



Pa Kua Chang

Newsletter

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Atlanta-based Pa Kua Chang Instructor Emphasizes Tradition and Authenticity

The sign above Allen Pittman's door should read "No dilettantes, please." The Atlanta-based martial arts teacher is not pursuing the eager hoards of Pa Kua Chang part timers or collectors of forms. He's not even pursuing a livelihood through Pa Kua Chang, preferring to teach to a select few who find their way to him, or through him to others.

"Some students are sent to me, some I send to others, and some I just send away," Allen chuckles.

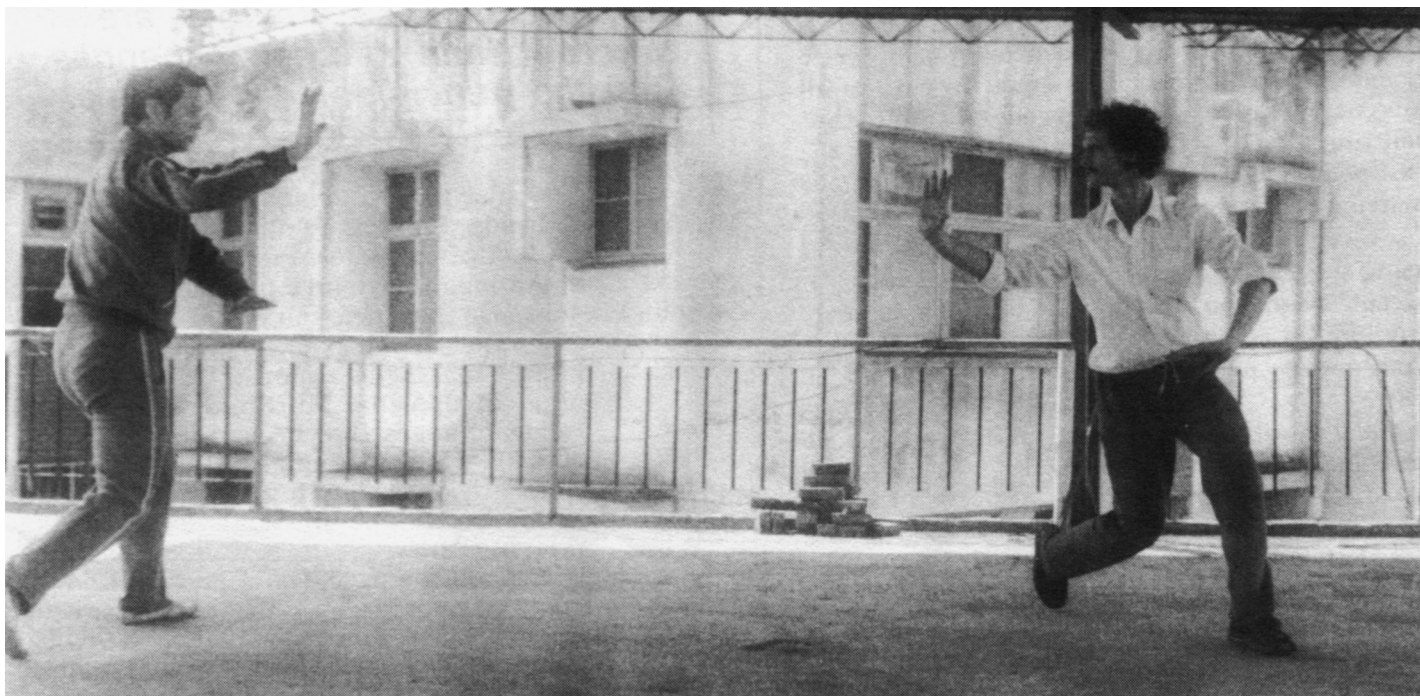
In a lengthy interview, Allen Pittman expounded his theory on keeping the integrity of the art, and avoiding the commercial seduction that befalls many martial artists. Not for Pittman are those who collect forms like tinker toys and render them without authorization or lineage in videos or books. An ardent fan of footnotes, Allen's own attempt at "going public" will include full notes of its sources and origins, and is co-authored by the man Allen will always call his teacher, Mr. Robert Smith.

Student-Teacher Relationship

Pittman began his own study with Chinese boxing expert Robert W. Smith in 1975. Under Smith's training and later study in Taiwan with Hung I-Mien, Pittman was to form his theories of the student-teacher relationship.

Pittman feels that for any tradition to be passed on completely, there must be a bond between student and teacher. "Tradition comes through personality - the relationship," he states. "The apprenticeship program is the best way to get the whole transmission because it is human," rather than institutional. The student-teacher relationship is a delicate one, predicated on trust. If that trust is shaken, the transmission will fail and the student will only get part of the art. But "when this relationship has been developed, the total will be greater than the sum of the parts," says Pittman.

Pittman believes that the teacher's and the student's



Allen Pittman practices Pa Kua Chang with Ch'en P'an-Ling's son Ch'en Yun-Ch'ing in Taichung, Taiwan



Pa Kua Chang

Newsletter

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Purpose and Policy Statement

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

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

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

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

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

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intentions need to be the same - if the intentions match, you get transmission. Otherwise something will be missing. For example, a student who only wants to learn to fight will miss the health and behavioral aspects of the art and the tradition. To maintain authenticity the student comes to the teacher's side of the fence and learns the teacher's method - as is the Confucian aspect of the Chinese boxing tradition.

