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Ba Gua Zhang's Single Palm Change





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About the Pa Kua Chang Journal

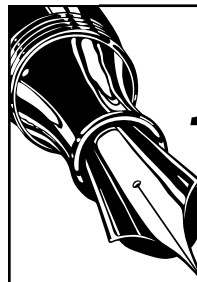
The *Pa Kua Chang Journal* is published six times a year. Each issue features an interview with, or article by, one or more Ba Gua Zhang instructor(s) from mainland China, Taiwan, the United States, and/or Canada. The interviews will report on each instructor's background, current program, training methods 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.

Chinese names and terms will be romanized using the pinyin system of romanization except when an instructor prefers his name romanized differently. The title of the Journal appears in the Wade Giles system of romanization as it was the system we started with and we kept the original title. Whenever possible, Chinese characters will be listed in parentheses following the first appearance of Chinese terms and names in each 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***

We've Moved

Since we published the last issue of the *Pa Kua Chang Journal* we have been busy moving our office space to a new location. I am sorry for the inconvenience experienced by those of you who have had a difficult time trying to reach someone to talk to. During the move we have relied primarily on the answering machine to take messages while we got our new phone lines hooked up.

We are now fairly well established in our new location, unfortunately we have had to change our phone numbers because the new location is in a different city. However, our mailing address at the post office box will remain the same.

Our new office number is (408) 622-0789 and our new Fax number is (408) 622-0787. Those wishing to call and ask general questions should utilize these numbers. If you are trying to contact us to place an order, we now have a new toll free service. This new number is: (800) 413-8296. If you are placing an order, or have a question about an order you have already placed, please call this number.

Again, I am sorry that it has been difficult for the last few months to reach a person when calling our office. I know how frustrating it can be when you want to ask a question and all you get is an answering machine. I also apologize that we have been a little slow in sending out orders and answering written correspondence over the past few months. The change of location has taken a lot of time and effort in moving and reorganizing the office. Now that I am settled in the new location, things are getting back to a normal schedule.

Another reason it has been hard to reach someone and correspondence has slowed down is because for the past several months we have been a one person office. Previously we had two people working here, however, for a while it was only me. When I had to be out of the office, no one was here to answer the phone. Now we are back to having a better schedule and more people available to answer the phone, so it should not be so hard to find someone available to answer your calls.

On the Cover

Ba Gua Zhang instructor Sun Xi Kun (1833 - 1952) executes Ba Gua's "single palm change."

A Detailed Study Of Ba Gua Zhang's Single Palm Change

Every complete Ba Gua Zhang method embraces a systematic approach to practice. The practitioner who engages in the repetitive practice of fundamental skills for hundreds of hours before attempting more complex, intricate, or subtle skills, will always find that the solid foundation enables continued growth and development in the art. At the root of almost every Ba Gua system there are several key elements of training which should be thoroughly practiced and experientially understood prior to progressing to more advanced training. These components are: circle walking, some variation of the eight "mother" palms (八母掌 - *ba mu zhang*), the single palm change (單換掌 - *dan huan zhang*), and the double palm change (雙換掌 - *shuang huan zhang*).

The Four Pillars of Ba Gua Training

Circle walking provides numerous physical and mental benefits for the practitioner in terms of health, longevity, body strength, stamina, coordination, balance, *qi* cultivation, calming of the mind, mental concentration, mobility in combat, body/mind unity, and acquiring the skill of "stillness in motion." The circle walk practice of Ba Gua was covered in detail in a previous issue of the *Pa Kua Chang Journal* (Vol. 4, No. 6) and so we will not discuss it further here. Each system of Ba Gua will have their own requirements for basic circle walk practice and there exist a multitude of variations on the theme.

The eight "mother palms" (also called the "*nei gong*" palms or the "*qi gong*" palms) are the foundational static upper body postures which are held while the practitioner is practicing the circle walk. These postures are designed to train certain structural alignments while the practitioner is walking the circle. The upper body is held static while the lower body is continuously moving. In the practice of holding the eight mother palms the practitioner trains structural strengths, internal body connections, internal/external

單
換
掌

body integration and harmony, development and awareness of muscle groups not usually under conscious control, tendon strength and conditioning, and joint opening and suppleness, in each of the eight postures that are held. Again, the exact postures will vary from one Ba Gua system to the next, each system of Ba Gua will have their own version of the "eight mother" palms.

The purpose of training the Single Palm Change is primarily to learn how to change power, strength, energy, awareness and mental focus from one side of the body to the other while remaining centered, stable, and balanced. In fighting, the basic single palm change is primarily used to change direction quickly, accurately, and appropriately in response to an opponent's movement. The single change can be used to change from any posture to another, or from any situation to another.

There are literally hundreds of ways to execute the single palm change. Its execution in practice aids the practitioner in learning how to change strength, power, and awareness from one side of the body

to the other, develops central equilibrium, coordinates the upper and lower body, trains whole body "twisting power," and teaches execution of coordinated rotational motion for use in both offensive and defensive action. Additionally it develops the ability to maintain consistent mental focus when shifting the awareness from left to right or vice-versa. All of the aspects of the single palm change will be discussed in detail in this article.

The Double Palm Change will develop many of the same components as the single change, however, it serves to add a bit more complexity in the changing of direction and it involves a division of body power, strength, awareness, and mental focus to both sides of the body at once. In most systems of Ba Gua the double palm change movement sequence is a bit more complex than the single palm change. The added complexity helps the practitioner take the lessons learned from the practice of the single change and

***To arrive at the target in a straight motion is not special,
Fluidly circling left and right is preferable.
The left changes to the right and right changes to the left,
In withdrawing the body and reversing the steps one will find an opening.
- Dong Hai Chuan***

**Changing the palms is the mother,
the beginning without end,
The eight roots overturning the body
originates from within;
One root overturning the body
produces the eight styles,
The eight roots create the sixty-four
names;
The sixty-four forms create the
changes,
Yin and Yang, movement and
stillness are profound without end;
The eight roots overturning the body
follow the Ba Gua,
The "Black Dragon Waves its Tail"
creates a whirlwind
- Gao Yi Sheng**

carry them a step farther. Additionally, whereas the single palm change taught the practitioner to change the body energy, power, and focus from one side to the other, the double palm change teaches the practitioner how to divide the strength and power to both sides at the same time. The mechanics of developing power, energy, and awareness in a balanced manner to both sides of the body at the same time also takes the training to a new level. The practitioner begins to learn the principle of extending power to have it arrive at the four tips simultaneously. This is an important concept in developing internal power. The classic writings of both Xing Yi and Ba Gua advise the student to learn how to extend power to the four tips (hands and feet) simultaneously in order to develop whole body, coordinated strength.

In most systems of Ba Gua Zhang the single palm change and the double palm change are practiced separately from the other form sequences. In other words, they are not a part of any one of the system's eight sectional forms, but form the foundation for those forms and are practiced separately before the other form sequences are learned. In fact, many systems of Ba Gua have developmental eight section forms which are made up entirely of variations of the single and/or double palm change movements. In other Ba Gua systems the single palm change and the double palm change will be the first two sections of their first eight section circle walking form. In all systems of Ba Gua Zhang the single palm change and the double palm change (although they may be called different names) are the basic building blocks upon which all other Ba Gua movements are placed.

If the Ba Gua Zhang student spends a considerable

amount of time studying Ba Gua's circle walk practice, eight mother palms, single palm change, and double palm change and gains a solid experiential understanding of these movements and their underlying principles, he or she will have developed a very solid foundation in Ba Gua and will be able to easily assimilate all aspects of Ba Gua training.

The Philosophical Connection

The art of Ba Gua Zhang was not haphazardly named after the eight trigrams of the *Yi Jing*. In all areas of practice there is a philosophical connection which has between the *Yi Jing* theory and the physical movement and training. Sun Lu Tang was the first to write about these connections in this book *Ba Gua Quan Xue* (The Study of Ba Gua Boxing), which was published in 1916. In his book (see excerpts on pages 15 through 23 of this issue) Sun relates the practice of static standing in preparation for the circle walk practice to the philosophical principle of *Wu Ji* (無極). He relates the circle walk practice while holding a static upper body posture to the principle of *Tai Ji* (太極). He then relates the single palm change maneuver to the principle of *Liang Yi* (兩儀) and the double palm change to the principle of *Si Xiang* (四象).

Those who have studied this philosophy will know that the belief is that all life, motion, or energy begins from a "void" or *Wu Ji*. When the *Wu Ji* begins to manifest movement, the *Tai Ji* is formed. When the One energy of the *Tai Ji* begins to reveal its opposite polarities (*Yin* and *Yang*), the *Liang Yi* is formed. When the two polar energies (*Yin* and *Yang*) of the *Liang Yi* combine to form four energies, directions, movements, or principles, the *Si Xiang* is formed. When the *Yin* and *Yang* combine once again to form eight combinations, the *Ba Gua* is formed (see diagram on page 16).

In relating the *Wu Ji*, *Tai Ji*, *Liang Yi*, and *Si Xiang* principles to static standing, circle walking, the single palm change and the double palm change of Ba Gua Zhang, Su Lu Tang is telling the reader that in order to be able to progress to the formation of true "Ba Gua," in both theory and physical movement, the practitioner must have studied and understood the principles of *Wu Ji* (standing in preparation), *Tai Ji* (circle walking holding static upper body postures), *Liang Yi* (the single palm change), and *Si Xiang* (the double palm change). This is why we refer to these fundamental Ba Gua Zhang exercises as the "four pillars" of Ba Gua training.

**If one studies traditional writings
one can understand the theory of
Eight Diagram Palm.
If one applies the theory martially,
one can understand the principle of
change and be victorious.**

The Study of Ba Gua Zhang Movement

Ba Gua Zhang is an art of principle. It is not an art of choreography, it is not an art of technique, it is not an art of "form." This does not mean it does not have choreographed sequences, techniques, or forms, this means that all of these things are rooted in theory and principle and thus there is an almost unlimited potential for variation in technique or form as long as the technique or form adheres to the underlying principles or energies of the movement being studied. Therefore, in examining, researching, or training the moves of Ba Gua Zhang, one should try to capture the principles of body motion, the internal harmony associated with the motion, and the energy movement inherent in the motion, not simply memorize a sequence of physical motions. While components of body alignment and mechanics are always important concepts to grasp in any motion, the underlying principles become far more important once the body alignments, connections and mechanics are understood.

In the study of any Ba Gua Zhang motion some of the components the practitioner wants to try to grasp are: the rudiments of the physical movement, the energy or principles conveyed in the movement, and the adaptations or variations of those principles, allowing for an unlimited expression of the art form.

Physical Movement: In the study of the physical movement, the student will be interested in first simply learning the "form" of the movement. This study would include components such as the proper sequence of movement; the body alignments associated with all of the sequences, gestures, and posturing of the movements; the mechanics of the motion which will provide efficient execution, natural strength, and subtle power; the internal and external body connections, the structure, and harmony of the movements; the timing of the movements and the rhythm of the movement sequence; the energetic flow, smoothness in transitions and fluidity of the movements; the mental intention and focus of each movement and the overall sequence; the harmonious use of breath in the movements; and examples of possible combat applications of the movements.

Principles of Movement: After the study and practice of the physical movement or sequence of movements has been thoroughly researched as outlined above, the practitioner should then turn his or her attention to a study of the overall principles associated with the sequence. One should ask, "What is this sequence of movements trying to teach me in terms of body mechanics, power generation, and martial application?" Taking the single palm change as an example, after the student has spent time practicing the proper execution of the sequence, he or she should step back and say, "What am I really doing here?" Brainstorm and make a mental list, "I'm changing direction, I'm changing my power, strength

There is a central idea. Merely practicing is not understanding. Seek to understand the human ability. Study diligently for deep ideas. The result after a long time is that one is able to know.

- Sun Lu Tang

and awareness from one side of my body to the other, I'm exchanging my lead and rear hands, I'm developing rotational power around my body's center, I'm developing the ability to maintain constant strength, power, awareness and concentration while changing direction, etc." By learning how to look at the overall principles, patterns, and energy flow associated with movement sequences, the student will then be able to develop the ability to vary and change the movements, but continue to maintain the principles and patterns associated with those movements and sequences.

Variation and Change: Variation and change are the most important concepts a student can grasp in the study of Ba Gua Zhang. Learning how to take fundamental principles of body motion and adapt them to any given situation is what the *art* of Ba Gua Zhang is all about. Once the student has learned a movement sequence such as the single palm change and becomes aware of its inherent principles, he or she can then begin to vary the motion. Instead of turning inside the circle, execute an outside change (as shown by Sun Zhi Jun on page 14); instead of maintaining a high posture during the execution, scoop down low when executing the change (as shown by Sun Hui Xiang on page 13); instead of executing big movements, tighten everything up and make the motions small, quick, and subtle, etc.

The student may also think about how the move may be changed to fit various combat scenarios and self-defense situations, but still maintain the same underlying principles. This variation does not only apply to combat or a response to the movements of an opponent. It also applies to the practice environment and terrain, the individuals physical condition, age, body size, personality characteristics, physical abilities, physical and mental aptitudes, and specific training focus.

As we discussed when we examined the circle walk practice in the *Pa Kua Chang Journal*, Volume 4, Number 6, the circle walk practice can be varied many different ways depending on what aspect of training the practitioner wants to practice. He or she can adjust the training for purposes of upper body strength and connection, for leg strength training, for endurance, for cardiovascular training, for meditation training, for *qi gong* training, for training agility, mobility, and evasiveness, etc. Additionally, the student should

learn how to vary the stepping techniques of the circle walk dependent on the combat application of particular moves. The smart student will also learn how to vary the steps depending on the terrain. What is the best way to step when on a flat surface?, a rocky terrain?, sandy terrain?, slippery surfaces?, etc. In each different environment the execution of the movements may change in order to best suit that environment. Every aspect of Ba Gua training should be studied in accordance with a consideration for all possible variables.

