyard or a secluded spot in some public park by themselves or with a handful of students. Meanwhile, many more partly informed practitioners are teaching several dozen ardent followers each, as they pass themselves off as a finished product to these unknowing followers. Sometimes these half-done teachers are actually studying quietly at the same time with the true master in the backyard. Sometimes this is the fault of the half-done teacher because he doesn't direct these people to his teacher and dilutes the superior teaching down to make it more palatable and convenient for the lazy western mind; and sometimes it is the fault of the students themselves for their unwillingness to embrace the whole teaching. Either way, it is tragic that the real teacher doesn't have the students and the students don't have the real teacher.

Master Hsu put it quite well when he said, "To learn the forms for fighting is easy. It is possible for everyone to do that in two or three months. To achieve serenity, however, to achieve endurance, this is difficult. Anyone can easily open the cage and let a tiger out, but it is its containment that is Tao. Everyone in the position of sifu, sensei, or teacher should remember this, that it is not just the fighting that is important, for everyone can learn to fight. It is the pursuit of Tao that distinguishes the true martial artist."



**Vince Black discusses Kanjukenbo fighting with "Brother" Abe Kamehoahoa in Hawaii**

**You have spent quite a bit of time here discussing what an internal art is and you have not once mentioned the word "ch'i." Do you care to make any comment about ch'i and how its cultivation relates to the internal martial arts?**

The dimensions of ch'i and the manifestation of ch'i are very real. I have felt it too many times to try to deny that. It is a very important part of this whole process, but I feel that the pursuit of it is highly over-rated. There is a lot of misconception about ch'i. Ch'i as we experience it is a result of something. It is something that results from naturalness. When something is done naturally, then you have ch'i. People tend to fixate on the phenomenal expressions of ch'i and therein lies the problem. They will dwell on anything from tingling and warmth to psychic powers. While these things have something to do with the phenomenon of ch'i development, they really are not the parts we should be focusing on.

The reason that ch'i is important is because it is what allows us to exist. It is what we are. We are only here because of ch'i. Through ch'i we exist and we function and we know the world and be part of it. There are many people that can work with the phenomenon of ch'i in the area of parlor tricks. Because they have parlor tricks people think that they have mastered ch'i, so they think they need to follow this person. The parlor tricks, and these kinds of things are not really what internal boxers should be seeking. They should be seeking an overall well-balanced, natural state of mind - natural meaning at peace with oneself in one's setting, whatever that setting is - and the ability to adjust to their environment which does not detract from their own level of ch'i and how it is functioning in their body.

Internal boxers learn to control their ch'i and to some degree work with it in such a way that they don't waste it and in a way that they don't impede its own regular application in their body. It is best not to think too much about the ch'i, but just do the work and let the ch'i be itself. Too much thinking about it is the same as "trying not to try." If you are "trying" to do something, it is not natural. If you are trying to concentrate on the ch'i then it is probably not doing what it could be doing. Working with that, along the way you will encounter some of these "parlor trick" abilities, but these things should be only taken as a confirmation that you are starting to get the idea.

In that way there is nothing wrong with them, but when people make too much of these things they often get lost in a visionless search for power. Therein lies the pitfall. They will lose track of what a healthy, well-balanced person in the internal arts is trying to get to - and that is to be a normal person despite everything that is going on around them. We want to live normally without all of the vexations of life disturbing our ch'i. That is what we want to achieve. If we make too much of ch'i demonstrations and try to get too much mileage out of our meager abilities with the manipulation of ch'i, we may miss the target. There is a place for manipulation of ch'i, but I relegate this to specific ch'i kung systems and not martial arts.

**Being a Doctor of Oriental Medicine, as well as a martial artist, and having had the experience of working in China with doctors who specialized in treating patients who have been damaged in some way by incorrect ch'i kung, what do you think of the abundance of books and video tapes available to consumers today which teach ch'i kung or recommend herbal remedies?**

You know, in Chinese medicine, when we give people herbal medicine or exercises, or treat them with acupuncture what we try to do is achieve a state of balance. What that means is that a person should have energy but not be too energetic. He should be relaxed but not overly passive. A person should have a balance of animation, repose, tranquility, a quick clear mind, an ability to sleep well and wake refreshed; all in a state of balance.

A lot of people who get into ch'i kung practices look for strange pulses in the body or extreme circulatory variations or deviations, or some sort of psychic revelatory achievements. These people are playing with things that are not easy and not without risk. The ch'i kung experiences that I have had with the people in China have brought me to the point where I think there may be a lot of problems with ch'i kung here in the United States. There have been reports in this country of people getting ch'i kung damage, but I suspect there are many more unreported.

It is a problem in this country because there is so little understood about ch'i kung that when somebody is damaged with ch'i kung there is no way to connect the disorder itself back to the ch'i kung. Doctors don't understand it enough to attribute the problem to its cause. If people start doing this stuff out of books or video tapes, there is a good risk of developing problems that the health practitioners in this country cannot unravel for them. I have seen a few cases where people have ended up in sanitariums for years.

The necessity for certain things in ch'i kung training is not made clear in the books. They mention the guidelines for practice, but without understanding why those guidelines are there and what will happen if they are not followed, people are not capable of pursuing these goals in a safe manner. I saw people in China who were doing ch'i kung in less than optimum conditions and in a manner which was not advised by people who knew. Those people ended up with severe physiological and/or psychological problems. There was schizophrenia, insomnia, paranoia, physiological heart pain, palpitations, and fibrillation. All of these problems were very hard to treat once they were put into the body. They were almost all a result of people practicing in the wrong location at the wrong time or under the wrong circumstances. Those circumstances had all been written down into books - you should practice in a clean place, a quiet place, and all of these sort of things - but people do not understand why so they don't pay careful attention. They might go to a place that is quiet, but it is not always quiet.

The last thing you need is a sudden noise or shocking moment when you are in a certain state energetically while doing ch'i kung. If these sudden shocks to the system occur, or the life around you comes crashing in through one form or another

during those vulnerable moments, when your energy is in a delicate balance, it can do irreparable damage. People in this country have not experienced that, but I saw many cases of it in China and I came home and realized that I had seen those same kind of cases over here years before, but I did not recognize them at the time.

I think ch'i kung should only be done with someone who is very qualified to teach it. How do you know that person is qualified? Not through his abilities to perform parlor tricks. This is not what qualifies someone to be a teacher. Look at the teacher first and say, "Would I like to be like this person? Would I want to be exactly like this person in spirit?" If that is what you want, then to pursue what they are doing may be the way to go for you. But if they do a little shell game for you and you are amazed that you can feel their energy across the room or something like that, don't be too quick to jump to any decisive conclusions about their ability to give you what you need or want. You don't want to study with a person just because they have a couple of parlor tricks. This is not a direct expression of the highest level of the ability. Hsu Hong-Chi would always caution to ultimately "search your heart for the suitability of a teacher," but the catch is that you have to be even keeled about the issue at hand so the heart can calmly answer you. You have to search your own heart without a hunger or a goal.

As far as the herbal tonics go, our government is very slow to recognize the efficacy of herbal medicine from China and therefore they are slow to legislate the parameters under which you can practice it. There are people out there now who are ahead of our government in their half-trained, at best, modalities of marketing themselves to this herbal clan. It is very easy to get your hands on powerful herbal formulas and put them in magazines and market them blindly to the public. What is at risk here is the possibility that someday the government could ban the herbs because they are being mis-used. If this occurs, licensed practitioners, the ones who are trained and educated to the full extent of the art form, will not have them to use.

People would not think of going to someone who is not an M.D. to have surgery, so they should not think about taking herbs recommended by someone who is not fully educated, trained, and licensed. While some say that there are no side effects of herbal formulas, what they mean is that there are no side effects to an herbal formula that is designed specifically for one person in one instance. If you do the medicine in that manner, then there are no side effects. If it is not right for the moment, there can be side effects.