Pittman's belief in the importance of the student-teacher relationship and the need for traditional initiation is so strong that he has recently formed a non-profit organization he calls the International Society for Traditional Physical Culture (see page 4).

Pittman was initiated into the study of Pa Kua Chang in 1975. After reading Robert W. Smith's book Pa Kua: Chinese Boxing for Fitness and Self Defense, Pittman gave up his two years of Karate training to seek out a Pa Kua teacher. After an unsuccessful search in Atlanta, Pittman decided to try and correspond with a teacher outside of Georgia. He mailed letters to several martial arts teachers around the county; Mr. Smith was the only teacher to respond.

Pittman discovered that Smith taught Pa Kua Chang in Bethesda, Maryland, and the fifteen-year old had a friend drive him there to meet Mr. Smith. Pittman stayed in Bethesda for a long weekend, participating in all of the group classes that Smith taught, plus a few private lessons. In the sessions, Pittman demonstrated what he had been able to learn from Smith's book and was corrected accordingly.

***The art of Pa Kua Chang is based
on principles, not choreography.
One teacher's changes are
different than another's changes,
but the principles are the same.***

That first meeting led to eight years of periodic trips to Bethesda, Smith teaching Pittman enough Pa Kua to practice on his own in Atlanta until his next visit. Although Pittman's parent's thought it somewhat strange that their son would spend hours walking in circles in the backyard, they allowed him to continue making trips north.

Pittman explains that Mr. Smith emphasized Sun Lu-Tang's changes that he had learned from Kuo Feng-Ch'ih while studying in Taiwan in the late '50s and early '60s. Smith was one of the first occidentals to study the internal martial arts. While living in Taiwan, Smith was exposed to many different types and styles of Pa Kua Chang. Although his main Pa Kua teacher was Kuo Feng-Ch'ih, he also had the opportunity to study Pa Kua Chang with Wang Shu-Chin, Ch'en P'an-Ling, Hung I-Mien, and Hung I-Hsiang (see page 5 for further information on these instructors).

While teaching, Smith would relate stories about the teachers he had studied with in Taiwan and Allen

became interested in meeting these distinguished instructors himself. In 1982, Allen decided to go to Taiwan to see if any of Mr. Smith's teachers were still alive and to study Pa Kua with some of them. In particular, Allen was interested in studying with Wang Shu-Chin, a student of Chang Chao-Tung (also known as Chang Chan-K'uei).

A friend of Allen's had gone to Taiwan earlier to study T'ai Chi Ch'uan and helped him arrange for a job and an apartment in Taipei. While still in the U.S., Pittman discovered that Wang Shu-Chin had recently passed away. He decided to go to Taiwan anyway. Wang's body was being held in state for several months, until the appropriate astrological burial time arrived. Therefore, Allen was able to attend Wang's funeral and meet some of his students. A Chinese classics expert from England who had studied with Wang recommended that Pittman seek out Hung I-Mien, who was teaching in a local park.

Pittman found Hung, who remembered Pittman's mentor, Robert Smith favorably. Hung agreed to teach Pittman, and met with him over the next year for an hour in the morning, five days a week. Hung taught the internal arts in the tradition of Chang Chun-Feng.

Chang Chun-Feng had left mainland China and come to Taiwan during the revolution. When he reached Taiwan, he stayed temporarily with a boxing brother, until Hung's father offered Chang a place to live if he agreed to teach his sons. The Hung family was known for its Hung style Shaolin method, however, one of Hung's five sons had died from overexertion while

practicing this method. After this occurred the elder Hung wanted his sons to learn the softer styles and thus made the offer to Chang.

Chang taught in a "graduated method", from simple to complex, and preferred the student to have a basis in Hsing-I Ch'uan, and thus started their instruction in the Five Fists and related forms of Hsing-I. Chang thought it was important for the student to learn self-defense, via Hsing-I, first so that he would develop courage, then his mind could go on to higher and more refined ideas. After this, the student learns linking and animal forms that extend that knowledge and raise the level of difficulty.

After achieving a sufficient degree of proficiency with Hsing-I Ch'uan, the student moves on to the 24 basic actions of Pa Kua Chang, followed by a more complex set of 64 linear actions. There are eight sets of eight linear actions and each set of eight linear actions correspond to one of the changes on the circle.

After the student has studied the 64 linear actions for a sufficient amount of time, he then learns the circling exercise. The spinning and turning actions on the circle are difficult to grasp, Pittman explains, so it is easier for the student to learn the 64 linear movements first. Pittman believes that this set of 64 linear actions was probably originated by Chang Chun-Feng's teacher, Kao I-Sheng.

In Chang's complete system, after the student becomes proficient in his Pa Kua Chang practice, he then began a study of T'ai Chi Ch'uan. Pittman stayed in Taiwan long enough to learn Hsing-I Ch'uan and



Allen in Taiwan with (L to R): Ch'en Yun-Ch'ao, Peter Nichols, Allen Pittman, and Ch'en Yun-Ch'ing

International Society for Traditional Physical Culture

In an age where apprenticeship and tradition is losing to instant gratification, there are a few enclaves where traditional arts are still practiced and perfected.

The International Society for Traditional Physical Culture, founded by Pa Kua Chang teacher Allen Pittman of Atlanta, Georgia, is a growing network of those who practice the world arts that are in danger of being lost.