The idea in practicing Ba Gua is not to learn a choreographed form sequence, but to capture the principles and essentials of Ba Gua Zhang and then apply them to physical motion in the martial art and/or health maintenance context. Each individual should have a unique flavor to his or her Ba Gua based on their individual strengths and weaknesses as determined by their instructor. Therefore, there are almost as many interpretations of Ba Gua form as there are instructors of Ba Gua, however, the underlying principles are always the same. Practitioners who grasp the principles of the practice can easily learn how to modify the practice to suit different situations, environments, and personal training agendas. As Sun Lu Tang said in his book *Ba Gua Quan Xue*, "There is a central idea. Merely practicing is not understanding. Seek to understand the human ability. Study diligently for deep ideas. The result after a long time is that one is able to know."

Those who do not learn how to research the principles and vary the motions according to circumstance will always be simply following choreographed form routines without any real understanding of what Ba Gua Zhang

***To fathom the logic and
comprehend the theories,
One realizes that if a tree has
luxuriant leaves and branches,
its roots must go deep.***

is about. They will always need an instructor to tell them how to think, how to practice, and how to apply the art. Their art will never belong to them and they will always be on the fringe of understanding. A Ba Gua stylist is a master of varying and changing appropriately to fit any circumstance, not a someone who is good at mimicing choreography or mindlessly repeating standardized competition routines.

The Definition of Single Palm Change

By definition "Single Palm Change" simply means that in executing a maneuver, the palm that was originally the active palm, or *yang* palm, changes and becomes the inactive or *yin* palm. Additionally, in executing the palm change, the practitioner will change the direction of forward motion (at times this change maybe very slight). With the change of the *yang* palm also comes a shift in the practitioner's energy, power, focus, awareness, and intention from one side of the body to the other, from one palm to the other, and/or from one direction to another.

The variations on the single palm change theme are endless. The change can be simple, complex, high, low, inside, outside, left, right, fast, slow, big, or small. The change can occur from any given posture or position to any other given posture or position. Each complete school of Ba Gua will have many various ways of executing the single palm change and the execution of the single palm change will also vary from school to school. Practitioners who believe that there is only "one way" to execute the single palm change are severely limiting their practice and their understanding of Ba Gua Zhang.

Although there are a large variety of single palm change movements (many of which will be discussed later in this article), there are some consistencies in the execution of this maneuver which serve to define it. In examining a variety of single palm change motions from a number of different schools of Ba Gua Zhang we can recognize four main characteristics which appear to be common among all varieties of the single palm change movement. They are as follows: the *yang* palm changes to become the *yin* palm and vice-versa, the practitioner's path of motion changes direction, the general mechanics and power of the motion involve a rotational movement around the center line of the practitioner's body (this includes center line of the torso, center line of the arms, and center line of the legs), and the *kou bu* (扣步) and *bai bu* (摆步) foot maneuvers are employed in some manner. These characteristics

***Be supple in turning and changing,
do not stop to hold postures,
Yield infinite power high, low, far,
and near.
The waist movement coordinates the
four tips,
The eyes watch the eight directions.
The handwork harmonizes changing
situations,
Applications change appropriately to
protect left and right.
The shoulderwork should be
harmonized in the change of Yin and
Yang,
The bodywork should harmonize so
rotation is strong***

- Liang Zhen Pu



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2

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6

define the single palm change and give the practitioner a basis for variation of this method.

Similarly, in seeking to define the "Double Palm Change" movement we notice that in the execution of this maneuver the palms are changed and then both palms are applied in unison. They could both be applied in the forward direction, in the downward direction, one up and one down, one back and the other forward, both to the backward direction, etc. As long as the body's energy and movement is split between right and left simultaneously and equally in the execution of a maneuver, this maneuver can be called "double palm change."

Practitioners and instructors who understand that Ba Gua Zhang is an art of principle and not one of choreographed form routines will be able to execute dozens of variations of the single and double palm changes because their idea of the single or double palm changes is that which is defined by principle, not form.

On one occasion I attended a seminar given by Park Bok Nam in Maryland. One of the seminar participants asked if Park could execute "his style's version of the single palm change." Park was confused because to him the single palm change is a principle, not a sequence of choreography. Park's reply was that there were many ways to practice the single palm change. He was very hesitant to go out and demonstrate any given one of them because he did not want the seminar participants to think that the single palm change was this one sequence of moves. Park said, "this single palm change, this is a principle, not a form."

The "Form" of Single Palm Change

In defining the general motions of the single palm change in the last section, we gave an idea about how this move might be executed. In this section we will discuss numerous examples of how the single palm change sequence might be executed in an attempt to give the reader an idea of the variety which is present in the execution of this maneuver.

A very simple single palm change movement is demonstrated above by Park Bok Nam. As you can see, all of the characteristics are present. The palms change, the body rotates around its central axis, the direction of forward motion changes, and the *kou bu* and *bai bu* footwork methods are employed. This execution of the single palm change is very simple and direct and is used as a basic method of changing directions in the circle walk practice in Park Bok Nam's school. Park believes that the beginning student should practice a very simple change of direction like this one before more complex single palm change maneuvers are practiced. Park's entire training method is based on first learning and becoming proficient at simple methods before moving onto more complex sequences. As a practitioner develops in Park's system, the single palm change maneuvers move gradually from the simple method shown above to much more complex methods which challenge the students flexibility, agility, maneuverability, balance and coordination.

Simple changes such as the one shown above are somewhat characteristic of the Yin Fu (尹福) styles of Ba Gua as Yin Fu style fighting tactics tend to be very direct. Of course this does not mean that all of their variations of the single palm change were simple, many of the training sets have more complex variations. However, Yin style tends to be very direct in applications and thus the simple changes were preferred.

The Liang Zhen Pu (梁振蒲) school of Ba Gua also has a very simple change which is executed in their "old eight palms" form, as demonstrated on page 11 by Li Zi Ming's (李子鳴) student Zhao Da Yuan (趙大元). This single palm change execution makes use of the "piercing palm" which is also characteristic of the Yin Fu system. Liang Zhen Pu studied Ba Gua with both of Dong Hai Chuan's (董海川) top students, Yin Fu and Cheng Ting Hua (程庭華), after Dong died. Thus the Liang style of Ba Gua incorporates characteristics of both styles.

The Cheng Ting Hua schools of Ba Gua tend to teach a more complex turning and twisting version of the single palm change, even at the beginning levels. The Cheng school, which includes all forms of

A Single Palm Change Example



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8



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10



11



12



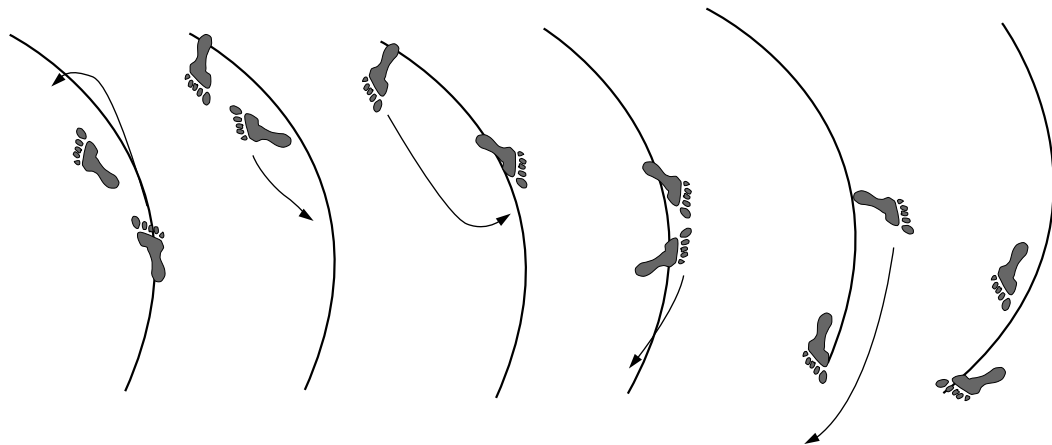
13



14



15



1 - Walking
CCW

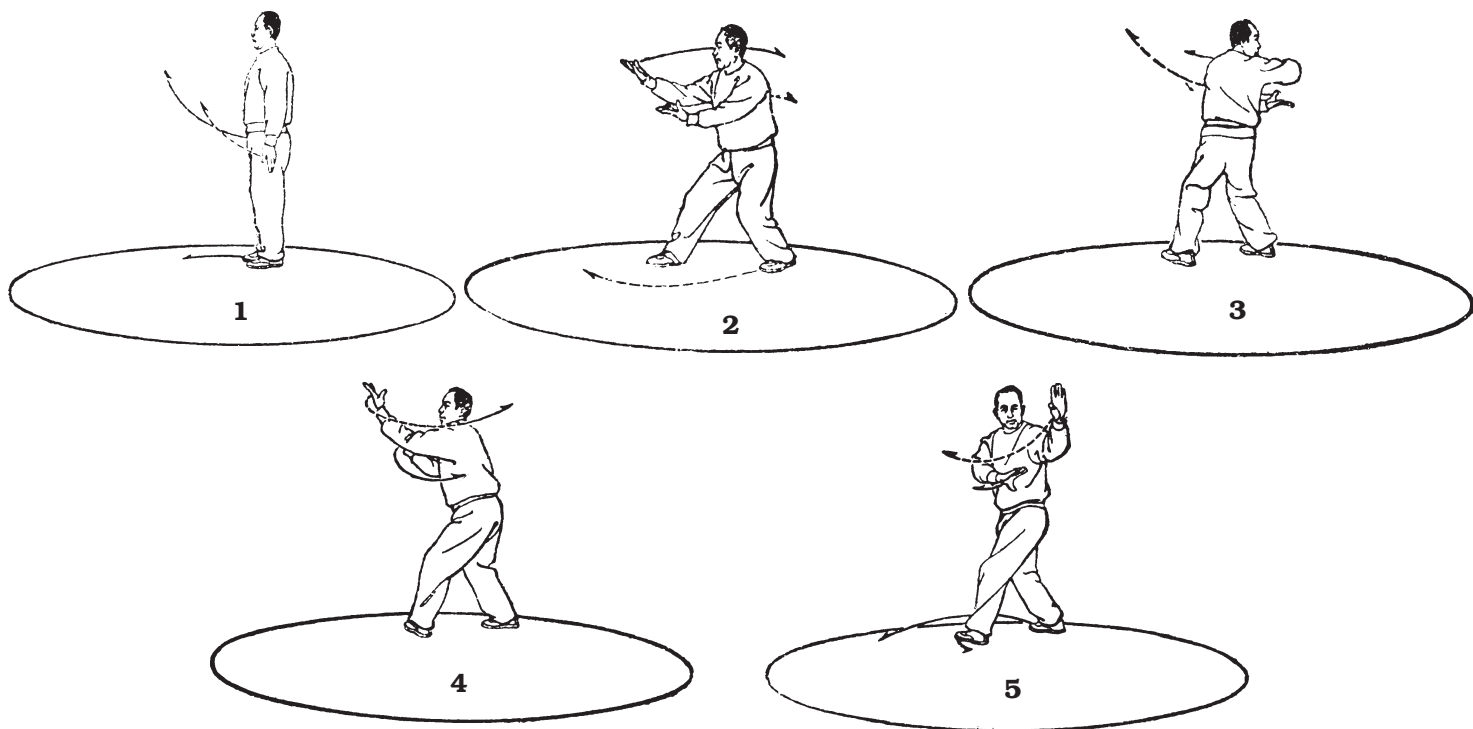
2 - K'ou Pu

3 - Pai Pu

4 - K'ou Pu

5 - Pai Pu

6 - Walking
CW



The opening movements of Jiang Rong Qiao's popular form transition directly into a single palm change maneuver before the practitioner begins walking the circle

"dragon style ba gua," "continuously linked ba gua," and "swimming body ba gua," tend to have more of a turning and twisting flavor to their movements and this flavor is expressed in their single change.

Because the Cheng Ting Hua schools of Ba Gua are by far the most widespread and have the greatest number of practitioners, we will examine the basic version of the single palm change from the Cheng Ting Hua school in order to set a standard example as a template from which we will discuss variations on the theme.

The first execution of the single palm change which we will discuss is demonstrated on the opposite page by Ba Gua Zhang instructor Luo De Xiu (羅德修) of Taipei, Taiwan. You will notice that this change is similar to the one executed by Sun Xi Kun (孫錫堃) on the front cover of this issue, by Liu Feng Cai (劉鳳彩) at the bottom of page 11, and by Sun Lu Tang (孫祿堂) in the article which starts on page 15. All of these practitioners are from the Cheng Ting Hua school of Ba Gua Zhang.

The Movements

In the photos shown on the opposite page, photos 1 through 3 are simply an opening sequence. Each school will have their own version of the opening movement. Some forms, like the popular form taught by Jiang Rong Qiao (姜容樵), will execute a single palm change sequence directly from the opening movement as depicted in the illustrations above (and as discussed in the article by Sha Guo Zheng (沙國政) in *Pa Kua Chang Journal*, Vol. 5, No. 1).

The opening demonstrated here by Luo De Xiu is a simple opening which brings the practitioner to the basic circle walking posture.

After the practitioner has transitioned into the basic circle walking posture (or any of the other circle walking postures such as the eight mother palms) he or she will begin by walking the circle holding that posture for a desired number of rotations. When the practitioner is ready to change directions on the circle, the single palm change is executed. In our example, this maneuver begins in photo number 6 with the execution of a *kou* (hooking) step (also shown in footwork illustration number 2 at the bottom of the previous page). The body begins to rotate around its center line with the execution of the *kou* step. The lead arm begins to come across the front of the body while maintaining a rounded shape.

From this position, the practitioner continues to turn the body smoothly around its center line and executes the *bai* (swinging) step as shown in photograph numbers 7 and 8 and footwork illustration number 3. The lead hand is held at about shoulder height, the palm facing downward. The bottom hand remains in the same position it was relative to the body. When discussing variations of the single palm change later in this article we will refer to this segment of the single palm change (as depicted in photos 4 through 8) as "the turn around."

Next the practitioner will begin to step up into a *kou* step with the right leg as depicted in photos 9 through 11 and footwork illustration number 4. The body continues to turn around its center as the lower hand comes underneath the upper elbow. The upper hand is still held at about shoulder height with the palm facing down and the lower hand is held under the upper elbow with the palm facing up. When discussing variations of the single palm change later in this article we will refer to this segment of the single palm

change (as depicted in photos 9 through 11) as the "winding."

