



Pa Kua Chang

Newsletter

Vol. 2, No. 1

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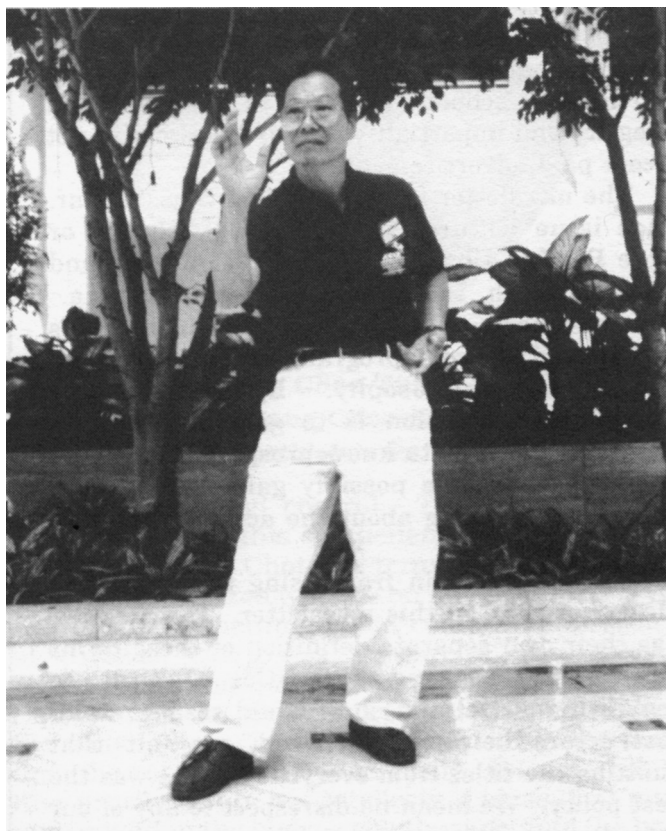
Wai Lun Choi Discusses the Principles of Chiang Jung-Ch'iao's Pa Kua Chang

The information in this article was obtained during an interview conducted in July 1991 at "A Taste of China" T'ai Chi Tournament.

The fundamental principles of Pa Kua Chang should be evident in all movements and applications regardless of the particular style of Pa Kua a person practices. It is generally accepted that Tung Hai-Ch'uan taught each of his students differently. It is said that Tung did not accept beginners. If a student wanted to learn Pa Kua from him, they were required to first be proficient in another style. Tung taught each student the principles of Pa Kua based on what they already knew, and thus he had to teach them differently. However, the common threads running through all of Tung's teaching are the principles of Pa Kua Chang.

Wai Lun Choi came to the Pa Kua Chang teacher's conference in Winchester, Virginia, ready to discuss these principles. At the conference, Choi stated that although Tung has been dead for over 100 years, his teaching of the Pa Kua Chang principles still lives in the book *Pa Kua Chang Lien Hsi Fa* (Training Methods of Eight Diagram Palms) published by third generation Pa Kua Chang instructor Chiang Jung-Ch'iao (Chiang was a student of Chang Chao-Tung). Unfortunately, the teacher's meeting did not lend itself to a detailed discussion of each of the Pa Kua Chang principles outlined in Chiang's book. However, during a lengthy interview with Choi in his hotel room one evening, he spent time discussing each of these principles.

Choi is one of the most qualified teachers in this country to talk about the principles of Pa Kua Chang as written in Chiang Jung-Chiao's book because his teacher, Chan Yik Yan, was a Pa Kua Chang student of Chiang. Choi spent eight years (1964-1972) with his teacher and studied Pa Kua, T'ai Chi, Hsing-I, and Liu Ho Pa Fa. Prior to studying the internal styles



Pa Kua Chang instructor Wai Lun Choi of Chicago, Illinois

with Chan, he had spent seven years studying a number of other styles including Tibetan Lama, Northern Shaolin, Mae Cheong Law Horn, Thai Boxing, and Judo. In 1971 Choi was chosen, along with several others, to represent Hong Kong at the Pan Southeast Asian Hand-to-Hand Martial Arts Tournament held in Singapore. Choi won two divisions and earned the nickname pai choi, or "big gun." Chan Yik Yan was so impressed with Choi that he chose him to be his Liu Ho Pa Fa style successor. In 1972 Choi moved from Hong Kong to Chicago and has been teaching there since.

See page 15 for an interview with Andrew Dale of Seattle



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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When discussing the postural alignment in Pa Kua, Choi started by saying that the head is held straight and the neck muscles are relaxed. When the head is held erect, the chin will tuck in slightly, but the chin should not be pushed in with force. The buttocks are dropped down (tailbone straight) as in sitting. The lower back is relaxed in order to flatten the lumbar curve -- it is not forced to roll under. The chest is relaxed, but not collapsed. The body is relaxed, but not over-relaxed -- hard must have soft and soft must have hard. Choi states that many practitioners will read phrases in books such as "the chin tucks in," "the buttocks is rolled under," or "relax the chest," and they will force the occurrence and inevitably go overboard, causing tension and misalignment. Internal arts practitioners are constantly reminded to "relax," but Choi says that even this can be overdone. The body should relax, but the shape must be full and ready, and control must be maintained. His advice is to keep things natural. In most cases, if it doesn't feel natural, its probably not right.

***If the intention of the mind and the will
of the heart are not congruent, then
there will be hesitation.***

Another principle that is typically forced and overemphasized by many practitioners is "tightening the anal sphincter." Many books list this component as an important principle, and there is validity in the concept. However, Choi states that some practitioners overemphasize this action. The anal sphincter should be gently held closed with about the same force you might use to lightly close your eyelid. At the moment you issue power with a strike, the anal sphincter is tightened a bit harder, but otherwise it is gently closed. Also, when practicing Pa Kua, the spine is vertical and the body has a natural straightness. The shoulders are relaxed and the elbows sink down with gravity. The nose, fingers, and toes should be pointing in the same direction. The goal is to align the entire body with gravity so that you do not create the need for excess muscular force and tension.

Choi explained that if your alignment is correct and balanced, then you will be solid like an island and the power from a strike will all flow into your opponent. If your alignment is off somewhere, you will be like a cup that has a crack in it. If your whole body is not in harmony, then your opponent's force will find your weak point. Additionally, if you have a weak link in your structure, you will absorb part of the force from your own strike rebounding off your opponent and coming back into you when you try to hit him. The body should be natural and relaxed with correct shape and good control. Movement should be smooth and solid. The body is light, but not floating. The body is solid and rooted when the ch'i is in the tan t'ien. Movement can be quick and light and still remain rooted if the breath

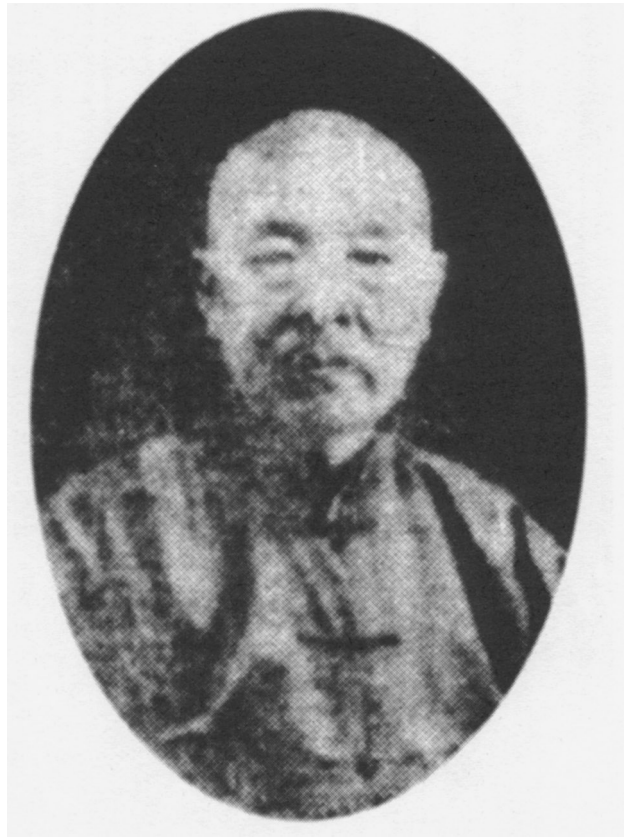
is kept in the tan t'ien.

The importance of deep, smooth, and continuous breath in practice is, in Choi's view, a key component to success in internal martial arts styles. Choi states that if the body is not properly aligned, there will be tension. If there is tension in the body, the breath and circulation are affected. If the breath and circulation are affected, the ch'i is not full and all parts of the body will not work together. Every improper body movement or alignment has a negative effect on breathing. If the chest is collapsed or too open, the breath is affected. If the shoulders raise up, the breath is affected. If the body does not move together as a unit, the breath is affected. Negative effects on the breathing would include stopping of breath, interruption in the smooth flow of breath, or the breath being shallow (as in upper chest breathing). Choi also explains that incorrect body alignment will also decrease reaction time. If the body is not naturally aligned with gravity, it will constantly be working to right itself and there will be tension. The nervous system response will decrease if the body is trying to balance itself at the same time you are reacting to an opponent's movements.

Another important component of internal martial arts practice that Choi emphasizes is what he calls "the mind and heart being together." If the intention of the mind and the will of the heart are not congruent, then there will be hesitation. Hesitation causes tension in the muscles. When there is hesitation and tension in the muscles, then the breathing is affected and the ch'i is not full. However, when the mind, heart, and body are together, there will be confidence, the body will remain relaxed and the breath will stay in the lower tan t'ien. When the heart and mind are not together, there will not only be physical tension, but emotional tension as well. Choi states that the same idea holds true in any sport. If a basketball player is relaxed and confident, his mind and heart are together and he will be on top of his game.