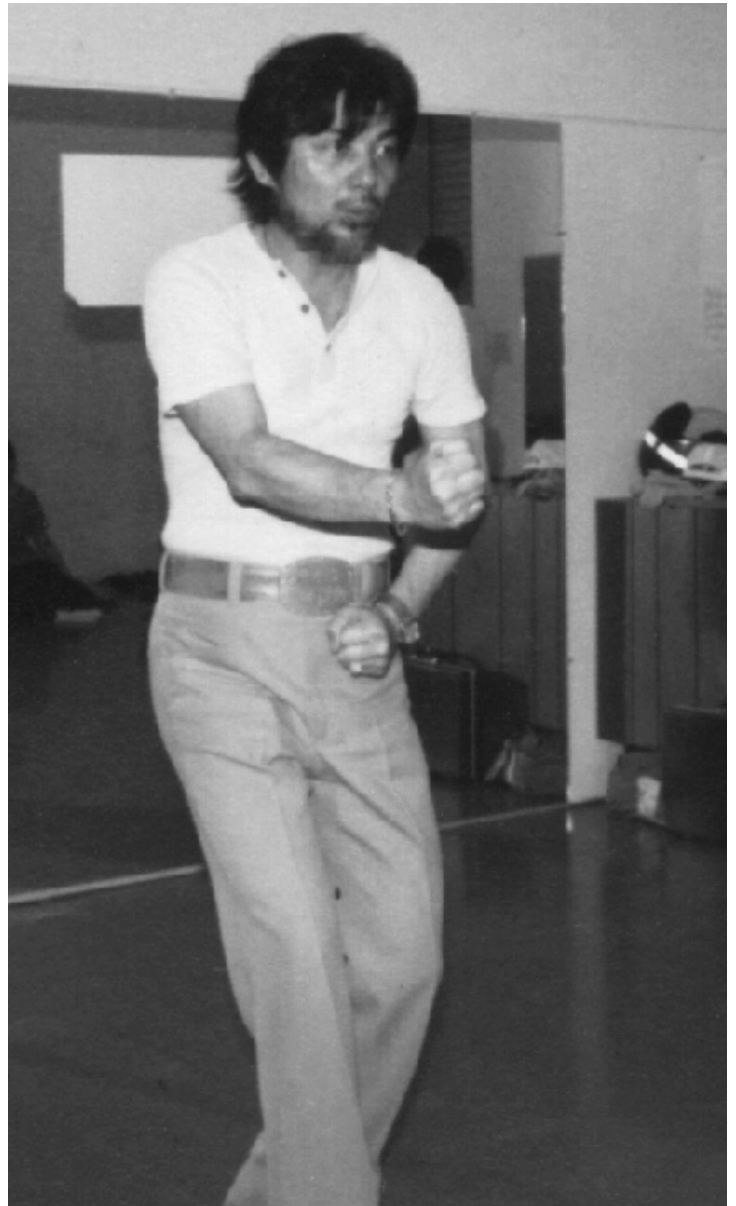
Chinese medicine is powerful and if you do not have a qualified herbalist you take the chance of getting an inappropriate formula. Even if the formula is right for you, if you recommend it to someone else, it may not be right for them. Many get herbal formulas freely from friends or from books and thus think it is all right to give them freely to others. With this casual disregard for the responsibility that lies behind giving someone these formulas, we stand a chance of losing them altogether. God forbid, if enough problems result from this liberal, if not irresponsible marketing of classical Chinese herbal formulas, the government can use this argument to take it away from all of us. What appears to be a blessing to everyone by being able to order formulas out of magazines can turn into a curse because even those trained in the ability to properly use these things will not have access to them. I think it is risky business right now and we don't know which way it is going. The FDA has a tendency to really slam down hard on things on the opportune moment. People who sell medicine through the mail are doing it just to make money and the people who are buying it that way are not being very smart.

**You have had a lot of teachers, Hsu Hong-Chi was not the**

**first or the last, but in all the time I have known you every time you are asked a deep question, you sum up a topic, or you select wisdom to pass along to your students, you always quote him. Could you talk about that?**

When he became my teacher, he fit all of the qualities that the definition of *shih fu* (sifu) means to me. For him *shih fu* meant father-teacher. Even though he is not your blood father, he teaches you as if he is bound by blood. He can't escape his feeling for you or his concern for you. Very often he teaches you on a level that you very own blood father, because he is your father, cannot teach you because you don't want to listen to him. Those bitter lessons of life that you are doomed to learn the hard way can be addressed ahead of time so that you can avoid that rocky path. You need to make that heart-to-heart connection that establishes who your teacher is. That teacher is then bound heart-to-heart with you and they have to teach you the right way because their heart is not at rest unless they are fulfilling those things for you. That is their job and their role.

A *shih fu* or father-teacher often gives you those things in life that are not so much about how to make a living, but how to live. That is an important piece which is often missing in our culture. There can be so much dissension between the generations that we often don't have a large nuclear family or



**Hsu Hong-Chi practicing Hsing-I's Peng Ch'uan**



**Vince Black, skilled in the art of Chinese bone-setting, works on a patient**

extended family anymore. There is no support group for the father or the mother and so we don't always get that intervention that we needed from the grandfather or uncle. When we are polarized with our family, that is it, we are separated and then we are lost. So this father-teacher, this *shih fu*, will give you those much needed insights of life.

Hsu Hong-Chi said that you are not someone's *shih fu* unless you are willing to try to change their heart. You don't necessarily have to change their heart, but you have to guard and protect their heart. You have to make sure that it is not going the wrong way. That is the level that you are trying to help that person develop on. Hsu Hong-Chi made this point clear when he talked about Hung I-Hsiang. He said, "I had many teachers, but my true teacher was Hung I-Hsiang. He is my true teacher because he changed my heart." Hsu acknowledged that he was pretty wild and he enjoyed fighting and he enjoyed going out on the street and getting the real action. The way he put it, he said that he was a "bad boy." When I met him, he very quickly spotted some of that in me. He told me, "I know you like to fight, huh?" I quickly denied that because I was awe struck by his power and didn't want to feel any more of it. I said, "No, I don't like to fight." He said, "No, no, you can no bullshit me. I know, you bad boy. I know because before I was a bad boy too." Hung I-Hsiang helped him out in that way and made sure that the ways he might go wrong were diminished. In this same way, he is my true teacher.

Hsu Hong-Chi taught me medicine and that being a doctor was an extension of being a kung fu teacher. As a teacher you are working to help people that you have that heart-to-heart connection with find peace. Sometimes you take a gentle person and give them a rigorous training regiment while you take a rough person and force them to train in a gentle manner

because they need that. They need that other avenue to find their answers. It is a healing process and Hsu Hong-Chi was good about doing that for me. I've had some great teachers, I've been blessed, but he was my true teacher. He showed me that way and set me on that path. Some of the best parts of who I am today came from him. But, that is not to take anything away from my own father either. He actually was my first teacher in martial arts. He taught me Jujitsu in 1963 and gave me a sense of appreciation for the tactics of true combat that provided the foundation for this last 30 years of training. But, he also taught me the importance of honesty in living so I can't give Hsu Hong Chi all the credit.

**I know that Hsu Hong-Chi required his students to learn the Chinese medicine and bone setting and you do the same with your students. Can you talk a little bit about the importance of the healing aspects which you stress in your teaching?**

Hsu Hong-Chi said that you are only half of a kung fu teacher if you don't know the medicine. Anybody can learn to fight and anybody can teach someone else how to fight, but the ability to put people out there and be responsible for the physical and mental well being requires that the teacher understands their students on a much deeper level than just showing them fighting techniques. You can see how a person has a problem with a certain type of skill and you can help them resolve it much quicker if you can go in with the hands of a doctor and physically change those conditions for them quickly so that they do not spend a year trying to break certain body parts loose and get them moving in a way that they should. You also can understand just how far you can go with a technique before the integrity of a certain joint or another part of the body starts to give way in a destructive manner. Being mindful of the aspects of Chinese medicine and physiology through the study and practice of Chinese medicine develops an appreciation for preserving the sanctity of the student's body. You don't use it up in pursuit of the less important goals in the martial arts. You use it as a well built, but also well maintained vehicle to get you down the road and through the whole journey.

The internal arts are the best thing to preserve that body's health if the art is taught correctly. You can get through the whole run of the gauntlet without all of the abuse and destruction laid on the body. Consequently, we see these gentlemen who are in their seventies and eighties that perform impeccably. You do not often see this in the external styles. You see people who have damaged knees and sore backs, they can't squat and they can't kick high and they can't stretch anymore, their shoulders display restricted motion, and they are very one sided in their muscle structure. You can prevent a lot of this if you are mindful of the sanctity of the body and you feel obligated to preserve that sanctity in spite of the other goals you are trying to achieve with the kung fu skills.

