

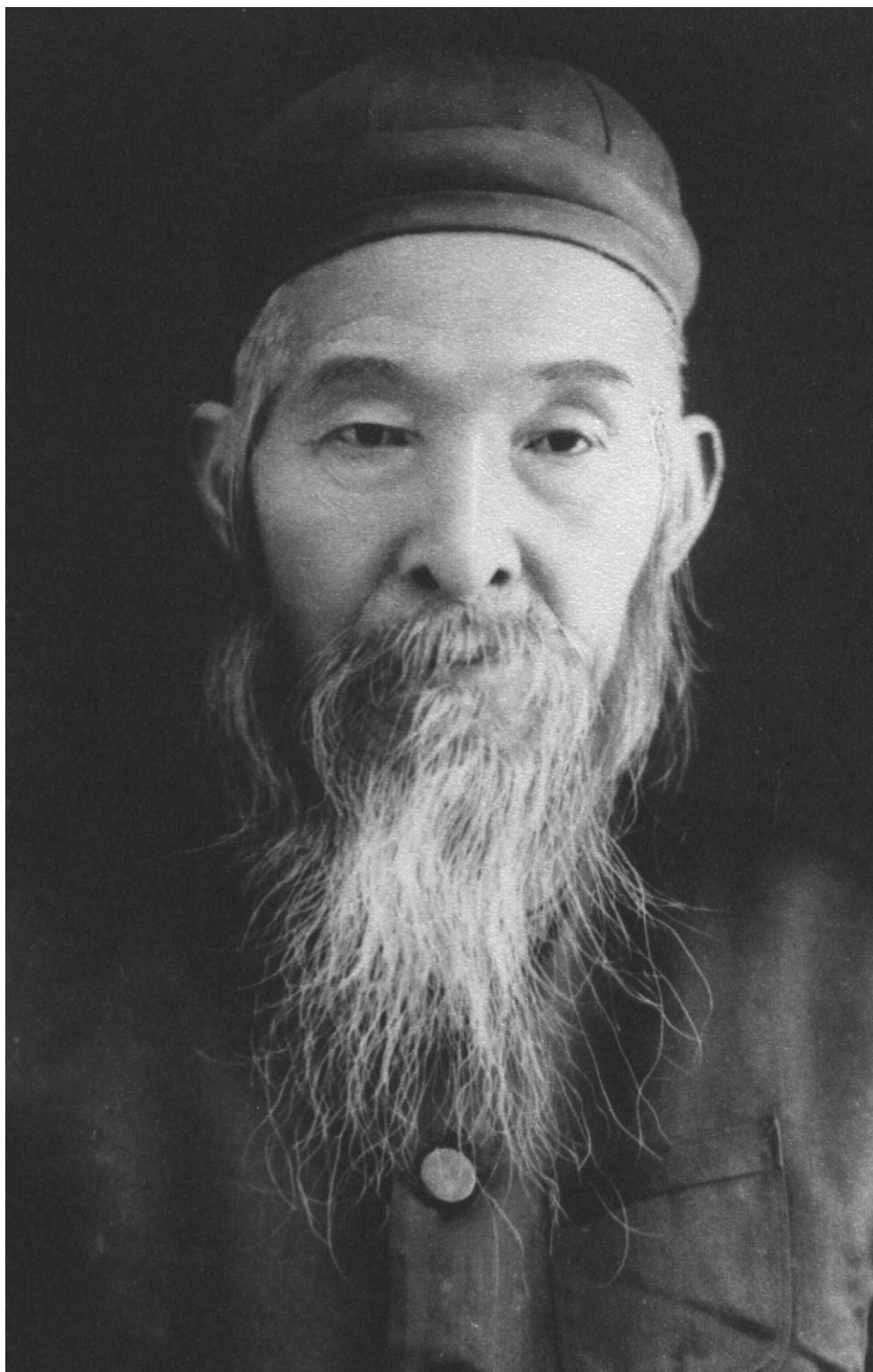


Pa Kua Chang

JOURNAL

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May/June 1993



**The
Pa Kua
Chang
of
Sun
Lu-T'ang**

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Pa Kua Chang JOURNAL

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Purpose and Policy Statement

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

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

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

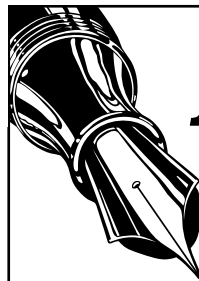
Chinese names and terms will be romanized using the Thomas Wade system of romanization except when the pinyin romanization is more familiar (in cases such as "Beijing") or when an instructor prefers his name romanized differently. Whenever possible, Chinese characters will be listed at the end of each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

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

We solicit comments and/or suggestions.

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Editor's Corner

This issue's lead article on Sun Lu-T'ang could not have been possible without the help of Sun Lu-T'ang's daughter Sun Jian-Yun, K'ang Ko-Wu, Tim Cartmell, and Tim's wife Ku Feng-Mei.

I had met Sun Jian-Yun in Beijing in 1991, however the meeting was very brief and I did not have the opportunity to speak to her at length about her father. When I returned to Beijing in 1992, I hoped to have the opportunity to meet with her again and interview her. Thanks to Professor K'ang Ko-Wu, I was able to accompany him to Sun Jian-Yun's home and conduct a lengthy interview with her. Thanks to Tim Cartmell's superb skill as a translator, we were able to obtain a great deal of information from Sun Jian-Yun in the four hours we spent with her.

Prior to meeting Sun Jian-Yun I had only seen pictures of her and I had seen her perform her Sun style T'ai Chi on video. Her performance, typical of T'ai Chi, was always slow and methodical. Based on this impression and her advanced age, I expected the interview would move along slowly. What I found was the exact opposite. She is very energetic for a person of any age and her speech is clear, bright, and fluid. She answered all of my questions without hesitation. She was very sure of herself and willingly answered all questions in a superb manner.

When I asked Sun Jian-Yun if she had studied Pa Kua or Hsing-I with her father she said that she had and did not hesitate to demonstrate. I was shocked when she stood up and started rapidly executing complex Pa Kua Chang twisting and turning movements and then executed a strong *Pi Ch'uan* (splitting fist) on Tim's arm.

Before meeting her I had heard rumors that she was hard to get along with and didn't like to talk with people, but my experience was just the opposite. She was very open and honest, extremely energetic and a delight to visit. She posed for numerous photographs, presented each of us with photographs of her father, and gave me a book which she endorses as her father's true biography.

When I returned home, Tim Cartmell continued his efforts as he and his wife, Ku Feng-Mei, translated the book into English so that I could use the material in preparing the article about Sun Lu-T'ang.

Many thanks to K'ang Ko-Wu, Tim Cartmell, Ku Feng-Mei, and especially Sun Jian-Yun.

On the Cover

Internal martial arts great Sun Lu-T'ang. Photo courtesy of Sun Jian-Yun via Christopher Pei.

Sun Lu-T'ang and his Pa Kua Chang

The name Sun Lu-T'ang rings familiar to almost anyone who has studied one or more of the major "internal" styles of Chinese martial arts. Because Sun was highly skilled in Hsing-I Ch'uan, T'ai Chi Ch'uan, and Pa Kua Chang, wrote five different books on these subjects, and synthesized the three arts to invent Sun style T'ai Chi Ch'uan, his name has become well known where ever Chinese martial arts are practiced. Like many of the Chinese martial arts heroes, as Sun's fame grew he became legendary and fantastic tales of his martial arts abilities spread like wildfire. Sun's daughter, Sun Jian-Yun, who is now 80 years old, shakes her head when she hears many of the stories that are commonly told about her father. She states that although her father was a very highly skilled martial artist, he was not super-human. In a long interview conducted in Sun Jian-Yun's home in Beijing, China, on 14 October 92, Sun Jian-Yun discussed her father's background in detail and gave me the version of Sun Lu-T'ang's biography which she helped write and endorses as being true. The information in this article is primarily based on this book and the interview with Sun Jian-Yun.

Sun's Childhood

Sun Lu-Tang, also known as Sun Fu-Ch'uan, was born in 1861 in Wen County, near the City of Pao Ting, in Hebei Province. At that time in China's history the Ch'ing government was very corrupt and as a result the Chinese common people were suffering. In Chu Li, Wen County, Sun Lu-T'ang's father had a small farm. He worked very hard but, because of the heavy taxes imposed by the Ch'ing, he could barely scrape out a living as a farmer. He was middle aged and still unmarried when one of his friends, who knew that he was very honest and hard working, acted as a matchmaker and introduced Sun's father to a young woman and soon thereafter the two were married. A year after their marriage, in 1861, they had a son who they named Fu-Ch'uan. This name was chosen because its meaning conveys that the baby would bring good fortune to their family.

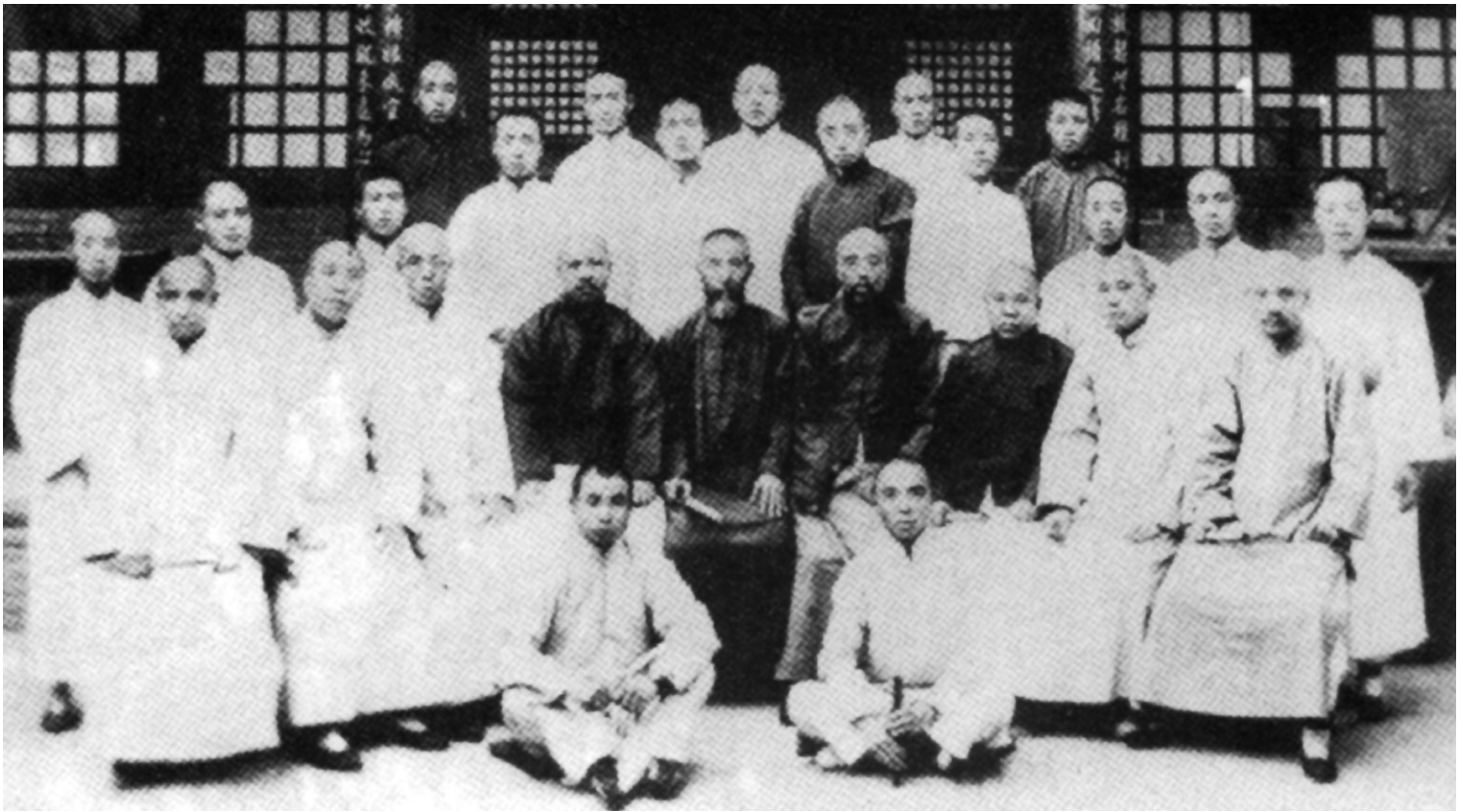
From a young age Sun Fu-Ch'uan was very intelligent. Recognizing the boy's intellectual abilities, his father sent him to study with a local scholar when he was seven years old. Because Sun's father did not have a lot of money, he gave the scholar food from his field in exchange for teaching his son. Sun Fu-Ch'uan was an exceptionally bright student. By the time he was nine he had already read and memorized many of the classical text such as the *Three Character Classic (San Tzu Ching)* and various Confucian works. Memorization of these classics through repetitive speaking and writing was the main curriculum of study for students of the time. Sun's memory was exceptional and by the time he was nine he had already memorized many of the texts and was also proficient at the basic calligraphy strokes.

The year Sun turned nine his father did not have a good harvest and therefore he could not afford to pay the very high taxes which the Ch'ing government imposed



An early photo (pre-1911) of Sun Lu-T'ang (1861-1933) taken at the home of Hsu Shih-Ch'ang where Sun gave instruction.

on the people. Because of the poor harvest, Sun's father could not afford to pay his tutor, so Sun did not continue with his formal education. The situation became so desperate that in order to avoid going to jail, Sun's father sold everything he owned, including his land, to pay his taxes. Shortly after he sold his land, the elder Sun became ill and died. Consequently, Sun and his mother were left with no land and no income. They could not even afford a casket to bury his father in and so his father's body lay



Sun Lu-T'ang with a group of Hsing-I boxers in Shanxi Province in 1924

in the house for three days before Sun begged enough money for a casket.

With no land to farm and no other means of support, Sun's mother did not feel as though she could raise her son so she went to a rich and powerful local landowner and asked if he would take her son as a servant. He reluctantly agreed saying that he would let Sun live at his home and he would feed him, but he would not give him any money because Sun was so small and frail looking. He did not think the boy could do enough work to earn a salary on top of room and board. Sun's new employer had a son, who was two years older than him, who took pleasure in bullying Sun. In addition, Sun's employer took any opportunity he could to beat him. Sun wanted to fight back, but he knew that if he lost his job he would not be able to take care of himself and his mother would be upset. He worked as hard as he could and silently endured the beatings when they came.