Pa Kua principles are not intellectual ideas, you must understand in the body -- you must get into the body feeling.

While describing the idea of heart and mind being together, Choi asked me to throw a punch into the air. After I did that, he held his hand out and asked me to punch at his hand. "Do you feel a difference?," he asks. If you punch at a target, your punch will have meaning, there will be intent and the breath will be in the tan t'ien. He encourages his students to "shadow box" when they perform their form routine -- this way there will be intent in their practice. But Choi warns against over-focusing on one object when training. If you over-focus, you will be out of balance and you



The famous Chang Chao-Tung (張兆東), also known as Chang Chan-K'uei (張占魁), was Chiang Jung-Ch'iao's Pa Kua Chang teacher

will lose flexibility and control. The term Choi uses when describing this component to his students is "Be Careful." To Choi, the term "be careful" means that you do not totally focus on any one thing -- you expect that something could come from anywhere at anytime. When you "be careful" your body is relaxed, your mind is calm, and your spirit is alert. Choi states that this concept must sink deep into the body. If you "be careful" deep within the body, then the body will always be ready. He says that Pa Kua principles are not intellectual ideas, you must understand in the body -- you must get into the body feeling.

When practicing the Pa Kua Chang circle walking, the idea behind the phrase "be careful" is particularly applicable. Choi says that when you are walking the circle, it should be as if you are walking on thin ice. The classic phrase "walking in mud" does not mean that you are walking as if you are stuck in mud or stomping in mud, it means that you are walking on something that is very slippery and thus you must walk lightly and carefully as if you might fall down at any time. When walking, the movement is smooth and even like water running -- there can be no breaking or tensing. Smooth and even movement will help keep the breath in the tan t'ien.

Choi explains that when walking, the front foot does not step out, instead the back foot should spring you forward. However, the step should not be too high or too wide. As the back foot passes



Wai Lun Choi is pictured here, in 1970, with his teacher, Chen Yik-Yan and his teacher's wife.

the front foot it should come close enough to lightly scrape the instep of the front foot. The "heart" of the foot should be empty and the toes grab naturally when the foot is placed flat on the ground. When the foot is up it is flat, when it is down it grabs. The grabbing of the toes should not be forced and you do not focus on the toes pulling. The walking should be smooth and light. Root comes from a relaxed mind and tan t'ien breathing, not heaviness of the body. Your walking will be heavy if you are uncomfortable and tense. Walking the circle uses "twisting power" rather than "forcing power." In each technique you use the waist to turn the whole body, then you have harmony and united power. When executing changes, the turning and rotating should be smooth on the inside and on the outside. The feeling should be like that of an eagle turning in flight.

Choi approaches each of the four internal martial art styles which he practices and teaches (Tai Chi Ch'uan, Pa Kua Chang, Hsing-I Ch'uan, and Liu Ho Pa Fa) with the same simple philosophy. If you align yourself with gravity, insure that the breath is smooth, deep, and continuous, have your mind and heart together, and execute movements and postures that feel natural, your skill level will improve greatly.

Choi states that Pa Kua contains four main methods: running, looking, sitting, and twisting. These four are for developing: flexible footwork

(running -- walking the circle), alert spirit (looking -- be careful), stability (sitting -- bending the knees, tailbone straight as if sitting on a stool), and power (twisting -- uniting the spirit, ch'i, mind, and power on the inside and outside).

***Spirit and ch'i and mind and power
must have harmony to be united.
To develop properly, these
elements cannot be separate.***

Training Stages

Choi outlines Pa Kua Chang training into three developmental practice steps or stages:

- 1.** Single movement by single movement -- this is the foundation work. The practitioner practices slowly -- one step, one technique.
- 2.** Continuous flexible movement -- like the first stage, but smoother. The movement is faster and continuous.
- 3.** Change form practice -- the changes are not executed in any given order. The practitioner is creative and reacts spontaneously.

Fundamental Principles

Choi states that the fundamental principles behind the first and second stages are the same, only the first is done slowly and deliberately and the second is done fast and continuous. He outlines these principles as follows:

- 1.** Neck and head straight, tailbone straight, anal sphincter gently closed, relax shoulders, elbows down, breathe in tan t'ien, relax chest.
- 2.** The body must twist, spin, run, and turn. The waist, elbow, arm, palm, and neck twist and turn to the circle center. Whether you spin or turn depends on the technique, but in either case you must twist.
- 3.** Spring the back foot and touch the front foot instep when walking. The forward foot must slide, the backward foot springs. (The weighted foot is called the back foot. The foot that slides forward is called the front foot. When you sit on that foot it is called the back foot.)
- 4.** Don't step too high or too wide. Adjust by yourself, depending on your size. Be comfortable.
- 5.** Bend the knee to walk in mud (slippery surface). Be careful.
- 6.** The foot center is empty, the heel and toes grab. The forward foot must follow the circle and grab. (When the step is big, the rear heel can go up. But when the back foot comes up to the front foot, it must be flat. When the weight is on the foot, the toes grab.)
- 7.** Fingers are open, palm center rounded, move the forearm and follow the circle center. Do not push forward, but into the circle center.

Continued on page 6

西曆壹玖伍零年冬兩南
京中央國術館長張之江
先生及中央國術館教導
主任六合八法拳導師吳
翼翬老師形意八卦太極
拳專家儲桂亭先生中央
國術館編教處主任葉形
意八卦太極拳專家姜容
樵先生韓星橋君尹天雄
君等攝於上海東寶興路
滬寓以留紀念
陳其沅誌



Leading practitioners of Internal Kung Fu in Nanking, China, circa 1950.

Front row (L-R): **Chiang Jung-Ch'iao** (Pa Kua, Hsing-I, T'ai Chi), **Wu I-Hui** (Liu Ho Pa Fa), **Chang Chih-Chiang** (Liu Ho Pa Fa), and **Ch'u Kuei-T'ing** (Hsing-I, Pa Kua). Back row (L-R): **Ch'en I-Jen** (Wu I-Hui's Liu Ho Pa Fa successor and Wai Lun-Choi's teacher), **Han Hsing-Ch'iao** (Hsing-I), and **Yin T'ien-Hsiung** (Liu Ho Pa Fa). At the National College of Martial Arts in Nanking (Nanking Central Kuo Shu Kuan), Chang Chih-Chiang was Chancellor, Wu I-Hui was Dean of Studies, and Chiang Jung-Ch'iao was Director of Programs. Chang Chih-Chiang, Chiang Jung-Ch'iao, Ch'en I-Jen, and Yin T'ien-Hsiung were all Liu Ho Pa Fa students of Wu I-Hui. Before studying with Wu I-Hui, Ch'en I-Jen had studied T'ai Chi, Hsing-I, and Pa Kua with Chiang Jung-Ch'iao and Ch'u Kuei-T'ing.

陳亦人	Ch'en I-Jen (Chan Yik-Yan)* **	韓星橋	Han Hsing-Ch'iao (Hong Sing-Kyu)*	尹天雄	Yin T'ien-Hsiung (Whan Tin-Hung)*
姜容樵	Chiang Jung-Ch'iao	吳翼翬	Wu I-Hui (Wu Yik-Fan)*	張之江	Chang Chih-Chiang (Chun Chi-Kung)*
褚桂亭	Ch'u Kuei-T'ing (Chi Kwai-Ting)*	* Cantonese Pronunciations			

** The Chinese Writing at the top of the page lists Chan Yik-Yan as Chan Cho-Fan, he later changed his name to Chan Yik-Yan

8. Shoulders are even, dropped down, and comfortable.

9. The waist is like an axle, the hand is like a wheel. When the hand moves, the body moves; when the body moves, the waist moves. Make the waist move everything.

10. The classics say: fire up, water down. Fire is light, water is heavy. In the body they relate to the heart and kidney. What they mean is the breathing is deep, to the stomach, the chest relaxed. The stomach is the root of ch'i; it is like an air tank. You must make the breathing deep in the stomach. The ch'i is like a cloud moving. Like a cloud moving means slowly. No fast inhale or fast exhale.

11. At moments of change, when the weight is on, the foot must be strong like a mountain. When you change, the foot must move like water -- that smooth. When moving, the weight must be down, heavy but not dull or sluggish, solid but not stiff, flexible and with good balance.

12. Dragon Body and Monkey Face. When you walk the circle, the body and footwork must look like a swimming dragon (i.e. a snake). The eye must watch the hand (i.e. look at the opponent). Monkey face means intelligent and alert.

13. Tiger Sit and Eagle Twist. When you change your palm and your footwork, the hip must sit, like a tiger sitting and watching. When you twist your body and change your palm, you must be like an eagle turning in the air, flexible and smooth, not stiff.

14. You must get into the animal feeling, be able to picture it in your mind.

Advanced Principles

Choi states that the third level of training is much more difficult. Principles of this level include:

1. Eight Direction Chain Power. The mind not breaking, idea not breaking, power not breaking, movement not breaking. You are automatically ready and have awareness of all eight directions.

2. Roll and Drill, Holding and Forcing. These concepts are not only accomplished with the hand, but with the whole body. When you roll and drill, the power changes. Roll in a circle to turn the arm, then drill and turn forward to get the coil power. In every technique all four things must come together to get real power.

3. Yin and Yang Power. Soft has hard, hard has soft. Everything has to contain opposites. Rolling must have drilling, forcing must have holding. This is what produces power in Pa Kua. To develop you must know about this.

4. Mind like a Flag, Mind like a Lamp. This idea goes back to old fashioned military communication. Day and night the Army could send messages and give orders, in the day with signal flags and at night with lamps. This tells you that when you practise you must use the mind to order movement, not simply move. It means you must know the reason for the technique and apply it with intention.