The more you know about the medicine, the more mindful you are about it all, and the more adamant your efforts will be to preserve those things. You can be very conservative in your training, but that might limit what you are offering people in the way of experience and vision. If you are very skillful in your bone setting and very skillful in the application of the medicine to their constitution and their particular situation, then you can go ahead and push them to their limit and still cover them so that they are not in jeopardy. So it is not just a question of being mindful and conservative; you can be bold in a responsible manner. You can push people to limits that they really couldn't go to without being in some kind of jeopardy. Quality instruction really requires that kind of training and that is why I go around and teach the medicine and bone setting to as many internal boxers as I can. I would teach it to external stylists as well but, interestingly enough, most of them really

don't have the palpatory skills or the philosophical appreciation for that dimension. Some of them actually see it as a weakness or even irrelevant to martial arts.

While all my students are encouraged to study the medicine, we have a separate certification program through the North American Tang Shou Tao Association to acknowledge those who have achieved a high level of proficiency. We do not allow students who only have a superficial skill level to practice on others without supervision. Our program is supervised by a board of licensed Doctors of Oriental Medicine. These board members set the certification standards and oversee all of our medical activities.

**Could you talk about your North American Tang Shou Tao Association and the goals you have for the Association?**

The association was an outgrowth of the teaching I was doing while I was in acupuncture school. I was traveling around the country and teaching seminars during the school breaks to earn the money for acupuncture school. It allowed me to earn enough money so that when I was at home I could spend all of my time and effort with my studies. I consequently encountered many people in the martial arts who were already very adept at some other styles but when they were introduced to Hsing-I or Pa Kua they converted over.

Over a five or six year period I had worked with a number of schools that were not necessarily under me, but I was teaching the teachers of the schools. When I graduated from acupuncture school I continued to work with them and we put together an excellent program in this format of teaching where I could go and give a piece of knowledge and then go home and leave them for three months. It forced me to organize my material and my presentation of what the internal arts were so that people who were coming from a hard style way of thinking could translate into an internal philosophy and develop this in my absence. I had to organize the training so that they would not go off on a wrong path and have to start over when I returned.

I ended up with a dozen schools around the United States who are practicing fine Hsing-I right now as well as the medicine and everything else. They pressed me to establish a formal organization and certification program. As interest grew in

this county, and it was obvious that there was money to be made, a lot of Johnny-Come-Lately's showed up from other countries and from within this country who offered themselves as "masters." They put their organizations and their paperwork together very quickly so that they became a substantial entity. The fact that I did not do those kind of things back then did not hurt me, but it sort of hurt the people who were trying to make a living with schools and convert their school to these kind of arts. They were up against overly published people in the commercial world and pressed me to come up with our own certification program. That is how the organization started in this country.

I also started the organization out of a sense of obligation to Hsu Hong-Chi because he always wanted an extension of his organization here. None of my school brothers, my colleagues in the Hsu Hong-Chi family, seemed to coordinate well enough together. We were all too independent and we got off on our own paths and that sort of thing. So a national organization never got off the ground. It really disappointed him. He used to always point to the Japanese students and say how organized and cooperative they were and therefore were able to achieve much more than the Americans because they did that. It was a disappointment to him that we could never get it together as school brothers. This looked like a good opportunity for me to do it because these people are all my people and they work very well together.

We started interacting on a national level together and have tournaments and national conferences where we consolidate the best of what we all have and work together to raise our standard level. We have a Pa Kua group, a Hsing-I group and a T'ai Chi group within the organization and as things become more stable and more well organized we plan to pull in other martial arts. It is an open broad-based organization. The crux of it is Hsing-I and Pa Kua and T'ai Chi, but other Chinese martial arts as well as Hawaiian and Filipino systems will be included. The cross-training is wonderful, it is a way for people not to become so tunnel visioned and myopic about what is good and what is not and what is internal and what is not. It causes people to take their blinders off and find what they are doing in the context of it all. It breaks down the elitist type of thinking that some people get themselves into.



**Vince Black with his teacher Hsu Hong-Chi**



**Vince Black's Pa Kua Chang teacher, Li Tzu-Ming flanked by photos of his teacher Liang Chen-P'u and Tung Hai-Ch'uan**

Every year we have a full contact tournament which is non-competitive in the sense that there is no prize and there is no victory. There are no judges and there are no rules for winning or losing. There is no concept of winning or losing promoted in the tournament. Students come and they compete for the experience and the experience only. It is not a monetary thing, there is no charge for competing. The Association sponsors the tournament and the following dinner for all the participants. It is strictly for the benefit of developing the art and developing a sense of family between everyone.

**Could you talk about tournament fighting and why you think it is important for your young students to experience free fighting in your tournament setting as opposed to other tournaments?**

I look at other tournaments and it seems to me that most tournaments are money making events. Everyone has to pay a fee to enter and the money seems to be a real determining factor in how the tournaments are run. The promoters try to appeal to the most people in a way that loosens their pocket book. Unfortunately egos get swept up into this thing and they feed off of people's need for ego nourishment. The tournaments then become a thing of win at all costs and the winning is achieved through fairly restrictive rules so that people don't get sued. Then these unrealistic parameters separate this type of fighting from what might really happen on the street. Often when I observe other tournaments, I see that the people who won the tournaments would not have won the fight. The winner may often get the first lick, but the lick would not have been enough to change the course of the fight had the referee not blown the whistle and brought the fighters back to the center to start over again.

In our tournament even people who are rather timid or who have never fought in their lives can enter into a fairly realistic fighting situation and come out with a sense of achievement and progress no matter what happens out there. The key is to match people together who are of the same ability level. We do

not just toss all of the names of the members in a hat and come what may. We always match the opponents to where they are very close in temperament, ability, size, age, experience, etc. We match it so close that even if the fighting is very fierce, it is hard for one person to get the advantage. It is really a struggle that demands the best from them and that is all they have to give.

In this tournament there is no winner declared. It is an environment of learning, not a competition. Even students who get knocked out learn some very important things and cannot be considered losers. The people who tend to get knocked out are people who are very stubborn, very aggressive, and they have a "do or die" attitude. They usually get an education about how bitter that pill is and the next time they are a bit more respectful of the moment and more appreciative of the point that real kung fu is a survival thing. It is not a military thing, it is not do or die, it is not about that, it is about surviving in this world. There were only two knockouts in our last tournament, and they were in the most fiercely aggressive matches.

This kung fu is about a civilized person trying to tap his primal resources and his God given physical qualities and organize them in a way that he can regain his primitive defensive reflexes and get by in this world. If they can develop those qualities and an appreciation for those qualities in the tournament and not just go in there to beat the other person, but survive the pressure of the moment, then that is all we really need to achieve.

I am not looking for champions, I am not looking for three and four time winners five years in a row. If they do well in the sense of being able to handle that situation well, then there is no need for them to go out there again. They do it to find answers to their own personal questions. That is what the tournament is all about.

My ideas on this were in great part fostered by Hsu Hong-Chi. In his tournaments people had trophies and there were winners and losers, but, he added his own personal touch to try and break up the juvenile logic in the pursuit of those trophies. I wanted to do it even better. He was trying to bring people from many countries together for these international events. I think he would have done it differently had he not had such a big goal in mind.

Myself, I really don't care if we get very big. I know we are going to grow steadily and our organization is going to be very strong in the end, but I'm in no hurry to get there. If we can have quality tournaments with 20 to 30 matches that are fine matches, then that will be great. If we have no serious injuries but a lot of enlightenment coming to the fighters in relation to their mindset when they go in to fight, then I am happy. There are no declared winners or losers, everyone fights and then enjoys dinner together and there is an open discussion between the fighters about what they were doing wrong and how the other guy got over on them. It is a learning environment which benefits all fighters. Since our members are scattered across the country, the tournament brings everyone together like a family reunion and the new members get the opportunity to meet and interact with the rest of the family. It's a wonderful atmosphere. I don't think you would get that to the same degree if they were fighting over silly little trophies.

**Now let's talk a little bit about Li Tzu-Ming's Pa Kua. When you went to China, did you go to seek out Li Tzu-Ming as a teacher?**

No, it was an accident that I met Li Tzu-Ming. I was indirectly invited to China by Shan Xi Hsing-I boxers who had befriended a student of mine. I took that invitation as a privileged opportunity to go over there and get some personal instruction from some Shan Xi Hsing-I boxers. Of course, I had not anticipated the Tiananmen Square incident and

I had bought my ticket months in advance and then that incident happened and altered some of what I had planned. The foreigners were being asked to leave the country and I was just going in. But I managed to get into Shanghai by boat and I went to the hospitals in Shanghai and set up a program where I could work in the hospitals with the bone doctors and Tui Na practitioners on some days and with acupuncturists on other days to improve my acupuncture technique. I did that for about eight weeks and spent all my days concentrating on the medicine.