“The purpose of the society is to provide traditional initiation to people,” said Pittman. “I turned to Chinese boxing for my initiation and this is what I teach. I realize, however, that not everyone is cut out for a self-defense art. The society was formed to gather together, and make accessible, teachers and students of all traditional physical cultural arts from around the world.”

The society is organized into five broad categories of traditional arts: cooking, music, dancing (folk), hunting and combatives, and arts and crafts. The objective eventually is to have a listing of practitioners and teachers of these arts so that they can correspond and learn from each other.

Currently Allen is accumulating a list of people who study or teach traditional arts that fall into one of the above mentioned categories. If you wish to learn more about the Society or would like to have your name added to the list of traditional arts teachers, write to High View Publications and your letter will be forwarded.

Pa Kua Chang from Hung, but did not learn T'ai Chi Ch'uan.

When Pittman first met Hung, he demonstrated what he had learned from Smith. Hung recognized that Pittman had a sound foundation and, since Allen was particularly interested in learning Pa Kua, Hung agreed to start teaching him Pa Kua right away. During the first year Pittman worked primarily on the 64 linear actions. These linear actions are actually a series of tactical movements done on zig-zags. The set is called Huo-Tien Pa Kua or Pa Kua of the Earth (literally Post-Heaven Pa Kua).

Though he observed many different Pa Kua Chang teachers in Taiwan, Allen studied with only one other than Hung: Ch'en Yun-Ch'ing, son of the famous Ch'en P'an-Ling. Pittman made periodic visits to Taichung to study with Ch'en Yun-Ch'ing. Ch'en Yun-Ch'ing's father, a Chinese boxing authority, was interested in simplifying Pa Kua Chang and thus his system is not as complex as the system taught by Hung I-Mien. While studying with Ch'en, Pittman learned the Five Fists of Hsing-I and Ch'en's eight Pa Kua Chang changes.

Pittman's stint in Taiwan was rigorous, encompassing not only intense Pa Kua practice, but a job as an English conversationalist to earn his room and board, and Chinese language classes. The study of Chinese was a visa requirement. The busy schedule took its toll, and Pittman came home in 1983 to consolidate his studies and recuperate. He came back to Atlanta, worked in his parent's book store, and tried to hammer in all of the Pa Kua he had learned while he was in Taiwan. Although Smith did allow Allen to lead his Pa Kua class in Bethesda to show the students what he had learned, Pittman did not yet start teaching Pa Kua Chang.

After his first trip, Pittman had no intention of returning to Taiwan for further study. However, Hung sent word to Allen indicating that if he came back to Taiwan, he would teach him his comprehensive Hsing-I Ch'uan and Pa Kua Chang systems.

Pittman saw this as an opportunity and, in 1984, went back to Taipei to resume his Pa Kua Chang study with Hung I-Mien. On this trip he lived with Hung's relatives and studied Chang's Hsing-I system, basic Pa Kua postures, and circle changes. He also, later in his stay, made trips to Taichung to study with Ch'en Yun-Ch'ing and was also able to study with Ch'en P'an-Ling's other son, Ch'en Yun-Ch'ao.

When Pittman was ready to return to the United States, Hung told him that he should teach. He also received this direction from his other instructors. Hung's advice to Allen was to emphasize the basics, observe the student's work on the basics and watch the student's behavior.

Pittman believes that it is important to listen to his teachers before starting to teach. Once his teachers gave him the go-ahead, he felt he could teach with a clear conscience.

Pittman currently holds a regular Saturday class in Atlanta. Most of his students are referred to him. He has also started a new program at Georgia State University two days a week. Since Mr. Smith's retirement, Allen occasionally teaches Smith's group in Bethesda. The regular class is conducted by some senior students and Pittman periodically comes up from Atlanta, two weeks at a time, to lead class.

Study With Pittman

A new student who has no background in martial arts and wants to study Pa Kua Chang from Pittman will probably start out learning the Five Fists of Hsing-I Ch'uan and the 24 standing exercises of Pa Kua Chang in order to build a proper foundation. The student may also learn the basics of walking the circle. When the student has a firm grasp of the fundamentals, he will begin learning the 64 linear movements from Chang's method. Pittman believes that the student should be given the new information as soon as he has earned it through rigorous practice of the basics.

Continued on page 6

Pa Kua Chang Biographies

Since some of our readers may not be familiar with the great Pa Kua Chang instructor's of the past, who have propagated the art to our present day practitioners, we will occasionally include short biographies of the instructors who are mentioned in our feature articles. The information below has been provided by Allen Pittman. Individuals interested in learning more about the instructors listed below should refer to *Chinese Boxing: Masters and Methods* by Robert W. Smith, now available from North Atlantic Books.

Chang Chun-Feng - Chang Chun-Feng was born in Shantung. He later ran a business (unspecified) in Tienching for 20 years. While in Tienching, Chang met Li Tsun-I, Kao I-Sheng, and Chang Chao-Tung (also known as Chang Chan K'uei) and studied Hsing-I, Pa Kua, and T'ai-Chi. On the mainland he was president of the Ching Kuo Shu Kuan, and later became president of the Shanghai Kuo Shu Kuan. In 1948, during the revolution, Chang went to Taiwan. In his book, Chang lists 40 students, including the three Hung brothers. His students describe him as a harsh taskmaster. Chang died around 1973.