5. Make the mind clear and aware and the ch'i can go

all over. Without the mind to order it, ch'i and power can't go with you. When you practise a technique and know how to use it, you develop alertness and sensitivity; the ch'i will follow your mind and go all over, because the mind orders it.

6. Shoot Out and Tie In. Don't hold back. There must be no hesitation. Shoot out and tie in are the same as open and close. Tie in means close. Inside you suck in, outside you make tight.

7. Still and Move. Still and moving, circle and push out. When you move you must want to be still. That means calm. When you are still you must want to move. That means don't stop there. Power at the end is still, but it is not stuck there, it is ready for something else. Still at the end means power at the beginning. Moving and stillness must be together. You must control both.

Beyond these three levels, Choi defines the instructor level as having experiential knowledge of the following:

Spirit and ch'i and mind and power must have harmony to be united. To develop properly, these elements cannot be separate. Hand and foot together, shoulder and hip together, mind and spirit together, ch'i and power together, inside and outside together - that is united power. You must have harmony to produce this united power.

In Pa Kua, all of these elements must be together, otherwise you have only learned the outside technique -- you have an empty form. Uniting the spirit, ch'i, mind, and power on the inside and outside is the reason for the Pa Kua method. If you really have this, then you can say you have learned Pa Kua. Otherwise, you only know an empty technique and can't say you really know Pa Kua.

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張占魁	Chang Chan-K'uei
氣	Ch'i
陰	Yin
陽	Yang

Pa Kua Chang Question and Answer:

Adam Hsu reveals the substance of a 20 year old Question and Answer Session with his teacher Liu Yun-Ch'iao

After the publication of Pa Kua Chang Newsletter, Volume 1, Number 4, which featured an interview with Adam Hsu (Hsu Chi), Mr. Hsu received a number of letters and phone calls asking about the Pa Kua Chang post training that he discussed in his interview. His busy schedule has kept him from writing more on this subject, however, he did provide us with a translation of an interview he conducted with his teacher, Liu Yun-Ch'iao in Taiwan. This interview was conducted over 20 years ago and first appeared in print in a martial arts magazine in Taiwan. The translation of the original article is printed here in its entirety.

Q: Master, Pa Kua is a high level Chinese martial art, and the Pa Kua style is a famous path followed by some great masters, so why do so few people practice Pa Kua today? And those who do practice only walk the circle. They talk about lots of mysterious concepts, the more you hear, the more confused you become . . . sky, earth, fire, water, ying and yang, five elements and on and on. People have the impression that Pa Kua may be exercise, but it is not a real martial art. Then there are even those who would tease Pa Kua practitioners saying that we are merely donkeys grinding grain as we pull the mill stone in an endless tedious circle. The situation appears this way to me, but, what is the truth under the surface?

A: What a good question! The answer could be as long as 24 volumes of Chinese history, so I have to consider where to begin.

Q: Master, where ever you want to start . . .

A: I'd rather you bring up your questions and I'll give you honest answers.

Q: If so, then I will respectfully follow your wishes. First of all, why should this martial art be called Pa Kua?

A: Originally, this type of palm technique was not called Pa Kua Chang. It's not totally absolute, but it might have been called Yin Yang Pa Pan Chang.

Q: And what is the Yin Yang Pa Pan Chang?

A: Well, the so called yin/yang has a simple explanation: the white hand (palm up) and the black hand (palm down) are interchangeable, they are continuously flipping back and forth. To discuss this yin/yang concept in depth, then we'd have to touch on fa ching (issuing power), ch'an szu chin (twisting energy) and coordination. So, we can go on and talk about Pa Pan Chang. To practice this kind of palm, you have to plant 8 wooden posts and use them to practice doing the "pan" movement with your palm. (Translator's note: In Chinese, pan used as a noun means plate; as a verb it means to circle. In kung-fu any circling movements can also be "pan.") So, when you put all the aspects together then you have the Yin Yang Pa Pan Chang.

Q: May I ask how you set up those eight wooden posts?



**Pa Kua Chang instructor Liu Yun-Ch'iao
of Taiwan**

A: You are supposed to surround yourself. Front and back, left and right . . . that's four, right? Plus, you add the left front corner, left rear corner, right front corner and right rear corner. That makes eight.

Q: If you don't call the posts front, back, left, right and so on, is it all right to designate them east, south, west, north, northwest, southwest, northeast, and southeast?

A: Defining them by direction is O.K., but if you name the directions, then the position is fixed so you have to plant the posts this way. Then you have to follow these directions and you have limited yourself. Conditions in today's society are very crowded, and it's not necessary to follow these kinds of restrictions. Plant your posts based on the amount of space available, roughly surrounding yourself. As long as the arrangement doesn't hinder your practice, it's fine.

Q: These eight posts and their position, is this what Pa Kua practitioners like to call the four directions and four corners?

A: Exactly.

Q: What is the relationship then, between the eight wooden posts and the Chinese yin/yang and Pa Kua principles?

A: Roughly speaking, if we think that everything on the earth and in the sky is related to the yin/yang principle

and cannot move apart from Pa Kua, then this type of martial art and those wooden posts could not dare exclude themselves. How can they be exempt? Of course they are related.

Q: I sense something unspoken between the lines. May I ask, if I insist on absolute clarity, the Pa Kua philosophy and Pa Kua Chang the martial art, are these two necessarily indivisibly related?

A: When you put it this way, naturally it's not necessary to relate the Pa Kua philosophy and Pa Kua Chang martial art.

Q: Then why do most people call this martial art Pa Kua Chang?

A: In fact, it's not a requirement that you must call it Pa Kua Chang, it's just because some people named the posts after the eight trigrams that the name Pa Kua was adopted.

Q: Who is responsible for naming the eight posts and adding the Kua (trigrams)?

A: It would be a formidable task to trace it back, you cannot. You would have to be a well educated scholar, and even then . . .

Q: In your opinion, is it imperative to name the eight posts after the trigrams? And are we required to call this martial art Pa Kua Chang?

A: Not at all. Take a look at Yin Yang Pa Pan Chang: Eight is the number, pan is the movement, it's so clear. It's really better than Pa Kua Chang.

Q: Then should we replace or change the name Pa Kua Chang?

A: The name is already popular and well accepted. It's not necessary to change it. Besides, what name would you use?

Q: When people call the posts 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8, they called it Yin Yang Pa Pan Chang. Then when they named the posts after the eight trigrams they changed the name to Pa Kua Chang. So, if we deserve a whole new name, it should still be based on the eight posts.

A: You need to understand: It doesn't matter what you name the posts! You could name them anything!

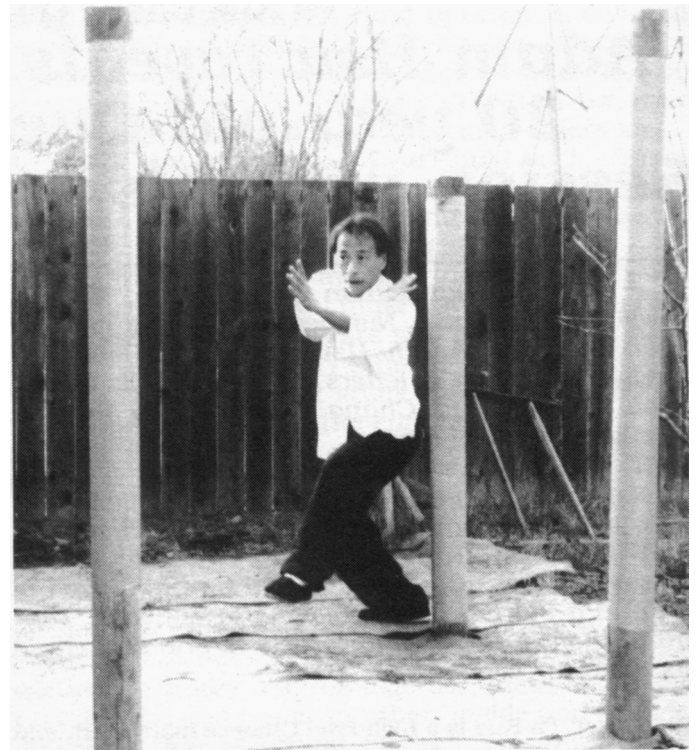
Q: Ah! I get it! Even if we called them A-B-C-D-E-F-G-H it would still be right.

A: Ha! People like you are easy to talk to about Pa Kua Chang. Now you are really following my train of thought.

Some people prefer to spend their energy quibbling over terminology. They make critical statements based on vocabulary instead of investing time practicing.

Q: Thanks for the compliment. May I ask, after the eight posts are established, is the directional pattern fixed?

A: In the beginning there is a certain order to follow in practice: Which post is first, which second and so on. But it isn't mandatory to fix the direction. For instance, this time start from the East; next time the West. Practice must be based on oneself and then related to direction. You must follow a certain method of practice not a direction. Don't think that if you practice with the wrong post, heaven and earth will change places and an earthquake will occur!



Adam Hsu Practicing the Pa Kua Post Exercise

Q: Master, you said, "In the beginning there's a certain order to follow . . ." But it seems as if when we reach a higher level, there are more questions.

A: Naturally. After you get used to this practice, you base the movement on your own feeling, and you go to whatever post you like - - there is no necessary order anymore.

Q: It's clear that direction and order aren't necessary to follow, but, may I ask, can the number of posts be increased or decreased?

A: Yes. The reason to have eight posts is not the number eight but the direction. The eight posts give you the ability to totally surround yourself on all sides and from every angle. This enables you to train to take care of an attack from any direction. That is the intention, not the number.

Q: What is the minimum and maximum number of posts?

A: There isn't any standard at all - - except obviously you must have at least one, otherwise, how could you practice? The maximum number is potentially endless, but too many are really useless.