One day Sun was out in a field tending to sheep when he heard people yelling. He climbed up on a nearby hill and saw a group practicing martial arts. The teacher was a man about 70 years old with an average build. He had a lot of spirit in his eyes and when he demonstrated his art his movements were quick, crisp, and clear. Sun had never seen martial arts before and was fascinated with what he saw. He decided that the next day he would find this teacher and ask to be taught martial arts.

The next day Sun found the teacher's house and knelt before him to ask permission to become a student. At first the teacher thought that Sun was kidding. He asked where Sun was from and Sun told the teacher the story about how his father had died and that he worked for a man who beat him. The teacher was moved by Sun's honesty and sincerity. He asked why Sun wanted to study

martial arts. Sun replied that he wanted to fight back when his employer and employer's son beat on him. The old man said, "Martial arts are not only for fighting, these principles are very deep." Sun was adamant about studying. The teacher asked if he could stand the hardship of it and Sun replied that he could stand any kind of suffering as long as he could study martial arts. The teacher, whose surname was Wu, agreed to accept Sun as a student.

Sun was ten years old when he began studying with his first martial arts instructor. Every day after work he would go and study until the middle of the night. His teacher had also had a very hard life as a youngster and sympathized with Sun's situation. After becoming skilled in martial arts, Wu was very righteous and helped oppressed people. On one occasion he came to someone's aid who was being beaten and subsequently killed the attacker. The government wanted to execute him for this crime and so he fled his home. To make a living he performed his martial arts in the streets and begged for money. Later he joined the T'ai P'ing Rebellion (1850-1864) and fought against the Ch'ing soldiers. After the T'ai P'ing dispersed, he went back to performing martial arts in the streets for money. He was an expert at Shaolin and Pa Chi as well as the eighteen weapons. He was also skilled at shooting iron balls from a sling shot and had *ch'ing kung*, or lightness skill.

Sun Lu-T'ang was an exceptional student. After the first year of practice he had become proficient at the basic skills and began studying *Hung Ch'uan*. Wu recognized Sun's natural skill and intelligence and therefore taught him at a rapid pace. After two years of study, Sun was the best boxer of his age in the area. So that Sun would not become too cocky, his teacher reminded him that

although he was progressing quickly, he had still only touched the surface of real martial arts and therefore he should not become overly proud of what he had achieved. His teacher told him a story of when he himself was young and had attained a good level of skill for his age. He thought he was very good and went to someone's aid who was getting beat up. The opponent who he fought was a highly skilled martial artist and injured him badly. Wu said that his opponent would have killed him had not a Shaolin monk been there witnessing the fight and intervened in order to save him before it was too late. The monk took Wu back to the Shaolin temple and he stayed there for two years studying. At the temple he studied *tan tui*, the 64 hands free fighting, the 72 *chin na*, and *ch'ing kung*.

Sun replied that he could stand any kind of suffering as long as he could study martial arts.

After Sun had been with his teacher for three years, his mother heard that he was practicing martial arts. This made her very nervous because she thought he was too frail and might get hurt. She went to see him with the intention of telling him not to practice anymore. However, when she arrived she saw that he was much stronger and healthier than he had been before and so she did not try to stop him from practicing. Sun had always been thin and weak and upon seeing her son's physical improvement she realized that the martial arts were good for him.

When Sun was approximately 12 years old, his boss let all of the servants have half a day off to celebrate the new year. Sun had planned to go home and visit with his mother. As he was about to leave, the boss' son came in and started pushing Sun around. He said, "You have been practicing martial arts! If you think you are good, let us see you fight with my cousin." The cousin, who was 8 years older than Sun, came into the room. He was a very big, strong looking practitioner of *Shuai Chiao* (Chinese Wrestling). The cousin grabbed Sun by the shirt and dragged him into the courtyard. Once in the courtyard, the aggressor grabbed Sun by the pants and shirt, picked him up over his head and threw him. When he was thrown, Sun flipped over in the air and landed on his feet. This made the cousin mad, however, Sun was also angry because his shirt had been ripped. As Sun's opponent ran over to pick him up and throw him again, Sun punched him in the solar plexus and knocked him on his back. When he hit the ground, the cousin vomited all of the new year's food he has just consumed. Sun's boss' son ran and got his father. Sun's boss came out in the courtyard with a big stick and said he was going to beat Sun to death. The other servants held the boss back and tried to convince him not to beat Sun. The boss yelled at Sun to leave and never come back or else he would beat him to death. Sun left and went home to his mother.

The only thing that interested the young Sun Fu-Ch'uan was the martial arts. He did not want to work, he only wanted to study. To feed himself, and ease the burden

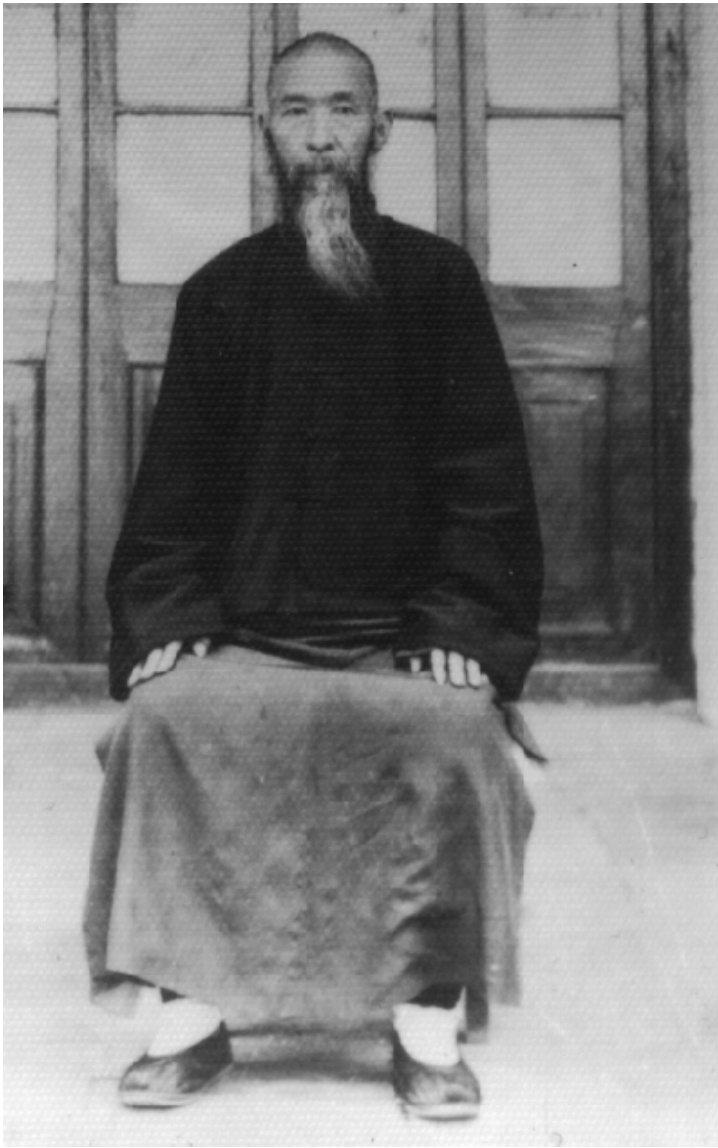
on his mother, he would eat wild vegetables that he found. Because many martial artists of the day had bad reputations, the local villagers thought that he would surely grow up to be a bandit. This made him even more determined. He told them that not only was he going to be a great martial artist, but one day he would help this village and make all of the villagers proud.

Shortly after being fired from his job, Sun became very ashamed and depressed because he could not take care of his mother and he could not keep a job. One day he told his mother that he was going to go beg for some rice. Sun felt so depressed that instead of begging for rice, he went out and hung himself. Immediately after he had drawn the noose tight around his neck, two traveler's came by and cut him down. Sun was not yet dead so they took him back home to his mother. The two kind-hearted travelers talked with Sun and convinced him that no matter how bad the circumstances, he should not try to kill himself. One of the travelers gave Sun and his mother some money and they used it to go to Pao Ting to visit Sun's uncle.

Sun's uncle owned a shop where he sold calligraphy brushes. He gave Sun a job working as a clerk in the shop. While working in his Uncle's shop, Sun practiced his calligraphy everyday. He was too poor to buy paper or ink and so he would use scrap paper and write on it with



Sun Lu-T'ang demonstrating a Hsing-I Ch'uan technique in his book *The Study of Hsing-I Ch'uan*



Sun Lu-T'ang in Tianjin, 1926

water. Sun's Uncle was a kind man and his shop was very successful. In addition to room and board for Sun and his mother, his Uncle would periodically give Sun money for working in the shop. It was through his Uncle's connections that Sun was able to continue his martial arts practice in Pao Ting. Sun's Uncle had two very close friends. One friend, surnamed Chang, was a scholar and the other, surnamed Li, was a martial artist who owned the *Tai An* bodyguard service.

Li had been a Hsing-I Ch'uan student of the famous Kuo Yun-Shen. He had met Kuo one day when he was on a job escorting a convoy. On this occasion, he challenged Kuo to a friendly match so that he could test his own skill. Li was famous for his legwork and kicking techniques. During the match, Li tried to kick Kuo. Kuo blocked the kick with what appeared to be a light tap, however, Li flew back several yards and fell on the ground. When Li got up he was not hurt. Because Kuo had met the challenge and defeated him soundly without hurting him, Li knew he had run into a very high level martial artist. He ran over to Kuo, knelt down and asked to become a student. Kuo agreed to teach him and Li began studying Hsing-I Ch'uan with Kuo. Li, whose personal name was K'uei-

Yuan, studied Hsing-I with Kuo for several years. Since Li was already skilled in martial arts, Kuo taught him quickly and thus he greatly improved his martial arts abilities. After studying with Kuo, Li earned the nickname "divine skill" Li.

One day Sun Lu-T'ang's Uncle was preparing to send a gift to his scholar friend Chang and asked Sun to write the name and address on the package. When Chang received the gift he was more impressed with the calligraphy on the package than he was with the gift which was inside. Chang went to visit Sun's Uncle to ask who had written the calligraphy. When he found out that it was his friend's nephew who had written the calligraphy, Chang said, "You never told me you had a young man in your family with such talent." Chang told Sun, who was about 15 at the time, that he could come to his home as often as he would like and learn more about calligraphy. During his spare time Sun began to go to Chang's house to practice. It was there that he first met the martial artist Li K'uei-Yuan. Upon meeting Sun, Li found him to be an upright and intelligent boy. Learning that Sun had a background in martial arts, Li offered to teach him Hsing-I Ch'uan. Sun's love for martial arts had not faded and he was thrilled to have found a new instructor.

Sun Studies Hsing-I Ch'uan

For the first year Sun studied Hsing-I with Li he was only taught the *San Ts'ai* standing posture. He was not allowed to practice anything else. Sun wondered why he was taught only standing, however, since his teacher had told him to only practice standing, he did not complain. After about six months, Sun started to feel as though his chest and stomach were full and his feet had roots. He was starting to develop internal power from his standing practice and he figured that this is what real kung fu was all about. After these experiences he started to stand more diligently. After Sun had practiced standing for approximately one year, his teacher saw him practicing one day and snuck up on him to test his level. Li hit Sun on his back with a palm strike and Sun's standing posture was not affected by the blow. He realized that Sun had attained a good level of development and had great potential so he invited Sun to come live with him and started to teach him Hsing-I's five elements and twelve animals. Sun practiced his Hsing-I so hard that after only two years of training he had developed a much higher level of Hsing-I Ch'uan skill than was expected of someone of his age and experience.

On the scholar Chang's fiftieth birthday Li and Sun went to his home to wish him well. On this occasion, Chang suggested that Li accept Sun as his formal disciple. Li agreed that Sun had studied hard enough to earn a place in his Hsing-I lineage and accepted Sun as a seventh generation disciple of his branch of Hsing-I. This branch of Hsing-I Ch'uan originated with Chi Chi-Ke (also known as Chi Lung-Feng) and was passed to Ts'ao Chi-Wu, then to Tai Lung-Feng, to Li Neng-Jan, to Kuo Yun-Shen, to Li K'uei-Yuan, and then to Sun Lu-T'ang.

After Chang had made the suggestion that Li accept Sun as a disciple, Li made a suggestion to Chang. He said, "Now that I have accepted a formal disciple at your encouragement, I will encourage you to accept a son-in-

law and allow Sun to marry your daughter.” Chang’s daughter, Chang Chao-Hsien, was 16 years old at the time and Sun was about 18. Chang and Li thought that the two would make a good match and so they became engaged. However, Sun did not want to marry right away. He wanted to spend more time practicing martial arts before he had to worry about supporting his wife. Li K’uei-Yuan told Sun that he had taught him just about everything that he knew. He suggested that if Sun wanted to learn more about Hsing-I he would introduce him to his teacher, Kuo Yun-Shen. Sun was very excited about the possibility of studying with Kuo, but he was a little worried about someone taking care of his mother. Chang the scholar told Sun not to worry about it. He said that he would take Sun’s mother into his house and look after her while Sun was studying with Kuo. With his mother taken care of, Sun was ready to go continue pursuing his martial arts study. Li took Sun to Hsien Chou in Hebei Province to introduce him to his teacher Kuo Yun-Shen.

Kuo Yun-Shen had studied Hsing-I Ch’uan with Li Neng-Jan. Kuo loved to fight when he was young. When he first approached Li Neng-Jan wanting to learn Hsing-I, Li would not teach him because he was of such a violent nature. Li told Kuo that unless he could change his character, he would never teach him martial arts. Kuo got a job as a servant near Li’s home and would secretly watch Li and his students practice Hsing-I. Kuo practiced *peng ch’uan* (smashing fist) on his own for three years. One day Li Neng-Jan saw Kuo practicing *peng ch’uan* and noticed that Kuo was very good at it already. Li saw that Kuo was sincere about learning Hsing-I so he then agreed to teach him.

After Kuo had studied with Li he got a job as a bounty hunter. The law of the day said that a bounty hunter was allowed to catch criminals and bring them in, however, the criminals had to be brought in alive. On one occasion, Kuo was hunting a bandit who was terrorizing travelers along a frequently traveled road. Kuo found the bandit he was pursuing while the bandit was engaged in a fight with a local escort service. Kuo joined the battle and captured the bandit, however, after he had captured him, the bandit pulled out a concealed weapon and tried to kill Kuo. Kuo hit the man and killed him. Recognizing that he had done wrong, Kuo turned himself in to the authorities. The penalty for such a crime was death, however, the local magistrate’s advisors begged him to consider not executing Kuo because he was a rare talent in the martial arts. Instead of execution, the magistrate sentenced Kuo to three years in prison. While in prison Kuo was manacled, however, he continued to practice his Hsing-I Ch’uan. When he came out of prison his skill was higher than when he had entered.