Ch'en P'an-Ling - Ch'en P'an-Ling was born and raised in Honan. Ch'en's father was trained in the Shaolin temple. At the age of 12, Ch'en began to study Hsing-I with Li Tsun-I and Liu Tsai-Chen. He learned Pa Kua Chang from Tung Lien-Chi and Cheng Hai-Ting and T'ai Chi from Wu Chien-Ch'uan, Yang Shao-Hon, Chi Tzu-Hsiu, and Hsu Yu-Sheng. In 1928 -29 Ch'en went to the Chen village in Honan to study T'ai Chi at the root. Ch'en was educated as a hydraulics engineer and was Chairman of the National Boxing Committee in 1941. He organized the writing of 50 textbooks by a panel of 20 Chinese boxers - all of these books were lost to the Communists during the revolution. Ch'en went to Taiwan in 1950 and lived in Taichung. He was president of the Chinese Boxing Association in Taiwan until his death in 1967 at the age of 67. He was regarded as a kind and open hearted man by his students and was concerned with preserving the best of Chinese Boxing.

Hung I-Mien - Hung I-Mien was a native Taiwanese from Taipei. He studied Pa Kua Chang, Hsing-I and T'ai Chi from Chang Chun-Feng. Hung was a senior student and led class in his teachers absence. He became expert in Pa Kua and Hsing-I and has now retired from teaching.

Wang Shu-Chin - As a young man, Wang Shu-Chin studied with Tung Hai-Ch'uan's student Chang Chao-Tung (also known as Chang Chan K'uei) for approximately eight years in Tienching. Wang also studied the "stake standing" or "pile stance" method from Wang Hsiang-Chai, originator of Ta Ch'eng Ch'uan (Great Achievement Boxing). Wang was a "boxing brother" of Chang Chun-Feng under Chang Chao-Tung. He went to Taiwan during the revolution and also toured Japan where he was known for defeating high ranking Karateka. Wang worked with Ch'en P'an-ling and the Chinese Boxing Association and taught in Taichung until his death in 1981.



Wang Shu-Chin teaching students in Taichung, Taiwan in 1980

When the student has an understanding of the 64 linear movements, he can learn the circle changes with their emphasis on proper body turning. The student often begins circle work by learning the changes of Ch'en P'an-Ling or Wang Shu-Chin. As these skills are acquired the difficulty level is raised and other changes can be learned.

Pittman feels that the art of Pa Kua Chang is based on principles, not choreography. One teacher's changes are different than another's changes, but the principles are the same. The physical parameters that can vary in Pa Kua practice are articulation, orientation, and syncopation. The movements or changes may be articulated differently by each instructor based on their experience or their body shape and size, however, the basic alignments do not change. Orientation will vary with tactical situation, allowing flexibility in the martial application of the movements. Syncopation is the rhythm and the flow of the movement, which will also vary in a tactical situation.

Although Pittman does not insist that his students learn the martial function of the Pa Kua Chang form movements, he believes that in order to learn the whole art, function (health, behavior) and tactics (self-defense) should be studied and he encourages his students to do so by teaching them some self-defense function for each movement as well as two man drills.

Chinese boxing experts are very straight forward when it comes to form, philosophy and function. The teacher's authenticity should become suspect when flamboyant promises are made and theatrical gestures emphasized.

Pittman and the Police

Pittman has adapted some of his studies for police training, including a system of apprehension and suspect neutralization techniques for law enforcement personnel.

The suspect neutralization system was developed in cooperation with the Florida S.W.A.T. trainer and has been taught to state and federal personnel. The intense 10-hour course is designed to be easy to learn and easy to train. Because of the liabilities a law enforcement officer faces when trying to apprehend a suspect, Pittman emphasizes control. There are eight degrees of lethality in the system, starting with simple control and elevating to higher lethality depending upon the situation.

Advice To Students

Pittman's advice to students who are in search of a Pa Kua Chang instructor is to look for authenticity. Pittman's definition of authenticity includes: responsible behavior, reasonable physical condition, a traceable

lineage, and functions of posture that are not overly fanciful. The first thing to look at is the instructor's behavior. If he is not detectably sociopathic, and he seems like a kind human being (as regards his treatment of living things) then you look at his physical conditioning and physical approach to teaching. Pittman believes that a teacher should have a sound basic knowledge of physiology and anatomy, allowing him to teach the student what is happening to his body physically and to show the student the proper alignments. He cautions students to be wary of overly esoteric explanations of the physical significance of postures. Pittman states that, in his experience, Chinese boxing experts are very straight forward when it comes to form, philosophy and function. The teacher's authenticity should become suspect when flamboyant promises are made and theatrical gestures emphasized.

Allen Pittman has recently co-authored two new martial arts books with Robert W. Smith. These books, *Hsing-I: Chinese Internal Boxing* and *Pa Kua: Eight Trigram Boxing* are published by Tuttle.

The Pa Kua book gives an account of the history and philosophy of the art and introduces the reader to the style of Wang Shu-Chin.

Students wishing to contact Allen Pittman should write to Allen c/o High View Publications and your letters will be forwarded.

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Alex Wang Talks About the Importance of Creativity and Change in Pa Kua Chang Practice.

The information in this article was obtained in an interview conducted at the home of Alex Wang in Vancouver, B.C., Canada, in September 1990.