Q: I've heard before that to practice Pa Kua one should plant a bamboo forest and then walk through the forest while practicing. This is supposed to be done very quickly, without touching the trees. Is there such a practice?

A: This is nonsense and has been for a long time. Actually, this is someone talking about post training without knowing the facts and wanting to make it mysterious. This is how we get: "Penetrating the forest." Even if you could penetrate a forest, so what?

Q: Then "forest penetrating palm" isn't a very reliable term?

A: "Pa Kua forest penetrating palm" isn't really popular, in fact to practice with all eight posts is called forest penetrating. You can use this term without damage.

Q: There is also a term, "Dragon Style Pa Kua" . . .

A: Saying Dragon just makes it sound better. In fact, where's the Dragon? When you practice Pa Kua you have to do lots of twisting, body, waist, arm, leg . . . it's really more snake-like, you can't get away from that. But, to make it sound more classy, people say dragon instead of snake. In fact, all Pa Kua are dragon style, without the dragon it's not Pa Kua anymore - - besides there is definitely no tiger or kitty style Pa Kua. So, calling it dragon style is fine, and not to call it dragon style, well, it still is anyway, what's in a name?

Q: Your statement is so open minded, but we often hear people criticizing each other over different nomenclature - - snake, dragon, etc. Why?

A: Some people prefer to spend their energy quibbling over terminology. They make critical statements based on vocabulary instead of investing time practicing.

Q: But people practice the same style, Pa Kua, yet there are still differences within the movement. What's the reason?

A: That's because their teacher is different, the branch of the style is different, the level of achievement is different. It happens in all other styles as well. It's not too odd.

Q: Then there must be some styles that are better or worse. How can one make a proper judgement?

A: Each individual's achievement depends on their level and willingness to work hard. But, even if their technique is good, great or even lousy, it also has to match the principles of Pa Kua, or it's still no good.

Q: In the Pa Kua style, how many forms are there altogether?

A: No style should be judged by the number of forms. Pa Kua in particular doesn't emphasize this. Generally speaking, Pa Kua Chang should have the Pa Kua (eight palm changes) and Pa Kua Lien Huan Chang (linking form).

Q: May I ask another question about the linking form? We've heard about it, but it's difficult to find people today who practice it.

A: The Pa Kua linking palm is like the Pan Chang. The form walks through the eight directions, and Pan goes through all eight posts, stepping without stopping, using the palm continuously. This is the basic pattern, the reason it's fundamental is that after you've mastered the form, when you practice Pan Chang, you don't follow the pattern anymore. Then the wonderful changing relies completely on the individual.

Q: How is the linking form composed?

A: Good question. It has to be related to your practice order. First of all, it certainly should include Pa Kua's special basic techniques.

Q: Are these all single movements?

A: Yes, all single movements. You must practice your step, arm, eye, and body to get all the training. After you master this, then the teacher will lead you, or you could try and do it yourself, that is, link the basics together in a sequence. Then you continue to practice and keep on adding sequences. This is what we call the eight palm changes today.

Q: Nowadays, many Pa Kua practitioners only do the Pa Chang. Some don't have basic single movements, they just immediately do the first two palm changes.

A: How today's master's train is incomprehensible to me. But practicing this way do they get real kung-fu? Do they have any authentic depth? What is the level of their achievement?

Q: None, but may I ask why?

A: There's nothing else to say: It's just because they never

practice with a post.

Q: Then how do you practice with a post?

A: Post practice has an order too. After basic training has been completed, students can start the pan (circling) with one post. After that, use two posts to learn how to switch smoothly from one to another. When the progression to three posts can be done smoothly, you can move on to all eight posts; and that's the linking form: all eight directions, all eight posts. Some might want to increase the connection, or get still more training. To do this some people add two more posts in the center of the configuration, and that's OK too.

Q: Then is that ten Kua?

A: Not so. You still have eight directions, and this is not based on the number of posts.

Each individual's achievement depends on their level and willingness to work hard.

Q: Today, who else besides you teaches Lien Huan Chang?

A: People use the linking form nowadays to impress an audience; most of these forms were composed by the masters, but they are not the original form.

Q: Forgive my rudeness, may I dare to ask, how do you know these masters composed these forms themselves?

A: It's not difficult. Just ask them to pan through the eight posts smoothly, without hesitation, with their movement based on the Pa Kua principles. Is their movement beneficial? Is it meaningful? This is an easy way to tell.

Q: After finishing the linking form and practicing eight or ten, or endless posts, then why continue to practice the Pan Chang?

A: If you don't use posts to practice, even for your entire life, you cannot really establish your art. After prolonged post practice, you must leave the post to practice in empty space. Then you can fully realize the art and achieve the highest possible level.

Q: Then after walking the circle, the palm changes, after leaving the post, is a student ready for "private practice"? [Private practice is training devised specifically to match a student's individual needs.]

A: Exactly. After you leave the post, each individual should practice the safest and most reliable techniques that are best suited to their physical abilities. These are the techniques you feel you can win with in a fight. These techniques are mixed together to create an individual's "private practice."

Q: Based on what you've said, this private practice is not necessarily eight palms. . .

A: Not necessarily. Nowadays, people always say "eight" because they want to correspond to the eight diagrams.

Q: Each person doesn't do those eight palms exactly the same though!?

A: No, not necessarily the same. The student isn't required to do them just like the master, and the master shouldn't force the student to mimic his movement. No one's physical ability is the same, and interpretations will always be different. Even if you demand that student's do it the same, you won't succeed.

Q: When we speak about the "art" of Pa Kua, following your outline, is this the highest peak?

A: The depth of art is endless, how can you ask about a

final peak? Martial art is followed by usage, but art comes from the heart and there's no way to set up a standard to judge that.

Q: Master, your statements are so intelligent, they've cleared away the clouds that I can see blue skies now, and yet . . . I'm stupid, so, can I dare to ask you . . . If Pa Kua technique is so wonderful, and the training is so systematic, why is it that so few people really succeed at the art? Pa Kua just isn't a very popular style.

A: (Sigh) This is the Pa Kua style's big fault. It's inexcusable and unexplainable.

You have to have a good body, the correct personality and a willingness to accept the hardships of practice. These aren't simple guidelines, the requirements are very high.

Q: I'm sorry to ask . . .

A: Oh no, it's nothing to do with you . . .

Q: Master, you don't have to answer.

A: I should give you a detailed answer. All styles always kept secrets -- it's not easy to pass on the art. Secrecy is the reason why Chinese martial arts aren't successful, it's the root of the problem. In the Pa Kua style the problem is more serious.

Q: Why?

A: There are several reasons. Number one is that the technique in Pa Kua Chang is very high. It's a very special martial technique, so when people get it, they feel like they possess a treasure. They don't want to show it, much less share it.

Q: Can I hear number two?

A: The second reason is this: The technique is not easy to practice. You have to have a good body, the correct personality and a willingness to accept the hardships of practice. These aren't simple guidelines, the requirements are very high. So, the old masters didn't want to waste their art by teaching it too easily.

Q: And number three?

A: It's coincidental and so unfortunate, but the first several generations of masters were a bit too strict. They didn't have many students, and among the students, there were only a few who passed on the real art. Then, those rare students who did possess the art, also retained their teacher's strict habits. It's not a simple thing, to show the real techniques of Pa Kua; it's just not easy to pass on Pa Kua Chang.

Q: Master Tung Hai-Ch'uan is respected by all other styles and masters -- his position is solidly established. But I've heard about Pa Kua being combined with Hsing-I because of a story that had Master Tung Hai-Ch'uan defeating a Hsing-I master. Is this true?

A: There is no evidence to say that this fight or competition ever really happened. Hsing-I was already established as a famous martial art, so most Hsing-I masters wouldn't learn Pa Kua if they weren't impressed.

Q: Naturally.

A: But, if you misunderstand and combine Hsing-I with Pa Kua to try and make them a single art -- that's a mistake. They aren't one.

Q: It's popular to say these two are one art. And, different styles can exchange ideas and techniques; couldn't that be a good, or potentially a great thing?

A: Not so. Pa Kua technique is special, it's off the beaten path and not everybody can do it. In addition, if you do it without reaching a certain level, it's very difficult to use. You really can't compare Pa Kua with Hsing-I because Hsing-I is so accessible. With Hsing-I as long as you practice hard, you can expect success.

Q: Master, you don't trumpet your abilities, and you don't put others down. This manner gives me the utmost respect for you.

A: Everybody should act like this. Especially if you practice a martial art, you should be humble.

Q: In bookstores there are lots of Pa Kua books. Can you recommend the best ones?

A: I've read all those books, and I don't feel satisfied with most of them. Only one, Pa Kua Chang Illustrated (Pa Kua Chang T'u Shuo) by Yen Te-Hua is not bad, even though some of the usage is not pure Pa Kua. Other than that, readers should beware. There's not much else to say.

Q: What I've heard from you today, I've never heard anywhere else. I believe Pa Kua is not easily taught -- some "secrets", like the post, people don't like to talk about to outsiders. I feel very lucky to have had this conversation with you! It's really more than my own ten years of study. But, I don't know, Master, if I can release this information to correct popular misconceptions about Pa Kua.

A: Well, I feel that your questions always touch the source of the river. That's why I can give you answers like these. Release them, or not -- it's up to you.

Liu Yun-Ch'iao was a Pa Kua Chang student of Kung Pao-T'ien.

