

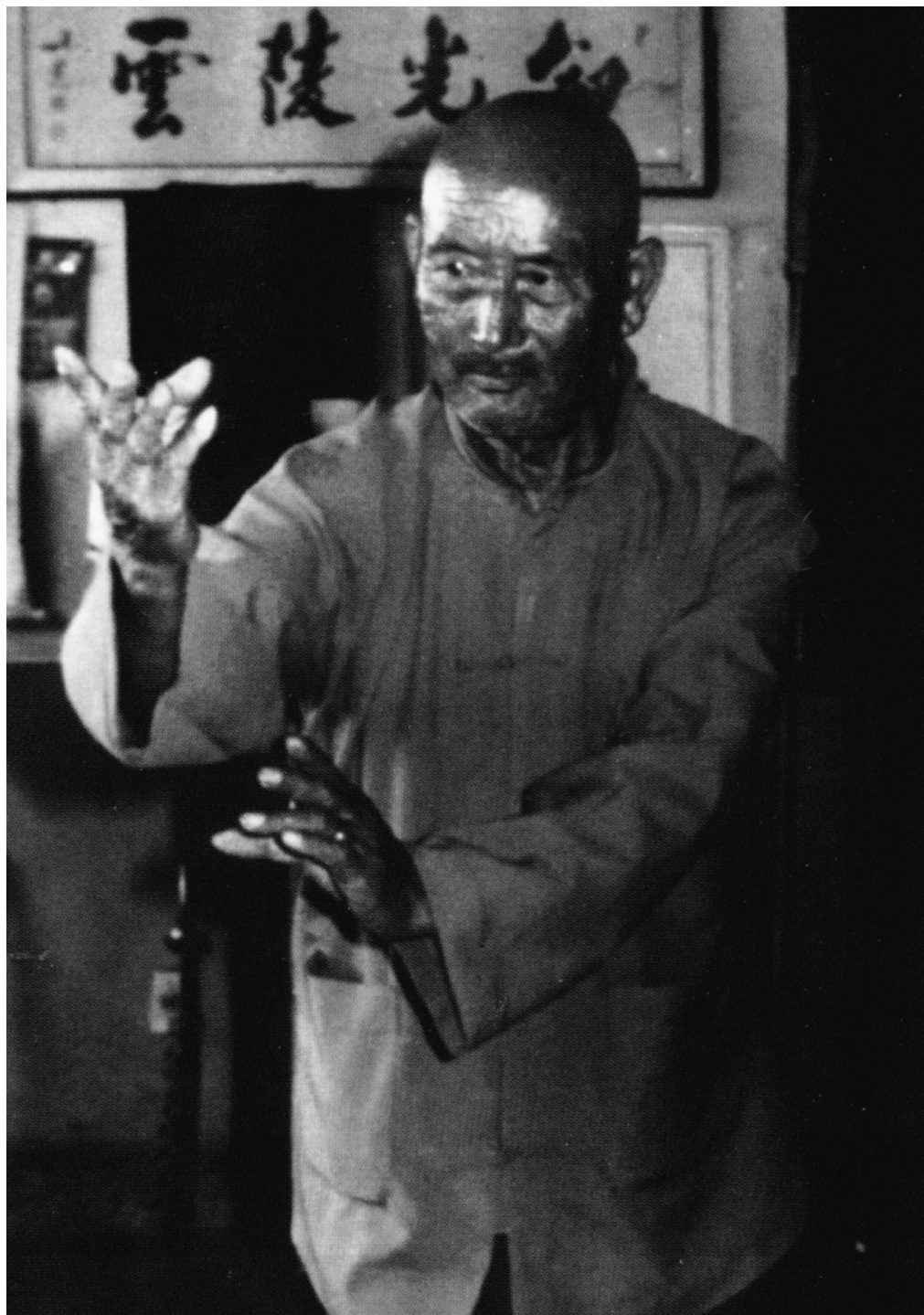


# *Pa Kua Chang* JOURNAL

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## The Ba Gua of Lu Shui Tian

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## **Pa Kua Chang** JOURNAL

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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.

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.

We solicit comments and/or suggestions.  
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## **Editor's Corner**

### **Thanks for Your Support**

I want to thank everyone who has called, emailed, faxed, and written to offer kind words about the *Pa Kua Chang Journal* and wish us well in our future endeavors. I wish that we had the time, energy, and money it would take to keep this journal going, however, we have reached the point in this small market where the effort is no longer worth the return.

I would be remiss if I did not extend thanks to all of those individuals who have helped support this journal from the beginning. Thanks to everyone who has written for us and thanks to our subscribers for supporting us.

I would also like to send special thanks to the following people: First and foremost, Ken Fish: If it wasn't for Ken, we would never have been able to bring our readers a fraction of the information that was made available over the years. Ken and I spent hours combing through literally hundreds of old magazines from Taiwan, mainland China, and Hong Kong to find articles about Ba Gua and then spent hours and hours in his office translating those articles. Ken would translate the articles in "real time," reading them aloud and I would write down every word that he said. Thanks for all you work Ken!

Other translators have also paid a very important role in helping to bring you this publication. I would like to thank Kent Howard for helping to arrange my first trip to Taiwan and introducing me to the one and only Bill Tucker. I would like to thank Bill for being a great translator, guide, friend, and savior. If it wasn't for Bill, I might be in a Chinese jail somewhere right now. Bill, thanks for helping me escape from China and I swear I will never tell anyone about that pig in the Cheng family village.

I also want to thank Tim Cartmell for being the best of translators, a great traveling companion, good friend, and working so hard for so little return. Other translators who deserve thanks are Huang Guo Qi and Xu Yu Hong. Also, a couple of people in China, Kang Ge Wu and Liang Ke Quan, were responsible for providing introductions to most of the Ba Gua

*continued on page 21*

### **On the Cover**

Ba Gua teacher Lu Shui Tian

# Ba Gua Principles - The Foundation of the Ba Gua of Lu Shui Tian

By Francis M. Hriadil,  
Boston Student Group

As students of the martial arts, we are all engaged in a quest for knowledge and truth. No matter what style or system we practice, we all hope to achieve the highest levels of skill and health that are attainable. We recognize that skill in self-defense provides little without health because, without health, skill will not last. Also, health without skill in self-defense is not martial art, and provides few options should a physical confrontation arise. Both elements are essential to the full and complete development of any martial arts practitioner.

The wise among us know this, and understand that this pursuit involves a life-style commitment and a life long dedication. Excellence comes through hard work, discipline, and sacrifice. It cannot be achieved in a month, in a year, or even ten years. There is always room to grow and always more to learn. This does not mean that progress comes through studying many forms, styles, or systems. Excellence comes more through concentration and focus. Learning "deep" is more critical than learning "much" or "many." A fighter who is expert at a few techniques will always defeat an opponent who knows many techniques but is expert at none.

In any human endeavor, knowledge and skill come at a price and with an obligation. This obligation is responsibility -- the responsibility to use one's knowledge with wisdom and benevolence, to execute one's skill with justice and bravery, to uphold one's heritage with honor and sincerity, and to present one's achievements with accuracy and humility.

There are literally hundreds of systems and styles, and thousands of forms and techniques. Which system is best? Which style should you study? Which form is most impressive? Which techniques are most effective? There are probably as many different opinions about these questions as there are proponents of the various martial arts. What remains the same, no matter what martial art is considered, is that it is based on the use of two hands, two legs, and one body. The key in assessing any martial art is how these body elements are integrated and coordinated into a cohesive and comprehensive method of attack and defense.

Fundamental to the effectiveness and longevity of any martial art are the principles, or foundation, upon which that art is built. A system or style without sound principles is just a collection of techniques. While each technique may work in a number of

situations, no one technique will work in all situations. Without a basis in principle, the approach or method is limited. The practitioner will eventually encounter an opponent who uses one or more techniques not covered in his or her repertoire. This often leads practitioners to look to other styles to augment, or even replace, their primary martial system. A martial art based on sound principles always provides a solution to any new fighting situation or circumstance. In this way, the system remains flexible, adaptable, and "fresh".

Without a comprehensive set of principles, there



**Ba Gua instructor Lu Shui Tian of Shandong Province, China**



**Lu Shui Tian (1894-1978)**

is little depth. Students will practice the "repertoire" for a number of years. They may even become good at what they do. But, after reaching a certain level, their progress or development will slow and eventually stop. Over time, these same students will likely become bored. Also as age, poor health, or poor training methods begin to affect their abilities, they will become frustrated at their progressive loss of skill. Each such student will likely reflect on his or her martial arts career and begin to question its value. Is this all there is? What have I really gained or accomplished? Is there something more? All are natural questions. These students will then start to look elsewhere, and may even quit training altogether.

What is characteristic of any system based on sound fundamental principles is that there is great depth to the art. A student can never become bored or outgrow the system because there are always deeper levels to research and develop. A system with depth addresses

the health of the practitioner, as well as the level of fitness and skill. A system with depth is adaptable to changing conditions and circumstances. A system with depth provides the practitioner with capabilities, rewards, and benefits that are lasting and will not be lost over time. A system with depth enables the practitioner to continue to improve, progress, and excel even as he or she ages, because it is not based simply on raw strength or speed.

It is no easy task to find such a martial art; there are literally hundreds of styles and systems to choose from. Selecting the right system, however, is only part of the problem facing the student. Finding the right teacher is also of critical importance. The student can never make significant progress in any system if the instructor is not proficient or is not willing to teach. The task is to find:

- one who knows
- one who can teach
- one who will teach

Finding such an instructor locally is generally not possible. In the modern era, however, it is much easier for the student to travel to "the mountain" or even arrange to have "the mountain" travel to him. But, the question still remains "Which is the right mountain?"