While in prison, Kuo had developed what became known as *pan pu peng*

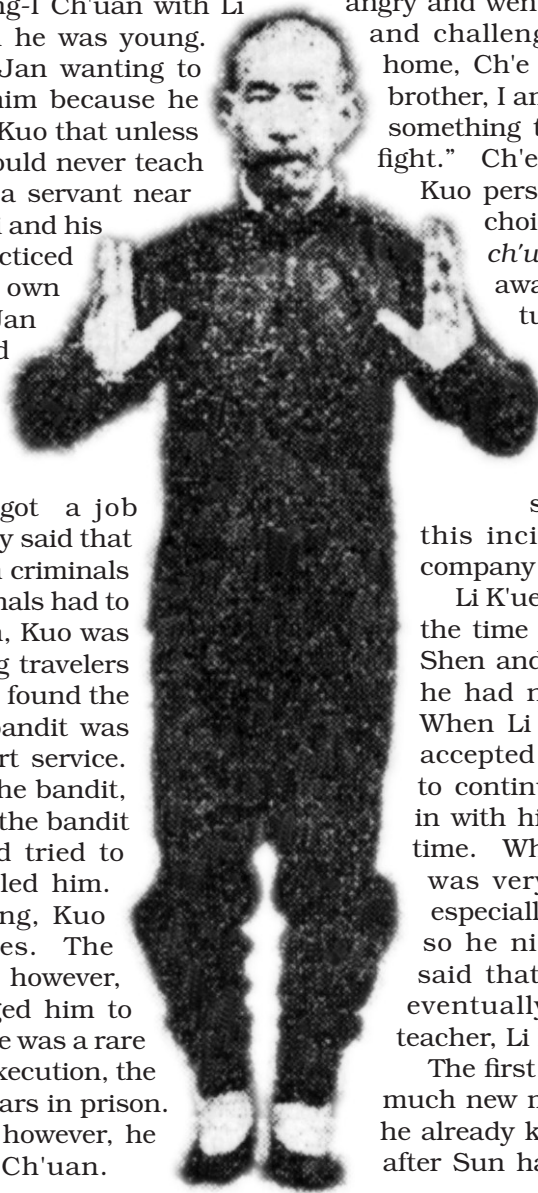
ch’uan (half step smashing fist) and became so famous for the power he developed with this special punch that people said that his “half step smashing fist could beat all under heaven” (*pan pu peng ch’uan ta t’ien hsia*). After being released from prison Kuo went to visit the escort service that worked in the area where the bandit he had killed had operated. He told them that ever since he had killed the bandit, the road was clear and their job had become easy. He told the escort service that they owed him money because of the work he had done for them. Because of his martial arts skill, they did not want to quarrel with him so they gave him some money. However, Kuo would periodically come back for more money and the escort service got tired of it. Instead of confronting Kuo directly they sent a letter to Kuo’s teacher Li Neng-Jan.

Li Neng-Jan called Kuo back home and told him that he shouldn’t bother the escort service any more. Li also said, “Plus, your kung fu is not nearly as good as you think it is. Your skill does not come close to that of your older brother Ch’e I-Chai.” Upon hearing this Kuo became angry and went to Shanxi Province to find Ch’e I-Chai and challenge him. When Kuo arrived at Ch’e’s home, Ch’e was happy to see him and said “Little brother, I am glad you have come to visit! Let’s have something to eat.” Kuo said, “No, I came here to fight.” Ch’e tried to talk Kuo out of fighting, but

Kuo persisted and thus Ch’e was left without a choice. Kuo tried to use his famous *peng ch’uan* over and over. Ch’e kept backing away from Kuo’s strikes and then quickly turned to the side as Kuo struck again and executed *p’i ch’uan* (splitting fist). Ch’e held the strike, stopping inches from Kuo’s head. Realizing the Ch’e had got the best of him, Kuo stopped and said, “It is just as our teacher has said, you are better than I.” Following this incident Kuo never bothered the escort company again.

Li K’uei-Yuan had already been middle aged by the time he had begun studying with Kuo Yun-Shen and although his skill level was very high, he had never reached the level of his teacher. When Li took Sun Lu-T’ang to meet Kuo, Kuo accepted Sun as a student and Li also stayed to continue his practice with Kuo. Sun moved in with his new teacher and studied Hsing-I full time. When Kuo saw Sun’s Hsing-I Ch’uan he was very impressed. He said that Sun was especially skilled in Hsing-I’s monkey form and so he nicknamed Sun “living monkey.” It is said that Sun had so much natural talent he eventually surpassed the level of his original teacher, Li Kuei-Yuan.

The first year of practice, Kuo did not teach Sun much new material but watched him practice what he already knew and made corrections. One night, after Sun had been there for about a year, he was outside practicing when Kuo leapt out of the shadows and tried to attack him with *peng ch’uan* (smashing fist). Sun instinctively used a leaping move from



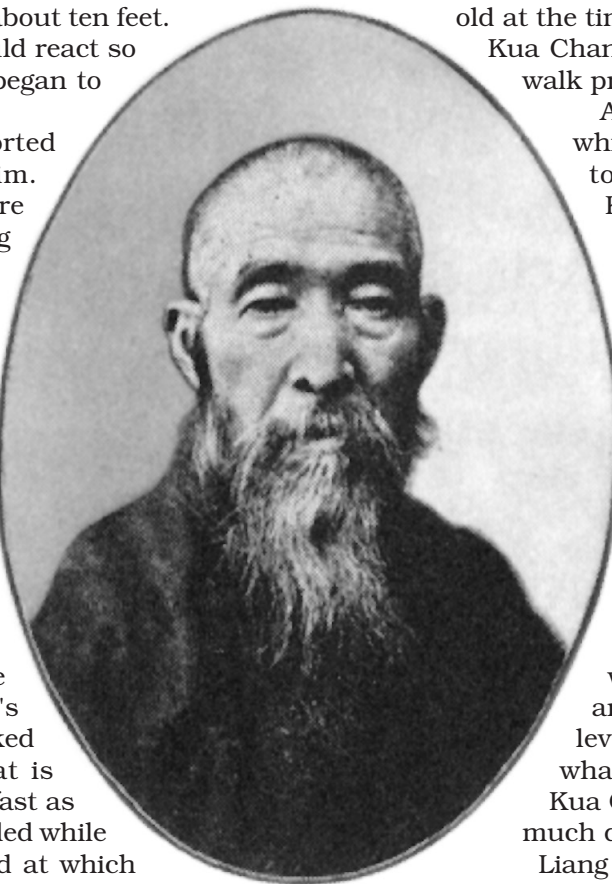
Sun Lu-T'ang demonstrates his T'ai Chi Ch'uan in his book *The Study of T'ai Chi Ch'uan*

the monkey form and leapt back about ten feet. Kuo was very happy that Sun could react so well and from that time forward began to teach him deeply.

Kuo ran a farm and supported Sun while Sun studied with him. Sun traveled with Kuo everywhere he went. Kuo often traveled long distances on horseback. In order to develop Sun's stamina and strength, Kuo required him to walk along beside the horse with his arm held straight out behind the horse with the horse's tail draped over his arm. Sun was required to keep the arm held out and always travel at the same pace as the horse by keeping the tail draped over the arm. One version of this story says that Sun was able to keep up with the horse even when the horse was running. When Sun's daughter, Sun Jian-Yun, was asked about this story, she said, "That is ridiculous, no man could run as fast as a horse!" The distances Sun traveled while following the horse and the speed at which he could run have been greatly exaggerated in books and articles written about Sun.

Later, Kuo gave Sun the book of Hsing-I that he had received from his teacher Li Neng-Jan. Sun knelt down and accepted the book and said that he would always strive to represent the system with honor. Sun then became the formal inheritor of Kuo's Hsing-I Ch'uan. Altogether Sun stayed with Kuo for eight years at which time Kuo told Sun that if he wanted to take his martial arts to an even higher level he should practice Pa Kua Chang to become skilled at evasiveness. Kuo told Sun he would like to take him to Beijing to study Pa Kua Chang with his friend Ch'eng T'ing-Hua.

Sun Begins his Study of Pa Kua Chang



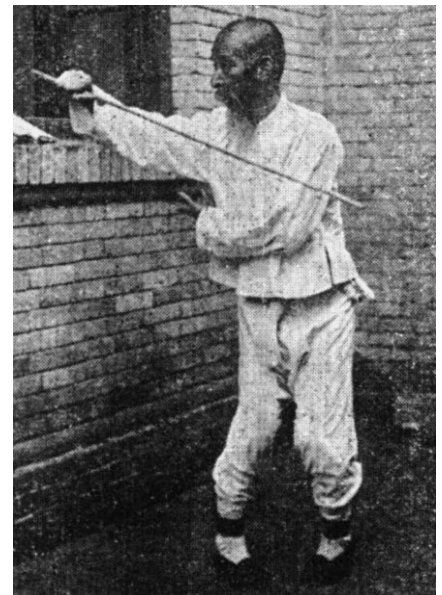
Sun was very interested in going to Beijing to study with Ch'eng, but first he went back to Pao Ting to visit his mother and tell the scholar Chang and his daughter that he would like to put the wedding off for a little while longer. He received their permission and set off for Beijing to study with Ch'eng. Ch'eng accepted Sun as a student and began teaching him Pa Kua Chang. Sun Lu-T'ang was about 30 years

old at the time. Ch'eng began teaching Sun Pa Kua Chang by introducing him to the circle walk practice.

After Sun had been practicing for a while, Ch'eng said that he was going to show Sun something about Pa Kua Chang's fighting method. He asked Sun to attack him and not hold back. Sun attacked with *peng ch'uan*. Ch'eng used Pa Kua's evasive footwork to quickly move out of the way of the attack and instantaneously positioned himself behind Sun. Sun continued attacking, however, every time he moved toward Ch'eng, Ch'eng would end up behind him. Finally, Sun turned one time and met Ch'eng's "double crashing palm" and was thrown back several yards. Sun was very impressed with Ch'eng and was disappointed with his own level of skill. Ch'eng told Sun that what he had used was only basic Pa Kua Chang skills; the art of Pa Kua was much deeper than he had shown.

Liang K'e-Ch'uan, a Hsing-I and Pa Kua instructor in Beijing who studied Pa Kua Chang with Ch'eng T'ing-Hua's son Ch'eng Yu-Hsin, tells a story about Sun's early days with Ch'eng. Liang states that for the first year of study with Ch'eng the only thing Sun was allowed to practice was a few standing postures and walking the circle. However, he would practice other things on his own behind his teacher's back. There was an area behind the Forbidden City where some old cannons lay. Sun would practice hitting these cannons everyday and after several months of practice he could hit the cannons and make them move slightly even though they weighed several hundred pounds apiece.

After Sun had been with Ch'eng for almost a year, a famous martial artist came to Beijing from southern China to challenge Ch'eng T'ing-Hua. Ch'eng sent his best students out to fight the Southerner and all of Ch'eng's students were defeated. Ch'eng became nervous that he would lose his reputation so he went to fight the guy himself. As he was leaving, Sun grabbed him and said, "I'll go fight him." Ch'eng said, "But all you have practiced is walking the circle, how can you expect to beat this man who





Some of the most famous martial artists in China meet in Shanghai, 1929.

In the front row from left to right: Yang Cheng-Fu (T'ai Chi Ch'uan), Sun Lu-T'ang (T'ai Chi, Hsing-I, Pa Kua), Liu Pai-Ch'uan (Lohan Shaolin), Li Ching-Lin (Wu Tang Sword), Tu Hsin-Wu (Natural School Boxing), Cheng Tso-Ping (T'ai Chi Ch'uan), and Tien Shao-Hsien

has defeated my senior students?" Sun said, "He has beaten everyone else, so if he beats me, it is not much different, however, if he beats you, your reputation will be lost."

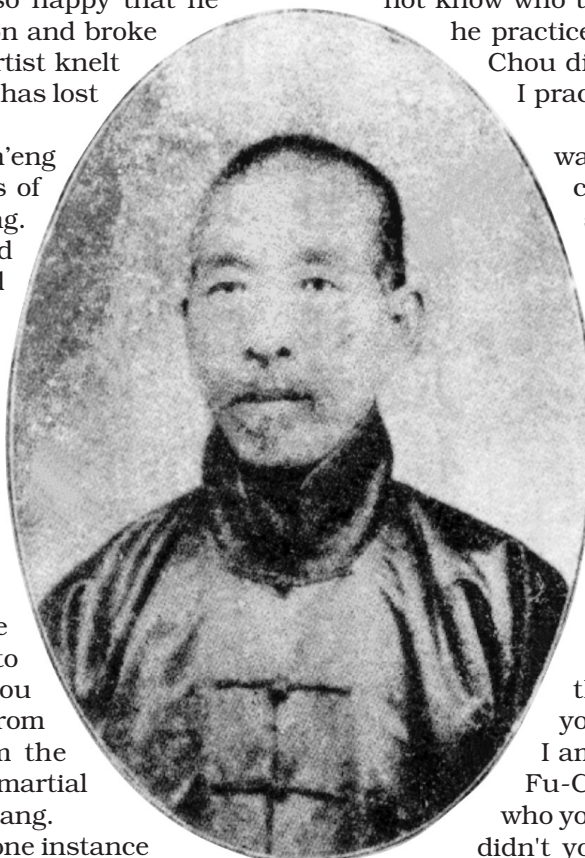
Ch'eng went to see the Southerner and told him that he had one more student to fight and Sun stepped forward. When the fight began Sun moved around the challenger and then hit him like he had been hitting the cannons behind the Forbidden City. Sun hit him so hard that he knocked the man out of the window of the building. Ch'eng T'ing-Hua was so happy that he slapped the bench he was sitting on and broke it in half. The Southern martial artist knelt before Ch'eng and said, "The South has lost to the great Ch'eng T'ing-Hua."