Chinese Character Index

劉 雲 樵	Liu Yun-Ch'iao
徐 紀	Hsu Chi
陰 陽 八 盤 掌	Yin Yang Pa P'an Chang
發 勁	Fa Ching
纏 絲 勁	Ch'an Szu Chin
八 卦 連 環 掌	Pa Kua Lien Huan Chang
八 卦 掌 圖 說	Pa Kua Chang T'u Shuo
閻 德 華	Yen Te-Hua
宮 寶 田	Kung Pao-T'ien

Eight Direction Rooted Stepping (Pa Fang Ken Pu) - The Basic Steps

This article is the second in a continuing series based upon the Pa Kua Chang instruction of Park Bok Nam.

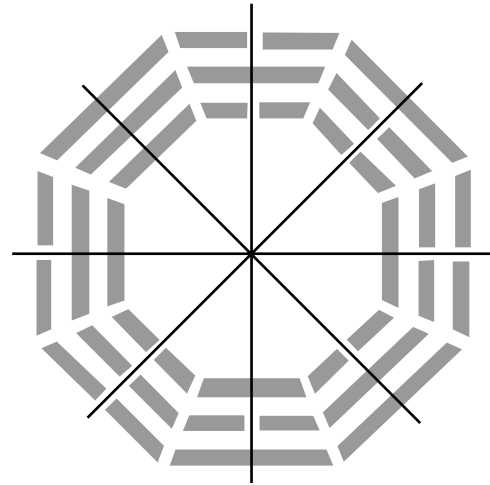
Success in internal boxing requires an experiential understanding of the principle of *wu-wei*. *Wu-wei* is one of the most important principles applied to any internal martial art in a self-defense situation. *Wu* literally means “non”, “negative”, “not”, or “none” and *wei* means “action”, “doing”, “striving” or “straining.” The common English translation of *wu-wei* is “non-action,” however, many people incorrectly interpret this translation to mean laziness or passivity.

Wu-wei is action through non-action. It is spontaneous action which does not arise from a motive or seek a result. In modern phraseology *wu-wei* can be interpreted as “going with the flow” or “rolling with the punches”, but requires that you do so spontaneously (*mo chih ch’u* or “going ahead without hesitation”), skillfully, efficaciously, and along the line of least resistance. When you have embodied the principle of *wu-wei* in martial arts, you have developed an innate nervous system response which is spontaneous, correct, without thought and requiring little effort. This response is based on a knowledge of principles, structures, alignments, angles and economy of motion which is resident in the body, not just the mind. *Wu-wei* does not stem from intellectual intelligence, but an “unconscious” intelligence in the physical body that can only be developed through hours of repetitive training.

Pa Kua Chang instructor Bok Nam Park emphasizes the importance of this “body knowledge” in his teaching. His approach to Pa Kua Chang instruction is to start the student with very simple movements and exercises. These exercises, which are based on fundamental principles, are repeated hundreds, if not thousands of times under Park’s watchful eye until the student has embodied the principle and it becomes a natural reflex. Park states that the exercise should be repeated so many times that when you stop, your body still feels as though it is going through the motions of the exercise - like when you get back on land after a long boat ride and your body still feels like it is rocking back and forth.

Once Park feels the student has “body knowledge” of the principle as it is applied in the simple exercise, he will teach the student a slightly more difficult exercise to work with in the same manner. Park feels that if the student is initially given exercises that are too complex, or is given too many different exercises to practice, then he/she will never develop skillful nervous system response.

To develop skill in internal martial arts not only requires that the student work to gain this “body knowledge” of the principles, but the body also has to



All Pa Fang Ken Pu exercises are based on the circular arrangement of the Eight Trigrams

change and develop physically. Tendons, bones, joints, ligaments, and secondary muscle groups all have to be developed properly and in a progressive manner. Development of the physical body requires many hours of repetitive practice with fundamental drills designed to initiate such development. The student has to develop what Park refers to as the “kung fu body.”

Park recalls that when he began his own Pa Kua Chang training with his teacher, Lu Shui-T’ien, he practiced one exercise for at least two hours everyday for six straight months. This exercise, known as *Pa Fang Ken Pu* (Eight Direction Rooted Stepping), is designed to teach the student how to move quickly in any direction with accuracy, root, balance, and full body control. In Pa Kua Chang, the foundation of the practice is built by developing skill in utilizing the foot work. If your stepping and footwork is not correct and natural, you will not be able to use Pa Kua effectively in fighting.

In the last issue of the newsletter (Vol. 1, No. 6) we introduced you to *Pa Fang Ken Pu* by explaining the “ready” or “guard” posture utilized in this exercise. Familiarity with this posture (which Park refers to as the “Dragon Posture”) is essential to success in the *Pa Fang Ken Pu* exercise because this posture is assumed at the conclusion of every stepping movement. In this article we will describe two of the fundamental stepping patterns - the “jump” step and the “full” step. After explaining the fundamental mechanics of these steps, we will then describe basic stepping patterns utilized in practicing these steps. In this article we will talk about the foot movements alone. We will not discuss the arm movements which accompany the steps until a later article which will explain the *fan chang* or “overturning palm” mechanics.

The Jump Step

The “jump step” (also referred to as the “follow step”), which is utilized to rapidly travel a relatively short distance with root, balance, and body control, is one of the first stepping exercise Park teaches. Ideally you will want to be able to execute this step quickly in any direction and, upon conclusion of the first step, be immediately ready to step once again in any direction. This requirement makes continuous root, body control and balance mandatory. If you were to step forward and allow the forward momentum of your first step to throw your body slightly out of alignment with the principles of the “guard” stance (outlined in the previous article), you would not be ready to immediately move a second time. When you initially practice any stepping movements, it is imperative that you work to fall directly into the proper “guard” stance upon conclusion of the movement. The conclusion of each step is the guard stance, there should be no extra adjustment necessary.

Grossly defined, the jump step movement requires the front foot to step out, landing heel-toe as in walking, and then the rear foot to follow (traveling the same distance) by dragging on the ball of the foot to maintain root. Upon conclusion of the movement you assume the “guard” stance without having switched the forward foot. When the front foot steps out and lands, it remains “tucked in” at a 45 degree angle from the direction of travel (see illustration). This step sounds relatively simple, however, in order to put “spring” and “power” into your step, the front foot does not “step” out forward as in walking, but is sprung forward by the back leg. Remember that in the “guard” stance the legs are spring loaded. The front leg is pushing towards the back and the back leg is pushing forward. In order to jump step forward you release the front leg and allow the spring loaded back leg to push the body forward as you step. It may help to imagine that all your joints are like springs.

As soon as the front heel hits, the rear foot is brought forward with the ball of the foot dragging the ground for stability and root. Again, in order to maintain power in the step, the rear leg is not haphazardly brought forward. The rear leg is quickly pulled forward by contracting the adductor muscles in the back leg (inner thigh) and pulling with the hamstrings in the front leg. When the rear foot reaches its final destination, the heel is placed on the ground.

When stepping, the body must move as an integrated piece. A common mistake when jump stepping forward or backward is to let the hips lead the shoulders causing the body to move in two separate pieces. The entire body must move together. The movement should be smooth and exact. When Park performs this footwork, his movement is very smooth and natural - cat like. There is no bobbing, hesitating, weaving, wobbling, or swaying. All of his moves are very fluid, swift and exact. Although you are rooted, the body must remain light and agile. Beginning practitioners will usually be too heavy and therefore their movements are slow and cumbersome.

Perhaps the hardest aspect of practicing the jump step is ending the movement in the picture perfect “guard” stance. When the step is complete, the foot spacing should be the same as before you stepped, the front toe is angled in, the weight distribution is 60% on the back leg and 40% on the front leg, the front leg is pushing back, the back leg is pushing forward, and the spine is straight, but slightly inclined forward (we will not worry about the arms right now - you can have them hanging down by your sides or rest your hands on your hips). When you begin practicing this step, check your posture at the end of each step and make corrections accordingly. Eventually, no corrections should be required.

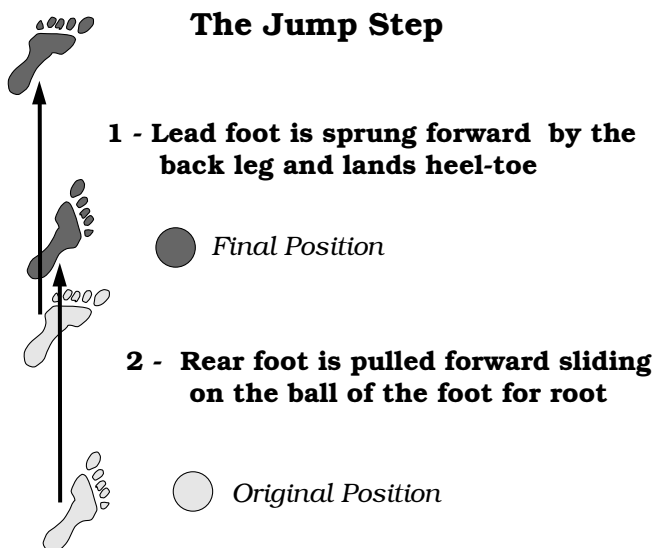
The back jump step (jump stepping backwards) contains the same mechanics as the front step, however, the back foot moves first (being sprung back by the forward leg) and lands toe-heel instead of heel-toe. After the rear foot steps, the front foot slides back on the ball of the foot maintaining the 45 degree “toe in.”