Next the practitioner begins to unwind the body, change the palms, and execute a *bai* step (as shown in photos 12 through 15 and footwork illustration number 5). The upper palm turns to face upward and leads the motion as the body begins to turn. Then the bottom palm moves up along the upper arm (palm up) and both arms lift upward as the body turns. As the body begins to reach the full extent of its turn, both palms begin to rotate and then the arms fall down into the original circle walking posture on the other side. When discussing variations of the single palm change later in this article we will refer to this segment of the single palm change (as depicted in photos 12 through 15) as "the unwinding."

The Principles

In this section we will briefly describe some of the principles that are being trained during the execution of this version of the single palm change in its three phases: the turn around, the winding, and the unwinding. We will also address a few of the possible single palm change variations which are based on those principles.

The Turn Around: The turn around, and its associated footwork, is perhaps the most important aspect of the single palm change in terms of training for fighting mobility. The practitioner who is interested in training Ba Gua as a fighting art should learn to execute this turn around movement (the *kuo* step) swiftly and fluidly while maintaining stability and balance. The first *kuo* step, and the associated coordination of the upper body motion rotating around the body's center axis with this step, are the key principles in this maneuver. The key element in this move is the swift, fluid, efficient change of direction while maintaining stability and a continuous connected strength. If there is a break in the fluidity of motion or the whole body connection and strength, the movement will be awkward, clumsy and inefficient.

As one variation, the simple change of direction and change of palms can be executed directly after the *kou* step. If you look at photo number 6 of Luo De Xiu, you can see that he is in a good position to execute a direct change of palms and change of direction if he were to take a straight step with his left leg cutting through the center of the circle while executing a piercing palm maneuver to change palms. This technique, which is similar to the change demonstrated by Park Bok Nam on page 7, is a very useful move when evading an opponent's attack and maneuvering to outflank him.

The *bai* step and turning of the upper arm which is executed in photos 7 and 8 of Luo's change develops the practitioner's ability to coordinate the upper and lower body and develop a horizontal power which is manifest from the rotation of the body. In this motion, the upper and lower body should move in a unified manner rotating around the practitioner's center. The

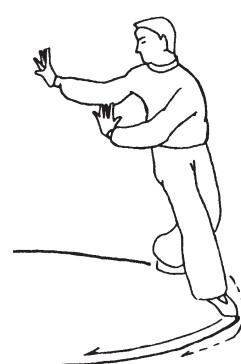
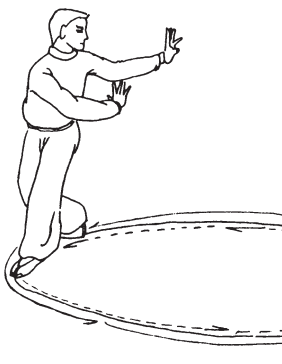
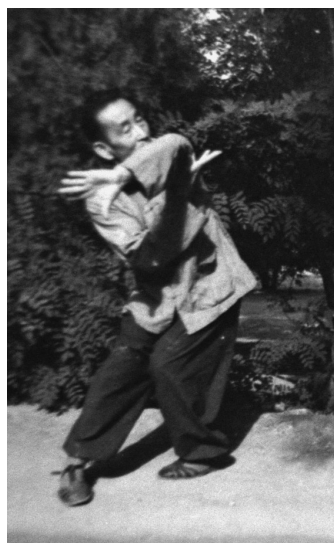
hip/shoulder, elbow/knee, and hand/foot alignments (referred to in the classics as the "three external harmonies") should always be maintained. Additionally, this movement trains the practitioner's ability to generate power from the body out to the hand utilizing the alignment of the body and the power of the rotational movement. This being the case, the importance of coordinating the timing, alignment, and unity of the upper and lower body in this motion cannot be overemphasized.

As one possible variation to the move shown by Luo in photos 7 and 8, many schools of Ba Gua utilize a move similar to the one shown in the Jiang Rong Qiao illustration #2 on the top of the previous page and also shown in the second photo of Zhao Da Yuan at the top of the next page (except his left foot would be in the *bai bu* position). The mechanics of body motion and the generation of power are all the same. The only change is in the motion of the arms. In Ba Gua terms, the maneuver Luo is executing is sometimes called "the Green Dragon Turns its Head" while the move executed by in Jiang Rong Qiao's illustration is called "Leaning on the Horse and Asking Directions." Usually the hand motion associated with this part of the single palm change is used to deflect or join with an opponent's attack in order to utilize an evasive maneuver as discussed previously, or set up for an arm break or a throw.

The actual hand and arm positions in this "turn around" motion can be executed with any one of a number of variations. See photo #3 of Sun Lu Tang on page 18 for one other possible variation. Sun Xi Kun's posture on the cover is very similar to Luo's with a slight variation in the body alignment. You will notice that Liu Feng Cai's change on the bottom of the next page is a shortened version of the single palm change sequence Luo is executing. This change lies somewhere between the basic change Park is executing on page 7 and that executed by Luo on page 8.

The Winding: The winding up of the body is demonstrated here by Luo De Xiu in photos 9 through 11. The principle in this portion of the change is in learning how to once again rotate the body around it's center while maintaining balance and stability. In doing this the practitioner is also learning how to generate horizontal power. The degree of the body turning, or winding, will vary from one system to the next and it will even vary within the same system depending on the experience level of the practitioner or the focus of the practice.

Several systems of the Cheng style of Ba Gua train all forms and movements at three levels. The first level is called "single step" where the motions are very distinct and more exaggerated. At this level, the practitioner executes a big *kuo* step and the winding of the body will be executed so that the body twists as far as possible. The illustration of Jiang Rong Qiao's form on the previous page depicts the tight *kou bu* and the maximum twist of the body. The maximum twist is also shown in photo 13 on page 13 and in photo 9 on



page 26. The maximum twist helps develop suppleness and flexibility in the spine as the spine is twisted from the base all the way up to the top of the neck. This large twisting motion can also be utilized in application when the practitioner is executing an arm break, shoulder strike, and/or as a set up for a throw. In order to condition the appropriate muscles, ligaments and tendons of the legs and torso to be able to train the body to generate this kind of power, the beginning student will maximize this twist. When practicing the maximum twisting motion the practitioner should always maintain the proper body alignments so the knees are not twisted to an unnatural angle.

The next level of training is called "moving step." In this practice, the *kuo* step is a bit more open and the twist is not as pronounced. Luo De Xiu is demonstrating the moving step practice in the photos on page 8. Notice that in his *kuo* step in photo 10, the foot is not turned in very far. You will also notice that in Sun Xi Kun's version on the cover, Sun does not even *kuo* at all, but steps with the foot and the knee facing straight ahead while he twists the torso around. This type of less pronounced turning motion can be utilized when setting up for a quick throwing technique.

The last execution is called "swimming body." At this level, the practitioner is executing the change in a manner such that the body never stops its forward motion after the first *kuo* step is executed. Here the energy is very fluid and continuous. The photos of Liu Feng Cai at the bottom of the previous page illustrate the swimming body style of the single palm change. Notice that Liu does not even take the second *kuo* step, but simply executes and straight walking step. This type of execution is used when mobility and evasiveness are employed.

In all applications, this motion is usually executed close into the opponent's body in order to employ a joint lock, arm break, set up for a throw, and/or flanking maneuver. The practitioner will apply crisp power at the end of the winding motion when utilizing this move for an arm break or shoulder strike. Thus when practicing with this type of execution in mind, the practitioner will usually perform the more pronounced rotation and tight *kuo* step in order to insure stability.

The footwork will also vary with the intent of the application. Whereas the *kuo bu* footwork in the "turn around" segment of this maneuver was utilized to change direction rapidly, the *kuo bu* in the "winding" section can be used to hook and lock the opponent's foot and leg or to set up for a leg sweep. Practitioners who are executing the single palm change with this strategy in mind will have a pronounced *kuo bu* as demonstrated by Sun Lu Tang on page 18 and in the Jiang Rong Qiao illustration on page 9. Others, who may use this movement for a fast throwing application, may use a very small, quick *kuo bu* as demonstrated by Luo and Sun Xi Kun on the cover. The practice of the single palm change can always vary depending on the intent of the practitioner's fighting application.

In addition to variations relating to different fighting

strategies, variations of this winding motion can be also be tailored for training flexibility and suppleness in the spine, back, shoulders, and hips. Various arm positions are utilized to facilitate different varieties of stretching motions. You will notice that Luo's hand position in photo 10 is such that the hands and arms are kept out in front of the body while the lower arm and hand position of Sun Zhi Jun's son, Sun Hui Xiang, shown on the opposite page in photo 13 is tucked in under the armpit and close to the body. This facilitates a stretching motion in the back which aids in the development of flexibility and suppleness in the back and shoulder areas.

The Unwinding: Part of the purpose of the winding motion discussed in the last section is to prepare for the unwinding motion which is to follow. It is during the execution of the unwinding that the actual changing of the palms occurs.

Like the winding, the unwinding is training the practitioner how to develop rotational power around the center axis of the body, legs, and arms. However, whereas the winding primarily trained horizontal power, there are also components of vertical and oblique power exhibited in the motion of the unwinding. You will notice that as the body unwinds and the palms change, the hands are brought up high before they reach their final position. This is shown in Luo De Xiu photo number 14, Jiang Rong Qiao illustration 4, Liu Feng Cai photo 3, Sun Xi Kun photo 5, and Sun Hui Xiang photos 16 and 17. The upward lifting and subsequent falling and rotating of the arms and palms as the body turns back in this unwinding phase is the key principle here. This is the "rise, drill, fall, and overturn" sequence that is discussed in both the Xing Yi and Ba Gua classics. These four different kinds of energy, or *jing*, are trained in this motion.

In application, the unwinding motion of the body and "rise, drill, fall, and overturn" motions of the hands and arms are usually utilized in the execution of a deflection, redirection, or throw. In some instances it can be also used as a strike to the side of the head or the back of the head or neck. In the abbreviated version of the single palm change from the Yin Fu style of Ba Gua, which incorporates the piercing palm motion, the pierce can either be use as an entry, deflection, or a strike.

The unwinding of the body and the uplifting, rotating, and falling of the arms and hands also aids the practitioner in developing functional flexibility in the legs torso, spine, shoulders, and arms. By functional flexibility I am referring to training which works to stretch and loosen muscles that will need to be supple and loose during the execution of Ba Gua. It is great if someone can perform the full splits, however, performing the splits is not nearly as functional in Ba Gua as having a loose and supple twisting and turning movement throughout the whole body, especially in the pelvic region. There are many individuals who have very limber leg muscles, however, when asked to stand with their feet and knees facing forward and twist their

Lower Single Palm Change



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



12



13



14



15



16



17



18



19

Outside Single Palm Change



1



2



3



4



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6



7



8



9



10

hips as far as they can to one side or the other, they discover that the muscles in their pelvic region are not so loose. In Ba Gua functional flexibility involves twisting and rotating the muscles and suppleness in the joints - twisting the legs, twisting the hips, twisting the torso, twisting the shoulders, and twisting the arms. Additionally, the twisting is executed in a coordinated fashion while maintaining whole body connection. These elements are all trained in the single palm change.

Conclusion

In terms of learning how to apply Ba Gua in an actual combat environment, the change of direction is the most important component of the basic circle walk practice. It is within the change of direction that the techniques of Ba Gua are usually applied. The change of direction in the circle walk practice also trains the Ba Gua body coordination, full body integration, functional flexibility, and whole body power. The torso is trained so that the upper and lower body are in harmony and Ba Gua's rotational power is developed while executing the change. The primary movement utilized to change direction during the basic circle walk practice is the single palm change.

The single palm change is the most important move in Ba Gua in terms of training the body and developing the inherent power of Ba Gua. The single palm change is also the most important component of Ba Gua in its combat application. If a practitioner can learn how to execute and apply the single palm change properly, he will be well on his way to developing a high level of Ba Gua skill.

Like everything else in Ba Gua, there are many variations of the single palm change. Each school will execute the single palm change in a slightly different manner and within each school there are also many variations that are practiced. Ba Gua is based on the principle of change, therefore, nothing is fixed. In practicing any aspect of the art, whether it be stepping method, the single palm change, or any given technique, the Ba Gua practitioner will execute a wide variety of variations. I know of no complete system of Ba Gua that only executes one variation of single palm change. Most schools will have at least five or six different ways of executing this movement. Everything from the hand and arm positions, to the direction the body twists, to the positioning of the feet, to the positioning of the body are varied in the practice of single palm change.

In His Own Words: *Sun Lu Tang's Single Palm Change*

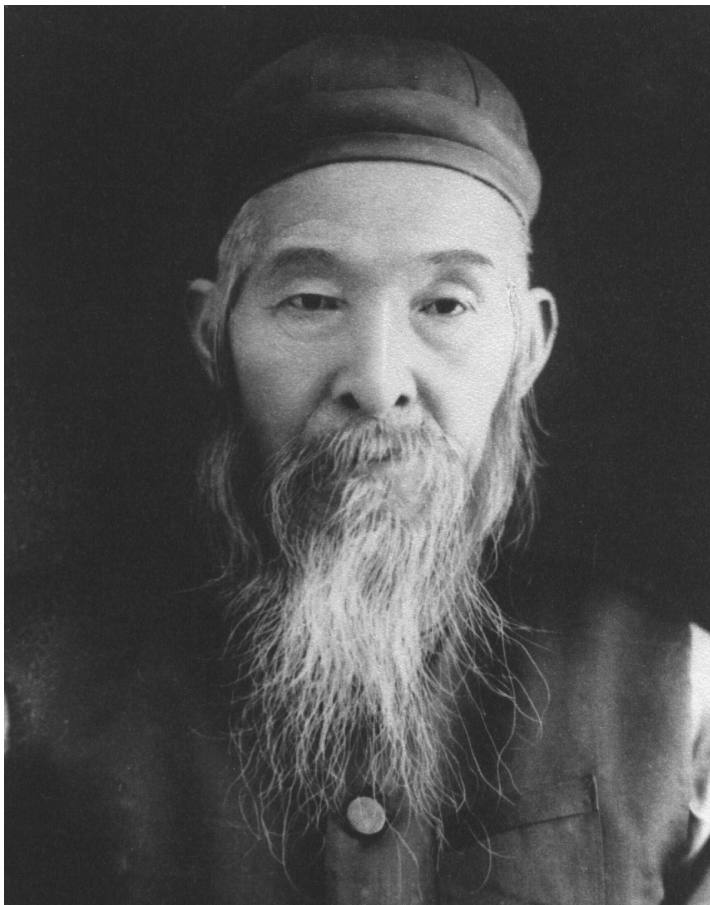
By Sun Lu Tang

Translated by Joseph Crandall and Helin Dong

Sun Lu Tang was one of the most prolific writers in the history of Chinese martial arts. He was the first to publish works on the internal martial arts and his ideas set a tone for the study and practice of martial arts since the early part of this century. Sun was deeply interested in the study of the physical boxing art as it related to the principles of Chinese philosophy and many of his writings address his ideas about the connections between physical practice and philosophical theory.