The dilemma of the teacher is not an easy one either. Here, I am not speaking of those engaged in the "business" of mass marketing the martial arts, and whose chief interest is the pursuit of fame and wealth. True masters (whether they are called "sifu" or "sensei" or something else) recognize their obligation to uphold and honor their heritage. As such, they are always concerned with finding students of good character - students who will not misuse and abuse their art. It generally becomes apparent (to those students who take the time to really look) whether the atmosphere in a school is "right", whether the instructor has the interests of his/her students at heart, or whether the instructor is engaged in some self-serving, personal agenda.

What? Who? And, where? All are important questions that must be addressed by the prospective student. I do not intend to carry out a comparison of all the systems, styles, and teachers that are out there. I do not profess to be qualified to do so. I do have my opinions on certain issues; others have theirs. The intent here is to try to summarize some important considerations that may serve as a reasonable basis for others to use in assessing whatever system or school they are considering.

You may now be asking -- what martial art do I study? I am engaged in the study of the Pa-Kua Chang of Lu Shui-T'ien, as taught by Sifu Bok-Nam Park. Pa-Kua is one of the primary internal systems of the Chinese martial arts -- the others being Tai-Chi Chaun and Hsing-I Chuan. The origin of Pa-Kua Chang (a.k.a. Eight Diagram Palms) is uncertain and is a matter of continuing historical research. There are many excellent articles on Pa-Kua in the Pa-Kua Journal

that are available to the reader for review, and there are a number of books available in the market-place. Basically, Pa-Kua, at its best, integrates chi-kung, meditation, physical conditioning, and scientifically based fighting principles into a complete and comprehensive martial discipline. Perhaps best known for its distinctive "circle walking" training methods, Pa-Kua is also renowned for its highly evasive footwork, powerful palm strikes, snake-like body movements, and lightning-fast combinations.

"Why did I choose Pa-Kua?" and "Why with Sifu Park?" -- simply because the Pa-Kua of Lu Shui-T'ien and Sifu Park embodies all of the attributes and characteristics which I believe are important and essential. This is not to say that there are not other systems and teachers that are good. All I can say without reservation is that I, and others like me, feel fortunate that fate has provided us with the opportunity to study Pa-Kua under the expert guidance of Sifu Bok-Nam Park. My hope is that you have the opportunity to see Sifu Park's books, and/or attend one of his seminars. They are not expensive and I have no doubt that you will recognize the depth and value of the information that is presented.

I study Pa-Kua with Sifu Park as part of the Boston student group. This group was formed in September 1995 by a number of seminar attendees. The group is composed of martial arts practitioners from a wide variety of backgrounds. Experience varies from as little as one year to over 40 years. Previous styles of group members range from Tai-Chi, Shao-lin, Hsing-I, Wing-Chun, Pa-Kua, Wu-Shu, Uechi-ryu Karate, Goju-Ryu Karate, Hung-Gar, Aikido, and Jujitsu. Each student found his way to Pa-Kua and Sifu Park via a different route; however, all joined the group because they recognized the depth of the Pa-Kua of Lu Shui-T'ien, the critical importance of the principles upon which it is based, and the excellence and openness of Sifu Bok-Nam Park.

It is beyond the scope of this article to present the whole of Pa-Kua as taught by Sifu Park. Since I have mentioned the importance of principles and "depth" a number of times, I will attempt to illustrate them in the context of the method of Lu Shui-T'ien. Although the origin of the Pa-Kua of Lu Shui-T'ien is unknown, what is known is that the philosophy and principles forming the basis of his art were derived from nature. As such, they are rooted in the real world, and are governed by the laws of physics and human physiology. They are not gifts from the gods, nor are they based on magic or mysticism. Anyone with proper instruction and training can learn this art.

What makes the method of Lu Shui-T'ien unique is its recognition of sound principles as the foundation of a martial art. In the case of Pa-Kua specifically, Lu Shui-T'ien stressed the critical importance of the trinity concept principle. The trinity concept was identified as the key to the strength and flexibility of Pa-Kua. It even manifests itself in the structure of the diagrams, or Trigrams, that constitute the symbol

for Pa-Kua itself.

There are many trinities of significance in Pa-Kua. The first and foremost trinity, the fundamental trinity, the trinity that forms the foundation of the Pa-Kua of Lu Shui-T'ien consists of the following three basic principles:

- The Principle of Yin and Yang
- The Principle of the Five Elements or Phases
- The Principle of Change (from the Book of Changes or I-Ching)

Yin and Yang are defined as complementary opposites such as up/down, soft/hard, in/out, left/right, front/back, receiving/issuing, heavy/light, internal/external, empty/full, fast/slow, etc. In Pa-Kua, the practitioner seeks a control and balance of Yin and Yang in every aspect of the art -- every



**Lu Shui Tian with his senior student  
Park Bok Nam in Korea**



**Park Bok Nam with members of the Boston Student Group, Boston, MA, 1996**

movement, every technique, and every method. This includes achieving a balance in training between self-defense (fighting and power methods which are Yang) and health (energy building and meditation methods which are Yin). In Pa-Kua, states of Yin and Yang are neither static nor are they absolute. Nothing is ever completely Yin or completely Yang. And, there is always a controlled dynamic interplay in which Yin and Yang are moved, interchanged, and varied in a continuous manner.

The Five Elements or Phases are identified as Water, Wood, Fire, Earth, and Metal. Each element has its own inherent and distinctive characteristics, as its name implies. In addition, there are specific constructive and destructive inter-relationships between the elements.

- Water creates Wood.
- Water destroys Fire.
- Wood creates Fire.
- Wood destroys Earth.
- Fire creates Earth.
- Fire destroys Metal.
- Earth creates Metal.
- Earth destroys Water.
- Metal creates Water.
- Metal destroys Wood.

These inter-relationships provide a system of checks and balances, and interplay between the various components. Those elements in excess can be

diminished through the application of the appropriate destructive principles. Those elements that are depleted can be restored through the application of the appropriate creative principles. As with Yin and Yang, the Five Elements are never static; they are dynamic. The practitioner seeks a continuous control and balance of the elements in every aspect of the art of Pa-Kua.

The Principle of Change from the I-Ching, or Book of Changes, acknowledges the fundamental, all-encompassing principle of change in the universe. The rule of nature is that everything changes; nothing remains static. Change may come fast or slow and may be large or small; nevertheless, change is inevitable. It is a continuous and on-going process. However, change is not haphazard. There are patterns of change inherent in nature and in human life. The Trigrams that comprise the symbol for Pa-Kua codify these naturally occurring processes in a systematic way.

Adaptability or change represents the foremost principle of Pa-Kua. The practitioner trains to respond and adapt instantly to any situation or circumstance. As in nature, nothing in Pa-Kua is static or fixed. Movements and techniques can be applied along linear, angular, or circular paths; can be applied in any combination; and can be varied as required, according to the underlying principles.

Some of these concepts may already be familiar to students of the Chinese martial arts, but the Pa-Kua of Lu Shui-T'ien is unique in the way these elements are integrated and incorporated. Every aspect of

the Pa-Kua of Lu Shui-T'ien (its strategies, tactics, methods, movements, and techniques) is derived from and based upon this fundamental trinity. If any one of these components is missing, then the training, method, or movement is unbalanced and incomplete. From the perspective of the disciples of Lu Shui-T'ien, all martial arts and martial techniques require a trinity of this nature to work properly. If they do not possess such a basis, then it is viewed as a deficiency or weakness which can be exploited to martial advantage.

Theory or philosophy for its own sake provides only intellectual satisfaction. Unless theory and philosophy can be applied efficiently and effectively in the physical world, it offers little benefit to the martial artist in a fight or confrontation. Sifu Bok-Nam Park stresses the practical manifestation of the trinity in all aspects of training. He teaches a system of fighting and training formulas based on many trinity combinations. One example is the general formula for fighting skill indicated below:

**Fighting Skill = Body Skill + Speed Skill + Internal Power** [a TRINITY]

where: **Body Skill = Hand Skill + Trunk Skill + Stepping Skill** [a TRINITY]

**Speed Skill = Degree + Distance + Joints** [a TRINITY]

**Internal Power = Qi Control + Striking Mechanics**

where: **Qi Control = Breathing + Body Posture/Movement + Mental Concentration** [a TRINITY]

**Striking Mechanics = Palm Striking Mechanics + Elbow Striking Mechanics + Multiple Combination Mechanics** [a TRINITY]

Each component of this formula is broken down further into lower level formulas composed of more basic elements.

Since it is principle-based and not merely technique-based, there is no way to strictly define Pa-Kua. Pa-Kua is not fixed or static; it changes as the circumstances require and it changes in some respect with each disciple who practices the art. As long as these changes remain true to the underlying root principles, Pa-Kua will survive and flourish. Pa-Kua acknowledges that all individuals have their own unique nature, character, and personality. According to the traditional method, each student is taught the art in a personal way that is unique to that student. No two students are trained exactly alike. This is opposite to the current trend in the martial arts to "standardize" -- to teach the identical choreographed movements, techniques, and methods to all students regardless of size, aptitude, or character. While students trained in this manner may learn the "surface" of a system, they will never be able to master the "depths" of any high level art. In addition, any martial system that becomes rigidly fixated on a particular set of techniques is destined to

stagnate and become outdated.

Sifu Park, according to the method of Lu Shui-T'ien, starts by teaching the student the fundamental importance of the trinity concept principles. These principles are discussed before any training begins. Students are taught to identify their individual strengths and weaknesses.

Over time, they are put on an individually prescribed training program that is designed to strengthen their weaknesses and capitalize on their strengths. Emphasis is placed on learning and understanding the underlying principles of Pa-Kua as they apply to the student's own individual body type and character.