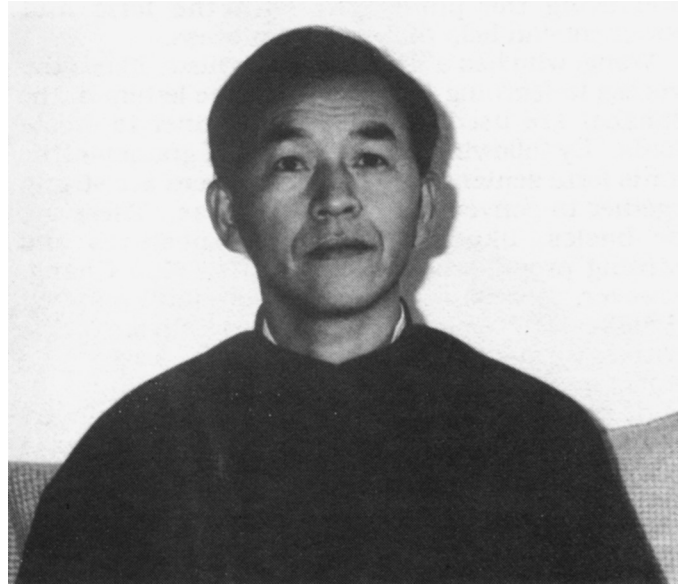
Alex Wang (Wang Hung-Tao) began his martial arts study in the late 40's at the age of nine. His family had just moved from the mainland to Keelung, a city just north of Taipei, Taiwan. After getting the family settled, Wang Chien-Feng, Alex's father, began teaching martial arts in Keelung and his son was his first student. Wang Chien-Feng initiated Alex into the martial arts by teaching him Northern Shaolin and Plum Flower Mantis. Wang's father, currently 79 years of age, still teaches Northern Shaolin, T'ai Chi Ch'uan and Pa Kua Chang at Taiwan University in Taipei. Wang Chien-Feng had studied martial arts from the age of 15 from his father, Wang Te-Yung in Chiang Shou Province on the mainland.

The elder Wang started his son's training with Northern Shaolin because he felt this style was best suited for younger students who enjoy the high level of activity inherent in the "external" styles and have not developed the patience required to study an "internal" style. Also, the philosophy of Pa Kua, which is an integral part of the art, is easier to comprehend when the student is older. Wang believes Northern Shaolin practice builds a foundation of strength, balance, and flexibility that will serve the student well if he later studies an internal style. When Alex was 20 his father told him it was time to start Pa Kua Chang training.

Prior to this time the younger Wang had not heard of Pa Kua Chang. He found the circular movement very interesting, however, because he had trained for 11 years with harder, more expressive styles, he found it difficult to achieve the level of relaxation required in the softer style. He comments that once he did learn how to relax, he noticed that he was able to achieve quicker movement and he did not get tired.

Wang's father initiated him to Pa Kua by requiring him to hold static postures in a middle basin stance. The emphasis was placed on correct structure and alignment. After the static postures were correct, he began walking the circle. Wang emphasized that these two beginning stages of Pa Kua Chang practice are crucial to proper development in the art. Without developing correct posture through standing practice and correct footwork through walking the circle practice, all other movement in the forms and weapons sets will be very weak. He commented that students today want to learn too fast and thus do not put the proper amount of time and effort into learning these fundamentals.

After walking the circle in middle basin, Wang's father required him to hold postures and walk in the lower basin to further develop his legs and his balance. Wang states that after the lower basin work has been



Alex Wang of Vancouver, B.C., Canada

done, the student can move to upper basin, but he feels that the leg work in lower basin is an important stage in development.

The next stage in training, after static postures and circle walking, was to move with change, and thus Wang learned the 8 "mother" palms of Pa Kua Chang. The mother palms are related to the trigrams of the I-Ching (Book of Changes) and change as the trigrams depict. The mother palms "give birth" to a longer, more intricate, set of 64 "derived palms" which Wang was later taught.

Wang stresses the importance of incorporating the philosophy of Pa Kua into the movement. Just learning the form movement would be like practicing any other sport for health, like running, he explains. The Pa Kua form movements have deep philosophical roots and thus the practitioner should use his practice to help gain access to the philosophy and read the philosophy to help improve the practice.

After learning the 64 derived palms, Alex completed his basic open hand form training, however, his training was not over because, just as the 8 palms multiplied to become 64, the 64 palms can multiply into inexhaustible palms.

Wang feels that the key to reaching high levels of Pa Kua Chang practice is in developing the ability to create. He states that the practitioner can have a very good foundation, but will not rise to the highest levels unless he learns to be creative. "Pa Kua movement is as sneaky as a swimming fish and it changes as fast as a divine dragon," Wang explained. "When you try to catch a fish, it is very difficult because its moves are unpredictable and it changes very fast. This is the nature of Pa Kua Chang."

Wang admits that creativity is very hard to teach, it is something the student must cultivate in his practice. Studying the philosophy of classics such as the I-Ching and the Tao Te Ching and integrating the philosophy with the form and movement can help this creative process.

Wang, who has a degree in journalism, likens the process to learning how to write. The letters in the alphabet are used in a defined manner to create words. By following the guidelines of grammar, the words form sentences and the sentences are strung together to convey thoughts and ideas. These are the basics, like holding correct postures and learning proper circle walking in Pa Kua Chang. However, to be able to express original, inspired thought effectively and efficiently through the written word requires the ability to create, you cannot simply copy what others have written.