I did not do any martial arts, beyond my own practice, for the first month and a half that I was there. Then I started traveling through China and meeting the boxers. I would question the old boxers, watch some of their stuff, and tape some of their practice. I finally got up to Shan Xi and met with the Hsing-I boxers up there and I got to work just minimally with them, not at all what I had hoped. But I learned some good things from them and I got my eyes opened to the many different ways that Hsing-I can express itself. I also studied some Pa Kua there as well and then for my last month in China I moved on to Beijing.

I was visiting some well known boxers in Beijing and one guy mentioned that if I was interested in Pa Kua that Li Tzu-Ming was just around the corner from his house. I said, "Well, who is Li Tzu-Ming?" They told me that he was the head of the Pa Kua Society in Beijing and had been for twenty years and so I told them I would love to meet with him. I met him and I was very direct about what I wanted to do in working with him. After I went back to my hotel I felt like I was not going to be well received there, but then someone called my hotel and told me to come back in the morning and start studying with Li.

Li gave me his books that he had written and we started with basic exercises. He corrected my basic postures and my stepping. Also, I would sit with my translator and we would go through Li's books with him. By the end of the month I was able to get through his "Old Eight Palms" form and some of his basic exercises and I would get personal correction from him. We talked about getting his book translated and published in America for the American practitioners and we made plans for me to come back and work with him as soon as I could.

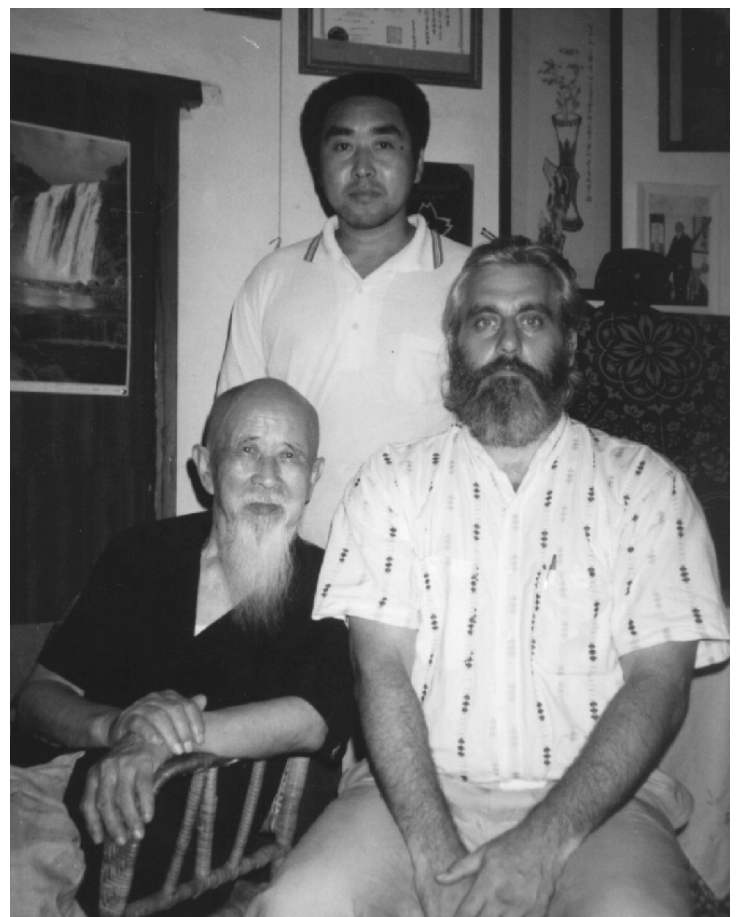
I had been studying Pa Kua since 1974 and I had experience in three different styles of Pa Kua over the last 11 or 12 years and so to learn his form did not take long. I was able to appreciate some of the finer and deeper points of what was different about his style. I worked with him for one month the first year and then I went back the following year and stayed another month at his family's home. We worked every morning on the classics he had written in his book and the insights which are hidden in the traditional songs which were transmitted orally from Tung Hai-Ch'uan to Liang Chen-P'u and down to Li Tzu-Ming. He had published this book in China with a very limited distribution on the 100th anniversary of Tung Hai-Ch'uan's death in 1982 as a commemorative. Each day we sat and he would explain to me each of the fine points of those classics. We meticulously tried to record it all so that when we went through our translation of the book we could add this commentary and double check our translation accuracy. We spent every morning doing that and then spent the afternoons working on the physical forms. The following morning he would check the physical forms that I had been practicing with one of his senior students and then we would go back to working on the classics.

While a month is not a long time, if you have your basics down well and you have been practicing the art for over a decade, you can glean a lot of information in that amount of time. Spending time with a 90 year old man who had been practicing the art for 70 years was one of the most memorable experiences that I have had in the pursuit of the internal arts.

**In general, what are some the points that he stressed in Pa Kua and what are some of the differences you noted between his Pa Kua and other styles that you studied?**

Before I studied with him, other styles seemed to focus on the external form in terms of getting the most circularity you could. In his view this was a diversion and a distraction from the essentials. While you need the circularity and it is what Pa Kua is about, there is a primal simplicity which is the underlying strength of anything that the human body has to do and he would first start with a few simple arcs and circles until you developed the power in those arcs to a realistic level of understanding in application before you moved onto anything more complex. When he corrected your hand, he corrected it in the context of what you were going to do with your hand and why it had to be that way. When he corrected your penetrating palm or your open palm, the details of exactly why your hands were that way, he would explain in very simple logic. That type of thing was, I think, what set him apart from a lot of Pa Kua teachers that I encountered who seemed to be very focused on the external form just to get it to where it looks right. His focus was more addressing the functionality of it and it had to look right only because if it wasn't looking right it probably wasn't functional.

Li Tzu-Ming's form was, in many ways, more simple than the other forms that I had learned, but I was much more taken with it because it seemed more originally correct and more like an archetype from which a lot of the more ornate forms evolved. In performing his movements, I was really in control of my movement and the integrity of my structure in the Pa Kua posturing. I could apply his applications and his defense tactics immediately. It was not something I had to work to develop for a long time because it was basic and strong. That really appealed to me. It confirmed to me that I was on the



**Vince Black in Li Tzu-Ming's home in Beijing China with Li and one of Li's student**



**Vince Black with Li Tzu-Ming and Zhao Da-Yuan  
in Beijing, China**

right track in studying with him.

Another aspect of studying with Li Tzu-Ming is the fact that he is such a scholar with a sense of history and of his own civilization; a result of his living over 90 years through extremely difficult times in his country. Seeing the country go through many radical changes over the last 50 or 60 years and the trying times, especially for boxers and people who tried to retain the better part of Chinese civilization, he has a unique perspective. After spending time with him, I highly valued his philosophical perspectives in what martial arts should be for. He had managed to adjust to the changing times of the century with the wisdom of a master diplomat. To listen to his perspectives and his views about why one should practice and how they should practice and what one should teach and why one should teach it was as important to me as the technical basics of the art form itself.

**Could you share some of that philosophy about why one should practice and how one should practice?**

It would be difficult for me to put it into words the way he put it into words. I think that I need another 30 years of living. The overall message is about being a good human being and being a civilized person. Because what we said came through translators, I cannot grasp his exact words. I could get the message because a lot of it came through his eyes and his facial expression as the translator was giving me a translation of what he was saying. But it is not easy for me to capture the exact expression of his message.

The points that he would make were always in parables and anecdotes that enabled him to make a bigger statement than something that could be captured in just one sentence. This is often true of one who has been on the planet and dealt with humankind for several decades longer than the average person. Having been a leader of a functional larger group due to his insight and wisdom and his ability to deal with other human beings, he has a way of putting things that can adjust your course in your own pursuits. It helps to change your heart and adjust your thinking on things.

One day we were talking about the history of Pa Kua and the subject of lineages came up and he told me this story.

Seventy years ago there was a very famous boxer living in Beijing whose skill had thus far been unbeatable and whose moral integrity set a high standard for boxers everywhere. People everywhere sought to learn from him and those who did were very proud of the fact they were his students. This

famous boxer's eldest son especially longed for recognition of this same sort. However, lacking his father's wisdom, the impatience of youth and the proficient skills gleaned from his father's training yielded only an aggressive and ruthless boxer. As such he was always looking for another local victory in combat to, hopefully, build his reputation. He was known for being particularly vicious and trying to maim his opponents permanently whenever he could.