The Full Step

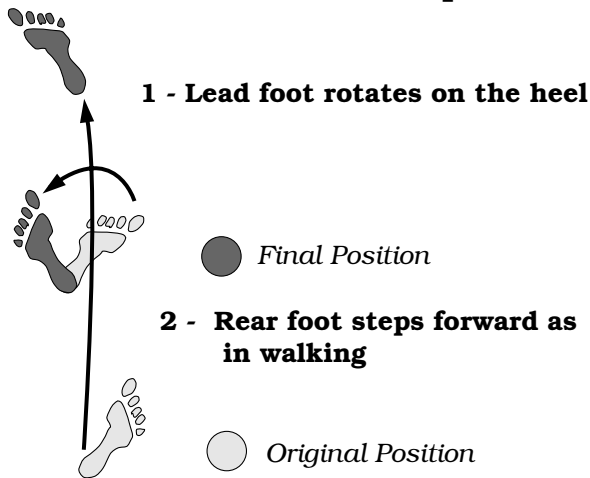
The full step movement is executed as in walking - the rear foot steps forward to become the front foot. This sounds easy, however, there are a couple of details to consider:

1) Because the front foot is angled in at about a 45 degree angle in the “guard” stance, you must pivot the front foot as you step forward with the back foot. The front foot will rotate through a 90 degree angle so that it ends up angled about 45 degrees to the other side (the direction of forward movement being the zero degree reference line). The front foot pivots on the heel for best speed and stability.

2) As you step forward, do not step too high or too wide with the foot - remember to protect your groin. The stepping foot should not drag the ground - it is brought up off the ground a few inches.



The Full Step



- 3) Do not allow the body to bob up and down as you step - the head stays at the same level.
- 4) As in the jump step, move the entire body as one integrated piece.

Full Step with a Jump

If you need to travel a longer distance in one step than a comfortable full step will take you, you can combine the full step with a jump in order to rapidly travel a longer distance. Before the stepping foot hits the ground, the back leg springs the step forward, landing a bit farther than a normal stride length. As the front heel hits the ground, the back foot is brought up by dragging it along the ground (as in the jump step) so that the feet are spaced the same distance apart after the step is executed as they were before stepping. The “full step with a jump” (as it will be called in the remainder of the article) should add approximately a foot to your stepping distance. You should not try to extend your stepping distance too far or you will jeopardize your root, body control and stability.

The back full step contains the same mechanics as the front step, however, the front foot moves to become the back foot and lands toe-heel instead of heel-toe.

The Basic Stepping Patterns

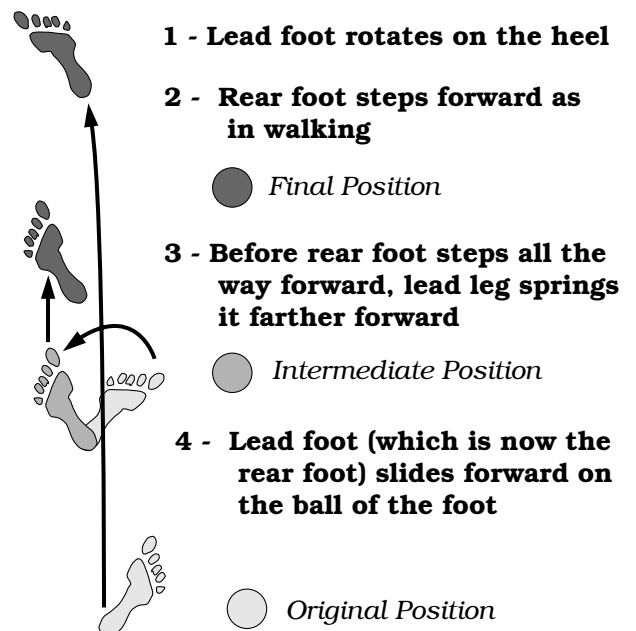
To effectively utilize these stepping movements in a self-defense situation they must become second nature. This requires hours of practice with the basic stepping patterns in order to develop the muscles properly and attain a “body knowledge” or “muscle memory” of the proper stepping movements. Before teaching the student the first basic Pa Fang Ken Pu pattern, Park requires the student to practice straight line stepping exercises in order to become familiar with the jump step, the full step, and the full step with a jump by themselves. First the student will jump step forward (with the right leg as the lead leg) the length of the workout space. Next he/she will jump step backwards

back down the length of the workout space. After going up and back numerous times with the right leg forward, the student will perform the same exercise with the left leg forward. The next drill is to utilize the full step going in a straight line forward the length of the workout space, and then full stepping backwards back to the starting position. After a number of repetitions, the student will then be required to perform the full step with a jump in the same “straight line” manner.

After practicing the above straight line exercises, the student will then practice a jump step exercise requiring a full 180 degree pivot. The 180 pivot is a simple “in place” turn-around executed from the guard stance posture. Standing in a 60/40 posture the student will simply pivot on the heels of both feet simultaneously and turn 180 degrees to face the other direction. This maneuver will be referred to as a “turn-around.” This exercise requires the practitioner to turn-around, immediately jump step forward, jump step back, turn-around, jump step forward in the other direction, jump step back, turn-around, etc.

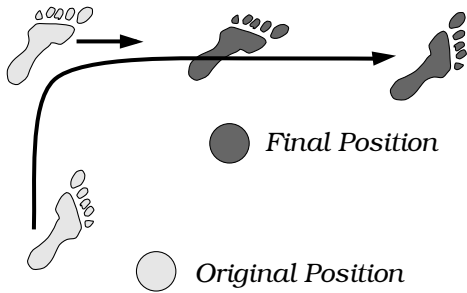
Before the first Pa Fang Ken Pu stepping pattern is taught, there is one more stepping maneuver, which is a variation of the full step, that needs to be practiced. This is a full step with a 90 degree turn. In this step, the rear foot is brought up to the position of the forward foot and then, instead of stepping straight forward as in the full step described above, it steps out straight to the side (90 degrees). The full step with a jump is usually utilized when executing the 90 degree turning step. If the left leg is forward, the 90 degree turn will be to the right. It is important to bring the stepping foot up close to the stationary foot before turning to step out 90 degrees so that the groin will be protected when stepping out. The turning of the upper body is coordinated with the stepping. This stepping movement is practiced in

The Full Step with a Jump



The 90 Degree Turn Step

1 - Rear foot steps up and then out at a 90 degree angle



2 - Before rear foot steps all the way forward, lead leg springs it farther forward

3 - Rear foot (original lead foot) slides forward on the ball

isolation by first stepping to turn 90 degrees to the right, then to the left, then to the right, etc. moving the length of the workout space in a zig-zag pattern.

Stepping to Four Directions

Once the student has spent a sufficient amount of time with the stepping exercises described above, he/she learns the first of many Pa Fang Ken Pu stepping patterns that are based on the Pa Kua arrangement shown in the illustration on page 11. This first pattern is arranged in four directions. The student starts in the center of an imaginary "+" sign or cross. The stepping movements are as follows:

1) The first movement is to jump step forward along one of the four directions. For ease of explanation we will assume the right leg is forward and the practitioner is facing north when the exercise begins (see illustration 1).

2) The second movement is a full step with a jump back along the same line of travel (now the left leg is forward and the practitioner is back in the center of the cross, still facing north - see illustration 2).

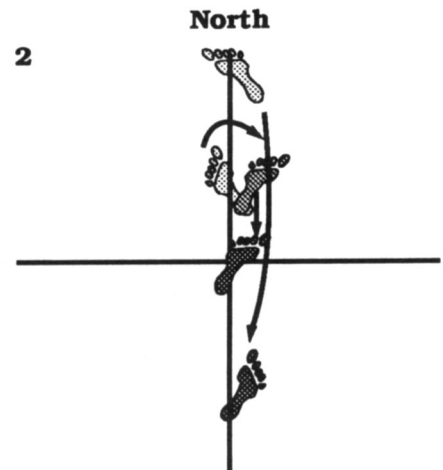
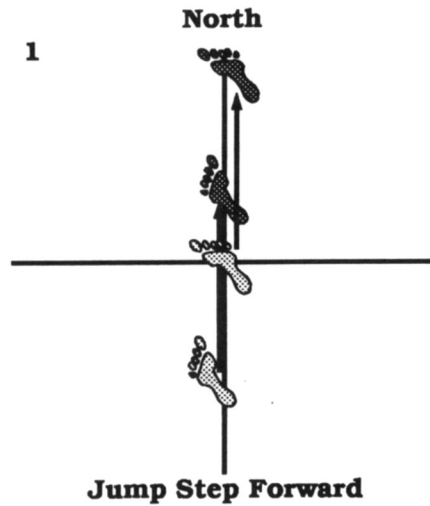
3) The third move will be a 90 degree full step with a jump turning to the right (east). The practitioner is now at the far end of the eastern leg of the cross with the right foot forward (see illustration 3).

4) The fourth move is a full step back with a jump (now the left leg is forward) The practitioner is back in the center of the cross and is still facing east.

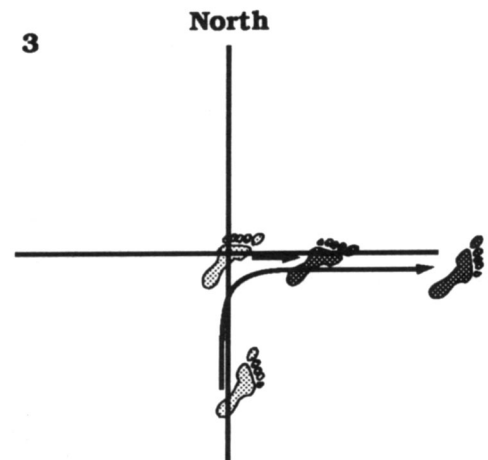
5) As you have probably guessed, the next move is a 90 degree full step with a jump, again turning to the right. The practitioner is now facing south and the right leg is forward.

6) Another full step back with a jump will place the practitioner back in the center, left leg forward, facing south.

7) Another 90 degree full step with a jump, turning to



Full Step with a Jump Backwards



90 degree Full Step with a Jump

the right will place the practitioner out on the western leg of the cross, right leg forward.

8) A full step back with a jump and the practitioner is back in the center of the cross, left leg forward, and facing west.