Until recently Sun Lu Tang's writing on Ba Gua has not been readily available in its entirety to the English speaking world. However now, thanks to the hard work of Joseph Crandall and Helin Dong, Sun Lu Tang's Ba Gua text is available in English (those interested in obtaining this work can now order it from High View Publications).

What follows here is an excerpt from Sun's book, as translated by Joseph Crandall and Helin Dong, where Sun discusses the single palm change and double palm change movements and relates them to Chinese philosophical principles.



Sun Lu Tang

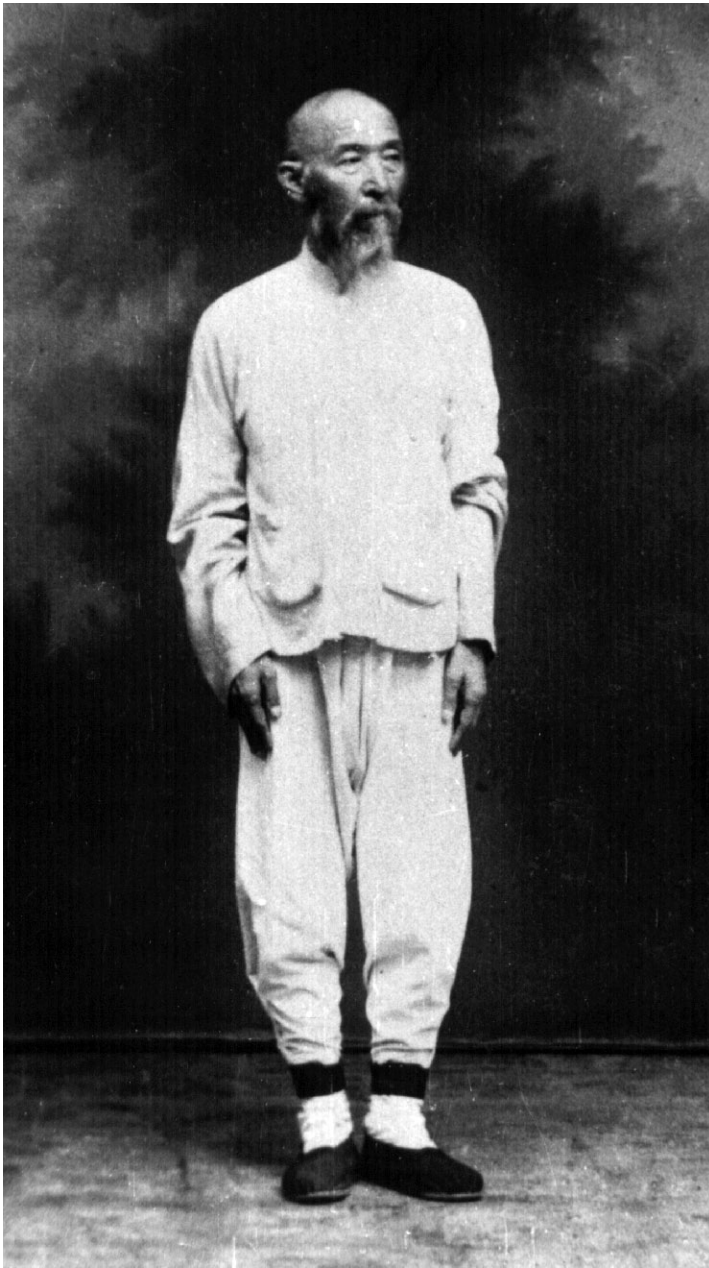
A Study of Wu Ji

What is the Wu Ji Form? It is how a man is before he begins to study. The mind is confused and disorderly. The One Qi is chaotic and moves at random. It is from the emotion of Nature. It spins and turns without degree. There is no division between rising and falling. The outside loses all practice, the inside loses all nourishment. Knowing the flow is where it goes and not-knowing the counter-flow is where it comes from. This is happening to such an extent that the body is empty and weak. Yang ultimately must become yin, yin ultimately must die. More often than not, one returns to the inability to do anything.

In the art of conserving one's health, the analysis looks in the wrong direction. One can be very indignant. Only holy men know the power of the movement of counter-flow to improve the moral nature of the body. The Way of returning to our origins is not outside the principles of Xing Yi Quan, Tai Ji Quan and Ba Gua Quan. It is the Way of the One Qi expanding and contracting. You must understand the benefits of getting these primary skills. Strive to set it up to arrive at the extreme point of beneficence. Use it to attain the Prenatal Original Qi, harmonious and not flowing. If this is set up correctly without deviation then later generations will be able to do this method. Also, you will be able to make the 10,000 things come alive. This is called the form of Wu Ji creating Tai Ji. Master Li Dong Yuan said, "Man is naturally empty and doesn't create spirit. Store up spirit and create qi. Store up qi and create *jing* (essence). This is not the way it works. Refine the *jing* and transform it into qi. Refine the qi and transform it into spirit. Refine the spirit and transform it into emptiness. This is the way it works. The Way of the Martial Arts gives birth to the principles of transformation which is the idea."

A Study of Wu Ji Explained by Pictures

Begin by facing the front. The body stands straight. Both hands hang down. Both feet form a 90 degree angle like in the picture. The toes don't go inward and the heels also don't pivot outward. Both feet are like standing in a hollow in the ground. Movement and stillness are not known. Stillness make the Wu Ji Body. Motion makes the Wu Ji function. When one is still, inside the breast is absolutely empty. The mind doesn't have a place to think. Both eyes hold the spirit fixed and firm. Inside there is no place to look. Outside there is no place to see. When one is moving, then one



Sun Lu Tang standing in the Wu Ji Posture

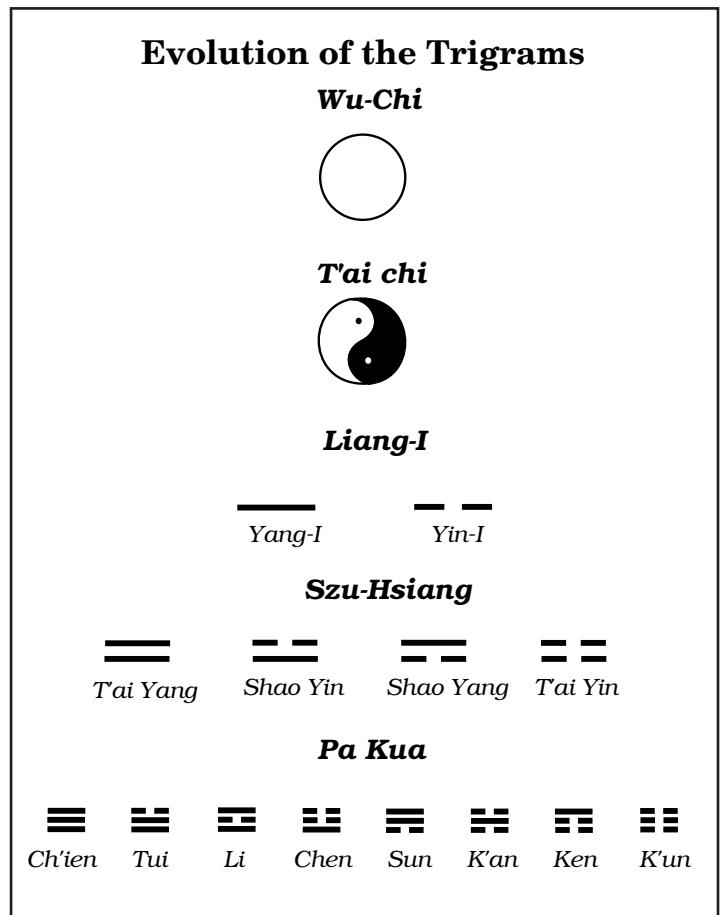
flows naturally, turning endlessly. At the same time there is neither straight nor curved, going nor coming, union nor separation of the mind or thoughts. The principles of "the breast being empty" and of "non-thinking" are in the mind. Only when the inside of the belly is hard have we arrived at emptiness, have we arrived at the root of nothingness. And then we are able to create qi from Wu Ji. This qi is like mist. Thickness and density, black and white, are not distinguished. The form is like torrential water, chaotic. Pure and muddied are not distinguished. Moreover, in fighting, the form is not fixed. Thus it is called the study of Wu Ji form. These principles are difficult to think about and comprehend. When the body strength moves to arrive at its ultimate place, you will be able to know this place and then use it.

A Study of Tai Ji

What is the Tai Ji Form? It is created from Wu Ji. It is the mother of Yin and Yang. Turning left makes Yang. Turning right makes Yin. Turning is the flowing movement of the One Qi. Tai Ji is the One Qi. The One Qi is Tai Ji. We use the body to speak of Tai Ji and we use the function to speak of the One Qi. When it is Yang then it is Yin. When it is Yin then it is Yang. When it is up, then it is up. When it is down, then it is down. Yin, and it is Yang. Yang, and it is Yin. It is the One Qi moving endlessly. It is without a doubt alive, opening and closing naturally. In the center of each a dot is applied. This the dot is instantly a fist in the middle of turning left and turning right, opening and closing, moving and stillness. Yin and Yang, together, pivot about a center. The center is the base of man's life, the source of transformation. The dan tian's qi is the foundation of Ba Gua Quan. This qi is the root of Heaven and Earth. It is the mother of Yin and Yang. It is Tai Ji. Thus the Liang Yi is created from this.

A Pictorial Explanation of the Study of Tai Ji

To begin, first hold the waist firmly depressed. The right foot appears to go straight out to the front. It falls down and both feet are formed like a parallelogram, like in the picture. The distance between both feet depends on a man's stature. In general, the rear foot moves to the front, without using strength, to arrive



in a good place. Both legs are curved inwardly and fully rounded. You do not need to have a fixed bend of the legs. The heels of both feet have Twisting Energy towards the outside. Both legs are shaped like riding a horse and simultaneously have the idea of Hooking Energy. You must not reveal where the form of the Hook is going.

At first, do not practice with the body too low, use a higher stance. Practicing low uses too much strength. Eventually will come the day when your skill is pure, then the height of the posture and the form of your legs won't matter. Do not walk the circle yet. The left hip and the left foot are even. When you are ready to do the turning walk, the tip of the right hip twists to bring the front hand index finger facing towards the center of the circle. This makes the standard.

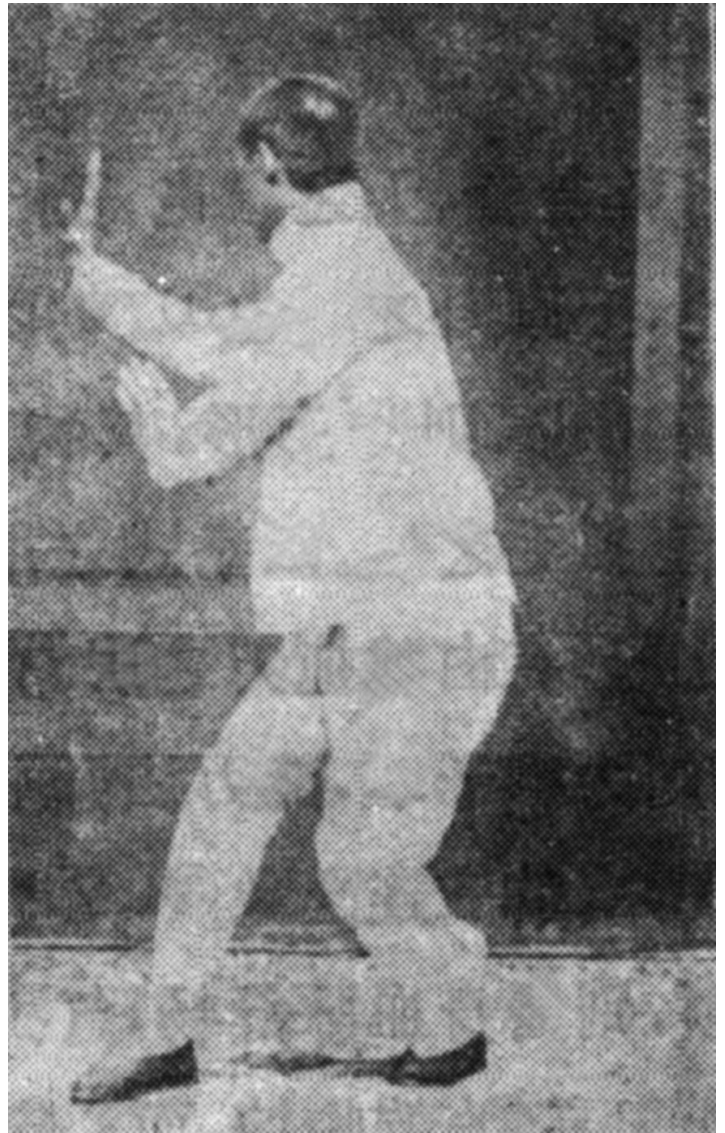
The form of the front right leg, knee, and heel is like one even line. Also hold the right hand and the right foot heel like a triangle. The hand is truly like a rising arc. Bring the hand's tiger's mouth opposite the eye. Both shoulders must be relaxed and open. Both elbows go inward with Wrapping Energy. The tips of the elbow hang down. Both hands prepare to open up wide, do not clutch them. Do your utmost to twist both wrists to the outside with Twisting Energy so that the index fingers point upwards.

The area between the thumb and index finger (the tiger's mouth) should spread open like a half-moon shape. The ring finger and the little finger each have the sense of returning with Hooking Energy. Both palms are unable to go outward with Stretching Energy. The tiger's mouth does its utmost to go forward with Pushing Energy. Above and below the stretching and pushing each must be in a fixed direction to create true energy.