The student begins by practicing certain drills or techniques; however, as the student progresses, he or she must look beyond the surface movements to the underlying principles. Making superficial attachments to specific attack and defense movements will severely limit the student's development in Pa-Kua. It is not enough to simply understand the "how" of a method and the "when" of a method. To truly progress, the student must "complete the trinity" and comprehend the "why" of a method as well. Without a proper understanding of the "why" of a method, the student will never fully grasp the underlying principles.

The final trinity concept that will be mentioned



**Ba Gua instructor Park Bok Nam**

## Six Year Anniversary Back Issue Sale

With the previous issue of the *Pa Kua Chang Journal*, we reached our sixth anniversary. In order to help those of you complete your collection of back-issues, or at least find the back issues that may be of interest to you, we have grouped the back issues into the following categories and are offering them at discount prices as long as supplies last (prices listed **do** include shipping costs):

**The Complete Back-Issue Package:** All 36 issues for the low price of \$100 (less than \$3.00 per issue). Postage is included in the US. Foreign countries add \$10.

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The following packages all contain all issue pertaining to the Ba Gua lineages indicated:

**The Gao Yi Sheng Package:** Vol. 2, No. 3; Vol. 3, No. 5; Vol. 4, No. 2; Vol. 6, No. 5, Four issues: \$12.00

**The Liang Zhen Pu Package:** Vol. 3, No. 3; Vol 4, No. 3; Vol. 5, No. 1; Vol. 6, No. 3; Vol 6, No. 4. Five Issues: \$15.00.

**The Liu Shui Tian Package:** Vol. 1, No. 6; Vol. 2, No. 1; Vol. 2, No. 2; Vol. 2, No. 3; Vol. 2, No. 4; Vol. 2, No. 5; Vol. 5, No. 3; Vol. 6, No. 2; Vol. 6, No. 3. Nine issues: \$27.00.

**The Fu Zhen Song Package:** Vol. 1, No. 3; Vol. 2, No. 6; Vol. 5, No. 2; Vol. 6, No. 6. Four issues, \$12.00.

**The Wang Shu Jin Package:** Vol. 2, No. 2; Vol. 5, No. 6; Vol. 6, No. 4, Three issues, \$9.00.

**The Cheng Ting Hua Package:** Vol. 1, No. 1; Vol. 3, No. 2; Vol. 3, No. 4; Vol. 4, No. 3; Vol. 4, No. 4. Five issues, \$15.00.

**The Yin Fu Package:** Vol. 1, No. 4; Vol. 4, No. 1; Vol. 4, No. 5, Vol. 5, No. 3. Four issues, \$12.00.

**The Jiang Rong Chiao Package:** Vol. 1, No. 4; Vol. 1, No. 5; Vol. 2, No. 1; Vol. 2, No. 4; Vol. 3, No. 6. Five issues, \$15.00

here briefly is the trinity of the con-frontation. All fighting situations are composed of the following three elements:

- the martial artist
- the opponent or opponents
- the environment

The Pa-Kua practitioner will not succeed in any confrontation unless he or she trains to address all of these components. Again, through the use of sound principles, the practitioner learns to efficiently, effectively, and continuously apply all of the weapons of the human body, from any angle and in any combination. The practitioner learns to respond to any situation and circumstance, no matter the environment, by making the principles of Pa-Kua an integral part of his or her inherent natural reflex and automatic response system. Sifu Park teaches that the high level Pa-Kua practitioner fights primarily by "feel" and by "instinct." Manifesting the principles of Pa-Kua is only part of the problem. The Pa-Kua practitioner must also learn to recognize the principles that are lacking in his opponents so that they can be quickly defeated.

In conclusion, the importance of a solid foundation of underlying natural principles cannot be overemphasized. The Pa-Kua Chang of Lu Shui-T'ien, as taught by Sifu Bok-Nam Park, is founded on this precept and the trinity concept principle. It provides the student with a methodology and framework within which to train and develop. It provides the Pa-Kua disciple with the tools necessary for further research into deeper levels of the art and continued progress toward higher levels of excellence, even as he or she grows older. It provides the fighter with a basis to analyze and resolve any new attack/defense problems he or she may encounter. And, it provides the practitioner with a martial system that is lasting, flexible, and readily adaptable to new situations or circumstances. Few other martial arts, in my experience, offer such a comprehensive and cohesive system that addresses both the health and self-defense training of the martial practitioner.

### Park Bok Nam's Groups in U.S. and Europe

If you are interested in studying Park Bok Nam's Ba Gua, he currently teaches on a regular basis in the following locations:

Richmond, VA	New York, NY
Charlottesville, VA	Boston, MA
Baltimore, MD	Italy and Switzerland

Additionally, he has senior students teaching in the following locations:

Pacific Grove, CA  
Tacoma, WA  
Sacramento, CA

For more info about a school or seminar in your area, call 804-794-8384



# Taking The Snake's Fangs

by Glen Moore

**Editor's Note:** *As a prelude to Glen Moore's article, I would like to thank Glen for his years of encouragement, patience, guidance, and high quality instruction to all of us who are studying Ba Gua under Park Bok Nam. Glen has been friend, confidant, elder brother, and teacher to all of us. Without his constant efforts, I don't think any of us would have been able to learn as much as we have about this system of Ba Gua. Glen Moore is one of the finest martial artists and best martial arts instructors I have ever met. Having somewhere in the neighborhood of forty years in the martial arts, his depth of knowledge and skill are astounding. In all of my travels I have met very few martial artists who equal Glen Moore in his Ba Gua skill, martial arts knowledge, expert level of instruction, and willingness to share all of it with anyone who had a genuine interest. His desire to keep a low profile has made him the best kept secret in the Ba Gua community. I feel very fortunate and greatly privileged to have had the opportunity to train with him. I have always wanted to highlight Glen in this journal by writing a feature story on him, but Glen, always humble, has continually sidetracked my efforts by insisting that I write something about Park's Ba Gua instead. He has always stated, "No one wants to read about me." However, my advice to anyone who is seeking quality Ba Gua instruction, or wants to see someone with a very high skill level apply Ba Gua in a fighting context, is that you would do well to contact Glen Moore for instruction.*

"Take the fangs away from the snake and it can not bite you." explained my teacher. Although that was many years ago, I still can remember that phrase vividly. I had just finished one of the hardest fights of my life, and I felt like everything in my body was broken or at least bruised. I felt a little humiliated and ashamed of myself. Not only had the person I had fought been larger and faster than I, but he also had the longest arms and legs of any human I had ever seen. We had struggled for a long time, and finally in total disgust with myself I had grabbed him and wrestled him to the ground, taking a few punches in the process. After I got him on the ground, he had panicked and I had been able to choke him out with a Judo hold I remembered. You would be totally amazed at what you can remember when someone is pounding on your head. Not too graceful or pretty but I just could not get by those arms and legs to do any damage to his body or head. I was lucky that we had been the only two people in his school at the time, or I'm sure his students would have finished me off while I was trying to choke him out.

I had driven over three hours to challenge him,

and I had plenty of time to think as I drove back to my teacher's school. I knew my teacher would be mad because I had been fighting. I also knew that I had a serious flaw in my fighting and he was the one that could correct it. As I got closer to the school, I tried to decide just why the fight had gone so badly and why I couldn't penetrate to his body or head to do any damage. That was the question I had to ask.

When I arrived at the school, my teacher was not there. He had stepped out and would be gone for a while. I hurried to change my clothes, to do my warm up and stretching exercises, and just generally be ready to ask questions when he came back. About a half hour later, he came in, and I could tell he was not happy. Someone must have ratted me out about the fight. I knew that I should not have told anyone about my plans. Finally, I got the nerve to ask him my question. He just looked at me real funny and said something about wasting his time because my head was full of rocks. Finally, he stopped what he was doing and said, "Take the fangs from the snake and it can not bite you". I just stood there, waiting for a little more information, because I did not want to confirm his remarks about my head being full of rocks. He looked at me, sighed as if to say he understood that my head was full of rocks and began to show me what he meant about the snake. For about an hour I had a lesson that I will never forget. The lesson started with my teacher asking me to put my hands up in a guarding position and attack him. Have you ever had one of those types of lessons? Knowing that each time you attack you are going to pay a formidable price but the information you gain somehow makes it worth while. If you have ever trained with an Oriental teacher, I would be willing to bet that you have had at least one lesson of that type. The information gathered from that session is the subject of this article and I hope that you will be able to use it in your quest for martial knowledge.

Ask most students where their best targets are in a sparring match, and the reply will probably be the opponents' body or head. This is a reasonable reply especially if the students are tournament fighters because the body and the head are their limited targets. But in real fighting it is necessary to take the fangs (weapons) away from opponents. Well, humans do not have real fangs, but they do have hands, arms, legs and other body parts that can be used for weapons. The more of these weapons that can be removed from action, the more opportunities that will be made to reach that elusive torso or head without paying any penalty. In our system of Ba Gua, as taught by Park



**Glen Moore with Park Bok Nam**

Bok Nam, this is done by utilizing many different theories such as (jab+bridge+finish), distance, degree of angle, speed-combination, whipping body motion, elbow exercises, and stepping, to include circle walking. We will discuss some of these principles in this article.

First, lets talk about the theory of (jab+bridge+finish). In order to make an effective attack, all parts of this theory must apply. As a confrontation begins, both opponents are searching for a way to attack. If the opponents are sophisticated in their fighting abilities, they won't be just banging away at each other. They will be formulating strategy for an attack that will place them in positions to begin successfully, and that will cause some type of disharmony in their opponents defenses. Ideally, this would be a move that would place the attackers in positions where they could attack continuously without the worry of being counter attacked. In other words, if an attack is begun with a technique that leaves the attacker open for an immediate counter then the attack is not complete.