One day a stranger arrived in Beijing who proceeded to socialize with the well known boxers in town and politely make himself known. As soon as the number one son heard about him, he immediately sought him out and challenged him to a match. The stranger politely agreed upon which the young boxer suddenly attacked with a powerful and unrestrained strike toward the heart. The stranger quickly parried and simultaneously plucked out the young man's eye. He then lectured the felled young boxer, "Today is your lucky day. You are fortunate we met on this day and in this way. You are fortunate to be the son of a boxer as great and renown a man as your father. And you are extremely lucky that I knew of your father and that you were his son. For it is out of deep respect for your father that I took only one eye and left you the other. Now go forward with your life, but change your heart for if you should by chance lose your other eye your whole life will surely be a total loss."

It was said by some that several days later the boy's father sought out the stranger and thanked him for giving his son the much needed lesson of life that was too bitter a pill for his own father to administer. He gave the stranger a box of money and a railway ticket out of town, and they never saw the stranger again.

Upon finishing the story, Li Tzu-Ming made several points. The main point being that sometimes the favored student or most loved student is not the best student. So being the eldest student or favorite student of the eldest student or any sort of technical connection of this type of reasoning just may not have any real significance. If even a great man and great teacher cannot manage to properly teach his own flesh and blood, what can we definitely say about other students.

Another intriguing point was a subtle hint that while his gift and thanks to the stranger may have been completely after the fact; there was some possibility of prearrangements on his father's part which can, if contemplated, produce several deeper points about the true nature of father/son relationships, *shih fu*/student relationships and the human learning process itself.

So, it was these kinds of talks and this manner of talking that made my time with Li Tzu-Ming very special to me. It reminds me to consider myself lucky to have been able to study with him but not necessarily special. So Li Tzu-Ming is also one of these people like Hsu Hong-Chi. If Hsu Hong-Chi was my father-teacher, Li Tzu-Ming could be considered my grandfather-teacher.

**How did the experience with Li Tzu-Ming change the way you approached your students and your martial arts?**

I think that his sense of the necessity of your Pa Kua to be a pragmatic art first and foremost and then to become beautiful after first grasping the pragmatic truth of it was something that I had a little bit in reverse. Prior to training with him I was really concerned with that circular form and to get my outward form more convoluted and dirvishly designed. I let those things affect me to a certain degree and my approach to the pragmatic part was more complicated than it had to be. Like all masters, he simplified my perspective of the essentials of what I had to get together to bring my Pa Kua art into a nice clear message for my students. In the way that Hsu Hong-Chi simplified my Hsing-I, Li Tzu-Ming simplified my perspective of the priorities of Pa Kua. I could concentrate on getting more pragmatic and



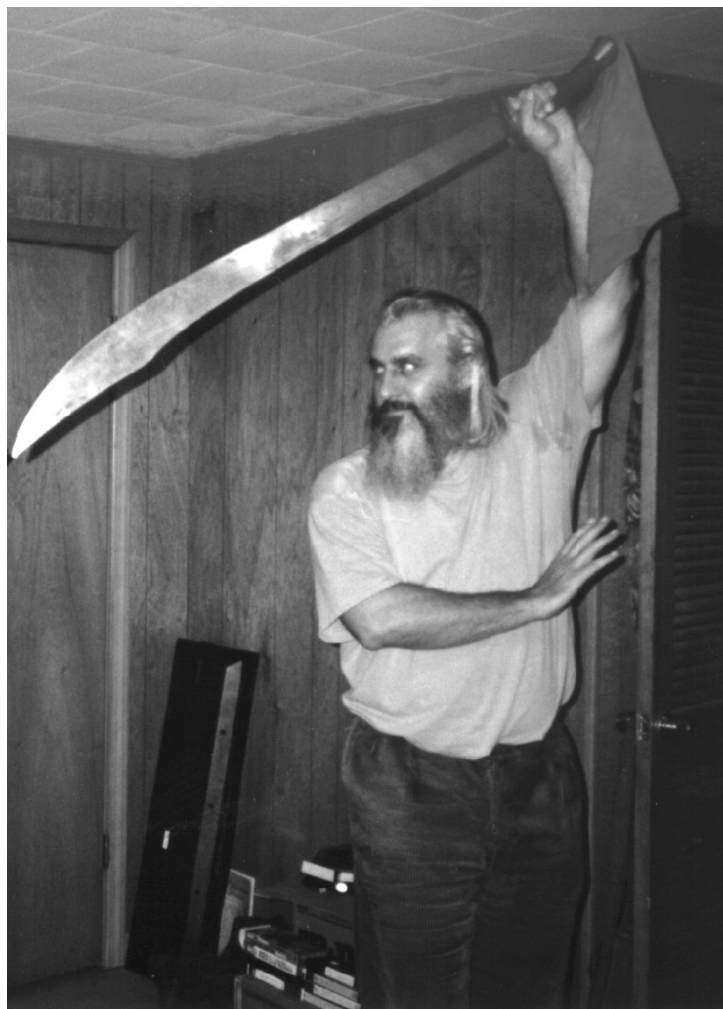
work on the artistic polish once I had some sort of a grip on the functionality of the movements.

**During the two trips to China to study with Li Tzu-Ming, what parts of his system did you learn?**

I learned his Old Eight Palms (*Lao Pa Chang*), a series of practical circle walking exercises that develop the footwork and develop hand and foot coordinations for issuing power (*fa ching*), walking concepts that pertain to the ch'i cultivation (*nei kung*), *chin na* applications and perspectives in how the footwork is used in relation to the application of *chin na*. I was taught his broadsword set for the large broadsword, and linear applications for the 64 attacks which are the basic alphabet or arsenal of optional strategies to plug into the modulated circular forms.

**I know that he emphasizes the *t'ang ni pu*, or mud walking step, could you discuss his reason for employing that step?**

I got a much greater appreciation for the characteristic mud walking step and the reasons for the strict requirements of performing that step and developing it in a natural way and also some good insights about what I was doing wrong in that step. There were some things that I was neglecting in that step for ten years. It was quite different in that you have opposition muscles in the front of your calf and the back of your calf that have to learn a completely different movement in order to perform that type of step. It is not something that comes from walking in any other way, it is something that comes from



**The large Pa Kua Chang broadsword was one of the weapons Black learned from Li Tzu-Ming**

only walking in that specific way and doing it very slowly and meticulously. After developing it to a certain degree, I could then understand why he emphasizes it so strongly.

When we talk of the grappling or the *chin na* type of evasive moves and how to literally walk out of an aggressive attack from the opponent, to do it correctly you are turning your back to your opponent at some points. If you are trying to get behind them and they turn with some equal skill level, you may have to turn again and your back or side may be facing your opponent. If they have any skill on these lateral attacks as well, you might have to change your whole strategy in mid-step. If your step is too far from the earth, and three inches may be too far, the instant they cut your energy and your movement, your balance will be shifted off center. If your foot is above the ground you can be thrown very easily. If the bottom of the foot is just above the surface of the ground as it is in the mud walking step, then the instant that you are an inch off your center from the opponent's counter-move, your foot gets a grip immediately and keeps you stable. If your Pa Kua is connected from your hand to your foot, then automatically your next move will be at your disposal and you can walk right into it. This is not possible if you are taking large steps that are uneven and the surface of your foot is not just above the ground. That insight for me made all the difference in how I look at the precise instant when I create a change or accept a change in a counter-attack.

Timing is everything in combat and the timing of change, that point when your strategy changes, that is when the smart fighter will seize the moment and become the conqueror. If you can change in a tenth of the amount of time, if you can have your next change available in a tenth of a second after the opponent's attack and change without leaving a chink in your armor, your chances of not being conquered are much greater. It was that insight that I didn't quite appreciate to such a degree before.

**Anything else you want to add about Li Tzu-Ming or his Pa Kua?**

Well, just the point that for me he provided that thing which it seems that I always need, that profound authority over me that humbles me and puts me back on the floor to work some more and continue to be a student. It was easy for me to take him as a teacher and jump into that student seat again. I think the motivation to be a student is the most important thing in learning. The willingness to be a student for that reason and that reason only, not to be a student so that you can hurry up and be a teacher. It is very easy when you have a man with such awesome knowledge and insight who is willing to be open with you and share his whole life with you. That is something that I treasure. I am lucky to have found him when I did, it opened up a whole new corridor of rooms of Pa Kua knowledge for me. I will continue to work with his Pa Kua family to fill in the blanks so that I can faithfully represent his teaching. We have finally finished the English translation of his book and it will be out soon so that, as the master himself says, "the lovers of Eight-Diagram Palm everywhere can taste a little of the dishes as Master Tung Hai-Ch'uan himself prepared them."