The standard is that both eyes gaze at the front hand index finger tip, but it is also acceptable to look at the tiger's mouth. If the qi is not centered, then the limbs will depend on the torso. Do your utmost to have them in a half-moon shape like in the book. The tiger's mouth goes forward but the elbow stays fixed. Both shoulders are rounded with Firm Shrinking Energy. (This is the idea of the middle of flow seeks for counter-flow center. If the positions of the trigrams are flowing movement, then the sequence of the trigrams is counter-flowing movement.)

Both elbows do their utmost to have the One Qi go downward with Hanging Energy. Both hands do their utmost to have the One Qi go forward with pushing Energy. Both hands and both shoulders do their utmost to return with Contracting Energy. The waist along with both hands goes outward with Twisting Energy. When it is like twisting a rope the twisting will be ultimately strong. The twisting arrives at the front hand index finger. Both eyes gaze towards the center of the circle, like the picture.

This form's name makes horizontal walking and vertical striking. Both hip joints do their utmost to go inward with Shrinking Energy. The hip joints twist inwardly like the arc of the inside of a circle. Now we speak of the circle. This is the idea of Jian and Kun,



Sun Lu Tang standing in the Tai Ji Posture

the empty center seeking mysteries. The head must go up with Pushing Up Energy. The mouth is open but not open, it is closed but not closed. The tip of the tongue touches the palate. The breath flows through the nostrils and the breathing must be natural. The Gu Dao (hui yin) must be raised. The neck must have Upright Energy. The heart must not use exerting strength. The chest should be curved inward yet not have the appearance of being curved inward. However, both shoulders must equally be rounded with Contracting Strength. It is natural and correct to have the inside open and the outside closed. This is what is said of the curved chest.

After a long time, the curved form of the front of the chest will become natural. In the Turning Walk, the body does not need to be quick. The Will, Life Force, and Strength combine together with the hands, feet, shoulders, hips, waist, and elbows, inside and outside, to create the One Qi. The whole of the body cannot have one place that is separate or confused. If there is one place that is separate or confused, then the energy of the whole body cannot be harmonized.

Next, seek to join the waist, hips, shoulders, and

elbows together with the Four Extremities. The Four Extremities are: The teeth are the extremities of the bones. The tongue is the extremity of the flesh. The fingernails and toenails are the extremities of the sinews. The pores of the body are the extremities of the blood. To strive for this we must hold the heart qi and return it down to the dan tian. The whole body must have one principle.

In the Turning Walk, the body doesn't lean to the left or right. If you do this the qi inside won't be stable. The fundamental walk is then like the form of a bird with bound wings incessantly flying. It is also like calm flowing water that one doesn't actually seem flowing, one doesn't seem to move. Have a calm, stable, and natural shape. The idea of this form is like both metaphors.

A Study of Liang Yi

Liang Yi is the principle of the contraction and expansion of the One Qi. Left Turning makes the Yang principle and Right Turning makes the Yin principle. Thus it comes from the Tai Ji form. It is the One Qi going forth. When it is like the idea of a circular flowing motion, then it makes the Tai Ji Yang principle. It becomes the qi of expansion.

In practice, the circle may be big or small and one may walk it many times or just a few times. Also, the nature of the terrain may dictate the practice. If the area is large, then the circle can be large, if the area is small then the circle can be small. Whatever the size of the circle, the practice method remains the same. More important, the terrain need not dictate the practice. Acres of ground doesn't mean the circle must be big and a circle with a three foot diameter doesn't have to be small. Truly, this skill is deep and pure. Thus, the whole circle may be many miles wide. Also, you can circle many times with no fixed form. The area should be level for walking.

In coming, going, and turning the body, balance must be maintained. The sage said, "The way of expansion and contraction is flowing movement. That which is big is not outside. That which is small is not inside." Open up and then unite the six combinations. Unroll and then conceal the secret. Also, there is the idea of fighting. This is the form of a returning, revolving body (the Single Palm Change). It doesn't matter whether it is big or small or whether you circle many times or just a few times. Decide for yourself depending on your qi, strength, and motion. After half a circle you may change the body, or, after ten circles you may change the body. With the One Qi turning, Heaven, Earth, and the 10,000 things appear in the body.

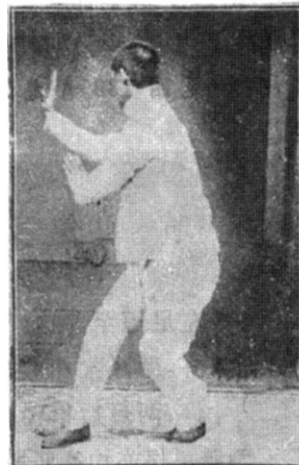
The changing of the body must be tight. Only do one form of the turning method. If you have doubts, the skill won't manifest itself. The head will get dizzy, the eyes confused, and the feet will have no root because of malpractice. Thus it is said, "Yang must ultimately become Yin. Yin must ultimately create Yang." Relating to the Ba Gua circle: Yang, left, and rising make day.

Yin, right, and descending make night. Day comes and then night goes. Day and night pushing together create the four seasons. Change the body to the right turning movement. Circling this way then makes the Tai Ji Yin element. This is the qi of contraction. The sage says, "It is the demon of spirit that makes virtue." This is the rise and fall of day and night. Each corresponds to the transformation of Heaven, Earth, and Nature. The Liang Yi Right Turning is central to fighting. Left and right have a sequence. How is it not the coming and going, the expansion and contraction of the One Qi? Thus the Liang Yi is again created and the Si Xiang spring forth.

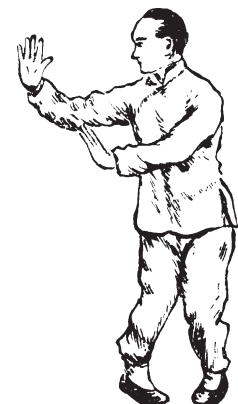
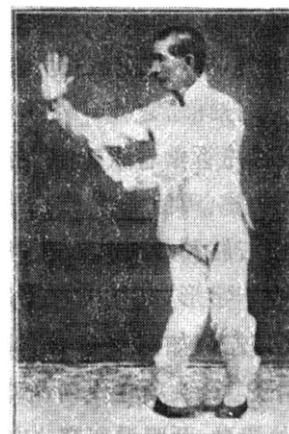
The Form of Liang Yi (the Single Palm Change)

Section 1 - Green Dragon Turns its Body

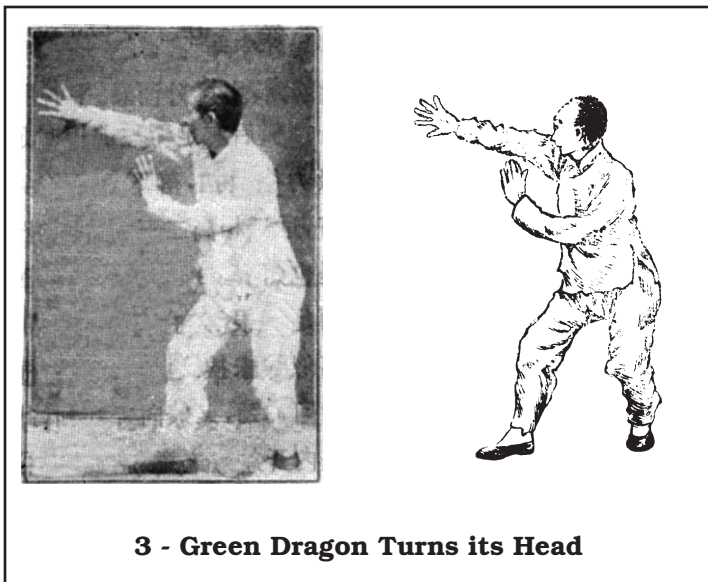
When you begin, it is like the One Qi turning left, flowing and moving endlessly. Plan to want to change the body to the right turning. This is the One Qi creating the Liang Yi. In this method the right foot moves to the front and drops down.



1 - Green Dragon Turns its Body



2 - Green Dragon Contracts its Tail



3 - Green Dragon Turns its Head

Section 2 - Green Dragon Contracts its Tail

Then the left foot also moves. The toes use their utmost strength to hook inward and the foot drops down opposite the toes of the right foot. The distance separating the toes is about two to three inches. See the picture. The heels of both feet have Twisting Energy towards the outside. Both knees have the idea of being next to each other yet not next to each other. Both hip joints have Shrinking Energy focused inward. Also, both have Open Energy focused outward.

This form has the idea of the inside being closed and the outside being closed. The waist must have Depressing Firmly Downward Energy. At the same time, with the upper body, both hands are as before, unmoving, with Firm Energy. Both shoulders are level and have the idea of going inward with Contracting Energy. Also it is said to hold the breast slightly firm.

Section 3 - Green Dragon Turns its Head

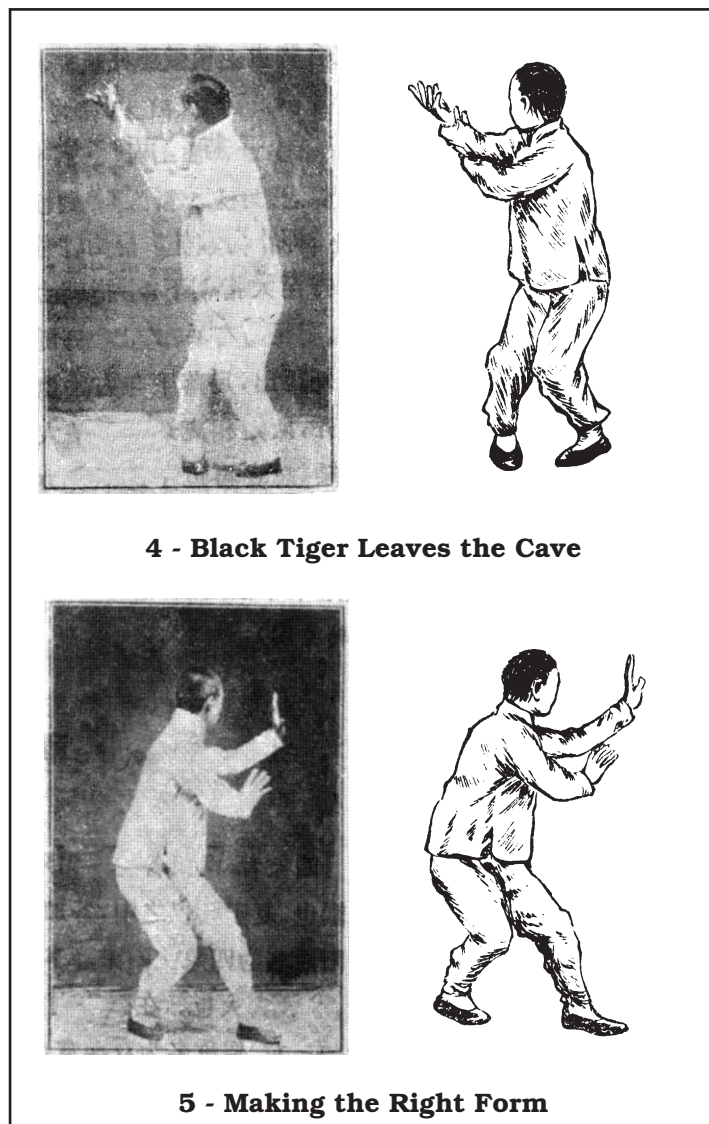
Instantly the right hand stretches out and does its utmost to go outward with Twisting Energy (niu jing -). Twist the hand until the thumb points down and stop when the little finger faces up. The right foot twists with the right hand, and both appear to go outward. The foot drops down and the hand and foot, above and below, are in alignment with each other. The distance between the feet dictates whether the posture is high or low. The upshot is that the left foot doesn't waste strength arriving at its place. The body sinks slightly downward with the idea of contracting and hiding. The left hand is under the armpit, the palm faces outward, and goes to the front with Firm Pushing Energy.

Section 4 - Black Tiger Leaves the Cave

Then the left foot steps up to the front. As before, it is opposite the right foot toes. Both feet are separated by about two or three inches. As before, both heels go outward with Twisting Energy. Both hips go inward with Contracting Energy. Both hands each do their utmost to curve back with Wrapping Energy. Wrap until both palms face upward. The wrapping also causes both shoulders to do their utmost to curve inward with Shrinking Energy. Also both shoulders go downward with Hanging Energy and the form is fixed, but not fixed.

Instantly the waist does its utmost to twist to the right side like twisting yarn. The left hand palm faces up. The elbow hangs down and does its utmost to appear to be unmoving with Firm Energy. The left hand, palm up, follows the twisting of the waist. Slowly it goes to the outside of the right armpit. The left arm forms a T-shape. The left hand pierces out diagonally upward to the front. The idea is for the left shoulder to appear to be piercing under the right armpit.

The head and neck are erect with Firm Energy and follow the waist to the outside with Twisting Energy. Both eyes gaze at the piercing left hand. The left hand



4 - Black Tiger Leaves the Cave

5 - Making the Right Form

A Study of Si Xiang

pierce arrives at its ultimate place and stops. These are the principles of the energies. Like above, fullness is suddenly manifest. Don't lose your balance. The outer energy of the form is as if closed, and the inner heart qi is as if open. It is like being empty, only this is not so. If you have doubts and fears, these will exert pressure on your heart and you will suffer disease.

Section 5 - Making the Right Form

The body also turns to the right. First the left foot moves straight to the front. When it drops down, the distance between both feet is not far. As before, the stance can be either high or low. Don't use strength when stepping. The left hand moves with the left foot, continually piercing, reaching, and going outward with Twisting Energy.

Twist until the left hand index finger points straight up. Also, the standard is that the hand is opposite the center of the circle. The fingertips are about eyebrow height. Also, the right hand does its utmost to pass next to the body, and with the One Qi, pushes out to arrive at the left elbow. The index finger firmly goes upward. The waist twists, with the left hand, to the right side like twisting a cord. Both eyes also gaze at the front index finger tip. Both wrists twist. Both arms curve upwards. Both elbows hang down. Both wrists have Twisting Energy. This twist is not easy. Use feeling the twist, not just the idea of it. Both wrists go up making Supporting Hands. The tiger's mouths also go forward with the idea of pushing. Both have the appearance of being fixed.