This first move, or jab, not only must place the attacker in an advantageous position but also should distract the opponent. This jab can be something as simple as a look or a body twitch, but in Ba Gua the preference is to hit a pressure point or nerve in some part of the hand, arm, or leg. This can be quite painful and will place the opponent's mind on the pain and away from his strategy. This is not as simple as it may sound. It requires that studying the anatomy of the limbs until these points and nerves are easily located with the eye and then many hours of practice to hit them properly. Techniques must be repeated hundreds of times. Just when the practitioner thinks that they have it, their practice partner will move their positions slightly and they get to do them all over again.

After the jab, the attackers continuation of movement will carry them into some type of bridging

movement. This might be a blow on a point of the limb close to the body, a Chin Na application, or a sticking motion which carries the attacker to the body. If Chin Na is used, Park emphasizes that a Ba Gua practitioner should, at any point after a blow, be able to apply the Chin Na. Additionally, after any Chin Na application is applied, a blow should be able to be delivered. This makes for a very refined technique with small amounts of movement in both the Chin Na and the striking technique. However, to take the fang away from the snake a blow would be most appropriate. The attackers could resort to another hand technique but, folding could bring the elbows into play. The elbows are particularly devastating weapon at this range and can become a finish as well as a bridge. In Ba Gua, tremendous time is utilized in honing the use of a weapon

such as the elbow and it is practiced until it is a learned response.

All movement just happens after the first attack is joined. Park often says that there is only one idea and everything that happens after that is in reaction to environmental input or is a learned response not requiring any thought. This only comes from continual practice of technique and meditation to make the mind calm so that it doesn't miss the input. This does not happen quickly and it is very easy to see why there are so many casualties in internal martial arts today. Society demands instant gratification, and internal martial arts demands patience and constant repetitive work.

The finish is often the bridge but it can continue into a body or head attack. If this is done it is always as a continuation of the movement started as the first attack was joined. Lien Huan, or continuation of motion, is important for speed combination to be utilized. Speed combinations are a series of techniques that are practiced repeatedly for smoothness, speed, and power. When a speed combination is utilized as a finish it only would look like a blur of motion. Park advice is to open the door (front, side, or back ), make an entry, and finish before the door can be closed. Ba Gua practitioners who become good at this type of technique spend many hours repeating their speed combinations over and over. They work out the continuing numerical combinations as given from the Yi Jing and bore themselves to death repeating them. But, boredom has its own reward in this case. I have seen both Park Bok Nam and my Senior, Glenn Wright, hit more than thirteen times in one second with great power. Yes, boredom has its own reward.

In closing, I would like to say how very fortunate I have been to have the opportunity to study with my teacher, Park Bok Nam, and I owe him a debt of gratitude that I will never be able to repay. So, from the

bottom of my heart I would like to humbly say, "Thank You, for your time, patience and loving guidance." It is not often that one can be touched by the greatness of another and for this I am thank you.

I hope the techniques that I have included with the

accompanying pictures will give you an idea of what I have been referring to when I say "Take The Fang From The Snake". Practice your Ba Gua in good health and happiness. I wish for you the best kind of boredom. Ha.

**Attack Sequence #1 (see detailed description of this technique on the following page)**



**Photo 1:** The attacker throws a jab at Park's head. Park pivots slightly and delivers a blow to the inside wrist area of the attacker. Park uses his fore-knuckles to strike the attacker's vital points for maximum affect.



**Photo 2:** Park immediately attacks the nerve junctures in the shoulder joint, striking with his rear-knuckles. The fast striking combination to vital points on the opponent's right wrist and shoulder can easily render the attacker's right arm useless.



**Photo 3:** Park folds the elbow and, using a slight jump step forward, delivers an elbow strike to the nerve center in the attacker's chest.



**Photo 4:** Park executes "White Ape Offers Fruit" to the attacker's head. Applied correctly, this technique will often knock out the attacker.

**Attack Sequence #1:** This attack sequence demonstrates a technique used to get inside on the opponent, or as Park would say, "Open his center door." Getting inside is dangerous because once you get past the lead hand, you still have the other hand to deal with. You have to execute your attack sequence extremely fast and thus the reason for the speed combination training in Park's system. This entire four photo sequence will take Park less than one second to execute, and it will be executed with a high degree of accuracy. Park's teacher, Lu Shui Tian, not only taught Park how to execute these combinations with great speed, but he also had Park practice various accuracy drills so that when a strike was to be executed to a vital point on the opponent's body, it would always hit its mark exactly.

**Photo 1:** In the first photograph, the attacker executes a jab towards Park's head. Park will make a small pivot step in order to get off of the opponent's line of attack and simultaneously attack the vital point on the inside of the opponent's wrist with his fore-knuckles (the knuckles on the leading edge of the fist). As in all Ba Gua strikes, the wrist action is important. The motion of the wrist will help provide a sufficient amount of power to cause damage to the opponent's wrist. The wrist must be loose in order to execute this attack properly. If your wrist is stiff, the "whipping" power will be dampened.

Attacking vital points with the fingertips, knuckles and elbows is a rule of thumb in Park's system of Ba Gua. Bony areas and nerve junctures are always attacked with the bony areas of your own body. Palm strikes are usually executed to the fleshy areas of the opponent's body. You always want to optimize your striking areas and striking surfaces in order to cause maximum damage to the opponent.

This initial strike will serve two purposes. The first is to cause pain to the opponent's wrist. The pain will be a distraction. It will get the opponent's mind off of his attack. The second purpose is to help open the opponent's body. The pain has served to "open" the opponent's mind. The direction of the strike (moving outward) will help open the opponent's body by moving his hand to the outside. This helps set up the opponent's body for the next strike.

**Photo 2:** In photograph number 2, Park has followed the strike to the opponent's wrist by a fast and fluid strike to the opponent's shoulder junction just where the arm meets the body. A well placed strike to this area can cause the opponent's right arm to go numb, thus "taking away one of his fangs." Again, the wrist is very loose in order to transmit the whipping power and this time the major row of knuckles is used as the striking weapon. This strike is executed like a back-fist.

While Park is executing this strike, he is very aware of the opponent's left hand. He is ready to use his elbow to block the opponent's attempt at a left hand

strike to Park's head. If the opponent's left hand came towards his head at this point, he would lift his elbow to block the strike and get in underneath the opponent's left arm. He would probably then use his own left hand to attack the opponent's chest or head. Park always says that opening the opponent's center door is very dangerous and you must be careful and quick.

**Photo 3:** If the opponent's left hand has not come in to strike by the time the second strike of this sequence has been executed, Park will then fold the elbow and attack the opponent's solar plexus with an elbow strike. In this system of Ba Gua, the elbow need not be pulled back in order to attain power, the whipping power of the body transmitting through the shoulder is used to gain power. This is an very fast and powerful strike.

As soon as the previous strike to the opponent's shoulder is executed, Park moves in with a short jump step, folds the elbow and strikes. This is an extremely fast striking sequence. If the opponent were to decide to execute a counterstrike with his left hand by the time Park got his elbow folded, it would be too late. Park's elbow would be drilling into the opponent's chest before the left hand strike landed to Park's head and thus all the power would be taken out of the opponent's left hand strike.

**Photo 4:** To finish this sequence, Park will bring both hands up inside the opponent's arms and assume the "White Ape Offers Fruit" posture. Both hands come up and the palms are placed along the opponent's jaw bones. Park will use whipping power in order to rattle the opponent's brain. This strike will damage the opponent's neck and will usually render the opponent unconscious due to the severe concussive rattling the brain with undergo.

Whenever teaching this type of attack sequence, Park will emphasize that the sequence is always susceptible to change. At any point in this sequence, based on the reaction of the opponent and the "feeling" of the moment. Park is ready to change and adapt to the situation. For instance while executing the maneuvers in photos 1 and 2, Park is always ready for the opponent to throw that left hand and he is prepared to block it with his elbow. In Park's system, he emphasizes the usage of all of the body's joints as both attack and defense weapons. All changes and responses to the opponent are executed fluidly and continuously and thus adhere to the "lian huan," or continuously linked, principle. For instance, if the opponent were to use his left hand to block Park's elbow strike in Photo 3, he might simply follow with a back fist to the opponent's nose. From the moment of the initial attack, or "initial idea," as Park calls it. He is always prepared to change and adapt and "fight by feeling."

**Attack Sequence #2 (see detailed description of this technique on the following page)**



**Photo 1:** The attacker begins to execute a front kick. Before the kick gains momentum, Park intercepts it with a punch to the small bones in the top of the foot.



**Photo 2:** The punch to the foot is followed by a pivot step in combination with a punch to the opponent's knee.



**Photo 3:** The attacker attempts to hit Park with the lead hand. Park executes an outward moving strike/block with his right hand to the inside of the opponent's arm.



**Photo 4:** Park finishes with a double palm strike to the opponent's chest.

## **Attack Sequence #2:**

This attack sequence demonstrates how one might “take the fangs out of the snake” by disabling the opponent’s leg when he kicks. Park loves to attack vital points on the legs when the opponent throws a kick. A well placed punch to a vulnerable point on the opponent’s ankle, knee, or hip can render the opponent’s leg useless. Some might think it dangerous to attack an opponent’s leg with a punch because you may be leaving your face unguarded if the opponent follows the kick with a hand attack. In order to insure that the opponent is unable to successfully use a foot/hand combination, he always pays strict attention to angles of attack, distance, speed, and accuracy. If the components of distance, angle, and speed are properly executed, the opponent will be left without an opportunity for counter-attack.

These principles of distance, angle, speed, and precision are studied in great detail in Park Bok Nam’s school. Ba Gua Zhang is highly effective only if the practitioner has a great appreciation for subtle angles of attack and defense and utilizes these angles, along with a finely tuned knowledge of distance. You cannot be sloppy or careless and expect to gain skill at Ba Gua. Because the photographs of these attack sequences are crude, some of the techniques may not look very effective to the uninitiated. However, when these sequences are executed with a high degree of speed and precision, they are extremely effective.