Sun took notes on all that Ch'eng told him and this formed the basis of his later writing on Pa Kua Chang. Ch'eng told him he had learned quickly because of his background and natural ability. After Sun had practiced with Ch'eng for three years, Ch'eng told him that staying there longer was not going to help him much. Ch'eng told him that he needed to go test himself in the world. Sun was reluctant to leave, but Ch'eng told him he should go. Ch'eng told Sun that his kung fu skill was such that if he got into a fight, his teacher would not lose face. Before he left, Ch'eng said to remember this, "Pride will cause you harm while you will always benefit from humility." Ch'eng then gave him the name "Lu-T'ang." From then on in martial circles he was known as Sun Lu-T'ang.

Sun Jian-Yun speaks of at least one instance

where Sun's change of name caused some confusion later in his life. One of Ch'eng T'ing-Hua's other Pa Kua Chang students, Chou Yu-Hsiang was teaching in Tianjin. Sun was in town and went by to visit Chou. Although they were from the same Pa Kua Chang school, they had not studied with Ch'eng at the same time and thus they had never met. When Sun entered Chou's school, Chou asked his name and Sun replied, "I am Sun Lu-T'ang." Chou had never heard of Sun Lu-T'ang, he had only ever heard of Sun Fu-Ch'uan and so he did not know who this visitor was. Chou asked Sun if he practiced martial arts. Sun, realizing that Chou did not know who he was, said, "Yes, I practice Shaolin."

When Chou heard that this visitor was a Shaolin practitioner his attitude conveyed that he thought his style superior to what the visitor practiced. He said, "Why don't you show me some of your Shaolin." Chou attacked Sun in a friendly manner so Sun could apply his art. Sun performed an application. In response Chou said, "That does not look like Shaolin to me. Let's try again." This time Chou attacked with more force, trying to really hit him. Sun avoided the strike and struck Chou in such a manner that Chou's head went through the low paper ceiling. Chou said, "That is not Shaolin. I recognize this as Hsing-I Ch'uan. Who are you?" Sun replied, "As I have told you, I am Sun Lu-T'ang, also known as Sun Fu-Ch'uan." Chou said, "Now I know who you are. We are boxing brothers! Why didn't you tell me." Chou then apologized



for his rudeness.

Sun Lu-T'ang Goes Out On His Own

After Sun Lu-T'ang left Ch'eng T'ing-Hua he took his teacher's advice and traveled to Sichuan Province, visiting with other martial artists along the way. If he heard that someone was good at martial arts, Sun went to meet them. After making this trip to Sichuan to compare his martial arts skill with others, Sun went back to his hometown and began teaching martial arts. When he first started teaching he was in his thirties. He stayed in his hometown teaching for five years. Many of the farmers in the area and other townspeople studied with him. His very first, and some of his best, students were from his hometown.

One of Sun's best students in Pao Ting was surnamed Tung. When Tung started studying Hsing-I with Sun, he did nothing for three years but stand in the *San Ts'ai* posture. If one travels to Pao Ting today they can see Sun's martial arts still being practiced by many of the martial artists there. While teaching martial arts in his hometown, Sun also started a literary study society because most of the townspeople were illiterate.

After Sun left his hometown he traveled to Hsing Tang, a town about 80 miles from Beijing in Hebei Province. Sun taught martial arts there for eight years. On one occasion a wealthy land owner held a party. Sun was in attendance and the wealthy man was showing off his horse riding skill. Knowing Sun was a famous martial artist, upon finishing a ride around the stable yard, the man asked Sun if he could ride a horse. Sun said, "You take one more ride and then I'll give it a try." The man rode the horse around the stable yard once more, demonstrating his best maneuvers so as to show up Sun. He finished his round to thunderous applause from the guests. Bowing proudly to the crowd, convinced that Sun could not perform near as well, the man looked to where Sun had been standing, but no one was there. He then realized that Sun was sitting on the horse behind him. Sun had been sitting there during the entire demonstration and the applause from the crowd had been for Sun, not the land owner.

While Sun was living in Ting Hsing there was a famous bandit nicknamed the "flying thief" because of his *ch'ing kung* (lightness skill). The mayor of Ting Hsing approached Sun and asked if he could help catch the bandit. Sun disguised himself as a fortune teller in the center of town and waited. When the thief appeared, Sun ran after him and the thief fled. One the edge of town there was a field full of a tall plants which are known for their very thick stalk. When the plant tops were

removed during harvest, only the thick stalk remained. The "flying thief" ran to the field and leapt up on top of the densely planted crop and ran across the plant stalk tops. The thief was sure that no one could follow him, however when he turned around, he saw Sun still in pursuit, also running across the plant stalk tops. Sun caught the thief and turned him in.

One of the common practice methods in *ch'ing kung* training is to learn how to maneuver quickly while stepping in patterns on top of thin wooden posts which are driven into the ground. Evidently this training served Sun well in apprehension of the bandit. Sun Jian-Yun states that not only did her father have *ch'ing kung* training when he was young and practicing Shaolin, but both the Pa Kua and Hsing-I her father had practiced included *ching kung* training as well. She said that one of the developmental skills was to run as fast as one could up a slightly inclined ramp. Gradually one would increase the steepness of the incline until it was vertical. She said her father could run up a 10 foot wall in three steps, quickly turn around when he reached the ceiling and jump back down. She says that although there have been reports that he could stick to the ceiling when he ran up there, this was not true.

After eight years in Ting Hsing, Sun returned to Beijing and stayed there for the majority of his remaining years. He made a number of short trips to teach at the request of different martial arts schools around the country, however, he kept his home in Beijing until the month before he died when he returned to his hometown. When he returned to Beijing from Ting Hsing he was 45 years old (1906). Sun Lu-T'ang's daughter, Sun Jian-Yun was born when Sun was 53. Sun also had three sons.

While in Beijing, Sun heard that the famous T'ai Chi teacher Hao Wei-Chen was there to visit friends. Evidently Hao could not locate his friends and had checked into an Inn and subsequently taken ill. Sun went and got Hao Wei-Chen out of the Inn and brought Hao to his home. Sun brought a doctor to the house to look at Hao, went to get medicine for him and took care of him while he was sick. Up to this point Sun did not know that Hao practiced T'ai Chi, he only knew that Hao was a famous martial artist. After Hao recovered from his illness, he told Sun that he would repay his kindness by teaching Sun his martial art. This is how Sun learned the Hao Style T'ai Chi Ch'uan from Hao Wei-Chen.

Between 1922 and 1924 Sun was working for the government in Beijing teaching martial arts. There had been a three year drought in his home village and the poor people of the village had to beg for food. Sun went back to his home and said that he would lend them all money at a high interest. The rich people of the village refused because



Sun Lu-T'ang in 1920 with his 6 year old daughter Sun Jian-Yun

the interest was too high, the very poor had no choice and took the money. Sun had them all sign contracts binding them to the interest rate.

That year it rained in the village and everyone had a good crop. Sun returned and burned all of the contracts. He said that he set the interest rate high so that the poor people would work very hard and the rich people would not borrow. As he had predicted when he was a boy, he had become a famous martial artist, and he had made the village people proud.

Sun Jian-Yun states that her father did not think there was any secret way to practice the martial arts. He emphasized that there were two words which describe correct practice, *Chung He*, which translates to mean "balance." He recommend that students follow the principles of the style, but never practice one thing too much. The practice must be balanced. Sun Jian-Yun said, "Just as when you are hot, you take off some clothing or when you are cold, you put on more clothing, when you practice you seek a balance."

Ch'eng said to remember this, "Pride will cause you harm while you will always benefit from humility."

Sun Jian-Yun remembers when she was young watching her father practice in their home. She said that they lived in an old style home, the only thing dividing the rooms was a cloth that hung down from the ceiling. The room Sun practiced in was a bit too small for the form he performed and at one point in the form he would kick out quickly and hit the cloth which divided the rooms. She reports that her father was so exact in his forms practice that everyday he kicked the same spot. After several months he wore a hole in the cloth where he had been kicking it. Her mother would patch up the hole, however, several months later a new hole would appear in the exact same spot.

Sun's T'ai Chi Ch'uan

After scores of years of research with the arts of T'ai Chi, Hsing-I, and Pa Kua, Sun Lu-T'ang put together the Sun style of T'ai Chi Ch'uan. Sun Jian-Yun described this method as employing Pa Kua's stepping method, Hsing-I's leg and waist methods, and T'ai Chi's body softness.

Sun became very well known for his T'ai Chi method and his ability to apply it. He was so well known that word of his skill had reached Japan. A famous Japanese martial artist was so determined to test Sun's skill that he convinced the Emperor of Japan to send him to China to fight Sun. In 1921, the Japanese martial artist came to visit Sun and, speaking through an interpreter, said, "I heard that you practice a Chinese martial art method which uses soft to overcome hard. Well, I am hard! How do you want to fight me? I will fight with any rules or any weapons." Sun turned to the interpreter and said, "Since he is a guest in our country, I will let him decide." The Japanese challenger said, "I am going to use hard



Sun Lu-T'ang's daughter, Sun Jian-Yun, in Beijing, October 1992.

strength to take your arm in a lock and break it. Let's see if you can use your soft energy to overcome that!" Sun, who at 5'7" barely came to the Japanese man's shoulder, was willing to give it a try. Concerned that Sun could simply move his feet and get away from the lock, or wiggle his arm out of the lock, the challenger said, "I want you to overcome this technique without running around." Sun said, "I can accommodate you."

Sun had the spectators move all of the furniture aside and cleared a space on the floor. He said, "I will lie here on the floor, your students can hold my feet, and you can apply your technique. I'll even put my other arm behind my back." Sun laid on the floor and the Japanese martial artist took hold of his arm. The interpreter counted, "One, two, three!" At the count of three Sun quickly pulled his free arm out from behind his back and applied a point strike to his opponent's stomach. This point strike caused the Japanese challenger to lose his grip on Sun's other arm and Sun hopped up. The opponent was not so easily put off and followed Sun. Sun struck a few other points on his opponent's body and threw him into a bookcase. The book case fell on top of the challenger. The interpreter shouted, "You've hurt him!"



Sun Lu-T'ang's Tomb

Sun said, "He'll be all right. Tell him when he gets up and catches his breath we can try it again." His opponent, admitting defeat, refused to try again.

Sun Lu-T'ang was well known for his ability to do a tremendous amount of damage with a very light application. Once when he was pushing hands with a large, big boned student surnamed Li, the student became angry that Sun was so small yet could easily control him. He thought to himself, "He is so much smaller than I am, if I smash him, he will surely go flying." The student tried to *fa ching* and Sun lightly diverted the force as if nothing had happened. Frustrated that he could not hit Sun, the student left. Several hours later the student returned and Sun was sitting at his desk writing. The student was sweating heavily and could barely speak. Sun said, "When you were trying to hit me, I know what was on your mind." The student apologized and Sun said, "You have suffered internal damage." Handing the student the paper he had written on he said, "Take this prescription and go home and rest." The next day the student's entire arm was black.

Sun Lu-T'ang's second son was very angry with the student for trying to hit his father. Later, Sun traveled to Shanghai and took the student with him. Sun's son said, "This guy was trying to hurt you. He may try it again! Why are you treating him so well?" Sun said, "You are wrong. He knew that I could have damaged him badly. By only giving him a small taste, he knows

that I used morality to overcome his violence and now he respects me."

Sun Jian-Yun says that her father always taught that the reason to practice martial arts was not to fight. He said that if one wants to fight they can use a gun. His advice to students was to practice in order to improve the health of the body. He stated that the goal of martial arts is to be healthy while you live and then die quickly. He said that if one is internally strong they will not become ill during their life and when the body is worn down by old age they will die with no lingering illness. Recent articles from mainland China report that Sun was known for having turned away students who were interested in fighting, telling them that if they wanted to fight they should go find a better teacher.

Sun's Fast Feet

Sun Lu-T'ang's ability to apply Pa Kua Chang's quick footwork methods and fast stepping changes was legendary. Sun Jian-Yun remembers that on one occasion Sun went to a friend's house to visit. When the friend heard the bamboo front door rattle he immediately poked his head into the room to see who it was. Sun had already crossed the room and was sitting in a chair on the other side. The friend exclaimed, "How did you get there so fast." Sun said, "That's from Pa Kua Chang practice."

On another occasion a famous martial artist nicknamed "Nose" Li wanted to challenge Sun. All of his friends said that he was crazy because Sun was too fast. Li was persistent and Sun finally agreed. The two faced each other and before Li could get ready Sun was already behind him and had kicked him in the backside. People witnessing the fight told Li he should not have even tried against someone as fast as Sun.

In 1928 Sun went to Shanghai to teach at a big martial arts association school. When he arrived, there were 30 or 40 people who were eager to see him demonstrate his already legendary skill. Sun said, "You can all chase me, if anyone can grab my sleeve or gown, then you have kung fu." They all chased him around the room, but none could grab him or his clothing.

"By only giving him a small taste, he knows that I used morality to overcome his violence and now he respects me."

In 1931, when Sun Jian-Yun was 17 years old, she learned about her father's fast footwork first hand. Sun was visiting a martial arts school in a mountainous area of China. Sun, who was then 70 years old and dragged a walking stick behind him wherever he went, asked the students to chase him up a hill. They, including Sun Jian-Yun, all ran fast, but could not keep up with him. When they reached the top, he was standing in a doorway showing no signs of fatigue. He said, "You all look as if you need a rest."

Pa Kua Chang instructor Liu Hsing-Han (now 85) of Beijing reports that when he was young and studying

with his teacher Liu Pin, Sun would often come and help him with his Pa Kua practice when Sun was visiting his friend Liu Pin. Sun and Liu Pin were classmates under Ch'eng T'ing-Hua. Liu Hsing-Han remembers that every time Sun Lu-T'ang observed him walking the circle Sun would yell, "Faster, faster!" Sun was well known for his fast footwork and always emphasized this component of Pa Kua Chang training when teaching students.

Sun Jian-Yun reports that Sun was always very respectful of his mother. Her grave site was ten miles away from where he lived when he was in Pao Ting. She says that on occasion Sun would walk the ten miles to his mother's grave bowing every five steps. He walked so fast that, even though he paused to bow every five steps, students accompanying him had a hard time keeping up.