Both shoulders do their utmost to curve inward with Shrinking Energy. Hold both hands for three to five steps, or you may walk a complete circle. One need only walk and perchance to change forms.

In general one needs to be connected together above and below, inside and outside, the six combinations and the One Qi. The six combinations are:

The mind and the will combine.
The will and the energy combine.
The energy and the strength combine.
These are the three inner combinations.

The shoulder and the hip combine.
The elbow and the knee combine.
The hands and the feet combine.
These are the three outer combinations.

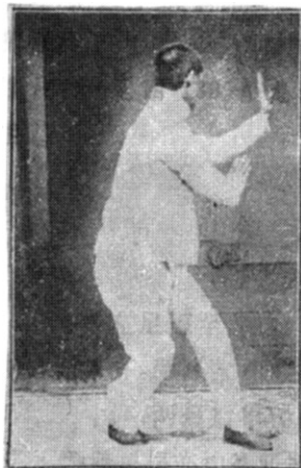
The inner and the outer are like one. Together they make the six combinations. This is the central idea. Merely practicing is not understanding. Now seek to understand the human ability to give instruction. Study diligently for deep ideas. The result is that after a long time one is able to know. Liang Yi again returns to change and walk. Study this method of similar principles.

Si Xiang. The Liang Yi is made up of one Yin and one Yang. Tai Ji creates Liang Yi. Ba Gua is represented by solid and broken lines. This is taken from the Liang Yi (Yang is solid, Yin is broken). By adding a solid and a broken line to each we get: Tai Yang (two solid lines), Tai Yin (two broken lines), Shao Yang (a solid line and a broken line), and Shao Yin (a broken line and a solid line). These names make up the Si Xiang. The Si Xiang has, as its base, either a solid line or a broken line. Each adds one Yin or one Yang line. These then are divided into metal, wood, water, and fire. In the body they correspond to the lungs, liver, kidneys, and heart. In fighting they correspond to front, back, left, and right. The common name is Double Palm Change.

The Si Xiang are subordinate to earth. Tai Ji is earth. In the martial arts it is Rise, Drill, Fall, and Overturn. Movement that doesn't rise up is called Horizontal (*heng*). Heng is earth. Because it is creating without cease, it is called earth. Because it is One Qi, it is called Tai Ji. Tai Ji and earth are the same thing. Thus it is said that the Si Xiang is subordinate to earth. And earth is its center. Does not the Si Xiang already contain Yin and Yang? Then they combine to form the Ba Gua (Eight Trigrams). They combine and balance. One trigram is then placed on all eight trigrams until all eight trigrams are paired. Then they make the 64 hexagrams.

According to the *Yi Jing*, one hexagram has six lines. The lower three lines form Heaven, Earth, and Man; the San Cai. The upper three lines move in opposition and are emphasized. The forms: Heaven, Earth, and Man; the San Cai, each have Yin and Yang. As in understanding the core of fighting, each movement has turning left and turning right. Each has Yin and Yang forms. Thus, left turning forms the lower three lines. Head, hand and foot form Heaven, Earth and Man, the San Cai. Right turning forms the upper three lines because Heaven, Earth, and Man; the San Cai, each have a Yin and a Yang. The Ba Gua is then the Si Xiang's Yin and Yang. The 64 hexagrams are then Yin and Yang join together and they create qi.

When the Ba Gua arrangement is complete, there is movement. When Yin and Yang join together, one can create or not create oneself. With the 64 hexagrams one can arrive at 1000 or 10,000 multigrams. In general we do not depart from the 64 hexagrams. The 64 hexagrams are an outgrowth of the Ba Gua. The Ba Gua are an outgrowth of the Si Xiang. The Si Xiang are an outgrowth of the Liang Yi. The Liang Yi are the movement of the One Qi. Zi Yang read the Can Tong Qi and said: "The one is naturally empty, not millions of atoms. The Liang Yi is based in the one. Si Xiang are not separate from these two bodies. The Ba Gua mutually make the sons and grandsons. The 64 hexagrams are created from this and 10,000 forms are transformed and moved by this." Truly take in these words. You can make this an examination of the martial arts.



1 - Green Dragon Turns its Body, right form



2 - Green Dragon Contracts its Tail

The Form of Si Xiang (the Double Palm Change)

Section 1 - Green Dragon Turns its Body, right form

Begin with the Liang Yi form. It doesn't matter whether or not you use the right turning or left turning. Each is able to be transformed into the Si Xiang Double Palm Change. First use the right turning. The left hand is in the front. The right hand is at the rear. From true north, go west along the circle. This is right turning.

Section 2 - Green Dragon Contracts its Tail

To change palms, move the left foot to the front. The right foot follows and then passes to the front. The toe does its utmost to hook inward and drops down opposite the left foot toe. The distance between the feet is about two to three inches. Both heels do their utmost to go outward with Twisting Energy. The waist depresses with Firm Energy. Both hip joints curve

inward with Shrinking Energy. The form is as though fixed, yet not fixed. The above form, Green Dragon Contracts its Tails, must turn right.

Section 3 - Green Dragon Turns its Head

Instantly the left hand reaches out and goes outward with Twisting Energy. The twist causes the thumb to point down and the little finger to face upwards. The palm faces outwards. The left foot rises. The toes follows the left hand's twist. Together, they go outward with Swinging Energy. The left foot drops down so that the heel and the toes of the right foot make a wrong way eight shape form. It is like the picture.

The distance between the feet determines whether the man is high or low. As the foot drops down then the form swings outward. Both hip joints have Shrinking Energy. Wrap inside like the idea of opening a circle. The waist follows the left hand and twists outwards. Both shoulders also have Contracting Energy. There is also the idea of containing the chest. The right hand, as before, is next to the body with the palm facing outwards. It passes below the armpit of the left arm and pushes firmly below the elbow. It appears to be



3 - Green Dragon Turns its Head



4 - Black Tiger Leaves the Cave, left form

not moving. Although the body is stopped, it has the idea of not being stopped.

Section 4 - Black Tiger Leaves the Cave, left form

Instantly get both hands to have Inward Wrapping Energy. The wrapping is completed with the palms facing upwards. The right hand pierces out below the left armpit. The right foot moves with the right hand and passes to the front. It stops with the toes opposite the left foot. The toes of both feet are two to three inches apart. The right shoulder does its utmost to look as though it is going to pass beneath the left armpit. The heels of both feet go outwards with Twisting Energy. Both hip joints have Shrinking Energy. The waist still presses down with Firm Energy. The form does not stop. Like a sentence in a book, the individual words must be continuously strung together, not broken.

Section 5 - Sparrowhawk Spirals to Heaven

The right arm moves up next to the right ear. The palm does its utmost to go inward with Wrapping Energy and pierces upwards. The pierce arrives in its final place with the palm facing inwards. The body follows the right hand and stretches upwards. The left hand palm faces inwards and when the right hand goes up, at the same time it goes down next to the right armpit and drops next to the ribs. The fingers point downwards. The back of the hand is next to the right hip as it pierces downwards. Both hand separate and go up and down together and arrive at their final place at the same time.

When both hands separate, the left foot rises up. The toe does its utmost to go upwards. The left foot is in contact with the inside of the right ankle. Then the body sinks down with Contracting Energy and the waist depresses firmly. The right hand does its utmost to pierce upwards with Firm Energy. The left hand, as before, does its utmost to pierce downwards with Firm Energy. Both eyes look at the right hand. The body must be firm and stable.

Section 6 - White Snake Lies in the Grass

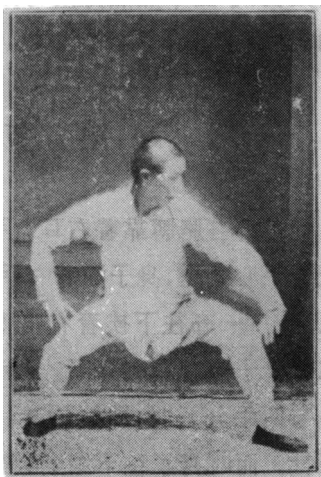
The right hand passes by the front of the left shoulder and drops by the left arm. When the right hand drops, the body also sinks down low. Both hands separate to the front and back like swinging something. Both wrists equally go outwards. They push outwards with Firm Energy. Front and back, the tiger's mouths of both hands are aligned. Both arms form a half circle shape. The left foot and the left hand move to the front together. When the foot drops down it has a half angular appearance like it is on a circle. The waist depresses with Firm Energy. The body pounces forwards. The lower abdomen must be over the thigh. Both eyes follow the right hand down and then pass to the left hand. Both shoulders, front and back, do their utmost to contract with Firm Energy. Both hip joints, front and back, do their utmost to contract with Firm Energy. Inside the abdomen must be like an empty circular area. Then you will be able to get the mysterious powers of the martial arts.

Section 7 - Black Tiger Leaves the Cave

Again have both hands go inwards with Wrapping Energy and arrive with the palms facing upwards. The right hand is in contact with the body and appears to pierce out under the left armpit. When the hand reaches its ultimate place, it forms a T-shape with the left arm. The right move moves simultaneously with the right hand and drops down opposite the left foot. The distance between the toes is two to three inches. The heels of both feet go outwards with Twisting Energy. Both hip joints go inwards with Shrinking Energy. The waist must depress with Firm Energy and, when the hand pierces out, turns to the left with Twisting Energy. It twists like a rope. And at this time, the



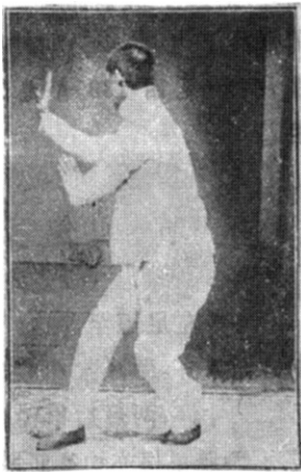
5 - Sparrowhawk Spirals to Heaven



6 - White Snake Lies in the Grass



7 - Black Tiger Leaves the Cave



8 - Green Dragon Turns its Body

energy of the body is also like the idea of showing all of the above, only the inner core connection must have the idea of emptiness. How do we get the idea of the inner core being empty? When both shoulders and both hip joints go inwards with Contracting Energy, then the middle of the breast will naturally have the idea of emptiness and the inside of the abdomen also cannot have the disease of exerting *qi* or blockages.

Section 8 - Green Dragon Turns its Body

When the body again goes to do the left turning walk, first the right foot goes straight out to the front and drops down. The distance between the feet, as before depends upon how high or low the practitioner wants to be. No matter what sort of stepping method is used, walking to the front or retreating to the rear, you must naturally make it arrive at the wonderful place. When the right hand follows the movement of the foot, it continues to pierce and reach and goes outwards with Twisting Energy. The left hand equally goes outwards with Twisting Energy.

Both feet begin to walk and both wrists do their utmost to go outwards with Twisting Energy. The twisting causes the right hand index finger tip to point straight up. It is also opposite the center of the circle as a rule. The height of the index finger is still even with the eyebrows. The left hand still does its utmost to be in contact with the body and pushes to arrive under the left elbow. The index finger firmly points upwards. The waist follows the right hand. It twists towards the left like a rope. Both eyes follow the front hand index finger tip.

When both wrists twist and both arms bend in the middle they face upwards and both elbows still point downwards. When both wrists have Twisting Energy, not twisting them is very easy. Also it is like felling the twisting not just have the idea of it. Both wrists go upwards as though upholding something. Have the idea of both tiger's mouths pushing to the front. The two are equally fixed and cannot come out.

Both shoulders also do their utmost to go inwards with Shrinking Energy. It will probably take three to five steps for both hands to come out. It will probably take walking the whole circle for the twisting to come out if you do not embrace the necessary methods. As with the Liang Yi walking and changing forms, the principles of the upper and lower being mutually connected and the inside and outside being unified are similar. The Si Xiang practice method follows the idea of the division of the four seasons and then elaborates on that theme. It truly is the Way of the One Qi completely connected together. When you are practicing, you must know this.

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SUN STYLE BA GUA ZHANG

SINGLE PALM CHANGE

by Tim Cartmell

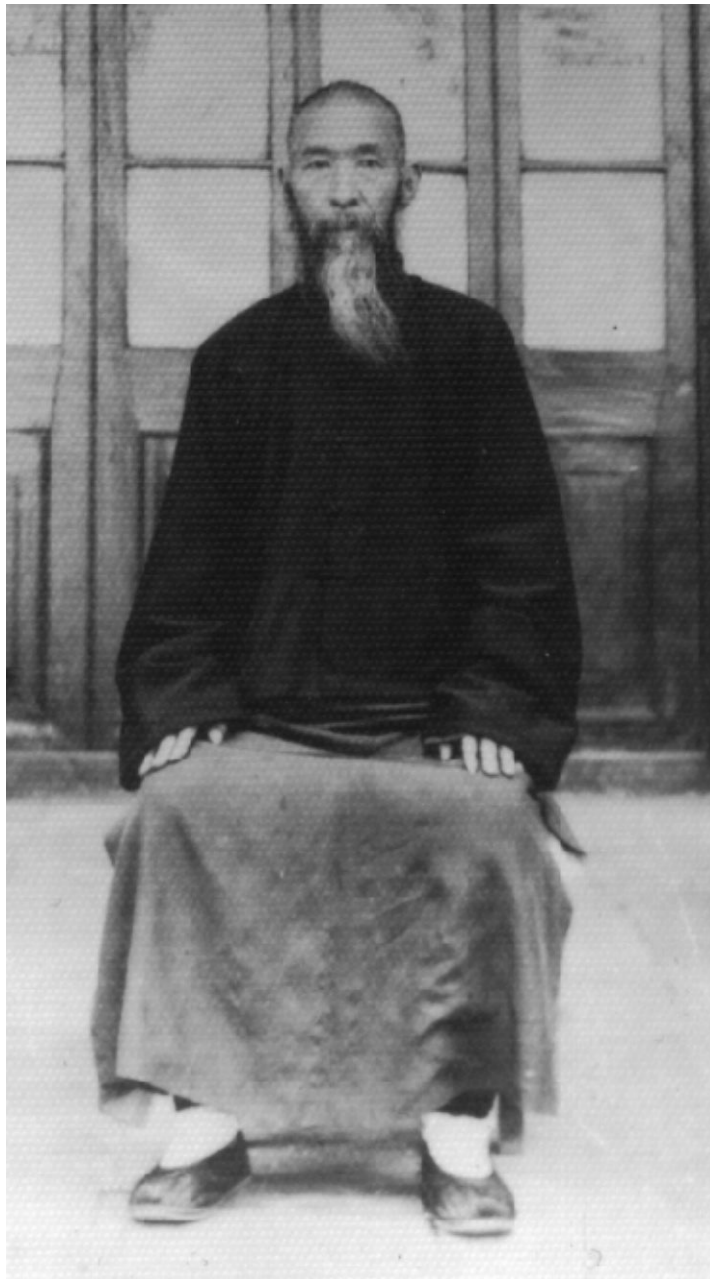
BACKGROUND

One of the most famous martial artists of all time, Sun Lu Tang mastered all three of the orthodox internal martial arts. After gaining expertise in the art of Xing Yi Quan, Sun was introduced to Cheng Ting Hua, the renowned student of Ba Gua Zhang's founder, Dong Hai Chuan. Sun Lu Tang threw himself into Ba Gua training with characteristic vigor, mastering the art in three years. Sun's forms are a variation of Cheng style Ba Gua Zhang, and are unique in that they contain the essence of the art while remaining completely devoid of extraneous movement.