9) The ninth move will be a 90 degree full step to the north and will end up being the same step as the original step of the exercise. The practitioner will end up with the right leg forward, facing north.

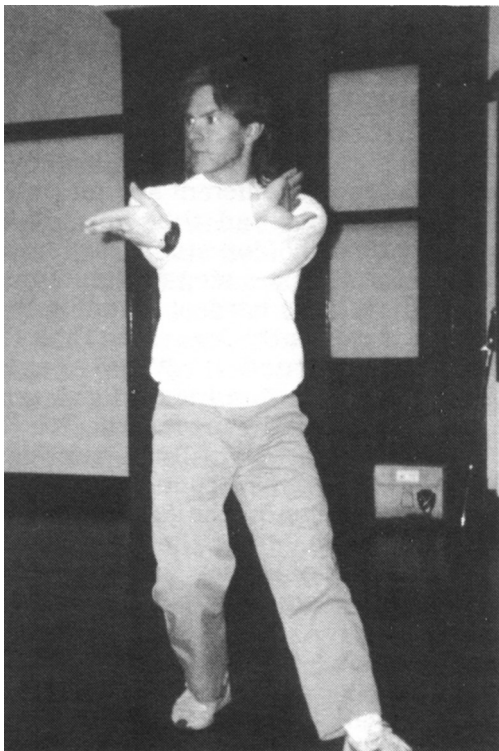
continued on page 18

Andrew Dale Teaches Three Styles of Pa Kua Chang in Seattle

The information in this article was obtained during an interview conducted in September 1990 in Seattle, Washington.

Seattle, Washington based Pa Kua Chang instructor Andrew Dale began his martial arts career in 1968 studying Judo and Aikido. In 1970 he met Dave Harris, an instructor who was skilled in Shoshin ryu Karate jitsu, Aikijitsu, Tai Chi Ch'uan, and Yeung Ch'uan. Harris showed him the T'ai Chi versions/applications of the Aikido principles he was studying and Dale practiced Yang style T'ai Chi san shou (free fighting) with Harris. He states that, at that time, the study of T'ai Chi greatly improved his Aikido in that it helped develop greater sensitivity, centering, and softness.

In 1973 Dale attended a T'ai Chi Ch'uan demonstration and witnessed a display of martial arts skill that was beyond anything he had ever seen. The man demonstrating that evening was Chung Ta-Chen. Chung demonstrated Yang style solo open hand form, fast form, tui shou (push hands), T'ai Chi cane, T'ai Chi sword, and san shou (free fighting). Dale states that when Chung demonstrated self-defense applications, he sent attackers flying without any apparent effort. "His power came from seemingly nowhere and his touch was very soft and light, so soft you couldn't feel the power until both feet were off the ground. Prior to this I was



Pa Kua Chang instructor Andrew Dale

familiar with the softness and yielding principles of T'ai Chi, but not the fa ching power or the lightning quick and effortless movements."

Chung was born in Sezechuan Province in mainland China and served as a Colonel in the Army of Chiang Kai-Shek. He later moved to Taiwan. While in Taiwan, he was invited to teach in South Africa and became the T'ai Chi teacher to the president of Gabon. After teaching in South Africa for a number of years, Chung moved to Vancouver, British Columbia in 1970. When Dale witnessed Chung's demonstration, Chung was in his sixties. Shortly after the demonstration that Dale had witnessed, Chung began commuting once a week to Seattle to teach T'ai Chi Ch'uan. At that time Dale started a study of the internal martial arts with Chung that continues to this day.

When watching Pa Kua I look for fluid, smooth action, excellent balance, back slightly rounded, elbows down, alert appearance and definite focus.

When Dale started with Chung he was only learning T'ai Chi, however, about a year after he began his T'ai Chi study he met a Pa Kua practitioner who showed him Sun Lu-T'ang's eight basic changes. One night before T'ai Chi class Dale was practicing some of the Pa Kua he had learned. Chung saw him practicing and came over to correct his form. Thus Dale began his Pa Kua Chang study under Chung.

Chung started Dale off with circle walking while holding a series of static upper body postures. The emphasis of this training was on developing balance, root, and the internal body linkages and connections which give the student a feel for the relation of the body to the root. Dale states that the student also learns to become aware of excess tension in the body and learns to calm the mind and sink the energy to the lower tan t'ien at this stage. At first the transitions between the postures were very simple. Later, Dale worked on increasing his skill level with Sun Lu-Tang's eight changes and he also learned Wang Shu-Chin's changes. Chung and Wang Shu-Chin had been good friends when Chung was living in Taiwan.

In teaching Pa Kua Chang, Chung emphasized being relaxed, soft, and natural. Dale said that Chung also talked about needing a good and sincere heart in order to develop any skill or depth of knowledge in the arts.

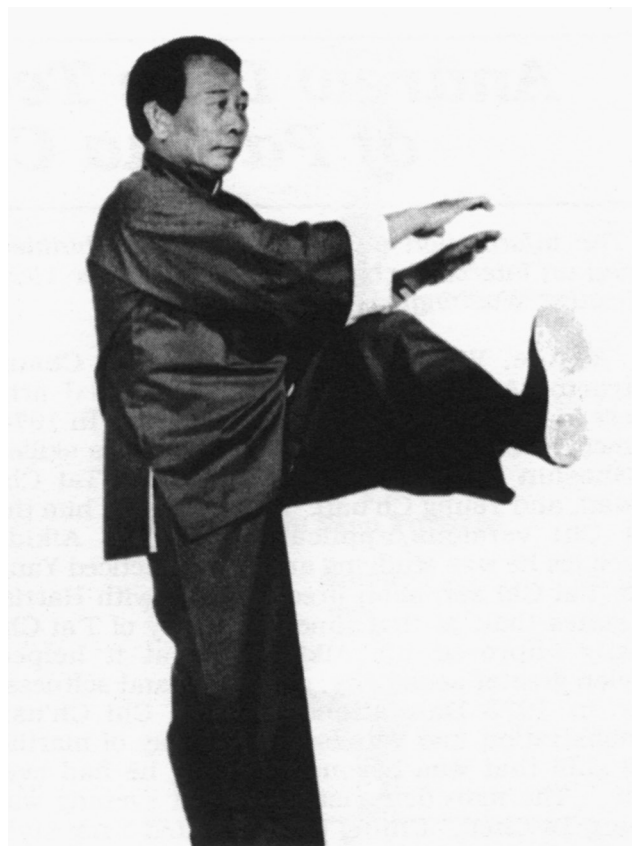
Though Chung did not emphasize fighting, he insisted that the students know how each movement of the form could be used and how the power was transmitted. He stressed that each movement had hundreds of applications depending upon the situation. He taught that each movement represented a principle, not just a single technique. Chung also emphasized the teachings in the classics by reading from the Tao Te Ching or Chuang Tzu and then demonstrating the principles in push hands practice. In this manner he stressed applying the philosophy in physical movement.

Dale also studied Pa Kua Chang for one year with T. Y. Pang (Pang Tze-Yau). Pang was a Pa Kua student of Sun Hsi-Kun, who was one of Ch'eng Yu-Lung's students. Ch'eng Yu-Lung was the eldest son of Ch'eng T'ing-Hua, the famous student of Tung Hai-Ch'uan. Dale comments that Pang's Pa Kua was the most intricate he had ever seen. He states that seeing Pang do Pa Kua was like watching a powerful snake coiling, attacking, twisting, darting, spinning and turning. He added that Pang's Pa Kua was lower and he focused on the changes more than Chung. Where Chung's emphasis was on walking the circle, Pang would work with the changes. His focus was on the body connections and he made the students isolate every movement in the form and study it in detail. Pang's Pa Kua provided strenuous body training in its twisting, stretching and getting low to the ground.

Dale adds that another difference between the teaching styles of Pang and Chung was that while Chung emphasized softness and relaxation, Pang's emphasis was on separating the joints and extension. Each movement was slightly reaching and yet one maintained centeredness and root. The focus of the practice was on extension and working the extension in opposite directions to facilitate opening of the joints. Dale believes that both the extension and the relaxation are important aspects of Pa Kua practice. He states that Pang discouraged the students from asking questions, so the students would simply come to class and follow Pang's movements. In his opinion, Pang's approach to the art of Pa Kua was that the student can only discover the essence of the art through hours of practice.

To me good Pa Kua looks like a river. Sometimes flowing smoothly, other times raging.

Dale began teaching Pa Kua Chang part time in 1977 and has been teaching internal martial arts in Seattle full time for the past two years. He starts his beginning Pa Kua students learning the circle walk while working some basic palm transitions. Dale has linked together various basic postures from the Sun system into a continuous exercise. The student will move from one position to the other while walking the circle. Dale states that when he started teaching he had trouble



Pictured above is Dale's first Pa Kua Chang teacher, Chung Ta-Chen.

deciding which style or form to teach to the beginners. He finally decided to teach them in a progression from easiest to hardest, the first series being based on the Sun system. This system focuses on walking the circle and working through basic palm positions with some twisting into the circle. This method strengthens the student and starts the process of understanding how their balance, body, muscles, and mind can work together to form a smooth, integrated movement.

Dale teaches the beginning student to walk using the Snake step and the Chicken step. He comments that each of these steps trains the legs differently. When asked about the different stepping methods of Pa Kua Chang, Dale had this to say, "Chung's walking was primarily Lion step, Pang on the other hand taught the Chicken step (treading mud as he referred to it). It's the hardest stepping I've done. It's slower, and works the legs more than the other methods I've learned. While exchanging information with a Pa Kua friend, I was taught the Snake step. This is really my favorite. It works the legs a lot but helps teach quicker footwork and smoothness of all actions. Though I teach the other two, I focus primarily on the Snake step with the continuing students. I see the Chicken step as a training method to start new students on and the Lion step for the older students that can't work very strenuously."