Sun's demonstrations of skill were not limited to his ability to move quickly. One time when he was visiting the Chang Shu Martial Arts Academy, the school officials asked him to give a demonstration. The room he was in was small and crowded with people. There was not any room to move around so Sun went over to a wall and placed the side of one foot against the bottom of the wall (where the floor and the wall meet) and stood with his shoulder and arm flat against the wall (the arm hanging down by his side). He then lifted the other foot off of the ground by raising his knee as high as it would go. His foot, shoulder and arm remained pressed against the wall. The group looked at Sun as if to say, "That wasn't very impressive." Sun said, "Why don't a few of you try that." Try as they might, none of them could keep their balance. Standing in this position against a wall one who has not been trained cannot shift the weight to the leg which is next to the wall. They asked Sun, "How could you do that?" Sun replied that his body had no one center of balance. His whole body was the center.

Sun's Death

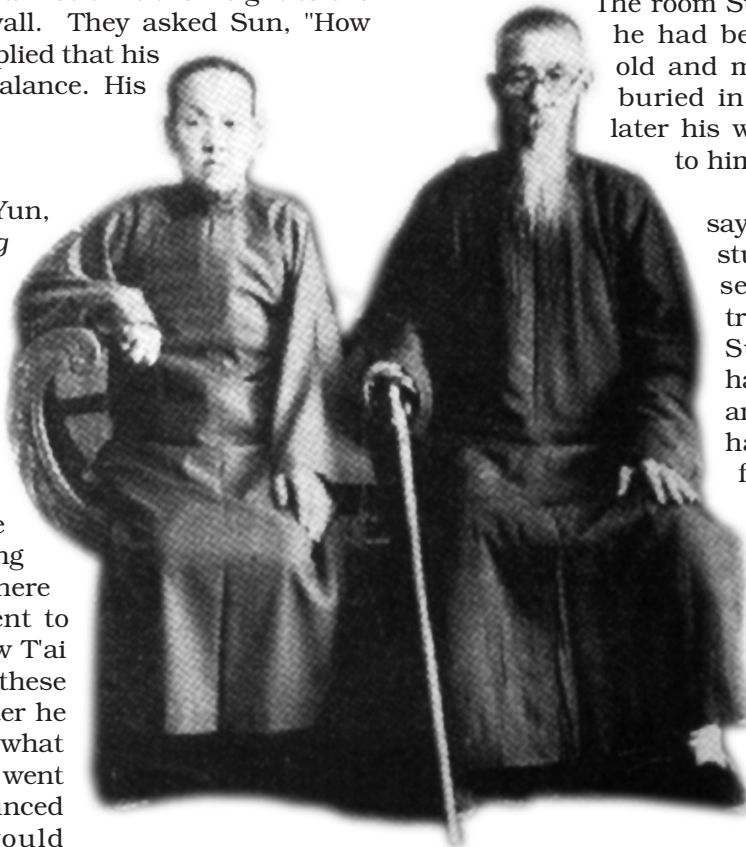
According to Sun Jian-Yun, her father used the *I-Ching* to predict the exact date and time of his death. The year of his death (1933) a German doctor in a Western hospital had examined Sun and said he had the body of a 40 year old (Sun was 73). Shortly afterward he said that he wanted to return to Pao Ting because he had not been there in 17 years. When he went to Pao Ting he took on 18 new T'ai Chi students and said that these were his last students. After he had taught these students what he wanted them to learn, he went back to Beijing and announced that in one month he would die. A good friend of Sun's had died recently and so his family

thought that he was just depressed and would get over it. At the time, Sun Jian-Yun was taking care of her parents. The first two sons had already died and the third son was living in Shanghai. Sun Lu-T'ang told Sun Jian-Yun, "We should return to Pao Ting now. I want to be buried there and it will be too much trouble to take my body back when I am dead."

Sun continued attacking, however, every time he moved toward Ch'eng, Ch'eng would end up behind him.

Sun, his wife, and daughter went back to Pao Ting and Sun stopped eating. He said, "I came into this world empty and I will go out empty." He did nothing but sit in meditation all day and would only drink water. Sun told his daughter not to cry after he died. He left his daughter with instructions concerning what she should do when he was gone. He said he would die sitting up. They were to wait for one half hour after which they could lay his body down. After he was laying down he said his son and daughter could then weep for him.

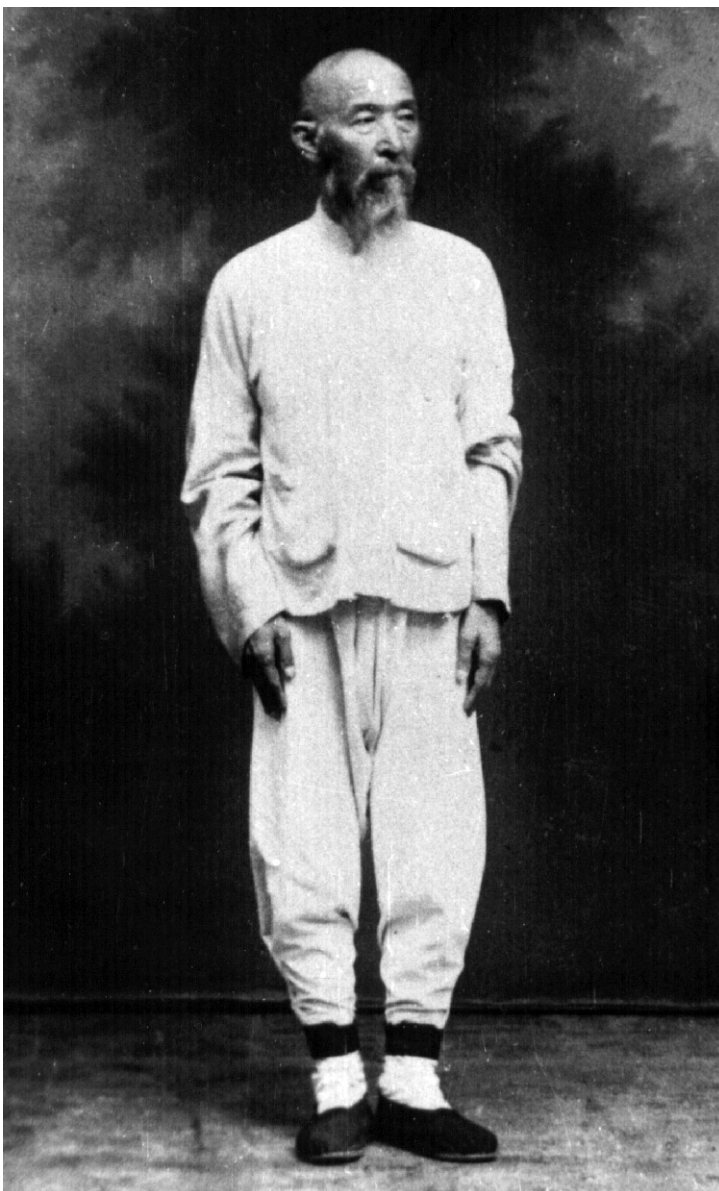
On the day he had predicted he would die, Sun was sitting in a chair meditating. His family and friends were trying to talk to him, but he wasn't paying attention. He didn't want to put on any clothes that day because he said he wouldn't need them. On three different occasions he opened his eyes and asked what time it was. The third time he said "Good-bye," closed his eyes, and died. The room Sun died in was the same room he had been born in. The house was old and made of mud bricks. He was buried in his home village. One year later his wife died and was buried next to him.



**Sun Lu-T'ang with his wife
Chang Chao-Hsien in 1932**

There is a famous story that says that just before Sun died his students asked him what was the secret to internal martial arts training. This story states that Sun wrote a character in his hand, showed it to his students and then died. The character he had written was the character for "practice." Sun Jian-Yun, who was with her father when he died, said that this story is not true. However, she said that he did say that if there was any secret to internal arts it was simply to practice hard.

Sun Jian-Yun said that her father kept a dairy until he was 60 years old. He did not like to talk to people a lot, but he kept records of everything; what he had learned from his teachers,



Sun Lu-T'ang in 1929 at the Chiangsu Province Martial Arts School

people he taught, people he fought, etc. in his diary. For Sun's 60th birthday (a very important birthday to the Chinese) several dozen of his students came to Beijing. Sun's diary was on the bookshelf in his home. After everyone left the party, the diary was gone. After Sun Lu-T'ang died his daughter put an ad in the paper asking whoever borrowed the book to please return it and she would make it available to all of his students. No one returned the diary, however, later she found out that one of his live-in students had taken it and had given it to his son. Later she finally tracked down the son, but it was after the Cultural Revolution and the diary had been destroyed.

Sun Lu-Tang's grave site also suffered during the Cultural Revolution. In 1966, the Red Guard came to Sun's grave site to rob its contents. They figured since he was famous he must have been wealthy and had some of his valuables buried with him. All they found was a few coins and Sun's sword. They took the coins and threw the sword on the ground. Someone in the village retrieved the sword and put it in a safe place. Later the villager presented the sword to Sun Jian-Yun and she

subsequently donated it to the government as a national treasure. In 1982, Sun style enthusiasts helped Sun Jian-Yun restore Sun Lu-Tang's grave sight.

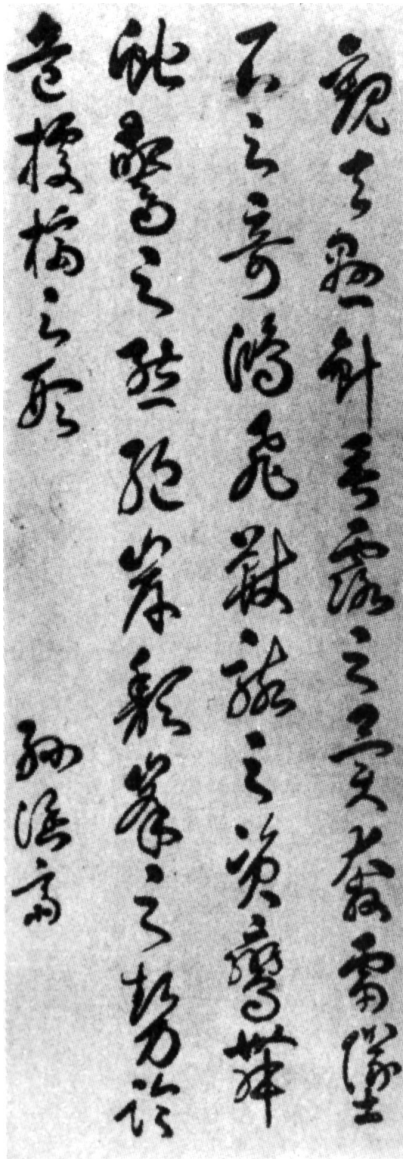
Sun Jian-Yun, who at 80 years old is full of life and appears very healthy, states that her father was always a humble and honest man, he was never proud or arrogant. Although the only formal schooling he received was between the ages of seven and nine, he was a respected scholar. He wrote five books during his lifetime. The first book, *The Study of Hsing I-Ch'uan* was published in 1915, the second book, *The Study of Pa Kua Boxing* in 1916. His T'ai Chi Ch'uan book (*The Study of T'ai Chi Ch'uan*) was published in the 1920's and his Pa Kua sword book (*The Study of Pa Kua Sword*) was published in 1929. His final book was the *True Essence of Boxing*. Sun Jian-Yun says that there was a scholar named Liu Chun-Li who was ranked number one in the last imperial examinations given in China. After Liu read a few of Sun's books he was convinced that a martial artist could not have really written them. Most martial artists of the day were illiterate and uneducated. Liu went to visit Sun and said, "You didn't write these books. Who wrote them for you?" Sun told the visitor that he had in fact written them himself. Liu, convinced that Sun was not telling the truth, grilled Sun all day on the literary classics, the *I-Ching*, and mathematics. He was not able to stump Sun on any subject. Liu finally said, "You are a master of both the literary and martial arts."

Sun Lu-Tang's Pa Kua Chang

Looking at Sun's background one can see that he really did not spend a long time teaching in any one place, so it is quite possible that he did not have many long time Pa Kua Chang students. He spent five years teaching in Pao Ting in the late 1890's and then spent about eight years teaching in Hsing Tang in the early part of this century. After he moved to Beijing in 1906 he held various jobs with the government, either as a martial arts instructor or a bodyguard, and he spent a great deal of time traveling.

Talking with elderly Hsing-I Ch'uan and Pa Kua Chang practitioners in Beijing, it is clear that Sun's forte was Hsing-I Ch'uan and later in his life he preferred to teach his T'ai Chi Ch'uan. Because he traveled widely during the 1920's and taught at many of the martial arts schools in China, many practitioners were exposed to Sun's Pa Kua, but it is not clear how many were actually taught deeply. When I asked Sun's daughter to name his best Pa Kua Chang students, she only offered one name, Sun Chen-Ch'uan.

The majority of the students who I can verify as having studied directly with Sun only did so for a relatively short time (a few years at most). So most of what you see of Sun style Pa Kua Chang today is very simple. Those who studied with Sun at any of the various martial arts academies only had the opportunity to study with him for a month or two as this was as long as he tended to stay at any one place teaching. For instance, he is always listed as one of the instructors at the Central Martial Arts Academy in Nanjing and people who went to the school claim to have studied with him, however, the truth is that he was only there for a total of



Sun Lu-T'ang's Calligraphy

three months in 1928. So, while students who were there at the time may have studied with him, they certainly could not have been taught much. If the Pa Kua Chang teaching of Sun Lu-T'ang which is being handed down to us today is primarily from these students, it seems as though we may only be seeing bits and pieces.

Li Tian-Ji's father, Li Yu-Lin (1885-1965) was a close friend and student of Sun Lu-T'ang. When the two met, Li was already skilled at the Li Tsun-I style of Hsing-I Ch'uan and Pa Kua Chang which he had learned from his teacher Hao En-Kuang and, to some extent, from Li Tsun-I himself. After Hao died, Li Yu-Lin impressed Sun Lu-T'ang and Sun accepted him as a student. Li was 35 and already an accomplished martial artist when he started studying with Sun. Li Tian-Ji also studied with Sun Lu-T'ang when he was a boy.

When I visited Li in his home in Beijing last fall, I asked him about Sun's Pa Kua Chang method. He told me that in Sun's Pa Kua, the circle walking is the most important. He said that Sun taught students differently depending on who they were and their skill level. He also said that Sun's Pa Kua system was very deep. When I

asked him if he could tell me something about the depth of the system he said that there was not enough time in a short interview. I pressed him, asking if he could simply outline the teaching sequence so I could have an idea of what kinds of things Sun's Pa Kua student's practiced. He said that even this would take all night to explain. When I asked Li about Sun Lu-T'ang's Pa Kua Chang book he said that the book barely scratched the surface of Sun's Pa Kua. He stated that the information in the book was what Sun showed to outsiders. He said, "Sun had the public version, and then there was a reserved private version for his disciples."