**Photo 1:** The attacker throws a straight front kick. Park intercepts this kick before it has reached its peak acceleration or peak power. He applies a straight punch to the small bones of the opponent’s upper foot. He has adjusted the distance between himself and the opponent so that if he misses the kick with his punch, the kick will not hit its mark and the opponent cannot quickly attack with his hands.

When using the fist in a straight punch, Park always teaches his students to use the top two knuckles of the fist aligned with the bones of the forearm so that there is a great deal of stability in the punch and support in the bones of the hand. Unless the alignments are correct, there is a good chance that the hand can be broken if the opponent has a powerful kick. However, if the alignments are correct and the punch properly applied, it will be easy to break bones in the opponent’s foot and not suffer even the smallest ache in your hand. Details of correct body alignment must always be considered when executing any strike.

**Photo 2:** Immediately after striking the opponent’s foot, Park will step in towards the opponent, execute a pivot step, and quickly strike the opponent’s knee with his fist. He adjusts his angle to be to the outside of the opponent’s body and off the opponent’s line of attack. Since he has closed with the opponent, getting this outside angle will make it difficult for the opponent to effectively utilize his hands in a counterattack.

This one-two punch sequence to the foot and knee is executed very fast. One aspect of Park’s Ba Gua that makes it so effective is the speed at which all of the combinations are executed and the precision of the body placement. Park’s students train repetitive footwork and speed combination drills hundreds and thousands of times in order to gain the speed and precision necessary to make all of these techniques effective. Without the proper foundation with both the repetitious footwork drills and the speed combination hand training, it is difficult to properly execute many of these attack sequences against a skilled opponent.

From this point in the sequence (photo 2) Park could choose any number of possible follow-on techniques. He might choose to use his fist or elbow to attack the opponent’s hip joint. He could easily move around to the back of the opponent and attack the kidneys and/or spine. He might choose to kick or sweep the opponent’s right leg. There are any number of possible ways he could continue this attack.

**Photo 3:** In this scenario, we have the attacker trying to strike Park with his left hand. Park quickly changes his right hand from a fist to a yang palm (palm facing upward) in order to block the strike. This short, quick, tight motion can be quite powerful when executed with the whipping action of the body. This maneuver, sometimes called “Unicorn Whips its Head” or “Giraffe Whips its Neck,” is a very common technique in Park’s system of Ba Gua and the power generation mechanics are practiced frequently. When this move is executed optimally, the motion is very small and the opponent’s strike is deflected very efficiently in that there is minimum motion for maximum effect.

In Park’s system of Ba Gua, students learn how to execute every striking/blocking technique with both “heavy” (yin) and “shock” (yang) power. Additionally, the power can take on characteristics which range anywhere in the yin/yang continuum. In other words, a strike/ block can be soft, light, and adhering, it can be heavy, redirecting, and controlling, it can be quick, fast, and percussive, or any combination of these characteristics can be applied. Looking at the technique in photo 3, Park could apply a very sharp, crisp percussive, whipping power in order to damage the opponent’s arm, or he could utilize a soft, receptive energy in order to redirect the opponent’s strike in order to set up for the next move. The situation and feeling of the moment will usually dictate which response is most appropriate.

**Photo 4:** From the position in photo 3, Park once again has numerous options for the finishing technique. Here he chooses a double palm strike to the opponent’s upper chest. This strike can easily damage the opponent’s heart and/or lungs, depending on how it is applied. If Park choose to apply this double palm as a “heavy” versus a “shock” strike, he could set up a throw by sweeping or locking the opponent’s front foot at the same time the “heavy” strike is applied.

**Attack Sequence #3 (see detailed description of this technique on the following page)**



**Photo 1:** The attacker throws a straight left punch. Park moves off of the line of attack and uses a whipping motion and loose wrist to strike the sensitive area on the back of the opponent's hand, or the opponent's wrist, with his knuckles.



**Photo 2:** Park quickly steps forward and punches the opponent's elbow, striking the nerves.



**Photo 3:** Park executes a pivot step and simultaneously strikes the opponent's shoulder joint with his knuckles. Again, the target of opportunity is the areas of the joint where the nerves are close to the skin and thus unprotected by muscle or bone.



**Photo 4:** Park finishes by kicking the opponent's leg at the joint and upsetting the opponent's balance. At the same time, he delivers a strike to the opponent's spine or at the base of the opponent's skull.

Bringing the left hand up to prepare for a double palm strike in this situation is a good idea because if the opponent tried to strike with his right hand, your left hand is in a good position to block that strike and continue on with the double palm strike technique. Remember that anytime you move inside on the opponent, you must be cautious of his ability to apply all his weapons.

**Attack Sequence #3:** This, and the next, attack sequence demonstrates one of the primary strategies that is used when attacking an opponent. In order to quickly and effectively “take away the snake’s fangs,” Park will teach his students to initiate an attack, at long range, to one of the opponent’s joints, and then work into close range by damaging every joint on the opponent’s arm or leg. This strategy enables the practitioner to apply a great number of very painful and damaging strikes in an incredibly short span of time. If one were to strike the opponent’s wrist to gain his attention and then move straight in to attack the body or head, the time it takes to close that distance gives the opponent time to react. Park teaches that after you strike the wrist or hand, you then attack the elbow and then the shoulder, and then go for the body or head. In doing this you are keeping the opponent’s mind continuously occupied and inflicting enough damage to render his arm useless for the remainder of the confrontation.

**Photo 1:** The opponent throws a straight jab at Park’s face. Park moves off of the line of attack and then applies a whipping motion through his body that is manifest in his fist (the wrist is very loose). The wrist snaps and Park’s knuckles strike the back of the opponent’s hand or his wrist. Either target will work. The motion of the hand in this strike is very small. When the practitioner can learn to use the subtle whipping motion of the body to produce power, there need be no wind up. Park can apply a great deal of force in this strike and his hand only need move a few inches from its original position in a guard posture. The loose action of the wrist is key in utilizing this type of strike.

While some people may feel that it would be difficult to accurately strike the points on the opponent’s hand or wrist during a jab or straight punch since the opponent’s hand is moving so fast, with repetitive practice, it really is not that difficult. Plus, this is not a wildly swinging strike. If Park were to miss his mark, his hand would not swing off into the wild blue yonder. In fact the motion of this strike is so small that his hand would still be directly in front of his face and guarding his body. Since he has stepped off of the centerline of the opponent’s attack, he has still blocked the opponent’s attack and is still in a perfect position to execute the next strike even if the first one misses. All executions in Ba Gua, whether they be strikes or blocks, are designed so that even if they miss their mark, the practitioner can easily and fluidly flow to

the next technique. Park calls this the “lian huan,” or continuously linked, principles and says without this principle in every technique the technique is “dead.”

**Photo 2:** Park now quickly steps in and attacks the opponent’s elbow with his fist. The quick one-two strike to the opponent’s wrist and elbow serves not only to damage those joints, but also keeps his mind distracted while Park advances. The attack to the elbow will also cause the opponent’s body to turn inward and thus expose his shoulder and back, making it easier to flank the opponent.

**Photo 3:** After executing the punch to the elbow, Park pivots and simultaneously strikes the opponent’s shoulder joint with a backfist. Again, speed and precision are required to execute this sequence properly.

The shoulders and hips are favorite target areas in Park’s Ba Gua. Park loves to strike vital points around the shoulder joint and hip joint with his fingertips, knuckles, and elbows. His strikes to the nerves and bony surfaces on the front and back sides of the shoulders and hips area incredibly effective, often causing the opponent’s arm or leg totally numb.

As a variation to this sequence, in order to hit the vital points in the area where the pelvis meets the leg, after striking the elbow with his right hand (photo 2), Park might move in and strike the opponent’s hip joint with his left fist. This move uses the principle of distracting high to attack low. After the first two strikes to the wrist and elbow, the opponent is usually totally caught off guard when the next strike arrives at the hip.

**Photo 4:** After the pivot is executed in conjunction with the shoulder strike (photo 3), Park is now in a very good position to execute any number of finishing techniques to the opponent’s back and head. Here he chooses to kick on the opponent’s leg to off-balance the opponent and/or damage the opponent’s knee joint. At the same time he executes a strike the opponent’s spine or the base of the opponent’s skull.

In Park’s system of Ba Gua, there are a wide variety of techniques which utilize attacking the opponent’s joints, one after another, while moving in to attack the body or head. In order to prepare the student for the ability to execute these attack sequences with skill and efficiency, the student in Park’s school will undergo a rigorous training program which begins with footwork training designed to teach the student how to attain optimum angles, follows with power training to teach the student how to strike with power using any variety of palms, fists, and elbows, and then the student will learn how to combine the palm, fist, and elbow techniques in various “speed combination” drills. The speed combination training is quite complex and is taught to each student on an individual basis in order to take advantage of that student’s inherent strengths



**Attack Sequence #4 (see detailed description of this technique on the following page)**



**Photo 1:** The attacker throws a straight left punch. Park throws a straight punch to strike the back of the opponent's hand or his wrist. Occasionally Park will use his left hand to trap the opponent's fist while he strikes the wrist (as shown).



**Photo 2:** Park steps forward, folds his arm and strikes the opponent with his elbow. His target is a vital point near the elbow.



**Photo 3:** Park then attacks the opponent's shoulder joint with a back fist.



**Photo 4:** The back fist is followed by a slight jump step forward and an elbow attack to any one of a number of targets, the kidneys, the spine, or the hip joint.