It is this same creativity that will allow the 64 palms to multiply into an inexhaustible number of palms and allow the practitioner to embody the characteristics of the swimming fish and the divine dragon. The master can create and change with the mind and body instantaneously according to the situation and “win in an invisible way.”

To “win in an invisible way” and manifest a spontaneous, correct response in any situation, requires the ability to create. The practitioner who has attained this level of practice has moved beyond a memorized set of form movements and functional applications. Wang states that most students’ idea of learning martial arts is simply learning the form movements and martial techniques. This is only the foundation. If you are in a combat situation, you will not perform well if you rely on a set of memorized form applications, especially if your opponent knows those same applications.

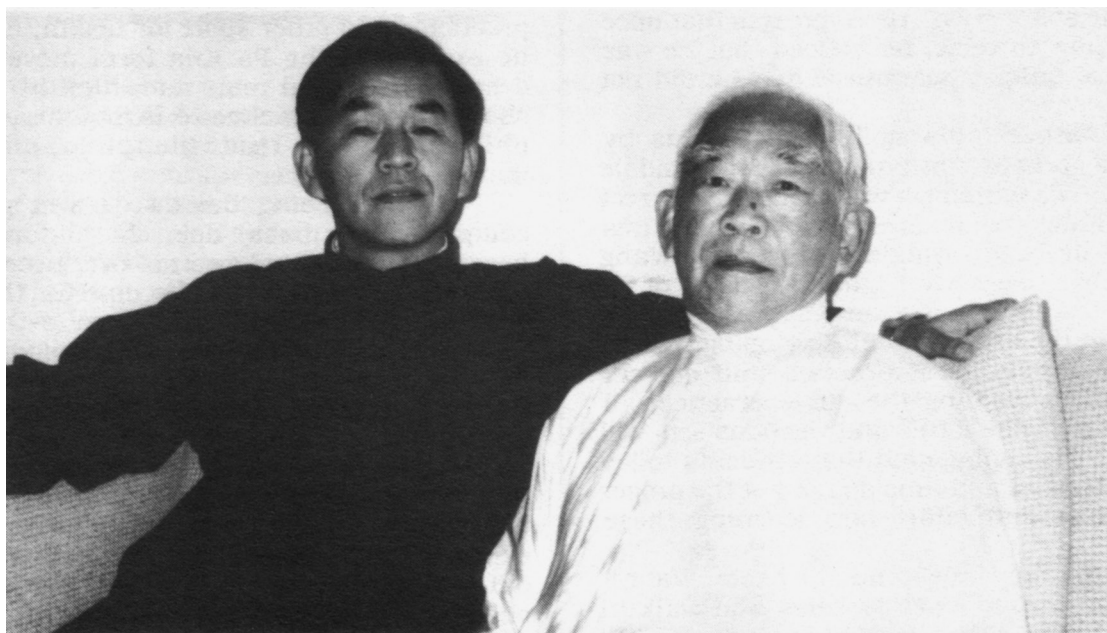
Wang explained that since Pa Kua Chang moves and changes in a great variety of unpredictable ways, it is great for self-defense and he divides the self-defense

learning process into three stages. First the practitioner will learn to win, however, the opponent will get hurt. At the next stage of development, the practitioner will win without hurting the opponent. At the highest stage, the practitioner will win without fighting.

When asked if there is a “royal road” to learning the martial arts, Wang replied, “In a sense, perhaps, yes. Thus the saying: ‘T’ai Chi plus Pa Kua make the gods and ghosts retreat.’ From the technical point of view, both T’ai Chi and Pa Kua Chang emphasize the dual principle of positive and negative, Yin and Yang, and the integration of softness and hardness. The difference is this: T’ai Chi Ch’uan inclines not to take the active move, while Pa Kua Chang less so inclines. Pa Kua Chang likes to take initial moves mainly because it emphasizes circular walk and, hence, likes to combat in marvelous movements. However, the goal is the same, to control, not to be controlled. A good way to practice martial arts would be: lay down a good foundation, with a good teacher, and then try to appreciate T’ai Chi Ch’uan’s ‘conquering the strong by the method of softness’ and Pa Kua Chang’s ‘taking chances in circular changes.’ “

Wang started his teaching career as an assistant to his father when he was in high school. His first experience with teaching on his own was when he went to college (1962-1965) and classmates asked him to teach them what he knew. After college he continued to teach part time while working as a journalist.