After walking the circle holding the static postures and learning Sun's changes, Dale's students will walk a figure 8 pattern working on "Shooting Palm" maneuvers. After this exercise the student will learn

the Single Palm Change, Follow Through Palm, and Double Palm Change. Since these changes are inherent in all three systems Dale teaches, he will teach the student one style until the movements are consistent and smooth and then he teaches the same changes as they are articulated in the other styles. Dale states that his goal here is to expose students to the various styles so that they can determine which one is best suited to them. At this stage Dale also introduces the students to partner work which includes partner circling, partner exercises, and partner forms. The last two "linking forms" that Dale teaches contain a mixture of Wang Shu-Chin's and Pang's changes. He states that Wang's changes are more upright while Pang's are lower and more difficult to execute. This level works on more body flexibility and quickness. He also teaches Pa Kua sword and broadsword.

***Movement is the best defense, as
you move, options for attack
become apparent.***

Dale teaches martial application through the use of partner sets. He believes that knowing the function of the form movements is important because it helps to keep the practice correct and transmits the whole art. When the student learns the martial function it improves his connection and his coordination. He adds that body structure is very important for ch'i flow and strength. Dale believes that the internal styles teach us lessons in the most efficient way to move the body. While teaching students the movements of Pa Kua Chang, he will emphasize to the student the importance of getting in touch with the feeling of the movement. He states that when the student can feel why a movement is correct, then he/she can have a feedback mechanism when they practice on their own.

For Dale, Pa Kua teaches body-mind integrity. He states that power and harmony are possible when all muscles, breath, mind, and spirit can be focused. He emphasizes that when the basic training and postures are done correctly, the joints are open and the "kinks" are worked out of the muscles and thus the ch'i and blood is able to flow freely. He states, "The opening and closing of the joints help with the fa ching and the storing of energy and power before the release. They (the joints) act like pulling and releasing a sling shot. The slight reach of the arms or legs done correctly feels like a current moving from the feet and hands. This feeling (connection) should be maintained throughout practice, even when the movements get more complicated. The more active movements focus on the mind gaining complete control of the body so whatever the mind needs and wants to do there is no friction between mind and body."

Dale also teaches his students to focus on the philosophy and use the art to understand themselves better. He states that physically the art teaches the

student to move efficiently with strength and by learning to be physically comfortable, relaxed, and strong, the practitioner will tend to be truthful and direct in any situation because thought and belief will be clear and this clarity will be reflected in action.

While talking about Pa Kua Chang in general, Dale says that the principles he emphasizes to his students are as follows:

- Keep the chest empty, it should not be noticed.
- Sink the mind to the tan t'ien and calm down.
- Tuck the hips and reach downward from the tail bone.
- The palm position I use is Ox tongue, the middle of the palm should feel empty.
- Upper body and arms reach into the circle, lower torso sinks downward, upper body reaches up like a flame.
- When watching Pa Kua I look for fluid, smooth action, excellent balance, back slightly rounded, elbows down, alert appearance and definite focus.
- To me good Pa Kua looks like a river. Sometimes flowing smoothly, other times raging.
- In Pa Kua applications I insist that my students never stop or pose. Movement is the best defense, as you move, options for attack become apparent.

As a final comment Dale adds: "One thing that saddens me a bit is the lack of commitment to the various arts. When I first started we felt lucky to find an instructor and practiced and trained diligently. Everything taught was valuable. I don't see this type of commitment any more, not just in Pa Kua, but in others arts as well. People are learning the forms and practicing, but not training or dissecting the arts."

Chinese Character Index

散 手	San Shou
鍾 大 振	Chung Ta-Chen
推 手	T'ui Shou
發 勁	Fa Ching
孫 祿 堂	Sun Lu-T'ang
丹 田	Tan T'ien
王 樹 金	Wang Shu-Chin
道 德 經	Tao Te Ching
莊 子	Chuang Tzu
孫 錫 埜	Sun Hsi-K'un
程 有 龍	Ch'eng Yu-Lung
程 庭 華	Ch'eng T'ing-Hua
董 海 川	Tung Hai-Ch'uan

This pattern is repeated over and over transitioning the four legs of the cross as many times as desired. To balance the exercise, the practitioner will start with the left leg forward and perform the same exercise rotating in the other (counter-clockwise) direction the same number of times that he/she performed in the clockwise direction.

Spending hours stepping up and down the length of a room may seem like a laborsome task, but in order to condition the body properly and develop a "muscle-memory" of the stepping movements, this kind of labor is required. Anyone who has watched Park apply these movements in a self-defense demonstration is immediately convinced of their effectiveness and necessity. However, practicing the stepping exercises themselves is only the first level of learning how to apply the stepping movements in a self-defense situation. Park states that after you have practiced the stepping exercises you need to research the principles of the stepping patterns (realizing that the simple stepping pattern outlined above is just one of dozens that are part of the *Pa Fang Ken Pu* set) and discover how the steps can be combined and then practice them in different combinations. The next phase of training is to use your imagination and "shadow box" with an imaginary opponent, using the stepping patterns to avoid attack and seek optimum angles of counter-attack. The final phase is to actually apply the stepping movements while working with a partner.

By "putting in the hours" with the stepping exercises, researching the patterns, visualizing imaginary partners, and working with real opponents, you will eventually develop a innate feel for how to move optimally in a combat situation. When you can naturally respond to an opponents movements with skill, little effort, and no thought, you will have embodied the principle of wu-wei and thus will have achieved high levels of internal boxing skill.

The next article in this series will describe the pivot step and a couple of self-defense stepping patterns which combine the pivot step with the jump and full step movements.

Chinese Character Index

無 為	Wu Wei
驀 直 去	Mo Chih Ch'u
八 方 根 步	Pa Fang Ken Pu
虛 水 田	Lu Shui-Tien
翻 掌	Fan Chang

From Hsing-I to Pa Kua and Back Again

by Mike Patterson
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My teacher, Hsu Hung-Chi, used to say, "You put Hsing-I stay circle, same same Pa Kua; or you put Pa Kua stay straight line, same same Hsing-I." Of course this is an over simplification of two complex sets of principles which govern these two Internal styles, but Hsu's point is well taken. The two Arts are remarkably similar in many ways, and it is definitely true that practicing one will enhance the other and vice-versa. Following are a few key points of this relationship.

Hsing-I and Pa Kua both have "Yang" exteriors and "Yin" interiors, meaning they both maintain a "surface tension" on the perimeter shell of the posture while remaining flexible enough internally to change swiftly from place to place. This could be likened to the true nature of water, which, when pressed lightly with your palm for example, will first resist your push and then, upon exertion of a heavier pressure, will give way and envelope your hand.

The word "tension" is only used in analogy. In the Internal Artist's vocabulary, "tension" is a dirty word in that it implies tensing the whole body for strength. "Linkage" is a better term denoting proper alignment of the skeletal system and employed, appropriate use of the necessary connective tissue. IE: If one were to push forward with the outward palm, only the appropriate extensor groups of the muscle skeletal system should be utilized in the pushing force, all other unnecessary groups should be relaxed so as not to inhibit the movement through antagonistic tension.

Since Hsing-I utilizes mostly vertical rising and falling aspects of Yin and Yang, it is easier to accommodate this principle and provides a solid base for the more difficult spiraling usage of this principle found in Pa Kua.

The explicit use of "Fa Ching" (issuing energy) and the "I" (intention) of Hsing-I provide an exceptional ability to crystallize the "I" at single explosive points in the form. The nature of Hsing-I practice enhances this ability. Once experienced through Hsing-I, the concept can be transferred to the practice of Pa Kua, making it easier to operate the Pa Kua method of "bouncing" the "I" around as each series is performed.

Study of the more "straight forward" circular kinetics found in Hsing-I Ch'uan's Five Elements will more easily increase the practitioner's understanding of applied force. This knowledge can then be transferred to his Pa Kua practice. For example, let's look at a conventional "Single Palm Change." As you toe in and push forward into the double palms, the energy of the body is essentially the same as Hsing-I's

“Fire” Element, body expanding outward and pushing forward simultaneously. As you then step into carry the ball, the “squeezing” inward and downward energy is analogous to the “Crushing” force found in Hsing-I’s “Wood” form. As you then begin to unwind the posture into “Rise, Drill, Fall, and Overturn” it is rather like combining the kinetics of Hsing-I’s “Crossing” and “Drilling” forms and then ending up at “Splitting” as you complete the posture change before walking the circle begins again.

The fact is that the Five Elements of Hsing-I embody refined kinetic principles that can be found in virtually every type of martial movement, regardless of style, and the study of these energies cannot help but improve the understanding and performance of any type of martial motion. But in relation to the study of Pa Kua you have not only a common ground of physics principles, but a common ground of metaphysical principles as

well, making the reference even more complete and directly transferable from one body of knowledge to the other.

There are a multiplicity of other comparisons, and anyone who has seen the linear Pa Kua methods cannot help but see the startling similarity between these two styles. Suffice it to say that they make a very good cross reference for the serious practitioner trying to understand the profound kinetic energy of the Internal Arts methods.

Mike Patterson has over 20 years of experience in the martial arts. He was All Taiwan Full Contact Champion in 1975-76 and is a published author on the subject of Hsing-I Ch’uan. He presently teaches in the San Diego, CA area. See instructor directory on page 20.

1991-92 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>
Bok Nam Park	Pacific Grove, CA	15 Feb 92	Jerry Johnson (408) 646-9399
Kumar Frantzis	New York, NY	14-16 March 92	Susan Robinowitz (212) 477-7055
Kumar Frantzis	New York, NY	19-21 June 92	Susan Robinowitz (212) 477-7055

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