**Photo 5:** Park finishes the sequence by executing a palm strike to the opponent's groin utilizing the "White Cloud Chasing the Stars" Palm.

the subsequent backfist to the opponent's shoulder can be executed extremely fast.

In nearly all elbow strikes in Park's system, the student practices to make the elbow-back fist combination a natural reaction. If the elbow is thrown, the back fist follows immediately and strikes the next joint up the chain. In other words, if the elbow strikes the knee, the backfist hits the hip, if the elbow strikes the elbow, the backfist strikes the shoulder, if the elbow strikes the shoulder, the backfist hits the head, etc. In training hundreds of hours of speed combination drills, students in Park's school have made all of these sequences a matter of habit. Park himself can execute every four move sequence presented in this article in less than one second. We tried to time each entire sequence with a stop watch and the amount of time from start to finish did not even register as one full second. Park's training has made him blindingly fast and, at the same time, every strike is precisely on target and delivered with a great amount of power.

**Photo 3:** Park follows the elbow of photo 2 with a back fist to the top of the shoulder joint. The shoulder offers targets of opportunity on every side, front, back, top, and bottom. It is an excellent target and one that is often overlooked.

**Photo 4:** Park continues the attack by jumping slightly to close the distance while throwing an elbow to the opponent's kidneys, ribs, spine, or hip joint. Elbows are a favorite close range fighting weapon of the Ba Gua practitioner.

**Photo 5:** The opponent turns to face Park in an effort to recover and Park finishes this sequence by executing a palm strike to the opponent's groin. As we have discussed previously, in each of these strikes, there is no need to "wind up" if the practitioner has trained to get power from the use of internal body mechanics, therefore the sequence can be executed with extreme speed. For instance, once the elbow strike of photo 4 is applied, Park need only twist his body and bring the hand straight down to the opponent's groin.

These four examples of how to "take away the snake's fangs" have been a small representation of the jumber of techniques that can be employed in order to take advantage of this principle of Park's Ba Gua. Student's in Park's school will conduct hours and hours of "research sparring" in order to perfect these and other similar sequences.

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and weaknesses.

The next attack sequence demonstrates another example of how to sequentially attack the joints to get in on the opponent.

**Attack Sequence #4:** In this final example, Park is once again going to use the wrist, elbow, shoulder sequence to get into a position where he can inflict damage on the opponent's body. This sequence is similar to the previous sequence, however it demonstrates how the elbows can get involved in the act.

**Photo #1:** Park moves off of the centerline of the opponent's attack and strikes the opponent's hand or wrist with a straight punch. Again, the knuckles are used to inflict the damage. In this photo, Park is shown trapping the opponent's hand with his left hand so that he can hold it in place while the strike is applied. This trapping technique also allows Park to easily follow the wrist strike with Chin Na to the opponent's elbow. For instance, instead of moving on to the strike shown in photo 2, Park could hook the opponent's wrist with his left hand and use an upward moving right elbow to lock or break the opponent's elbow. Instead, Park takes the elbow strike option as shown in photo 2.

**Photo 2:** After attacking the opponent's wrist or hand, Park will execute a small jump step forward and strike the vital point located on top of the opponent's arm near the elbow. This strike will serve the same purpose as the fist strike to the opponent's elbow demonstrated in the previous sequence. However, in this sequence,

# Research Sparring Practice

By Joseph G. Bellone,  
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Ba Gua Zhang offers a wide variety of ways to train. Common training methods include Qi Gong, circle walking, weapons, linear drills, palm striking methods, two man and multiple man drills, and sparring. In Park Bok Nam's system of Ba Gua Zhang, where everything is built upon a systematic training method, the beginning student is introduced one movement at a time to what Park calls "research sparring."

Research sparring involves doing only one attacking movement and one defensive movement at a time. The attacking student initiates offense with one move while the other student defends. The roles are then reversed and the research sparring goes back and forth. This type of practice, done in a slow and exact manner, builds proper body reflex habits. The two practicing students can then see the offensive and defensive opportunities as one defends and one attacks. The practice can be thought of as a physical chess match. Because of the slow pace, accurate analyzing of the interaction becomes clear.

Each student has practiced the research sparring techniques alone, first in a static posture and then with movement. Park usually first teaches these offensive and defensive movements based on the eight animal Qi Gong postures, along with the palm exercises, supplementary palm exercises, kicking techniques, and elbow striking. Research sparring provides a means for using these techniques in a practical manner.

There are times in practicing research sparring that the two students become confused about the proper available technique. Park helps his students open up options of defense or attack by giving them a research sparring formula made up of foot movement, Fan Zhang, and walking the circle. These options are chosen by the individuals based upon their body position relative to each other.

## **Foot movement, Fan Zhang and Walking the Circle**

Foot movement, Fan Zhang and walking the circle is a formula that tests the physical and technical concepts of angles and distance in a physical confrontation. These three concepts can be tested to provide options in research sparring.

### **Foot Movement:**

There's a Chinese saying that states, "the hands open the door but it's the feet that actually do the striking." This quote should not be taken too literally, but emphasizes the importance of footwork. Footwork wins fights. In research sparring, the student emphasizes footwork position in respect to the

opponent. If the student's footwork is good, hitting the opponent or defending is easy. Because research sparring is done in an exact, deliberate manner the importance of footwork becomes clear.

Everyone's body has natural limitations. Techniques that work because of strength or speed might work great when a person is young, but as a person gets older, speed, reaction time, and strength diminish. Footwork facilitates efficiency in a technique. Speed becomes relative to body position. Through proper footwork, achieving effective distance and angle of body positioning provides an advantage in reaction time over the opponent.

Efficient footwork can control the opponent. As the opponent continues to change attacking position, only the student with excellent footwork will have the ability to continually control the lines of attack and defense.

### **Fan Zhang:**

The second part of Park's formula is the Fan Zhang. Fan Zhang literally means "changing palm." The arms and hands help produce an upper body angle that works in coordination with the angle created by the foot position. The hands can "stick," "roll," "slap," or intercept and block to control the angles of the upper body.

The Fan Zhang creates a "bridge" between two individuals during a confrontation. By establishing this bridge, the Fan Zhang enables the student to read the opponent's energy. This subsequently allows recognition and selection of proper available possibilities for attack or defense.

By changing arm position, the Fan Zhang increases the number of angles with the opponent. This opens up possibilities of striking or defending with either hand. The Fan Zhang can also lead into a trapping and controlling movement when coordinated with foot movement.

The Fan Zhang creates this "bridge" that allows for different striking or defending possibilities. These options can be seen because the research sparring is done in a controlled and precise manner. There is time to observe angles and body position. Alone, the Fan Zhang is just a hand movement; in coordination with foot movement and walking the circle it becomes a valuable tool in sparring research.

### **Walking the Circle:**

Achieving proper foot position through foot movement with the angled options that the Fan Zhang creates gives the student an advantage in combat. This does no good if the student who just achieved the edge stops moving after one foot movement and one

Fan Zhang. Opponents will not stop advancing based upon one attack. The attacks will be constant until there is an opening to strike.

The third concept, walking the circle, deals with continuous movement and constant change as the feet, hands and body work together. Circle walking specifically trains the Ba Gua Zhang practitioner to change directions rapidly and smoothly while maintaining a centered balance. Because of the continuous movement contained within circle walking, the circle provides an infinite number of angles and options for attack and defense.

Circle walking does not mean to actually walk around the opponent. Circle walking creates angle options for the student, reducing the opportunity for the attacker to gain access to those same angles. Decreasing the speed and analyzing the movements during research sparring allows the beginning

student to gain a better understanding of these three concepts.

### **Ba Gua and Change**

There is no set formula in sparring. The fighting variables are constantly changing. Ba Gua Zhang's fighting effectiveness is based upon the ability to demonstrate constant change. Park teaches that "Ba Gua" means "change." With slow movement research sparring combined with the formula of footwork, Fan Zhang and circle walking, the student will see unlimited possible options in defense or attack. This will train the student to develop a body reflex, so that as the sparring tempo increases over time, the student's ability and effectiveness will also increase.

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## ***Ba Gua: The Road Less Traveled*** by G.T. Little, Jr. and Gregory Hatza

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**en.light.en** *vt* **en.light.en.ing** 1. archaic: ILLUMINATE 2 a: to furnish knowledge to : INSTRUCT b: to give spiritual insight to

**en.light.en.ed** 1: freed from ignorance and misinformation 2: based on full comprehension of the problems involved.

**en/light.en.ment** 1: the act or means of enlightening: the state of being enlightened 2: a philosophic movement of the 18th century marked by questioning of the traditional doctrines and values, a tendency toward individualism, and an emphasis on the idea of universal human progress, the empirical method in science and the free use of reason - used with 3: Buddhism: a final blessed state marked by the absence of desire or suffering.

Source: Webster New Collegiate Dictionary 1977 p379: 13 down

No single word epitomizes the effect Park Bok Nam has on the martial arts better than enlightenment. It doesn't matter what system of martial arts a person might practice. Any exposure to Park will strip away many confusing issues, questions, myths, or flat-out misinformation a practitioner might have about this continuously advancing and enigmatic art.

In the past 5 years, we have attended many of Park's seminars, and never failed to witness dozens of proverbial "lights going on" over newcomer's heads. Frequently, in his lecture, one is bound to hear "oh, that's why . . ." or "you know, I always wondered about that. This is the first time it ever made sense." Even more common is the occurrence of a student of any system not being able to explain why they execute a move or a series of moves in a particular fashion, other than their instructor told them to do it that way.

While surrender and blind obedience may be admirable in a martial arts student, no such "fog" exists among Park's students. They know exactly why they're doing whatever they're doing, and if they don't, they know they can ask and get a clear, precise, absolute answer that makes incontrovertible sense to them. In fact, the very nature of Park's teaching promotes passionate dialogue among his students much like seminary, rabbinical, psychiatric or law students! Once one gets even a glimpse of how deep this art really is, the thirst for knowledge will become virtually unquenchable.