In contrast to many other styles of martial arts which emphasize a myriad of forms containing exaggerated and highly stylized movements, Sun style Ba Gua Zhang teaches the alignments and methods of generating momentum precisely as they are to be applied to combat technique, all contained within ten forms on the circle. In order for movement patterns (forms applied as techniques) to be useful in stressful and unstructured situations (like a fight), they must be practiced until they are reflexive and natural. The basic philosophy of Sun style Ba Gua Zhang is to practice a limited number of practical movements until they are internalized. These movement patterns will then naturally manifest as the situation demands, resulting in technique appropriate to the situation. By practicing too many or too complicated movements, it becomes very difficult to internalize the forms until they become "part of" the practitioner. And in a real fight, techniques which require conscious deliberation before action is taken will always be too slow to be of any practical use. Sun style Ba Gua Zhang takes the basic whole-body rotational energy of the Art and branches it out into all possible variations within the bounds of combat practicality. And the Nucleus of these variations is the Single Palm Change.

SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SUN STYLE SINGLE PALM CHANGE

Being a small man, Sun Lu Tang relied on speed and skill, and this is reflected in the way he organized his forms. Sun style Ba Gua Zhang forms are done with quick and light footwork, rapid turns and a characteristic "coiling/uncoiling" method of generating power. The forms contain much evasive turning and powerful spinning motions. All of these elements are contained within the movements of the Single Palm Change. In fact, the remaining forms may be viewed as variations of the energies produced in the Single Palm Change. In contrast to many other variations of the



Sun Lu Tang

Single Palm Change, Sun's version utilizes a complete "coiling" or "wrapping up" of the body that stores energy for the subsequent "uncoiling whip." All turning is initiated from the waist and hips and the legs are moved as a single unit (with the knees, ankles and feet in constant alignment). The *Kou* (toe in) and *Bai* (toe out) steps serve to maintain the lower body alignment and set the requisite "stretch" from which the body turns are initiated. The momentum of the entire

body flows out through the arms and hands, which serve as “connections” through which momentum is transferred to the opponent. Using arm power alone is not emphasized, the power of the whole body should be expressed in every movement.

The structural alignment of the form is very important, as is maintaining relaxation. Sun style Ba Gua Zhang emphasizes a “pulling in” at the front of the hips which serves to maintain the connection between the upper and lower bodies and the ability of the waist and hips to control the movement of the body as a whole. This alignment, together with the gentle lifting of the head from the crown insures correct alignment with gravity and the ability to make full use of the inherent strengths of the body. If the buttocks are pulled under or the tailbone is pulled downward, the upper and lower body connection is severed and the ability to make use of the body’s inherent “springiness” is lost. The shoulders remain relaxed downward and the elbows feel as if they are “hanging.” The muscles remain relaxed at all times to allow free and easy movement and the smooth transference of momentum through the body.

Even the relatively small and light individual can learn to generate a tremendous amount of power if the entire body mass is coordinated into a single directional flow. The power produced transfers through the body in a wave-like fashion and into the opponent with nothing holding it back. It is important when practicing the Sun style Single Palm Change to remain relaxed and feel the wave of momentum flow through the entire body, from the bottom up. The momentum generated is expressed horizontally (rotational motion occurs in three planes, horizontal, vertical and oblique. The Single Palm Change expresses rotational momentum in the horizontal plane while the Double Palm Change expresses rotational momentum in the vertical and oblique planes). The basic footwork patterns, rotational body motion and arm movements contained in the style are included in the Single Palm Change.

In addition to teaching the basic methods of aligning the body and generating momentum-power and the basic footwork, bodywork and hand motions of the style in general, the Single Palm Change is also a blueprint for the strategy of Ba Gua Zhang as a combat art. The underlying principle of Sun style Ba Gua Zhang fighting (and most of the Cheng style variations as well) is one of a “hit and run” evasiveness. For the several thousand years before Dong Hai Chaun, theories of personal combat had mainly advocated a “toe to toe” approach to fighting. Dong’s primary contribution to the world of martial arts was a method which allowed the practitioner to apply techniques to an opponent while in constant motion. When proficient at this type of personal “guerrilla warfare,” the Ba Gua Zhang fighter could do what his opponent could not, that is apply techniques without ever stopping to allow the opponent an opportunity to mount a counterattack. Constant motion keeps the opponent off balance and vulnerable while the Ba Gua Fighter is operating “in his element.” In practical terms, Ba Gua Zhang fighters

seek to move behind the opponent or “cross” his body (turn the opponent’s body so that he is twisted off balance). These basic strategies are both implicit in the footwork of the basic circle walk and the movements of the Single Palm Change.

Finally, the Single Palm Change combined with the circle walk is excellent physical, mental and energetic exercise. Walking is among the very best natural exercises one can do. Combine the circle walk with upper body static postures and the movements of the form, all under conscious control, and the result is an exercise which improves the posture and balance, improves coordination, strengthens the muscles and connective tissue, improves cardiovascular function, increases the overall suppleness of the body and induces a state of relaxed concentration. The circle walk and forms can also be adapted to various levels of fitness. One may move slower or faster, with a higher or lower depth of stance and with greater or lesser ranges of motion as individual condition dictates. Few exercise systems offer so much from such a simple set of motions.

SINGLE PALM CHANGE MOVEMENT

Beginning Posture:

We will begin from a right guard posture, with the right foot in front of the left, the center of gravity more toward the rear foot. The waist is turned to the right about 45 degrees, with a slight inward pull at the front of the hips (photo 1). The right arm is extended in toward the center of the circle with the fingers pointing straight upward at eye level. The left arm is extended across the front of the body with the fingers pointing at the right elbow (the left fingers are separated from the right elbow by about a fist’s width). The left elbow should gently press against the left ribs. The arms are extended naturally with a slight curve at the elbows and bend at the wrists. The knees are slightly bent. The eyes look in the direction of the right index finger. Be sure to maintain relaxation and a feeling that your head is being gently lifted from the crown.

Single Palm Change:

(See photos on the next page. Sun Jian Yun’s student, Liu Yan Long is demonstrating here.)

1) The Green Dragon Pulls In Its Tail. Step up with the left foot, toe in (photos 2 through 4). Put the left foot down with the toes about a foot’s width from the toes of the right foot (the toes of the left foot will now point toward the center of the circle). The feet now form an inverted “V” shape. The hands maintain their relative positions.

2) The Green Dragon Turns Its Head. Shift the weight to the left foot and turn the body (centered at the waist) 90 degrees to the right as your right foot moves outward a half step, toeing out (photo 5). Keep the center of gravity toward the left foot, and pull in at the waist (your body will tilt forward slightly to maintain

Sun Lu Tang's Single Palm Change



1



2



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4



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6



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11



12



13



14

the correct alignments). As you turn, rotate your right hand so that your thumb points down and your palm faces out to your right side (photo 6). The right arm straightens slightly and the left hand maintains its same relative position while “following” the turning of the body. The right hand is about face height with the elbow lower than the palm. Be sure not to let the left knee twist inward out of alignment with the left toes.

3) The Black Tiger Comes Out Of The Cave. Shift the weight to the right foot and step up with the left foot (photo 7), toeing in the foot and putting it down with the toes parallel to the right foot. The toes of each foot are about a foot’s width apart and form an inverted

“V” shape. As you step, your body will turn 90 degrees to the right (you will now have your back to the center of the circle). As you turn, twist the arms so that both palms face upward. The right hand is extended in front of your chest with the fingers about forehead height. Keep the arm slightly bent at the elbow. The left hand follows the turn of the body reaching around the torso about solar plexus height with the hand “inserting” beneath the right armpit (photos 8 and 9). The body should be turned slightly to the right as you look over your right shoulder toward the center of the circle. The weight may be slightly to the left. Be sure the knees point in the same direction as the toes.

4) The Green Dragon Turns Its Body. Shift the weight

to the right foot and allow the body to begin turning left (photos 10 and 11), with the hands maintaining the same relative positions, following the turning of the body. When the body has turned approximately 90 degrees, turn the left foot out and move it to the left a half step (photo 12). Simultaneously, the left hand follows the curve of the bottom of the right arm (there should be no gap between the left palm and bottom of the right forearm as the left hand travels outward), moving slightly upward and swinging out toward the center of the circle. The left arm swings out as the momentum of the turning body is transferred into the arm. The right palm moves down into position under the left elbow (photo 13). Continue turning the waist to the left until you are in a mirror image of the stance in which you began. You are now in a left guard stance and have completed the Single Palm Change (photo 14).

It is helpful to practice the movements of the Change slowly and smoothly at first, paying attention to the alignments and relaxation. The Single Palm Change should feel relaxed, smooth and comfortable. Once familiar with the form, the speed may be increased, as long as the basic principles are not violated. Look for an overall feeling of the whole body moving in a supple unit, feeling a wave of force moving up through the entire body.

APPLICATIONS

It is important to realize that the forms of Ba Gua Zhang do not correspond to single specific techniques. Each form teaches a particular method of generating momentum. The energy produced follows a specific pattern. These patterns or waves of momentum are often referred to in Chinese as "*jing*." Each of these various *Jings* may be applied to any number of actual fighting techniques. Following are two of the numerous possible applications of the strategies and energies of the Single Palm Change. Please note in the following techniques that the applications follow precisely the movements and energies of the form. In fact the techniques, when correctly applied on the opponent, should require no more effort than the form done in the air.

Technique One:

This technique illustrates the Ba Gua Zhang combat strategy of circling behind the opponent. The technique is a throw which involves the energies and momentum generated from the circle walk into the first two movements of the form, the Green Dragon Pulls In Its Tail and the Green Dragon Turns Its Head. The key to the throw is to circle around the opponent, joining centers with him and pulling him into your momentum flow, finally causing him to project backward onto the ground. It should be noted that the exact same sequence can be transformed into a striking technique by simply focusing the power of the movement into single points of application.

This first technique is shown on the next page

as follows:

- 1)** The opponent lunges in with a right punch to the face (photos through 3).
- 2)** Tim moves forward, moving off the attack line by stepping outside and around the blow (photo 4). He simultaneously raises his arms into the guard position and deflects the blow along its line of attack (thus avoiding a collision with the incoming force).
- 3)** Continuing in the basic circle walk pattern, Tim begins to move in and around to the rear of the opponent. He simultaneously extends his right palm into the opponent's face (photo 5), striking him and disturbing his intent.
- 4)** Tim now steps around behind the opponent, toeing in his left foot (The Green Dragon Pulls In Its Tail) as his left forearm presses against the opponent's lower back (joining centers with the opponent - photos 6 and 7). Note: the movement of the left arm may also be expressed as a horizontal elbow strike to the opponent's kidney.
- 5)** Changing the circular momentum into a rotation around his centerline, Tim transfers the momentum of the spin through his points of contact into the opponent's body (The Green Dragon Turns Its Head), causing the opponent to project rearward and fall on his back (photos 8 through 10).

Technique Two:

In this technique the strategic principle of crossing the opponent is illustrated. The energies used are taken from the final two movements of the form, The Black Tiger Comes Out Of The Cave and The Green Dragon Turns Its Body. The angle and body turn of the first form movement are used to set the opponent up by crossing his body in preparation for the sweep which follows. This technique is illustrative of the whole body power inherent in the motions of the forms. Both arms or the arms and legs may be employed simultaneously during one wave of momentum through the body.

The second technique is shown on page 29 as follows:

- 1)** The opponent grabs Tim with both hands for a front choke (photos 1 through 3).
- 2)** Tim reaches straight up with both hands, gently holding the opponent's wrists. Holding the opponent's hands in place, Tim steps back at an angle with his left foot, moving away from the choke without confronting the opponent's force directly (photos 4 and 5).
- 3)** Tim immediately crosses the opponent's arms, swinging them from the opponent's shoulders where they naturally pivot, thereby setting up the angle for the subsequent throw (The Black Tiger Comes Out Of The Cave). See photos 6 and 7.
- 4)** Tim continues by swinging his left arm up from

Single Palm Change Application #1



1



2



3



4



5



6



7 - front view



7 - back view



8



9



10

Single Palm Change Application #2



1



2



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9

below the opponent's left arm, catching his stationary arm and pulling it across the opponent's body with a turn of his waist (photos 6 and 7).

5) Continuing the momentum, Tim pulls the opponent's arm out, crossing the opponent's body and unbalancing him as he simultaneously sweeps the opponent's right foot with his left, throwing the opponent to the ground (The Green Dragon Turns Its Body).

The reader should note that this is a particularly hard fall as the twisted body position of the opponent makes it impossible for him to "slap out" and break the fall.

(The author would like to thank Terry Spalding for acting as the "opponent" in the techniques).

Tim Cartmell, who was featured in the last issue of the Pa Kua Chang Journal, is one of the top students of Ba Gua instructor Luo De Xiu of Taipei, Taiwan and has also studied the Sun style of Ba Gua Zhang in Beijing, China with Sun Lu Tang's daughter Sun Jian Yun, and one of Sun Jian Yun's students Liu Yang Long.