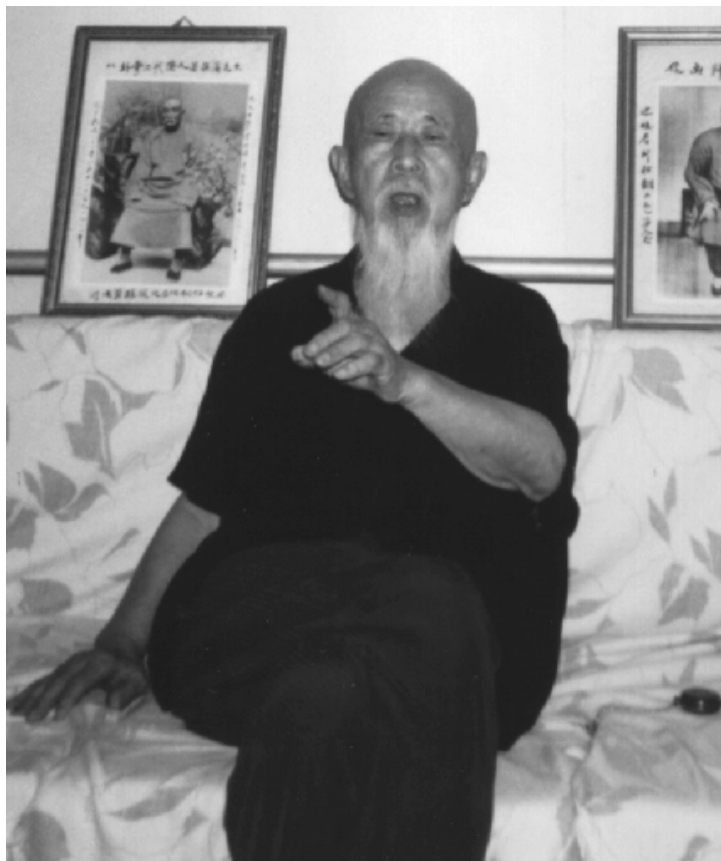
Practitioners wishing to contact Vince Black can do so by writing:

Vince Black  
P.O. Box 36235  
Tucson, AZ 85740  
or calling: (602) 544-4838

# The Classic Songs of Pa Kua Chang

In 1982, on the 100th anniversary of Tung Hai-Ch'uan's death, Li Tzu-Ming published a book privately which details the 48 classic "songs" of Pa Kua Chang which were handed down from his teacher Liang Chen-P'u. The songs, or poems, were given to Liang by Tung Hai-Ch'uan himself. The book also describes Liang's "Old Eight Palms" Pa Kua Chang form in detail. Until now this book has only been available in Chinese and one could only attain this book from Li Tzu-Ming himself. Li had a very limited number of books printed and thus they were never offered for sale in China.

When I was visiting with Li Tzu-Ming in 1991, he gave me a copy of his book and asked if I could publish it in English for him. He told me that it was his dream to have this book published widely before he died. I told him that I would do my best. After returning to the United States I related this story to Vince Black (see article on page 10). Vince had studied with Li Tzu-Ming for two consecutive years in China and it turns out that Li had made this same request of Vince. Vince told me that he had already had the book translated into English and had sat down with Li and discussed the details of each of the songs at length. He was currently working on writing commentery to each of the songs based on his discussions with Li. We decided to join forces in the publication of this book and when I returned to Beijing in 1992, I took photographs of Li's top student, Zhao Da-Yuan, performing the "Old Eight Palms" form (see article on page 27). This project is currently winding down towards a finished product. The book, *The Pa Kua Chang of Liang Chen-P'u*, will be available to the public through High



**Li Tzu-Ming comments on the Pa Kua Chang "poems" written in his book about Liang Chen-F'u's Pa Kua.**

View Publications by 1 April 93. Below we have provided a few short excerpts from Li's book.



Nowadays some people emphasize only strengthening the health and speak nothing of the attack skills in their practice and teaching of the boxing method. I suspect this bias is due to the lack of knowledge of the actual boxing skills. These boxing skills are the substance from which the Chinese martial arts is derived. The martial art is precisely this, the attacking and defensive skills of mortal combat. Therefore, the arts of the attack must be emphasized in the practice of boxing. Otherwise, the essentials of the boxing skills would be omitted and the significance of the Chinese martial arts would be lost. The boxing would become just another kind of ordinary dance or exercise.

In order to preserve the original purpose of the Chinese martial arts, it is essential that the practitioners research the arts of attack. In order for the practitioners to ensure correct gesturing, it is essential they perfect the arts of attack. The martial arts research is exactly that, research of the attacking skills. Only when the principles of attack and defense are completely understood is it possible to have correct gesturing through which we achieve maximum benefit to the body's vitality. So again, the arts of attack must be stressed.

Some people may presume that the training of the attack arts makes one more eager to fight. Those who hold this prejudice do not understand a basic precept of internal boxing, i.e., in a quarrel with somebody, we would never move first to strike the first blow; even when attacked by an opponent, we would not even counter attack unless absolutely necessary.



In the classic songs of Pa Kua Chang, Tung Hai-Ch'uan stipulated three definite ways to fight against the enemy:

A. When anyone attacks, I can dissolve it and then strike back. This is called the Mutual Advance Method.

B. When anyone attacks, I hold it and punch back at the same time. This is called the Blocking-up Method, i.e. to break the attack and to attack back simultaneously.

C. When anyone attacks, I just dissolve it with the footwork. This is called the Getting-away and Disappearing Method (or melting like a shadow).

His conclusion: 'Among the three ways, the first is better than the second. The third way is the most complicated and profound and can be used only when the exercise has been developed to a masterly level.'



Whether you are practicing the Eight-Diagram Palm to improve vitality or to improve boxing skills, the exercise should always conform with natural principles. Practice must proceed slowly and gradually in order to conform to these natural

principles. No haste can be allowed. Beginners especially must practice slowly to secure a good foundation with attention to correcting details.



These traditional songs are the compass with which the Eight-Diagram Palm practitioners measure and chart the course of their training. They are the keys to the precious essentials that make the Eight-Diagram Palm the distinctive art that it is.

The following is a verse addressing what it takes to become a good boxer:

#### **Formula Verse**

Profound insights hide in forty-eight ways,

It's true spirit won't unveil with mere words  
and simple plays.

True skills pure and real can only be obtained

In three years of trials in the company of men.

Annotation: The forty-eight songs are the training methods of the Eight-Diagram Palm and the rules that must be followed have profound implications. It takes at least three years of correct practice to properly understand the essentials of the Eight-Diagram Palm for obtaining the integrated internal and external skills. The methods for the practice generally can be described in four points.

The first point is the observation. First, one should observe how the teacher practices and then imitate the gestures. Afterwards, one should observe how others practice and consider whether their methods are appropriate or not for improving one's own skills. Then, one should study others writings for a better understanding of the theory.

The second point is listening. First listen to the teacher's instruction and then to the experiential insights of schoolmates to improve one's own practice.

The third point is thinking. Thinking over the best way to discard the crude and to retain the essential for improvement.

The fourth point is practice. Persistent practice is a necessary component, because the practice of internal boxing skills is painstaking and complicated work. The real skills can only be obtained through the extensive practice. Because there is no shortcut, the practice cannot be rash and must be carefully studied. Therefore, it requires a long-term plan for developing the internal boxing skills.

An old proverb says: 'It is easy to practice the boxing skill, but difficult to understand its theory.' Another says: 'One thousand practices makes the theory understood.' Therefore, it is necessary to first develop proper boxing skill and all the experience that it entails in order to develop the hindsight required for complete understanding of the theory. 'If the real and pure skills are expected to be obtained, a three year effort must be undertaken among several people.' This refers to the necessity of first a proper teacher, then training partners and, finally, other opinions.

The result is a visually impressive form; light but not floating, deep but not stagnant, and is an excellent physical culture. It is little wonder that it has spread around the world and been accepted by so many.

## **Liang Chen-P'u's "Old Eight Palms"**

*The following article is an excerpt from the English translation of Li Tzu-Ming's book on Liang Chen-P'u Pa Kua Chang. While the book explains all eight sections of the "Old Eight Palms" form, we have only included the first two sections in this article. This book will be available from High View Publications by 1 April 93:*

The Eight Diagram Palm introduced in this chapter is one of the oldest Eight Diagram Palm methods and is usually referred to as the "Old Eight Palms." In the explanation of the exercises in the Old Eight Palm, the movements are described in the normal order. During compilation, we have tried our best to provide the precise descriptions and illustrations. Concerning the illustrations of the form movements, a minimum of drawings were used to avoid confusion in interpreting the movement lines and preserving the continuity of the movement itself. The lines drawn in the figures indicate the movement lines of the hands and feet in the next movement. The order of the foot movements are indicated by the numbers.