A student of Park's isn't just a drone following a syllabus and waiting on trite positive reinforcements like grades, certificates of achievements, or belts. In fact, those who seek that pop culture, business oriented curriculum will certainly be disappointed

in this environment. Rather, Park's students are encouraged to learn the principles upon which our system of Ba Gua is based and are expected to research these principles to advance the level of the art. All stages of this pursuit exponentially increase the serious student's knowledge, understanding, skill level, and overall health. In other words, Park's system of teaching and expanded research, which was literally handed down to Park via 6 generations (we are the 7th generation), is truly complete.

Though Park had long had the dream of spreading authentic Ba Gua all across the U.S., it still took quite a bit of coaxing for more than a year to get him to teach outside Virginia. But our persistence paid off and we were able to start a class on Saturdays in Towson, Maryland. The original Towson class was made up of roughly 10 black belts (or equivalent ranking) in other systems, from other areas like New York, Philadelphia, New Jersey, Baltimore and the District of Columbia.

The travel demands alone demonstrated the true commitments that both devotees and instructors alike shared for this art form. Imagine. Every single Saturday, Park and his assistants, Glen More and Glenn Wright, would make a 3-hour commute from Richmond to Towson, while students were driving from one hour (D.C.) to 4 and 1/2 hours (N.Y.) to participate in this class! The class itself was, and still is, 3 hours long. Once concluded, participants had the same grueling commute home. Every Saturday, rain or shine! We even met during the worst periods of weather (snow, ice, hail storms, etc.) one could think of. The only time we didn't meet was if the hosting facility, TSU, was closed. That's dedication!

As time progressed and students departed the Towson class, they urged Park to help start classes in their areas. This ultimately resulted in classes being held in Philadelphia, Boston, California, Chicago, and other areas, with the number still growing. Now, every year, representatives of each of these groups meet at Park's summer camp in Belfast, Maryland. There we engage in a seriously intensive regimen of training that goes from sunup to sundown, for a week. Upon completion of that annual trip, one is vastly improved in their skills and the all important understanding of Ba Gua. Moreover, their enthusiasm for the art is at peak level. The bottom line is that once exposed to Ba Gua, most martial artists don't want to bother with anything else. People love this stuff!

The reason for this goes back to my opening statements. Park's system is clear and complete. There's no circus-like shroud of mystery surrounding this system. The students know the facts and applications of what they learn, and Park drills this information into them until their responses become reflexive. Any serious practitioner of any martial art will tell you that reflexive response is what one strives for most. Otherwise, any martial art is useless beyond its exercise appeal. The more you understand, the easier it is to assimilate and ultimately practice correctly. Then all that's required is repetition and patience. In this way, the reflexive nature is securely developed into your body (where it belongs and will to some good when needed) as well as your mind. In short, as far as martial arts go, you too could become enlightened.

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### *Editor's Corner continued from page 2*

instructors I was able to meet and interview in mainland China.

I also want to thank my teacher, travel companion, and friend Vince Black for all of his help and effort. When I first started this journal I had not yet met Vince Black, yet shortly after he received the first few issues (I had sent the first few issues free to every Ba Gua instructor I could find), he sent me a check for fifty dollars just to help out. He did not ask for a subscription, the money was just to help support the cause. He is the only one who ever did something like that in support of this effort. A year or so later, when I met him and we became friends, I found him to be one of the most generous supporters of the martial arts I had ever had the privilege to meet and work with.

Lastly, thanks to Park Bok Nam and Glen Moore for showing me the depth of knowledge and the level of skill that can be obtained in this art of Ba Gua Zhang. Of all the teachers I have met since I have been involved in the internal martial arts, in my view, Park Bok Nam has demonstrated the highest degree of skill and the deepest understanding of this great art. I

chose him as my teacher almost six years ago because I was fortunate enough to see his skill and the skill of his senior students. Since that day, as he peels away each layer of his art to reveal something even more fascinating, I have been continually astonished with his skill and knowledge. Unfortunately, most people do not get that opportunity. Park is very reserved and does not like to show much to those he does not know or trust. Hence, only a small group has had the privilege of seeing what he knows and what he can do. Most have only had exposure to him through the *Fundamentals of Pa Kua Chang* books and videos and his seminars. However, the information in those books and what he teaches in the group seminars only scratch the surface of his Ba Gua. That is why we called the books the *Fundamentals* of Pa Kua Chang. That material really just provides a starting point.

Anyway, I thank Park and Glen for their teaching and I feel fortunate that I have found a teacher and a system that I am completely satisfied with. I wish you all the same, and long life, health, happiness, and joy in your pursuit of knowledge and skill in this wonderful art of Ba Gua Zhang.

# Wang Shu-chin

## Teacher and Master

by Buho Jibiki  
Translated by Stephen Comee

Since his first trip to Japan in 1958 to spread the teachings of Chinese internal arts, Wang Shu-chin (1905-1982) had a tremendous impact on Japanese martial artists. It was his devoted efforts in teaching in Tokyo that led to Japan's current fascination with Chinese martial arts. Among them, Buho Jibiki (President, All-Japan Soft-Style Martial Arts Federation; President, Japan Chapter of the Cheng-ming Association) has received and passes on the arts of Orthodox Tai-chi, Hsing-i, and Pa-kua as transmitted to him, and still operates the training hall that Wang asked him to open in Tokyo. One of Jibiki's senior students, Stephen Comee also receives training (as a men-jen student) under Wang's student, Wang Fu-lai of Taiwan. Note: In this article, only the words/names related to post 1949 China (PRC) are given in pinyin romanization; all others, especially names of those living in Taiwan, are given in Wade Giles (thus, Xingyi and Bagua vs. Hsing-i and Pa-kua). Note also that place names on the Chinese mainland are given in pinyin except for those that are considered English, such as Nanking or Tientsin (excluding Peking).

Although I had trained long and arduously in both Karate and Daito-ryu Aikijujutsu, I once happened to see a copy of Life magazine in which Chinese soldiers were practicing something that looked like Karate but was distinctly different. The caption spoke of their ability to "strike with the force of a sledgehammer," peaking my interest in Chinese martial arts. Shortly thereafter I read in the newspaper that "a great Chinese master of T'ai-chi, Hsing-i, and Pa-kua named Wang Shu-chin" would be coming to Japan to teach his art to Japanese martial artists. Intrigued, I got together with three fellow Aikijujutsu students and went to see this "great master."

### MEETING WANG SHU-CHIN

When I first saw Wang Shu-chin, all I could see before me was a very large, very fat man. Although he weighed between 100 and 130 kg (200-285 lb), he was not hard and muscular but soft and supple. In spite of his being a famous martial artist, however, it seemed that there was not an arrogant bone in his body. Thus, based on his reputation, I asked to be accepted as a student and he agreed to teach me.



**Wang Shu-chin (1905-1982)**

Wang believed that "there's no use teaching techniques and kata to anyone who doesn't even know the basics." Our practice sessions consisted of our standing motionless (chan chuang, or "quiet standing") in ch'i-kung poses. Thus, although a number of Japanese became students at the same time I did, most quit during this stage of training. Only after we had reached a certain level of proficiency did Wang begin to teach us kata. During that training, I came to understand the strength of both offense and defense in Chinese martial arts. The type of Karate that I had practiced up until that time was pure offense—even the defensive movements were strong aggressive actions that continued with attacks meant to injure. It was when I began studying Daito-ryu Aikijujutsu that I first learned of the need for softer, more restrained techniques. Whenever I thought of "the ideal martial

art," I thought of forms of Chinese 'boxing.' Not too strong, not too weak, effective as both offense and defense, to me they represented styles in which offensive/defensive and hard/soft are united into a single style.

Wang's T'ai-chi, Hsing-i, and Pa-kua comprise the soft, or internal, martial arts. Although I had already given up my practice of Karate, I was still interested in the hard, or external, arts, and so I studied Shaolin methods while I was learning Wang's art. Although he allowed me the freedom to pursue my study of both internal and external arts concurrently, he described my position thus: "It's not a cup of tea; neither is it a cup of water."

Tea is delicious if it is drunk straight; likewise, water tastes good if it is pure. Trying to study both internal and external methods together is like mixing tea and water and expecting the result to taste good. In reality, it tastes like neither; in practice, you get confused and become a specialist in neither. This is what he wanted me to see for myself. As soon as I did, I devoted all my energy to the internal arts, and eventually I received from him even the most hidden teachings at the highest levels, but even now, Wang's admonitions and corrections are deeply etched within my heart.

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***Trying to study both internal and external methods together is like mixing tea and water and expecting the result to taste good. In reality, it tastes like neither; in practice, you get confused and become a specialist in neither.***

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#### **ABOUT WANG SHU-CHIN**

Wang Shu-chin, whose childhood name was Heng-sun, was born in 1905 in Tientsin. At the age of 17, he had already been accepted as an inner student of the famous Pa-kua master Chang Chan-kuei (also known in the Hsing-i lineage as Chao-tung), under whom he received instruction in both Hsing-i and Pa-kua. He also received Hsing-i instruction from Chang's "younger brother" in the art, Wang Hsiang-chai. (Chang was a student of modern-day Pa-kua founder Tung Hai-ch'uan as well as of fabled Hsing-i master Liu Ch'i-lan; Wang was a student of the great Hsing-i master Kuo Yun-shen.) He was also chosen for special instruction in Pa kua by Chang's "uncle" in the art, Hsiao Hai-po.