What Sun published in his book is commonly what we see "Sun style" practitioners practicing today, however, there is no doubt that there was more to Sun's Pa Kua than the simple form that is shown in the book. This form is very typical of the beginning level Pa Kua Chang form taught by many in Ch'eng T'ing-Hua's Pa Kua system. As our friends in Britain have discovered (see pages 18-24) , it is evident that Sun's Pa Kua Chang becomes much more difficult than what we have been exposed to in his written work.

(Chinese Character index for this article is on page 30)



Li Tian-Ji's father, Li Yu-Lin (shown above), was one of Sun Lu-T'ang's most famous students

The Single Palm Change of Sun Lu-T'ang

by Allen Pittman

The single palm change is the quintessential action common to all Pa Kua Chang systems. Although varying in articulation, orientation and syncopation the alignments of the limbs and crawl reflex action remain the same in all Pa Kua Chang systems.

The particular single change demonstrated is that of Sun Lu-T'ang and is found in his book *Pa Kua Ch'uan Hsueh* or "Pa Kua Boxing Studies," Beijing, 1916. I began learning this change in 1975 under R.W. Smith. Mr. Smith learned the change under his teacher Kuo Feng-Ch'ih, a student of Chang Hung-Ch'ing and Kuo Han-Chih.

In practice, work for continuity and evenness of movement. Do not lean. Let the eyes follow the index finger tip - changing your gaze as the fingers/palms exchange. Remember to maintain concentration on the tan t'ien and the head top.

The Single Palm Change

- 1) Begin with the left palm facing the center of the circle (see photo 1 on the next page.)
- 2) Toe-in the right foot and address the perimeter of the circle with the left palm. The right palm continues to protect your left ribs (photo 2).
- 3) Pivot the left foot on the ball (photo 3).
- 4) Take a left step ahead along the circle and slightly toe out. At the same time, lift the left elbow, pointing the left thumb down and press forward with the right palm (photo 4 - the right wrist can be bent more than shown in the photo).
- 5) As you continue pushing with the right palm, toe-in the right foot as shown (photo 5A). At the same time point the left elbow down and turn both palms up. The right palm faces the left elbow (do not cross the arms). Photo 5B shows this

position from outside the circle.

6) Begin turning back from the hips (the inguinals should be creased) and swing the arms palm up to the right (photo 6).

7) The right foot steps onto the perimeter of the circle and the right arm and palm follow it (photo 7).

8) The left palm, which is upward, follows inside the right elbow. As you circle, turn the palms toward the center (photos 8-10). Traditionally beginners should work on a gradual swing back requiring a full revolution to turn the palms to the center. Later the more rapid swing back can be synchronized with the step onto the circle.

From the aspect of health the single palm change corresponds primarily to the heart and secondarily to the mind. Its action must be crisp and decisive. Esoterically it corresponds to revolution or transformation. The readers may consider the Greek concept of Metanoia or "spiritual return."

Function is traditionally reserved for students of long standing. Suffice to say the lead arm can be used to deflect or attack, the toe-in can be used to scoop or lock the leg and the palms also show striking and *chin na* function. The readers should be wary of functions that stray too far from the form.

About the Author: *Allen Pittman is a senior student of R. W. Smith and a disciple of Hung I-Mien (Taiwan). He has published two books on Nei Chia - Hsing-I and Pa Kua available through Tuttle Publishers. Presently he is working on a comprehensive treatise on the Pa Kua system of Kao I-Sheng (both linear and circular) which he inherited from Hung I-Mien. Allen Pittman was featured in Pa Kua Chang Newsletter, Vol. 1, No. 2.*

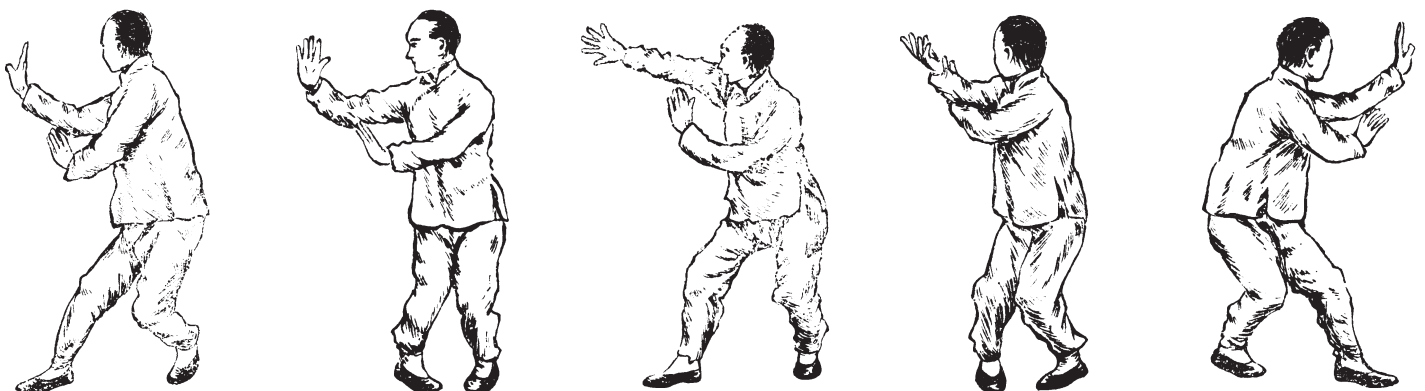
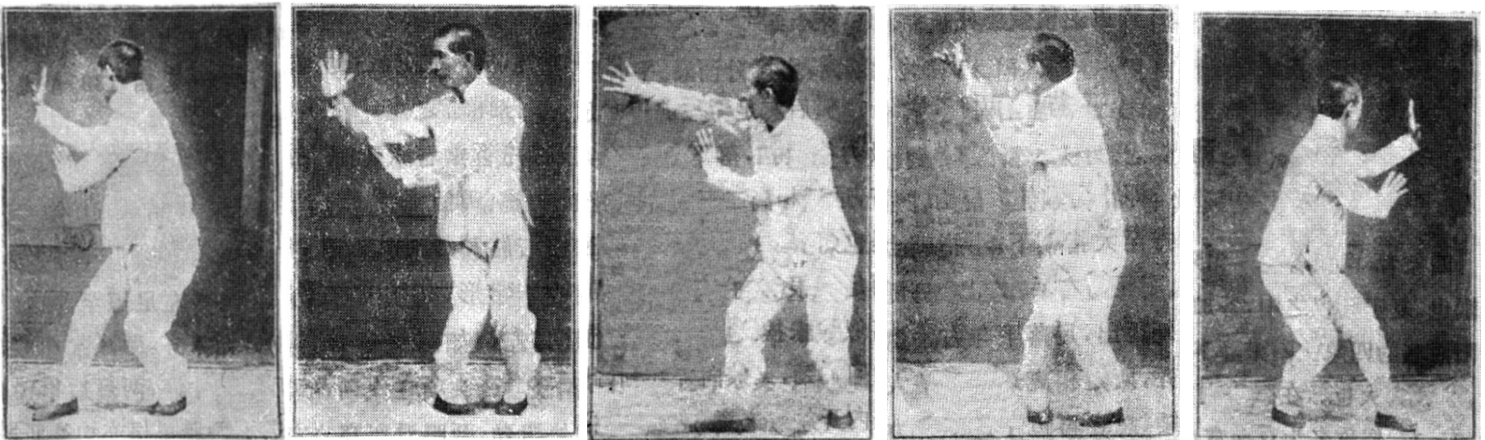




Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5A



Photo 5B



Photo 6



Photo 7



Photo 8



Photo 9



Photo 10

Pa Kua in Britian: Ji Jian-Cheng

By Alan Ellerton

We have, in Britain, had a fairly long exposure to and contact with various oriental martial arts dating from the 1900's and 1920's with Ju Jutsu and later Judo. In the early sixties we saw the arrival of Karate and subsequently Aikido. In the seventies and eighties we had Taekwondo, Hapkido, Wing Chun, T'ai Chi (of the mainly exercise variety) and many other styles. As regards the Japanese and Korean styles we have been able to receive training at the highest levels and many world class masters are now based in Britain. But the same cannot be said for the Chinese styles except for a few exceptions. As for Pa Kua, martial artists had heard or read of it but rarely if ever had an opportunity to see or actually learn any of this recondite style.

The situation has, however, greatly improved with the arrival in England last year of Ji Jian-Cheng. For the first time we have had the chance to learn several Chinese

martial arts with the emphasis more on the fighting aspect and the traditional virtues of Chinese martial systems instead of the fancy but useless modern wushu we have from time to time tolerated over the past few years. Ji's knowledge and skills of the fighting arts and particularly Pa Kua have attracted a great deal of interest from British martial arts aficionados and teachers.

Ji Jian-Cheng originally learned Southern Kung Fu in Longchuan with his grandfather Chen Xiang-Jin, one of the most respected kung fu masters in South China. Chen Xiang-Jin took up martial arts at the age of 13 in 1912. His family was involved in tree felling and the transportation of logs down the Ou-Jiang river to major cities. Loggers used to attract the attention of robbers when returning with their earnings, so many of them learned martial arts to defend themselves. In fact, the area around the Zhejiang-Fujian border was well known for the martial arts. To become proficient in the fighting arts, Chen was sent to the Mao Shan temple to live and study with the famous martial arts monk Lio Qi, master of Southern Shaolin kung fu. Lio Qi was probably originally a Northerner and a former army officer. Having gotten into some trouble he had fled to the more remote areas in South East China and adopted the name Lio Qi when he became a monk. As well as learning kung fu Chen had to do various jobs in the temple to earn his keep and later had to study Buddhist philosophy. At the age of 20 Chen was going to be ordained as a full Buddhist priest but unfortunately his father died and he had to give up his studies at the temple to return to his home.

Chen continued to practice kung fu and, when able, returned to the temple. He also trained with other masters in the area to further develop his knowledge. Some of the masters he came across were visiting the town of Longchuan to have swords made and while they were there taught kung fu.

Chen also became proficient in *Nan Ch'uan* and *Gang-Rou Ch'uan* as well as Southern Shaolin. Eventually Chen was himself recognized as an outstanding practitioner and started to attract students. At the age of 93 he is now regarded as one of the greatest living masters of genuine Southern kung fu.

Ji Jian-Cheng started to learn a little Southern Shaolin and Nan Ch'uan with his grandfather at the age of eight and then at the age of eleven began to train with him on a more serious basis. During the next few years Ji studied Southern 18 Lohan style, Black Tiger, Five Animals, Gang-Rou style, Qi Gong, and weapons such as the staff and sword.

It was not until about 1972 that Ji first came across Pa Kua. He was in Lishui where, one morning, he saw an old man going through his Pa Kua exercises, walking the circle. The movements he saw seemed to be too soft, lacking in power, and, compared to the Southern hard styles, probably not very effective as a fighting art. He



Ji Jian-Cheng, a native of Longquan, Zhejiang Province, is now teaching Pa Kua Chang in Britian



Ji Jian-Cheng with the well known Pa Kua Chang instructor Sha Kuo-Cheng in 1986.

was, however, impressed by the man's mental attitude and graceful fluid techniques.

When he returned to Longchuan, Ji asked his grandfather about Pa Kua and was told that Pa Kua was in fact a very powerful and effective martial art and that within the apparent softness there could be great strength. From this time Ji became fascinated with Pa Kua and its attendant philosophy and theory. He assiduously studied the *Yi-Ching (Book of Changes)*, the Yin-Yang and Pa Kua theories and how they relate to Pa Kua as a martial art. Having immersed himself in the philosophical and theoretical aspects of Pa Kua he hoped one day to find a Pa Kua teacher but in the area he came from there were none to be found.

In 1978 Ji entered the special Wushu instructor's program at Hangzhou University to be trained as a martial arts instructor and national wushu coach of China. There he found a teacher proficient in Pa Kua, Wu Zong Nong. Ji's enthusiasm, natural ability and many years training in other martial arts led him to make remarkable progress in Pa Kua. After some time Wu had to admit that there was nothing more he could teach him and suggested that Ji should, if the opportunity arose, pursue his studies in Chengdu where he knew there to be some highly respected masters of Pa Kua.

But before that he had the good fortune while in Xian in 1982 to meet one of the top Pa Kua instructors in China, Sha Guo-Zheng (Sha Kuo-Cheng). Ji was introduced to Sha, who impressed by his already high level of Pa Kua skill, agreed to teach him. Unfortunately Sha had to leave Xian a few weeks later but managed to teach him every day while he was there. With Sha he increased his understanding of the mental aspects of Pa Kua and the subtleties of Pa Kua movements. Since then Ji endeavored to train with Sha as often as he could sometimes having to travel great distances in China as Sha was in demand in many parts of the country.

In 1983 Ji, as a professional martial arts instructor, was sent by the government to study at the famous

Chengdu Martial Arts Institute. While there he became the personal student of Wang Shu-Tian, a well known instructor of Hsing-I and Pa Kua. Wang was originally taught by the great Sun Lu-T'ang and subsequently by Sun's student Zhen Huai-Xian (Cheng Huai-Hsien). With Wang, Ji studied Sun Lu-T'ang's style of Hsing-I and Pa Kua. It is Sun's Pa Kua form that Ji has been teaching while in England.

In addition to Hsing-I and Pa Kua, Ji has studied other internal styles such as T'ai Chi Ch'uan (Yang and Chen styles) and Ba Ji (Pa Chi). He has been a full time martial arts coach for 10 years, national judge and referee, and was recently made associate professor and Director of Wushu at Hangzhou University. In 1990 Ji spent 9 months in Russia as visiting professor at the Moscow Institute of Physical Education. As well as other martial arts he taught Pa Kua in Moscow and Tashkent. In 1991, I arranged for him to come to England as Chief Instructor of the T'ai Chi and Wushu Association of Great Britain. During the past year he has been teaching T'ai Chi, Hsing-I, Pa Chi, Shaolin Ch'uan, and qigong. He has contributed greatly to the development of Pa Kua through his classes and seminars and this year co-operated with one of Britain's most highly respected martial arts authorities and publishers, Paul Crompton, on the production of the first Pa Kua instructional video in Europe.