Due to the visual angle in the figure drawing, the steps in the figures would be different than those of the practitioners and there may be some deviation of the precise direction. Therefore, the literal explanation is presented forthwith.

The Old Eight Palm, also called the Eight Mother Palm, is the basic palm skill of the Eight Diagram Palm. Single Palm Change is taken as the basic gesture of these palm skills. The circle walking posture in the Single Palm Change, traditionally called the millstone pushing gesture, occupies a very special position in the Eight Diagram Palm. It is absolutely necessary for beginners to master first the exercises of the millstone pushing gesture. It will now be explained.

#### **Preparatory Stance**

Stand on the Northern border of the circle and face the center of the circle (due South) with the heels together and toes separated to an angle of approximately 60°. The knees are together, hips are held under by tilting the tailbone slightly. The back is straight and vertical and the chest is hollowed. The shoulders are relaxed and drooping down toward the ribs with the arms hanging. The hands are held naturally at the thighs while the neck is held upright, but without tension of any kind. The head is held up from the vertex as though suspended on a string and the lower jaw is drawn slightly inward. The mouth is naturally closed with the tongue curled to touch the roof of the mouth and all breathing is performed through the nose. Calm the mind and maintain deep, natural breathing.

#### **Explanation of the Millstone Pushing Gesture**

- 1) Turn to the right (45° to 60°), the two foot angles open about 30°, and the upper body remains unmoved.
- 2) Lower the body down, bend the knees keeping them close together. Shift the weight to the right leg and lift the left leg slightly. As the body squats down, turn the waist to the right side as far as possible, rotate the right palm outwards (ending with the palm facing up) and extend it forward and up to the level of the chin. At the same time rotate the left palm outward (to palm up position) and move it toward the right ribs along the waist and abdomen. As the eyes turn to follow the left palm, move the left side forward on the perimeter of the circle

by extending the left foot forward while thrusting the left penetrating palm forward under the right elbow up to the height of the nose. At the last instant of extending the palm, the left foot should find its root.

3) Continuing from the above movement, as the eyes look to the left, turn the waist to the left simultaneously. The left palm standing up and facing forward swings to the left with the waist rotation. The right palm is also following the left-turning waist to the left. When the palms are facing the center of the circle, the two palms turn inward simultaneously. The left palm drops at the wrist with the palm turning toward the center of the circle (the thumb is curved, creating a crescent shape between the thumb and index finger, the other fingers are straight and slightly spread to form a hollowness in the palm), the palm remains vertical and the index finger is held at the level of the eyebrows. While the right palm is turning inwards, simultaneously drop the shoulder, elbow and wrist to the lower border of the left ribs (the right palm obliquely faces the center of the circle), both arms retaining their rounded form.

In general, when turning to the left, the legs stay flexed or bent and the weight continues to lean slightly on the right leg, maintain a constant height when turning the body left as much as possible. Keep the back round and the right palm positioned directly above the right heel. The eyes stare at the tips of the middle and index fingers of the left palm. This posture is traditionally called the left millstone pushing gesture of the middle part. See figure 1-1.

As far as internal images are concerned, one should mentally embrace the chicken leg, dragon body, monkey shape, bear shoulder and tiger clutch and leopard head. These images serve to imbue their qualities into the physical movements and postures.

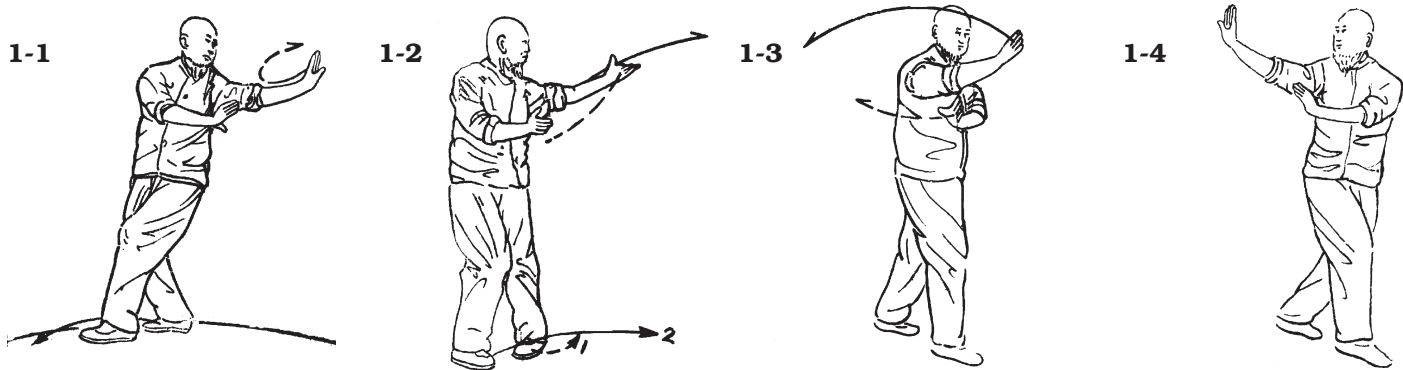
### Single Palm Change

1) The Single Palm Change starts from the left millstone pushing gesture while walking counter clockwise as shown in figure 1-1.

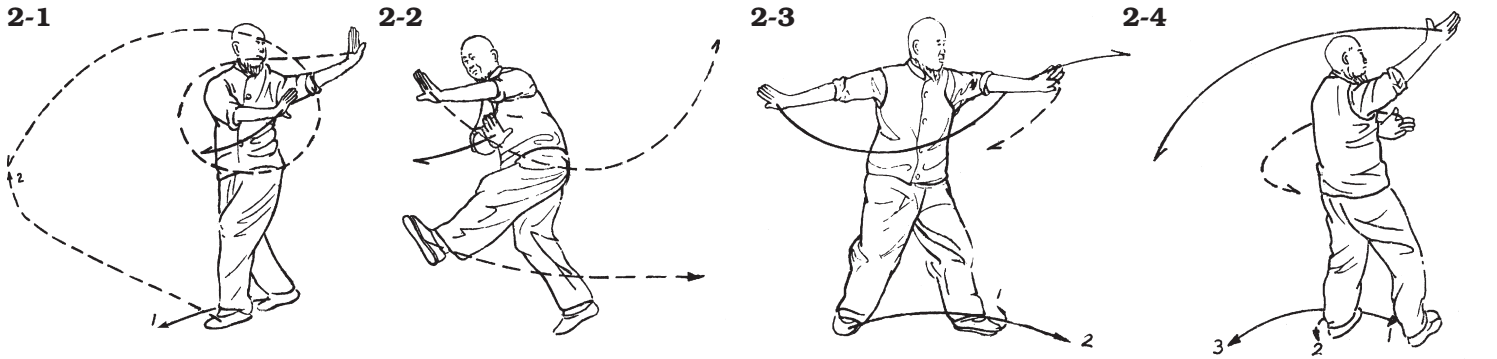
2) To implement the Single Palm Change the outside foot (right foot while moving counter-clockwise) steps forward on the circle in a toe-in position resulting in an inward turned foot stance (*k'ou pu*) with the two knees close together. After placing the right foot, immediately turn the body to the left, rotating the left arm externally (with the palm up). Simultaneously rotate the right arm outward so the right palm is up. The eyes stare at the left hand. See figure 1-2.

3) The right foot steps straight ahead on the circle so that the body, in effect, has turned to face the left side and the stance is in an outward or complex splay-foot (*pai pu*). As the right foot is stepping forward on the circle, the right palm simultaneously penetrates forward from beneath the left elbow and forearm with the palm and fingers pointing forward and the thumb curved slightly. The penetrating palm keeps all the fingers close together piling up against each other with the palm slightly cupped and the thumb locked in on the palmar base of the index finger. This leaves the *hu k'ou* (tiger's mouth) point upwards in a standing palm hand position. At the same time, the left palm turns inward with the wrist turning down resulting in a standing palm below the right elbow. At this moment, the face and chest are facing the opposite direction of the original left millstone pushing gesture. See figure 1-3.

4) The right palm follows the right turning waist to move upward to the right, curving slightly downward to drop in the right side (the palm facing the center of the circle, with the shoulder, elbow and wrist sunken downward and the finger tips at the level of the eyebrow). The left palm also follows the waist, turning slightly inward, and stops near the medial



First Section of the Old Eight Palms Form - Single Palm Change



### First Half of Second Section - Double Palm Change (continued on next page)

side of the right elbow (the palm faces the center of the circle obliquely). The eyes look at the right palm to form the right millstone pushing gesture, as shown in figure 1-4.