In 1929, a "new" style of T'ai-chi Ch'uan was 'created' by the T'ai-chi Organizing Committee of the National Martial Arts Academy in Nanking. In creating what they called "Orthodox (Chinese: cheng-tsung) T'ai-chi Ch'uan," the committee, working with the fundamental

principles of the internal arts, took the combative components of the five styles of T'ai-chi then prevalent—the Ch'en, Yang, Wu, Sun, and Wu (written with a different character) styles. Those gathered together to establish this form were attempting to return the art of T'ai-chi to its original form as a martial art. The main special characteristic of "Orthodox T'ai-chi Ch'uan" is that none of its postures contains any useless movements (in terms of martial applications). Today, students in Wang's lineage first study "Orthodox T'ai-chi Ch'uan," and only after they have mastered it are they allowed to progress first to Hsing-i and then to Pa-kua.

Later invited to live and teach in Fukien province, Wang moved to Taichung, where he was hailed by many as an unsurpassed master in Chinese martial arts. So great was his reputation that he was chosen to travel to Japan in order to introduce China's culture and martial arts abroad. Certain that many Japanese experts in various martial arts would challenge whoever was sent, and thinking that it would be meaningless to send someone who could possibly lose any contests,



**Wang Fu-lai was one of Wang Shu-chin's students in Taiwan**



**The author, Buho Jibiki, studied with Wang Shu-jin in Japan**

those in charge unanimously decided to send Wang, who was known at that time as "The Invincible." Thus, despite the fact that he came as a peaceful teacher of internal arts, he was literally taking his life in his hands. Wang served as director of the Chinese Martial Arts Association in Taiwan until his death. The chairman of the committee was Ch'en Pan-ling.

Wang died in Taiwan at the age of 77, and his tomb is near the summit of Tiger Peak, overlooking the village of Tsao-tun, to the southeast of Taichung. As large as an ancient Japanese tumulus, the enclosed space before the grave itself is wide enough to hold some 200 people. Every year in mid-September, there is a ceremony in which all those who studied under Wang assemble within his tomb and perform kata before his grave on the anniversary of his death. I travel there each year in order to participate. I also bring a group of students with me each spring, so that I can show my teacher that I am indeed transmitting his teachings pure and unadulterated—just as I received them from him.

## **THE TASK WANG ORDAINED FOR ME**

At present, one of Wang Shu-chin's students who is actively teaching in Taiwan is Wang Fu-lai (no blood relation; in order to avoid confusion, hereafter, I shall refer to Wang Shu-chin as Wang and to Wang Fu-lai as Fu-lai). Fu-lai lives in Tsao-tun, where he was born in 1941. He officially began studying with Wang Shu-chin when he was 16, at the advice of his father, a Taoist and strict vegetarian who was an ardent admirer of Wang (also a Taoist and vegetarian).

Accepted as a student, Fu-lai began taking formal lessons from Wang. Practice began at 5 AM four or five mornings a week. At that time, Fu-lai lived some 40 km (about 24 mi) away from Wang's residence. Fu-lai would get up long before dawn and ride his bicycle the whole way, often on unpaved roads. He says that if he was even a minute late, there would be no lesson that day. Eventually, however, he persevered and received even the deepest teachings from Wang. He coordinates the activities of Cheng-ming Association branches around the world and comes to Tokyo every fall to give special training to students at the All-Japan Soft-Style Martial Arts Federation in Shibuya.

Although Wang-Shu-chin was not as strict with me as with Fu-lai, I had to exert much effort toward my studies. When Wang first came to Tokyo, I lived in Kisarazu (in Chiba prefecture), about 80 km (48 mi) from Tokyo, from where I had to commute by train. In those days, there were many transfers, and connections were quite bad, so it took half a day to come into town. Sometimes I was able to borrow a car and drive in. When he came to Japan, Wang's visa was valid for only one or two months, and, try as I might, I could not come to meet him every day. In fact, it was usually impossible for me to come on any day other than Sunday. Although I didn't think so at the time, now I feel that I was indeed fortunate that it worked out that way—since I was thus able to receive man-to-man, one-on-one instruction from him.

In China, there have traditionally been two types of students: 1) ordinary students, called *hsueh-sheng*, which means simply 'student'; and 2) advanced students, called *men-jen*, which means 'those who have entered the gate,' indicating that those senior students have been officially recognized as having talent and have undergone a special ceremony (*pai-shih*) initiating them into the teacher's inner circle of disciples of the Chung-nan teachings. Needless to say, how and what these two types of students are taught are very different. At Wang's recommendation, I received the *pai-shih* initiation, together with Yoshikatsu Kono and Kogen Kuwayama, in Taiwan—and the three of us are the only Japanese that ever become *men-jen* students of Wang Shu-chin.

Continuing my studies, I fervently took Wang's every word to heart, and devoted my whole self—body and soul, mind and heart—to faithfully receiving and preserving his teachings. Fortunately, my zeal was seen and approved of by Wang, who transmitted to me



the real teachings (chen ch'uan) of Pa-kua. The modern founder of Pa-kua, Tung Hai-ch'uan, being a Han Chinese, was afraid of passing on the real teachings to the Manchurian rulers of the Ching dynasty, whom he considered the enemy. He therefore chose other Han Chinese, both Chang and Xiao Hai-po, to pass on the true lineage of the art only to Han Chinese, and exhorted them to do the same. Their student Wang, however, saw fit to open up the teachings to the world in order to spread and thus better preserve the art for posterity.

Every year I still visit Taiwan in June, that Fu-lai and myself might keep up and refine our practice. I was given the task by my teacher to both preserve these teachings and spread them around the world—at present, I am doing my best to live up to his wish, and to pass on all that I can completely unchanged, exactly as I received it from him, exactly as he received it from Chang Chan-kuei (Chao-tung).

### A FITTING TRIBUTE

On October 14, 1995, through the cooperation of the People's Republic of China and the Beijing Bagua Association, a memorial tablet dedicated to Wang Shu-chin was erected within the precincts of Tung Hai-ch'uan's tomb, which is located in Wan'an Public Cemetery in Beijing. Since that occasion,

much exchange has been going on between the Taiwan headquarters of the International Cheng-ming Association, its Japan branch, and the Beijing Bagua Association, as well as the Beijing Xingyi Research Institute. The dedication ceremony was attended by some 50 experts in Chinese martial arts from around the world, including Wang Fu-lai; Buho Jibiki (President of both the All-Japan Soft-Style Martial Arts Federation and the Japan Chapter of the Cheng-ming Association); Wang Shengzhi, Ma Chuanxu (President of the Beijing Bagua Association), Wang Shu-chin's two sons, and many others.

The cemetery is located in the suburbs of Beijing, on the southern flank of Mt. Wan'an. Tung Hai-ch'uan's tomb is located in the deepest part of the cemetery, some 200 meters from the entrance gate. The grave was originally located in Beijing, south of Xiao Niufang village, outside of Beijing's Tongzhi Gate, but the stone was buried deep within the earth in order to protect it from the excesses of the Cultural Revolution, and was later moved through the great efforts of Pa-kua enthusiasts. Their names are inscribed upon a hexagonal structure within the precincts, erected beside the original 4-sided stone moved from Xiao Niufang, before which a memorial tablet has been erected. On the other side of the path before the site can be found the graves of Liang Zhenpu and Guo Gunmin. The memorial to Wang Shu-chin was erected



Tung Hai-ch'uan's tomb is shown here with the new stone placed in memory of Wang Shu-chin

just to the left of the hexagonal monument within Tung's tomb, and on it are engraved the names of Pa-kua students in Wang's lineage, including the members of Japan's Cheng-ming Association, listed as fourth- and fifth-generation students of Tung.

The dedication ceremony was led by Wang Fu-lai, who opened with these words: "The members of the International Cheng-ming Association are extremely honored to be able to hold this dedicatory ceremony in conjunction with the many Pa-kua masters who have come from all over China and abroad. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my deepest gratitude to all those whose great efforts have made it possible to erect this memorial tablet here today. With this as a starting point, I would like to move on to spread throughout the world the teachings of Pa-kua as passed down to and passed on by the Grandmaster Wang Shu-chin." After the participants individually paid their respects by bowing before the tablet, Ma Chuanxu, President of the Beijing Bagua Association, said that, taking advantage of this opportunity, he sincerely hoped that all those present would thereafter engage in more communication and exchange activities. Lastly, I spoke on behalf all the Cheng-ming Association branches located all over the world, expressing my deep wish that "all the Cheng-ming branches around the globe will henceforth work together toward spreading Wang-Shu-chin's Chung-nan school of Hsing-i and Pa-kua, pure and unadulterated, to people of all lands, preserving the art for future generations."

After the ceremony, the participants retired to the famous Fangshan Restaurant, located in the middle of Beihai Park (itself the center of Kubilai Khan's ancient capital of Khanbaliq)—all invited to a "party to celebrate the dedication of Wang Shu-chin's memorial tablet" hosted by the members of the Beijing Bagua Association. A number of prominent instructors from China, Taiwan, and Japan—including Wang Yufang (daughter of Wang Hsiang-chai and Honorary President of the Beijing Xingyi Research Institute) demonstrated their art for one another, and all resolved to work together to preserve and spread the orthodox teachings of Pa-kua as passed down from Tung Hai-ch'uan to Chang Chan-kuei to Wang Shu-chin and his students.

**Note:** In the *Pa Kau Chang Journal*, Volume 6, Number 6, we reported that the chairman of the Japanese Cheng Ming Society, a student of the late Wang Shu-chin, was present at the ceremony dedicating the Wang Shu-chin memorial stone at Dong Hai Chuan's gravesite. We failed to mention the name of the chairman, which is Buho Jibiki.



**Wang Shu-jin's memorial stone**

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

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

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

**The Journal of the Chen Style Taijiquan Research Association of Hawaii:** Published Quarterly by Great Publishing Company, 761 Isenberg St. #A, Honolulu, HI 96826-4541

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