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Ji Jian-Cheng poses with Alan Ellerton and Paul Crompton after one of their training sessions at Reading University

Editor's Addition: About Ji Jian-Cheng's Sun style Pa Kua Chang instructors

Sun Lu-T'ang's style of Pa Kua Chang was taught by two different teachers at Ch'eng Tu Physical Education University in Sichaun Province. One of the Pa Kua Chang instructors at the school in Ch'eng Tu was Wang Shu-T'ien. Wang was born on May 16, 1918 in Hebei Province. He started studying kung fu at the age of 7 from Chu Kuo-Fu, a renowned Hsing-I Ch'uan instructor (see article on page 13, Vol. 2, No. 5). In 1928, the year the Central Martial Arts Academy in Nanjing was established, Wang went to Nanjing with his teacher and received instruction from Huang Chih-Ping, Wu Yu-Kun, Chiang Jung-Ch'iao and Yang Ch'eng-Fu. When he was 15, Wang went to Chang Sha in Hunan Province to receive technical instruction at the 4th Army Military Training Area. While there he studied martial arts from Chu Kuo-Chen, Chu Kuo-Fu's brother. Additionally, he learned *Shuai Chaio* from Ch'ang Tung-Sheng, Hsing-I from Ma Yuan-Chi, and *T'ung Pei Ch'uan* from Lin Tsun-San. In 1932 Wang became the children's instructor at the Chang Sha Kuo Shu Academy.

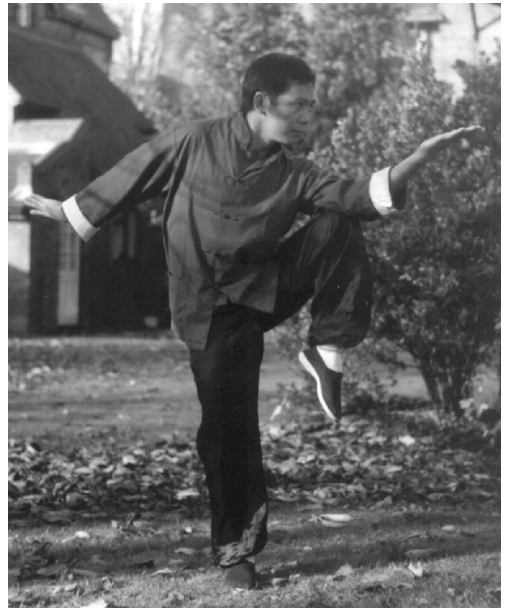
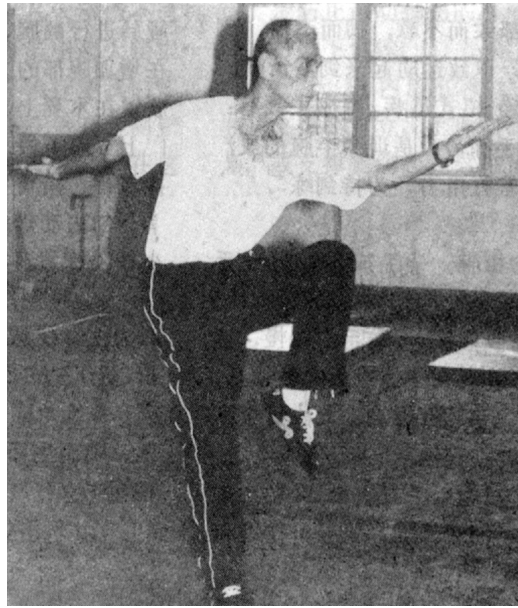
In 1939, Wang traveled to Sichuan. He first stayed in Chung King and then later went to Ch'eng Tu and took up residence. In 1960, Wang and Cheng Huai-Hsien were placed in charge of the martial arts training at the Ch'eng Tu Physical Education University.

Cheng Huai-Hsien was Ji Jian-Cheng's other Pa Kua Chang teacher in Ch'eng Tu. Cheng (1898-1982), who was skilled in Pa Kua, Hsing-I, and T'ai Chi, was from Hsin An County in Hebei Province. He began his martial arts training at the age of 12, first learning Shaolin. When Cheng was 20 he went to Beijing and a senior classmate of his from Hebei introduced him to Sun Lu-T'ang. Upon introduction, Sun agreed to teach Cheng. At the time, to become a formal disciple of a well known teacher such as Sun Lu-T'ang the student was required to go to the teacher's home bringing him gifts of meat, wine, candles, and incense and kow-tow on the floor as the gifts were presented. Cheng followed the custom and Sun accepted him as a formal student. Cheng studied with Sun for four years, learning Pa Kua, Hsing-I, and T'ai Chi.

When Cheng was 25 years old, by way of introduction from Sun Lu-T'ang, he began to study with Wei Chin-San a famous *Fan Tzu Ch'uan* instructor. In addition to martial arts, Cheng learned osteopathy and bone-setting from Wei. When Cheng was 27, he went to Nanjing to look for Sun Lu-T'ang. Sun found Cheng a job teaching martial arts in Shanghai at Yang Chang Elementary School. During the war with Japan, Cheng went to Sichuan Province and taught at the Ch'eng Tu military academy. After the revolution, he treated people's injuries and taught kung fu. In 1960, he was appointed head instructor at the Ch'eng Tu Physical Education University.



One of Ji Jian-Cheng's Sun style Pa Kua Chang teachers, Cheng Huai-Hsien, is shown above (back row on the right) with the famous T'ai Chi Ch'uan instructor Wu Tu-Nan (center). (Although it has not been confirmed, Ji's other Sun style instructor, Wang Shu-T'ien, is probably the man in the back row on the left).



**Three Generations in the Sun Style "Great Python Turns its Body" posture.
Sun Lu-T'ang (Left), Wang Shu-T'ien (Center), and Ji Jian-Cheng (Right).**

Pa Kua with Ji Jian-Cheng by Paul Crompton

I was introduced to Ji Jian-Cheng by Alan Ellerton. Earlier I had been shown a little Pa Kua by Chinese martial artists from Hong Kong and by English students, but had not studied it seriously. As soon as I met Ji I realized that I liked Pa Kua, wanted to study it, and that my twenty-two years of studying various styles of T'ai Chi and other martial arts would benefit enormously. I understood the words of Fu Shu-Yun when she said that the study of Pa Kua could help T'ai Chi practitioners to better perform the turning of the waist. Ji was living in a students' hall of residence close to Reading University some forty miles from London. I got to know the route to his dwelling very well over the coming months. Weather permitting I trained with him in the open, and if it rained hard we trained indoors, in all sorts of conditions; but whatever the accommodation we could find we trained.

There was always someone there, another pupil or two, when I arrived. When they left, my lesson began. Ji had lots of energy, was always cheerful, and never tired of demonstrating, explaining, and answering questions.

We began by walking the circle. He rarely volunteered advice. I coped with this and then realised I had to ask questions. I had never seen the method of walking he used. The leading foot travelled a normal step's distance, without touching the floor, and then, propelled by the rear leg, travelled another eight to ten inches, gliding parallel to the floor, before touching it. I soon began to feel the demands this placed on the back leg, particularly the thigh muscles. Then it dawned on me that if you imagined that someone was shoving your sacrum from behind then this propelled you forwards in a much better

way. I was always so happy to be learning from such an able teacher that we would often make jokes, and I tried to explain to Ji that the step reminded me a bit of the funny step that Groucho Marx used to make in his films. He showed me how to turn the waist in towards the center, and how the high hand should be focussed, but as readers will know there is so much to remember in Pa Kua that I often forgot one or more points as I was walking.

In this connection, I wonder if it is a common experience that when you are learning some new movements, it seems at the time as though you are learning a lot. Then when you get home it seems as though you have not learned much; I am talking about the numbers of movements, not their quality or difficulty. This happened to me a lot. I had not studied anything new for a long time, and learning from Ji was like going back to school, back to square one, and it had a rejuvenating effect, every time.

I quickly realized that it would take a lifetime to become "good" at Pa Kua

Ji had mainly learned the Sun Lu-T'ang style of Pa Kua. What I had encountered before had been different, and when we came to the first palm change I was surprised at the difference. It consists of two attacking movements. The first is a double palm strike, held horizontally, followed by a strike with the edge of the right palm whilst the left palm parries at face height. Then you spin to the right, as if holding a



British T'ai Chi Ch'uan instructor and author Paul Crompton practicing Sun Style Pa Kua Chang

large ball and walk back in the opposite direction. Ji's way of doing this was powerful, with focus of ch'i, as if engaged in a real fight. I had expected something emphasizing grace, but changed my tune. The second change involved five attacking movements; two double palm strikes and a single in one direction, then a 180 degree turn with a hip level single palm and a movement similar to "Fan Penetrates Back" of T'ai Chi but accompanied by a backward leap.

All the time I was learning I could not help comparing Pa Ku in a direct way with T'ai Chi. The four directional "Fair Lady Works the Shuttles" T'ai Chi movement seemed clearly comparable with Pa Kua; the big turns, the arm

threading and wrapping and so forth. Even "Single Whip Squatting Down" echoed Pa Kua's "Swallow Skims the Water." Then, the slow turning in of the feet into a "V" step of "Single Whip" could be seen in the omnipresent "V" step and "T" step of Pa Kua. I quickly realized that it would take a lifetime to become "good" at Pa Kua, and secondly that it required a degree of physical fitness which is beyond the reach of most people, certainly of part time students, which included me. This said, it did not and does not prevent me or anyone else from enjoying training and study. We can taste the wine, even if we cannot drink the whole bottle.

The third change was a long one, and here I came across movements which reminded me of Hsing-I, understandably, bearing in mind what we know of the development of both arts. In fact, when with my limited knowledge it was plain that Sun's Swimming Dragon form had much more Hsing-I in it than any other form of Pa Kua which I had seen or read about. In the third change I especially enjoyed being introduced to the snake like movement of the hand as it turns, palm up and threads backwards under the arm pit. It is fascinating to see how in different Pa Kua styles this arm/hand movement is interpreted differently. For instance, Chang Ch'ing-Lun's use of it in his Snake form (Pa Kua Chang Newsletter Vol. 1, No. 5) is softer, appears to use less force, and yet broadly speaking the movement is the same. Watching this form on video tape drove home to me that I did not really know which movements were original Pa Kua and which were borrowed from Hsing-I or elsewhere, though from reading PKCJ it is clear that there are people who do.

I learned the Chinese names of each of the movements, with their English translations, but have not included them in this article as the same names seem to be applied to different movements in different styles of Pa Kua. For instance in the latest Pa Kua book by Robert Smith, the Hawk posture is different from the one I am familiar with. Ji explained to me the self-defense uses of the snake-like arm movements and it reminded me of Aikido moves, but the latter in my experience are more angular, less rounded. Having read Uyeshiba's biography by John Stevens I have always felt that when the founder of Aikido was in China it was possible that he was inspired by Pa Kua techniques, though I have not evidence to prove it. Theofanis Andrews, a Greek Aikido teacher in London, was a pupil of Kazuo Chiba, founder of the British Aikikai. Theofanis is a knowledgeable aikidoka and when I showed him some of the Pa Kua movements he at once commented on certain similarities.

It was clear that when he did the form the hands and arms worked in excellent partnership.

In the middle of the Swimming Dragon form there are several high kicking techniques which are followed by low, swooping down movements. When I began to do these for the first time I realized that no martial arts training which I had done up to that time had physically prepared me to cope adequately with them. The sudden change

from a powerful upward move down into a low one, followed by a spin does really tax the muscles in an amazing way.

By this time I was having to make very careful diagrams and notes to know exactly where I was in relation to the center of the circle. Getting angles right, moving away from or across the circle needed a lot of concentration. As I learned more we needed to return again and again to the beginning and connect everything together.

... the study of Pa Kua could help T'ai Chi practitioners to better perform the turning of the waist.

About this time we decided to arrange a video shoot which would show all the basics and the form, plus a section on how the palm technique should be applied. The preparation for this shoot was invaluable since I was directing it myself and consequently needed to be clear about what was going on. On the day of the recording Ji put a great deal of effort into his demonstrations and later sent a copy of the tape back to China where it was well received.

Eventually we came to the end of the form. I realized that I had scratched the surface. We went back to the beginning. I began to ask Ji more details about stepping and about the relationship of one arm to the other. It was clear that when he did the form the hands and arms worked in excellent partnership. Their spatial relationship in terms of distance was not easy to follow, given the nature of the movements. I chipped away at this in my own way. The T'ai Chi I knew proved a useful guide, and had given me a good basis in coordination. At the same time, I have always followed the dictum to find relaxation where possible in moving and as I struggled to understand the movements of the form this particular aspect was difficult. I stopped trying to string the movements together and went back to doing them repetitively, in isolation, to get the "swing" of things.

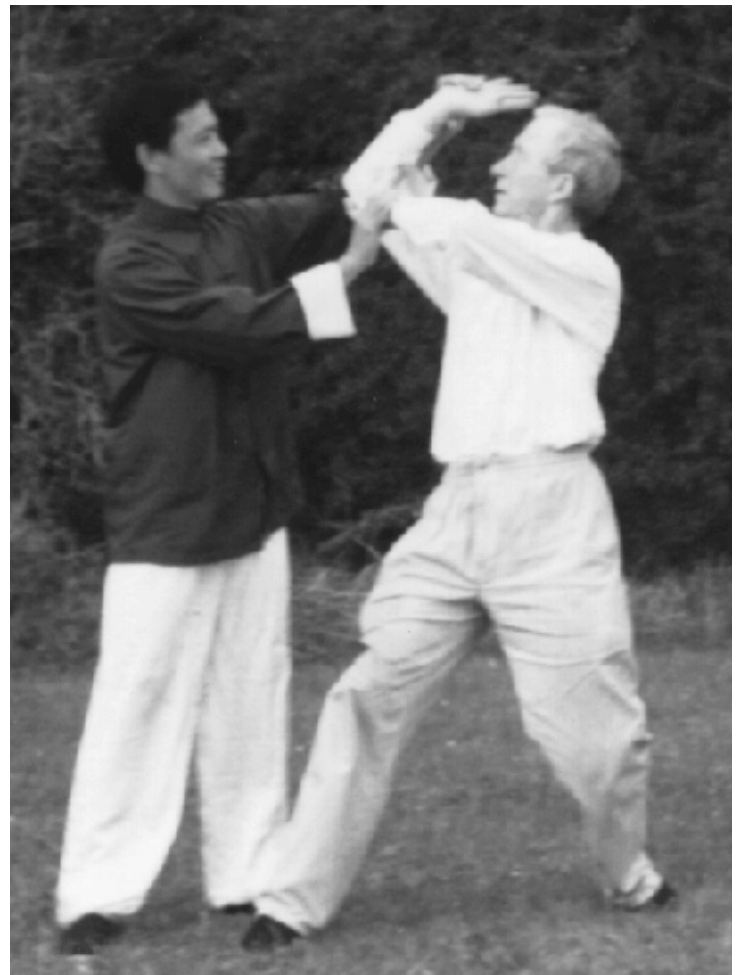
In one section of the form there are movements where the arms swing up, over and down like the sails of a windmill. At the same time the knees bend and the body weight sinks as the arm descends. It feels as though all the blood in the descending arm rushes towards the palms. I spent a long time going into this move, looking for coordination and trying not to tear myself apart doing it. A small voice kept saying to me, "Just pretend you're a plunging dragon . . ." The spirit was willing, but the flesh was lagging far behind. I began to think that twenty-four years of T'ai Chi tuned my body to move in a certain way, and it was very reluctant to adapt to new ways.