Tim Cartmell currently teaches Ba Gua in Westminster, CA. Those interested in studying with him or asking questions about his article can write to him or call him utilizing the address and phone number of the back page of this Journal.

Martial Arts Strategy: Two Enlightening Classics

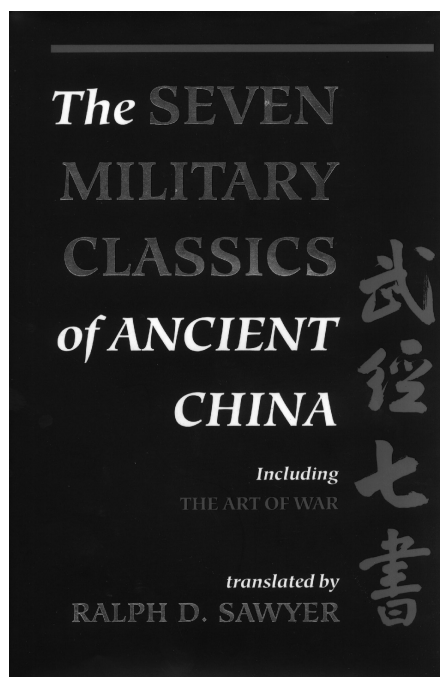
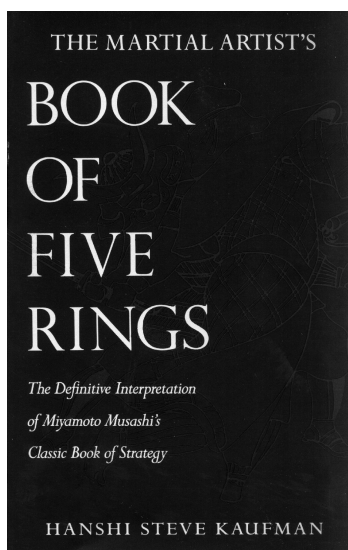
We have never run book reviews here in the *Pa Kua Chang Journal* in the past, however, within the last year two new books have been published which I think are worth recommending to Journal readers. Both of these works are translations of Asian classics which address the topic of strategy. These books are: *The Martial Artist's Book of Five Rings* translated by Hanshi Steve Kaufman and *The Seven Military Classics of Ancient China* translated by Ralph D. Sawyer.

Anyone who is involved in the study of combative arts should consider the serious study of strategy in warfare. Practicing technique and form is absolutely necessary, however, in only studying technique and form a student will never reach a depth of understanding required for the advancing of the martial art beyond technique and form. Going beyond technique and form means that the student grasps the principles, tactics, theories, and strategies of the art and can therefore make variations and adaptations appropriate to changing situations.

If one is involved in the study of an Asian martial tradition, it would make sense that the student would strive to study the classics of Asian war. These classics have formed the basis for the fighting theory and philosophy from which our present day martial arts draw their knowledge.

The *Seven Military Classics of Ancient China* (which includes *The Art of War*) were required study by all military scholars in China prior to the Republican period. These books formed the basis for the imperial examinations required for martial appointment in the government. As such, we can imagine that the contents of these classics formed the basis for all martial ideas and strategies in China. All of these classics emphasize outwitting the opponent through speed, stealth, flexibility, and a minimum of force.

The principles and strategies discussed in these classics are exactly those that are employed in Ba Gua Zhang and Xing Yi Quan, so any practitioner of the internal martial arts will gain valuable insight into



the study of their art by researching the ancient ideas which formed the strategies we now practice in our arts today.

Most individuals who are familiar with the classic written works of China know of *The Art of War*, however, the other six classics of Chinese military thought have not been as available in the English language. In fact, they have only really been known to a handful of Western specialists prior to the publishing of this present work. Sawyer's book provides the researcher with all of these classics in one book.

Whereas the *Seven Military Classics* provides a broad range of strategic topics presented from the viewpoint of winning battles with Armies, *The Book of Five Rings* is a personal journal written by

Miyamoto Musashi, one of the most widely acclaimed warriors in history. Musashi's introduction begins, "My name is Miyamoto Musashi. I have killed over sixty men in fights and duels." Anyone who is interested in the study of close combat will immediately be drawn to read on from an introduction like that!

Musashi draws from his fighting experiences and instincts and forms a sound strategy for combat. His strategy has been studied in great depth by martial artist, political and military leaders, and businessmen. The real value of this particular translation for the martial artist is that it was translated and presented with the martial artist in mind.

Most of the previous translations of this book have been presented for business strategy. But, as Kaufman writes in his introduction, "This is not another book about Japanese business strategy. There is a significant difference between not getting a deal signed and having your head cut off. Business is mental. War is mental and physical. The true warrior has no difficulty understanding this difference regardless of all the hype suggesting that "business is war." It absolutely is *not*."

Both of these translated classics offer much to any student of martial arts. These books are both now available from High View Publications. Call 800-413-8296 to order.

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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.

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John Painter	Santa Monica, CA	21-23 July 95	Matthew Cohen (310) 392-6788
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Pa Kua Chang Instructors Directory

Frank Allen
342 E. 9th St.
New York, NY 10003
477-7055

Bai Guang Tao, O.M.D.
P.O. Box 1307
Norwich, VT 05055

Loriano Belluomini
S. Andrea Di Compito 55065
Lucca, Italy
0583/977051

Tom Bisio
293 Church St.
New York, NY 10013
(212) 226-3140

Vince Black, O.M.D.
P. O. Box 36235
Tucson, AZ 85740
(602) 544-4838

John Bracy
151 Kalmus, #M-7-B
Costa Mesa, CA 92626
(714) 557-8959

Jim Burchfield
4168 South Saginaw St.
Burton, MI 48529
(313) 743-1450
1350 14 Mile Rd., Suite 103
Clawson, MI 48017
(810) 280-2788

Tim Cartmell
7361 Brooklawn Dr.
Westminster, CA
(714) 896-9531

Kwok Chan
P.O. Box 1642
Kingston, Ontario
Canada K7L 5C8
(613) 546-2116

Col. (Ret.) Y.W. Chang
2729 Palmer Ave.
New Orleans, LA 70118
(504) 861-4283

Peter Chema
60 McLean Ave.
Yonkers, NY 10705
(914) 965-9789

Wai Lun Choi
2054 West Irving Park Road
Chicago, IL 60618
(312) 472-3331

Robert Clair
Box 6291
Carmel, CA 93921
(408) 394-7921

Joseph Crandall
1564A Fitzgerald Dr. #110
Pinole, CA 94564
(510) 223-9336

James C. Cravens
1040 D West Prospect
Oakland Park, FL 33309
(305) 938-6992

Daniel Crawford
Peaceable Hill
Brewster, NY 10509
(914) 278-2558

Kenneth S. Cohen
P.O. Box 234
Nederland, CO 80466
(303) 258-7806

Andrew Dale
P.O. Box 77040
Seattle, WA 98133
(206) 283-0055

Frank DeMaria
105 Kramers Pond Rd.
Putnam Valley, NY 10579
(914) 528-3192

Joe Dunphy
211 N. Fredrick Ave.
Gaithersburg, MD 20877
(301) 921-0003

Joseph Eagar
150 E. Mariposa
Phoenix, AZ 85012
(602) 264-4222

Larry C. Eshelman
2814 Broad Ave.
Altoona, PA 16602
(814) 941-9998

Rex Eastman
Box 566, Nelson, B.C.
Canada V1L 5R3
(604) 352-3714

Dan Farber
173 Jersey St.
Marblehead, MA 01945
(617) 631-6966

Bryant Fong
P. O. Box 210159
San Francisco, CA 94121
(415) 753-3838

Robert Fong
P.O. Box 2424
Bellingham, WA 98227

Kumar Frantzis
1 Cascade Drive
Fairfax, CA 94930
(415) 454-5243

Glenn Guerin
134 E. Kings Highway
Shreveport, LA 71104
(318) 865-3578

Kenny Gong
241 Center St. 31 Fl
New York, NY 10013
(212) 966-2406

Nick Gracenin
28 North Pine Street
Sharon, PA 16146
(412) 983-1126

Chris Gulbrandson
P.O. Box 531
King's Beach, CA 96143
(916) 546-8733

Paul Hannah, MD.
4729 S. Greenwood
Chicago, IL 60615
(312) 268-7339

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

Ray Hayward
2242 University Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55114
(612) 874-6867

Benjamin Hill
1626 Sedwick Ave
Bronx, NY 10453
(718) 294-6403

Adam Hsu
P.O. Box 1075
Cupertino, CA 95015
(408) 973-8762

George Hu
2206 Woodlake Park Drive
Houston, TX 77077
(713) 493-3795

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

Jerry Alan Johnson
P.O. Box 52144
Pacific Grove, CA 93950
(408) 646-9399

Stanley Johnson
847 Jadewood Dr.
Dallas, TX 75232
(214) 283-9136

Jan Lane
346 East 9th Street
New York, NY 10003
(212) 777-3284

Stephen Laurette
123 Madison St.
New York, NY 10002
(212) 629-2004

Johnny Kwong Ming Lee
3826 Manatee Ave W
Brendanton, FL 34205
747-0123

Leung Kay Chi
53 River Street
Central Square, MA 02139
(617) 497-4459

Shouyu Liang
7951 No4 Road
Richmond, B.C., Canada
V6Y2T4
(604) 273-9648

Lin Chao Zhen
685 Geary St. P.O. Box 502
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 921-6978

Lin Chih-Young
84-35 Corona Ave
Elmhurst, NY 11373
(718) 779-5909

Lin Chun-Fu
Centinial Park
Tustin, CA
(714) 921-1573

Edgar Livingston
224 South Haven St.
Baltimore, MD 21224
(301) 732-4890

Kevin Lovas
3852 Parkdale
Cleve Hts, OH 44121
(216) 382-6759

Ron Loving
8915 Rockwell Dr.
Oklahoma City, OK 73132
(405) 728-8462

Nan Lu, O.M.D.
396 Broadway, 5th Floor
New York, NY 10013
(212) 274-0999

Ron Matthews
118 Marshall Road
Lowell, MA 01852
(508) 459-1604

Ray McRae
30 W. Carter Dr.
Tempe, AZ 85282
(602) 345-1831

Bow Sim Mark
246 Harrison Ave
Boston, MA 02111
(617) 426-0958

Dan Miller
620 Lighthouse Ave.
Pacific Grove, CA 93950
(408) 655-2990

Harrison Moretz
8007 Greenwood Ave. N.
Seattle, WA 98103
(206) 784-5632

Al-Waalee Muhammad
P.O. Box 301216
Houston, TX 77230-1216
(713) 661-2107

Bonnie Newman
52870 E. Cherryhill Dr.
Sandy, OR 97055
(503) 622-4041

Dr. John Painter
P.O. Box 1777
Arlington, TX 76004-1777
(817) 860-0129

William Palmeri
16404 North Aspen Dr.
Fountain Hills, AZ 85268

Park Bok Nam
11101 Midlothian Turnpike
Richmond, VA 23235
(804) 794-8384

Mike Patterson
8204 Parkway Drive
La Mesa, CA 92041
(619) 698-6389

Richard & Iva Peck
7312 Zelpchia Cir.
Plano, TX 75025
(214) 380-9070

Shannon Kawika Phelps
P.O. Box 234
Del Mar, CA 92014
(619) 792-8026

Allen Pittman
P.O. Box 450394
Atlanta, GA 31145
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Wilson Pitts
316 S. Cherry St.
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Chris Quayle
1160 East Apple Way
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Peter Ralston
6601 Telegraph Ave
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Russell Sauls
3438 Hwy 66
Rowlett, TX
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Rick Schmoyer
1907 Electric St.
Dunmore, PA 18512

Sheng Lung Fu
116 East Pender St.
Vancouver, B.C. Canada
432-1153

Jacopo Silicani
Via Sette Martiri, 32
35143 Padova, Italy

Michael Smith
8511 #2 Rd.
Richmond, B.C. Canada
(604) 241-0172

Edward Star
1220 Market, N.E.
Salem, OR 97301

Ronald Statler
1 Remsen Rd. Apt 3A
Yonkers, NY 10710
(914) 969-6667

Gary Stier, O.M.D.
2300 Lake Austin Blvd.
Austin, TX 78703
(512) 445-1950

G. S. Torres
932 15th St. Suite #4
Miami Beach, FL 33139

Carl Totton
10630 Burbank Blvd.
No. Hollywood, CA 91601
(818) 760-4219

Jason Tsou
330 S. San Gabriel Blvd.
San Gabriel, CA 91776
(818) 287-0811

Eric Tuttle
P.O. Box 2166
Kingston, Ontario
Canada K7L-5J9
(613) 542-9025

Larry Walden
3806 Olympic Blvd. W.
Tacoma, WA 98466
(206) 564-6600

Li Wang
440 Hawkeye Ct.
Iowa City, IA 52246
(319) 353-4599

Timothy Warfield
5th & Lehman St.'s
Lebanon, PA 17046
(717) 274-9840

Alex Wang
3314 Venables St.
Vancouver, B.C. Canada
(604) 251-1809

Brian Weatherly
4846 Gary Rd.
Bonita Springs, FL 33923
(813) 495-3919

Martin Werner
510 N. Alma School #173
Mesa, AZ 85201-5458
(602) 969-9471

Y.C. Wong
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

James Wu
24156 Kathy Ave.
El Toro, CA 92630
(714) 583-1096

Wen-Ching Wu
PO Box 14561
East Providence, RI 02914
(401) 435-6502

George Xu
4309 Lincoln Way
San Francisco, CA 94122
(415) 664-4578

Yang Shu-Ton
290 West Ave., Suite D
Tallmadge, OH 44278
(216) 633-1914

Jane Yao
50 Golden Gate Ave, Apt 502
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 771-7380

Robert Lin-I Yu
2113 Sommers Ave.
Madison, WI 53704
(608) 241-5506

253 East Fourth St., Third Floor
St. Paul, MN 55101
(612) 291-1080

Yu Cheng Huang
P.O. Box 166851
Chicago, IL 60616-6851
(708) 679-3113

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

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

Zhang Jie
1402 Northeast 155th St.
Seattle, WA 98155
(206) 368-0699

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

Zhang Hong-Chao
3729 North Ravenswood
Chicago, IL 60613
(312) 883-1016

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