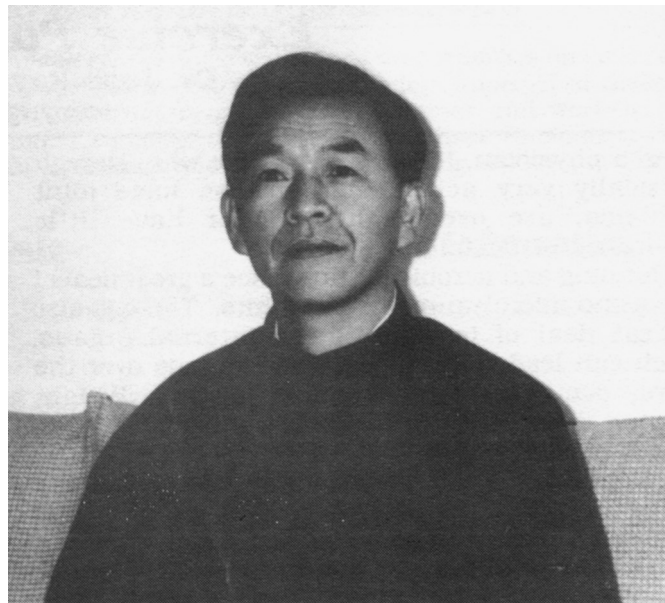
In 1977 Wang was teaching a student in Taiwan who was from Costa Rica. This student invited Wang to come to Costa Rica and teach. Wang, who loves to travel and experience different parts of the world, accepted the offer and moved to Costa Rica. While he was teaching in Costa Rica, a student from Vancouver, B.C., asked him to come teach there and so in 1980 he moved to Vancouver and has been teaching there



Alex Wang with his father Wang Chien-Fong

***One should avoid greediness
in learning; and in the end
one should not have the illusion
that a few punches or kicks
can make one invincible. Thus the
saying, "A teacher guides
you to the gate; how much
you can achieve depends on your own
hard practice."***

***A well experienced teacher
can only give you the master key,
whether you would like to
open the treasure box
or not depends on you
yourself.***



since.

Wang made an interesting observation about the students in Costa Rica as compared to those in North America. The Costa Rican lifestyle is very slow paced and thus the people are generally patient and relaxed. The students that he taught in Costa Rica were interested in learning the external styles that Wang teaches (Northern Shaolin, Plum-Flower Mantis, White Monkey, Praying Mantis, and Drunken Buddha). When he got to North America, where the pace of life is fast and the people are generally in a hurry, he found that people were more interested in learning the internal styles (T'ai Chi Ch'uan, Hsing-I Ch'uan, and Pa Kua Chang). Through this experience Wang concluded that people will generally search for the art that will provide a balance to their lifestyle.

Since moving to Canada in 1980 Wang only conducted a regular Pa Kua Chang group class for three years (1983-1986). He said that the majority of the people are interested in T'ai Chi Ch'uan and because he teaches 12 different T'ai Chi classes in and around Vancouver, he does not have time to teach anything else. At present he teaches Yang style T'ai Chi, T'ai Chi Sword, and push hands. After studying Pa Kua Chang for 5 years, his father taught him Chen style T'ai Chi. He later studied Yang style with Shou Tsu-Ming of the Taiwan T'ai Chi International Association.

Wang emphasized that the most important element in any martial arts development is practice. If you do not practice it is hard to improve. Although he has been studying martial arts approximately 40 years, he still practices every morning with his father who has been training for over 60 years. Wang's parents spend six months of the year in Taiwan and spend the summer months in Vancouver with their son. Although Wang would like his parents to move to Vancouver for good, his father still likes to teach martial arts at the Taiwan

University and thus returns to Taiwan every fall.

Wang's advice to students of Pa Kua Chang is to concentrate on the static postures until they are correct, then add activity and movement to the practice and develop the footwork by walking the circle. When these fundamentals have been developed, add change to the movement and learn to create. To improve your practice, Wang recommends that you learn in class, read the philosophy, and participate in tournaments so that you can watch others and exchange ideas.

Wang also believes, "One should avoid greediness in learning; and in the end one should not have the illusion that a few punches or kicks can make one invincible. Thus the saying, 'A teacher guides you to the gate; how much you can achieve depends on your own hard practice.' A well experienced teacher can only give you the master key, whether you would like to open the treasure box or not depends on you yourself."

Chinese Character Index

王 弘 道	Wang Hung-Tao
王 劍 鋒	Wang Chien-Feng
太 極 拳	T'ai Chi Ch'uan
八 卦 掌	Pa Kua Chang
王 德 勇	Wang Te-Yung
易 經	I Ching
道 德 經	Tao Te Ching
陰	Yin
陽	Yang
形 意 拳	Hsing-I Ch'uan

Pa Kua Chang: Eight Trigrammed Art of the Dragon Exercise Par Excellence

By Dr. John Raymond Baker, D.C.

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As a physician, I see many people who, though physically very active, nonetheless have joint problems, are overweight, and/or have little endurance or flexibility.

Running and aerobic jogging place a great deal of stress and microtrauma on the joints. There is also a great deal of jostling of the internal organs, which can lead to prolapse of the organs over the years, occurring from regular jogging. Weight training does little for flexibility and in fact, can limit it beyond normal.

What folks need is a complete, comprehensive toning exercise. Pa Kua Chang is such a total exercise for mind and body. As you watch a Pa Kua practitioner walking the circle, twisting, dipping, spinning, anyone trained in anatomy and physiology will be awed by the number of ligaments being stretched, muscles being toned, stretched, and the gentle stimulation of the internal organs which these movements have.

Pa Kua Chang puts motion into the joints of the vertebral column and thus, helps to prevent development of osteoarthritis. The "wear and tear" disease of osteoarthritis often results when there is a combination of loss of the correct and proper curves of the spine (i.e. there are three main curves; the lordotic, forward C-curve of the neck, the backward curve of the thoracic spine [kyphotic], and the lordotic (forward curve) of the lumbar [low back] spine). These curves are essential for the proper functioning of the back. They help to provide a supportive "springiness" that humans need in their constant opposition to gravity.