In other words, after the right palm penetration, turn the body to the right to form the right millstone pushing gesture. This sequence remains the same throughout the exercise. The above explanation is the exercise to turn the left millstone pushing gesture into the right millstone pushing gesture (single palm change). The Eight Diagram Palm gestures to the right as well as the left. The right gesture should be practiced after the left gesture. In order to decrease the length of this presentation and avoid repetition, all the movement explanations introduce only the left rotating gestures and how it is executed, while the right rotating gestures and exercises are omitted. The movements of the left pushing gestures and right pushing gestures are bilaterally symmetrical, the practitioners can work this out themselves.

#### Main Points

- 1) All the movements should be in coordination and embracing the six harmonies.
- 2) When turning to one side, the lead arm should extend forward and the crossing rear arm should root its power in the shoulder, sinking the shoulder and elbow and curving the arm so that its neither extended completely straight nor bent too much and *hu k'ou* is still rounded.
- 3) Slightly embrace the two thighs, embrace the arms, lift the anus, keep the knees close and curve the legs, hollowing the chest while maintaining a vertical spine and sinking the *ch'i* to the *tan t'ien* and keeping the eyes constantly alert.
- 4) The clapping steps must be distinctive and the foot must not scrape the ground in stepping.

#### Double Palm Change

- 1) The Double Palm Change, also called the Covering Palm, starts to turn to the left from the left millstone pushing gesture of the Single Palm Chang as shown in figure 2-1.
- 2) Start from the same position as the first left millstone pushing gesture. The right foot walks a step forward on the circle, the right and the upper body remain unmoved and the body gravity moves to the right leg. Next, the left foot kicks forwards to the right side (not higher than the waist, with the dorsum of the foot stretched flat). The left palm moves down, back and over the top to the front of the circle, and then the left palm slaps the dorsum of the left foot exactly when the left foot kicks upwards, as shown in figure 2-2.
- 3) Continuing, the left foot kicks backwards and drops behind the right foot and the two feet form a reversed splay-foot (reverse *k'ou pu*). At the same time, the left palm follows as the left foot drops, moving downwards to the left with the ulnar side of the palm up. The eyes watch over the left shoulder, the right palm and the left palm spread outward at the same time with the thumbs of the two hands downward. The chest faces the circle, as shown in figure 2-3.
- 4) Following the above movements, the right foot first claps inward and then the left foot turns outward, the weight shifts to the left foot, and the right foot steps forward. While stepping forward, the left palm turns inwards slightly to have the palm center down, and then the left palm continues to move forward and to the centerline. At the same time, the right palm supinates while moving to the front of the chest then penetrates beneath the left forearm. When the right penetrating palm crosses underneath the left elbow, the left arm will draw into its root and the shoulder will sink and pull the left arm suddenly in a backward motion while the right shoulder projects the right



### Second Half of the Second Section of the Old Eight Palms Form

penetrating palm suddenly forward. See figure 2-4.

5) Following the previous gesture, the right foot claps inwards (the inward rotation) and the body turns to the left (facing outside the circle). Then the left foot swings into external rotation and simultaneously the right palm rotates outward to have the palm center upward. Then the right foot walks one step forward into a right bow step. At the same time, the right palm, following the movement rotates in planation arcing over the head to press down in front of the body. At this moment, the right palm center moves obliquely downward, the left palm center faces downward, the left palm is on the right auxiliary side with the eyes watching the right hand, as shown in figure 2-5.

6) Following the previous movement, while the body turns to the left, the left foot swings rotating outward and stands firmly on the circle. At the same time, the left palm supinates up and out to the left anterior to a standing palm (the finger tips toward the left front), and the right palm moves to the right waist, as shown in figure 2-6.

7) The right foot steps straight ahead on the circle so that the body, in effect, has turned to face the left side and the stance is in an outward or complex splay-foot (*pai pu*). As the right foot is stepping forward on the circle, the right palm simultaneously penetrates forward from beneath the left elbow and forearm with the palm and fingers pointing forward and the thumb curved slightly. This leaves *hu k'ou* upwards in a standing palm position. The left palm also turns inward at the same time with the wrist turning down resulting in a standing palm below the right elbow. At this moment the face and chest are facing the opposite direction of the original left millstone pushing gesture. See figure 2-7.

8) Next, the right palm follows the right turning waist to move upward to the right and curves slightly downward to drop on the right side (the palm facing the center of the circle, with the shoulder, elbow and wrist sunken downward and the finger tip

at the level of the eyebrow). The left palm also follows the waist turning slightly inward and to stop near the medial side of the right elbow (the palm faces to the center of the circle obliquely) with the eyes looking at the right palm to form the right millstone pushing gesture. See figure 2-8.

#### Main Points

- 1) In kicking the left foot, the point of force is either the foot tip or the dorsum of the foot. The leg is slightly flexed and the foot tip shouldn't be too high, usually at the level of the waist.
- 2) On the slapping palm (see figure 2-3), the two arms extend outward to the both sides, but the arms should be curved round and not extended straight. The point of force of the two hands are on the ulnar edge of the palm.
- 3) All the movements should be coordinated. Please refer to the first palm for other related information.

#### Chinese Character Index

扣	步	K'ou Pu
擺	步	Pai Pu
虎	口	Hu K'ou
氣		Ch'i
丹	田	Tan T'ien

## ***Pa Kua Chang Related Periodicals***

**Qi: The journal of Traditional Eastern Health and Fitness:** Insight Graphics, Inc., P.O. Box 221343, Chantilly, VA 22022 - Steve Rhodes and his crew at Insight Graphics continue to provide readers with interesting information relating to all aspects of Traditional Eastern health and fitness. The magazine is produced in a very high quality format.

**Journal of Asian Martial Arts:** 821 West 24th Street, Erie, PA 16502 - This is a high quality publication which provides well researched articles in a scholarly fashion.

### ***1993 Calendar of Pa Kua Chang Workshops and Seminars***

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<b>John Painter</b>	Toronto, Canada	20-21 Feb 93	Andy James (416) 465-6122
<b>Bok Nam Park</b>	Seattle, WA	27 Feb 93	Glenn Wright (206) 584-4647
<b>Bok Nam Park</b>	Italy	March 93	Jacopo Silicani (Address on next page)
<b>Bok Nam Park</b>	New York, NY	10 April 93	Ken Delves (718) 788-7190
<b>Bok Nam Park</b>	Richmond, VA	8 May 93	Glenn Moore (804) 794-8384
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P.O. Box 1307  
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**Chien-Liang Huang**  
8801 Orchard Tree Lane  
Towson, MD 21204  
(301) 823-8818

**Andy James**  
179 Danforth Ave.  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada  
M4K 1N2  
(416) 465-6122

**Jang Kui Shi**  
P.O. Box 1677  
Santa Cruz, CA 95061

**Jiang Hao-Guan**  
1490 College View Dr. #1  
Monterey Park, CA 91754

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**Brian Lee**  
821 San Mateo Rd.  
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(404) 984-9354

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Oakland, CA 94609  
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**Heinz G. Rottmann**  
4311 - Bowness Road N.W.  
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P.O. Box 48118  
Midlake Postal Outlet  
40 - Midlake Bl. S.E.  
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819A Sacramento St  
San Francisco, CA 94108  
(415) 781-4682

**Glenn Wright**  
P.O. Box 11272  
Tacoma, WA 98411  
(206) 584-4647

**Dr. Fred Wu, Ph.D.**  
520 Dendra Lane  
Worthington, OH 43085  
(614) 885-7512

**Grace Wu**  
122 1/2 N. St. Francis  
Wichita, KS 67202  
(316) 264-9640

**George Xu**  
4309 Lincoln Way  
San Francisco, CA 94122  
(Classes in Golden Gate Park)  
(415) 664-4578

**Jane Yao**  
136 6th St.  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
(Class in Golden Gate Park)  
(415) 621-2106

**Luigi Zanini**  
via Faccio, 73  
36100 Vicenza, ITALY  
0039 444 563696

**Zhang Gui-Feng &  
Chris Pei**  
2844 Hartland Road  
Falls Church, VA 22043  
(703) 698-8182

**Zhang Jie**  
8007 Greenwood Ave. N  
Seattle, WA 98103  
(206) 526-8387

**Zhang Hong Mei**  
750 Myra Way  
San Francisco, CA 94127  
(415) 334-8658

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