The torquing and twisting movements also help to rehydrate the discs, those fibrous shock absorbing structures placed between the vertebrae. As people age, the discs lose their water content and this loss of water induces a loss of resiliency in face of the constant compressional forces on them. This causes a flattening of the disc, premature aging of the fibers which form the outer perimeter of the disc, and the result is that the disc lose height and this increases the compressional forces on the disc and the vertebrae.

Responding to this development, the body interprets that this joint is diseased or disintegrating and makes an attempt to limit motion at this joint to preclude further damage. It does this by a combination of muscle spasms and pain, and as the problem progresses, the body begins laying down calcium deposits on the edges of the vertebrae, deposits which look like horns and which, if the situation continues, can actually bridge the joint gap (across the disc) and lock the joint down. If this happens, you get a buildup of toxins in the disc which can eventually result in inflammation of the disc (discitis) and protrusion surgery due to pressure on nerve roots and resultant pain and/or loss of bodily functions.

Prevention is always the best medicine and Pa Kua Chang is an excellent means of helping to preserve function and health of not only the vertebral joints of the spine, but also function and range of motion of the knees, hips, neck, and even wrist.

But, just as the muscles are stretched and toned, just as it helps prevent osteoarthritis and just as it stimulates the internal organs, Pa Kua Chang is healthy for the mind as well. Vigorous exercise not only releases endorphins (those endogenous morphines that make us feel good about ourselves), it also helps to reduce psychological stress which we accumulate during the day.

The meditative, aesthetic aspects of the art cannot be overlooked. When our minds are quieted, when we stimulate the "relaxation response," this causes a sympathetic reaction in the body and the cells can function more in unison. Also, there is evidence that practice of the Chinese internal arts increases the efficiency of immune function.

Another thing that is good about Pa Kua is that it imparts confidence. This is certainly not a quantifiable, measured thing that a physical scientist would feel comfortable talking about, but walking the circle with hands placed in proper position gives you a sense of control and agility and stability that may be grossly lacking in some other aspect of life in a world in which a car may come speeding at you from an unexpected angle, a Middle Eastern dictator may decide to drop a bomb without warning, or a madman may decide to go on a shooting spree.

So, for those who enjoy taking part in promoting their own health and defense, Pa Kua Chang may be more than what appears on the surface. As muscles stretch and tone, organs increase blood flow, and stress hormone levels in the blood drop, Pa Kua may be the answer to more than self defense par excellence!

Dr. John Baker is founder of the National Martial Arts Association and has been involved in Chinese martial arts for over 20 years. He describes himself as a modern Taoist attempting to reconcile Eastern wisdom and Western knowledge.

Dr. Baker currently resides in Austin, TX and welcomes correspondences, comments and questions at the following address:

Dr. John Raymond Baker, D.C.
Holistic Health Productions
9971 Quail Boulevard #803
Austin, TX 78758-5791 USA
(512) 873-8105 leave message

1991 Calander of Pa Kua Chang Workshops and Seminars

Several of the Pa Kua Chang instructors in the U.S. and Canada give periodic workshops and seminars on Pa Kua Chang that are open to the public. In this section of the newsletter we will keep the readers apprized of these seminars and workshops for those who may be interested. Instructors please send seminar and workshop information to High View Publications, P.O. Box 3372, Reston, VA 22090. We will only list those seminars and workshops that teach Pa Kua Chang as part of the curriculum. Seminars and workshops teaching strictly T'ai Chi, Hsing-I, or Ch'i Kung will not be listed.

<u>Instructor</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Contact for Information</u>
John Bracy	San Bernadino, CA	1-3 March 91	John Bracy or Carlos Casados (714) 731-1196
Jerry Johnson	Capon Bridge, WVA	28 Apr-4 May 91	Jerry Johnson (408) 646-9399
Kumar Frantzis	New York City, NY	14-16 June 91	Susan Rabinowitz (212) 473-7590
T.Y Pang	Orcus Island, WA	1-8 July 91	Robert Fong (see address on page 12)
Jerry Johnson	San Francisco, CA	Sept 91	Jerry Johnson (408) 646-9399

In the next issue of Pa Kua Chang Newsletter: Interviews with Johnny Kwong Ming Lee and Al-Waalee Muhammad plus a new column dedicated to translations of Pa Kua Chang Classics.

For those of you who missed our premiere issue, it is available for purchase for \$2.50. This issue includes interviews with Liu Hsing-Han and John Bracy. Send check or money order to High View Publications at address shown below.

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Loriano Belluomini

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0583/977051

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Wai Lun Choi's Chinese Internal Arts
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(415) 621-2106

Zhang Gui-Feng & Chris Pei

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Arlington, VA 22204

Please note: The *Pa Kua Chang Newsletter* does not validate the authenticity or qualifications of the instructors listed in the Directory. Any instructor who requests a listing will appear on the list. We leave it to the reader to validate the instructor's authenticity on his/her own terms. We print this list so that readers who are looking for an instructor have a starting place.

Attention Pa Kua Chang Instructors ! If you would like your name, teaching address, and phone number listed in each issue of the Pa Kua Chang Newsletter for the benefit of students who are interested in locating a Pa Kua Chang teacher, please send this information to High View Publications, P.O. Box 3372, Reston, VA 22090.