After about eight months on basics and form, which I realized was not long, Ji said we could move on to looking at using the sword. His visa could run out at any time and he might have to go back to China; so learn while you can. Alan Ellerton used to call round to see Ji while we were training, and he told me how difficult the sword was. I had done some Yang style T'ai Chi sword, but

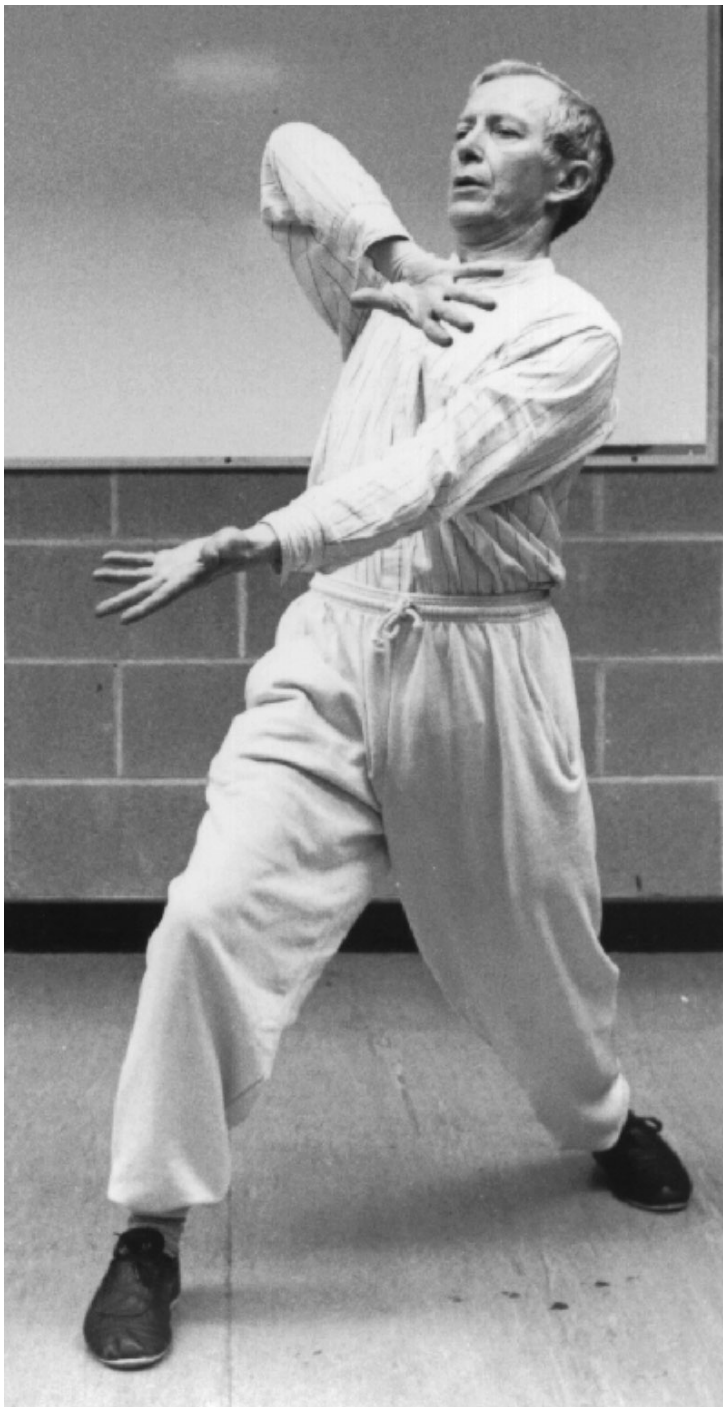
using the Pa Kua sword was once again different. You open with the sword inverted in the left hand and have to swing it forward and upward and spin it to present the handle to the right hand. My left elbow simply would not turn as much as my right and after hitting myself occasionally on the head with the blunt blade I took the precaution of always guarding my head with my right hand as I made the movement. Gradually I got the hang of it.

When walking the circle the left hand is raised high in the "sword charm" gesture, and the sword is held so that its handle, as it were, emanates from the tan t'ien. The first technique is performed eight times as you walk the circle. Ji could do this without disturbing the rhythm of his walk or his balance. For me, this was the first challenge. To maintain steady momentum, whirl the sword right, twist the body and sword and return to the basic position presented considerable difficulties. The body as a whole is moving along the curve of the circle, but torso, arms and sword twist right, so with the extra weight of the sword there is a powerful tendency to break up the walking rhythm. I could see that Ji had long since coped with this. His twisting and turning took place as it were independently of the lower abdomen and legs, causing minimum disturbance. Later, when we had finished the introduction to the sword form and then returned to the details, he helped me to overcome this problem.

Studying the sword gave me first hand experience of



Ji Jian-Cheng corrects Crompton's form



Paul Crompton struggling to get it right

how the action of abdomen and sword arm can generate ch'i. I had experienced this in T'ai Chi, but softly. Certain movements of the sword form directly affect the abdominal region, as far as I am concerned, in a way which I had not experienced in the Swimming Dragon form. Ji smiled when I explained my experience and made several useful suggestions about developing this. His own attitude to ch'i development - he taught Wild Goose, Eight Pieces of Brocade and Muscle Tendon - seemed to me to be a mixture of what I would call traditional and "modern." By modern I mean treating the ch'i in a matter of fact way. He also showed me some simple ch'i exercises which his own teacher had taught him; to be used with and without the sword.

Study of the sword form continued. Ji began to show me more details; where I was going wrong, and how to

put it right. Every time I realized that I had forgotten basics; that I had returned to using one part of the body in isolation instead of using the body as a whole, or that I was not "sitting down" far enough. As I write this piece I am still studying sword with Ji.

For what it's worth I conclude with a few comments on the contents of the *Pa Kua Chang Journal* to date. Several contributors have remarked that they have studied Pa Kua for a long time, and that it disturbs them that people who have studied for a short time have set themselves up as teachers. The implication being that they should not or are not qualified. But when tuition is very scarce you look for what you can, where you can. If you find someone who can teach you only a little, then you learn that. When you find someone who knows more than you, you learn from him or her, perhaps still continuing with the first teacher also. Maybe in China there was always a system, a protocol, a way of doing things the right way. But in our Western society this type of approach has largely disintegrated and people have to deal with the situation as it is.

The old commercial adage is appropriate: Let the buyer beware . . .

Those readers interested in obtaining the video tape of Ji performing Sun style Pa Kua Chang can contact Paul Crompton at the following address:

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Tel: 081 780 1063 - 081 788 9130
V. a. t. : 226 9918 28
Fax: 081 318 1439



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The Origins of Pa Kua Chang - Part 3

In the *Pa Kua Chang Journal*, Volume 3, Number 1, we began a serial article which explores the origins of the art of Pa Kua Chang. In the first installment (Vol. 3, No. 1, p. 14-20), we reported that there are four main theories relating to Pa Kua's origins. These theories are as follows:

1) Tung Hai-Ch'uan developed Pa Kua Chang after learning Yin Yang Pa P'an Chang from Tung Men-Lin. This version of Pa Kua's origin was published in the 1937 text *Yin Yang Pa P'an Chang Fa* written by Jen Chih-Ch'eng.

2) The *Unauthorized History of the Indigo Pavilion* (published in 1818) talks about eight direction stepping, *Li Kua* and *Kan Kua* as Pa Kua that was popular prior to Tung Hai-Ch'uan (as early as 1813). From the writing in this text, some have deduced that this Pa Kua was the predecessor to the Pa Kua Chang taught by Tung.

3) Tung Hai-Ch'uan learned his art from Pi Ch'eng-Hsia on *Chou Hua* (Nine Flower) Mountain in An Hui Province. A discussion of this theory would also include any of the various stories about Tung learning from a "Taoist in the mountains."

4) Tung Hai-Ch'uan was the founder of Pa Kua Chang. The individuals who subscribe to this theory believe that Tung spent his youth learning other martial arts, learned a circle walking meditation method from a Taoist, and then combined the two to invent Pa Kua Chang.

In the first part of this article (Vol. 3, No. 1 p. 14-20), we examined the first two theories listed above and concluded that these two theories had no basis in fact. The primary source of this information was taken from the work of Professor K'ang Ko-Wu of Beijing. While working on his master's degree in 1980-81, Professor K'ang wrote his thesis on the "Origins of Pa Kua Chang." When I visited with K'ang in 1991 in Beijing, he gave me a copy of his findings and the translation of his report has formed the foundation of this article.

Professor K'ang's research was extensive and involved close examination of over 650 documents from the Ch'ing Palace history books and over 230 papers written on martial arts. He also examined the situations of 413 teachers in 24 provinces and cities, personally investigating in 16 cities and counties and 9 provinces. K'ang interviewed over 256 people resulting in over 274 documents. Many of the people he interviewed were elderly boxers of the older generation who spoke openly about their martial arts. While conducting his research, K'ang was a motivating force in the effort to restore Tung Hai-Ch'uan's tomb and participated with 371 others in the unearthing and moving of the tomb.

In the first part of this article (Vol. 3, No. 1 p. 14-20) I reported that, although the research conducted by K'ang Ko-Wu was fairly thorough, I thought there were some conclusions he made in his final analysis that I would not have been so quick to make. In his summary, K'ang

concluded that it was Tung Hai-Ch'uan who originated Pa Kua Chang. I reported that I thought his reasons for discounting some of the other theories were weak in terms of western scholarly logic.

In October 1992 I had the opportunity to meet with Professor K'ang in Beijing and discuss some of the points I thought were missing from his thesis. During this meeting he provided me with additional information that was not printed in his thesis, particularly pertaining to the Pa Kua Chang of Kao I-Sheng, and answered other questions I had concerning his thesis work and the life of Tung Hai-Ch'uan. After several meetings with Professor K'ang, I must say that I have been convinced that his conclusion concerning Pa Kua Chang's origin is valid. In the second part of this article (Vol. 3, No. 2 p. 14-22) we explored theory number three above. We explored this theory in some detail and did not find any supporting evidence for this theory. In this issue we will conclude this serial article by examining the fourth theory of Pa Kua Chang's origin.

Was Tung Hai-Ch'uan the Originator of Pa Kua Chang?

To say that Professor K'ang Ko-Wu has been thorough in his investigation of the origins of Pa Kua Chang is an understatement. K'ang, who will turn 45 this year, has been a martial arts enthusiast since the age of eight when he started studying E Mei style martial arts in



Professor K'ang Ko-Wu wrote his master's degree thesis on the origins of Pa Kua Chang



After leaving his home in Hebei, Tung was said to have traveled to Jiangsu, Anhui, Zhejiang, and to the Ta Pa mountain area somewhere along the border of Shaanxi and Sichuan

his native Yunnan Province. In 1964, at the age of 16, K'ang began studying Pa Kua Chang with the famous teacher Sha Kuo-Cheng. When K'ang was still young and studying with Sha in Kunming, Yunnan Province, he sat for hours and copied all of his teacher's books by hand. Almost thirty years have passed since that time and K'ang still maintains the same interest and intensity. He has literally reviewed thousands of documents on Chinese martial arts, most of which are inaccessible to the public. He has interviewed hundreds of martial artists and traveled to dozens of cities all over China conducting research for the Chinese government. He has authored or edited numerous books on Chinese martial arts in the ten years since he received his masters degree in Chinese martial arts history. Aside from his thesis on the origins of Pa Kua Chang, his most notable works include a dictionary of Chinese martial arts which

outlines the characteristics of hundreds of different Chinese martial arts styles, and a book on the history of Cha Ch'uan for which he won an award. Presently he is completing an extensive work on the history of Chinese martial arts.

In 1973 K'ang Ko-Wu passed the entrance exam and was admitted to the Beijing Sports Academy as a Chinese Martial Arts major. In 1974 he toured the United States, Hong Kong, and Mexico as the captain of a Chinese martial arts demonstration team. He states that this was pre-contemporary Wushu, what his team demonstrated was traditional martial arts. In 1976 he went back to Yunnan to coach the Yunnan martial arts team. In 1978 he was accepted as a graduate student of martial arts history at Beijing College. For two years (1980-81) K'ang intensely researched the origins of Pa Kua Chang in order to prepare his master's degree thesis. He spent

weeks with members of Tung Hai-Ch'uan's family, visited every mountain top Tung was reported to have crossed, read every martial arts book in every library in Beijing and even dug up Tung Hai-Ch'uan's body and meticulously measured and weighed each and every bone. The man even kept one of Tung Hai-Ch'uan's teeth as a souvenir. The result of his life long study and research concerning Pa Kua Chang's origins boils down to this: Tung Hai-Ch'uan was the sole originator of the Pa Kua Chang system.

***One replaces one's myriad thoughts
with a single thought in order to calm
and ease one's mind.***

Professor K'ang is employed by the Chinese government to research Chinese martial arts on a full time basis, he is constantly uncovering new material and interviewing older generation martial arts practitioners all over China. Since his thesis was published over ten years ago and he has obviously run across much more information on Pa Kua Chang than was available to him when he was conducting his research, I asked him if he had found any solid evidence in the ten years since his thesis was published that would contradict the conclusion in his thesis. He said, "No." All of the evidence he has run across since his thesis was published supports his theory. His story goes like this:

Tung Hai-Ch'uan's ancestors were originally from Hun Tung County in Shanxi Province. Close to the end of the Ming Dynasty the clan started moving North, first ending up in Kou Sheng County, Hebei Province. From there the family split into two branches, one went to K'ai K'o village and the other went to Wen An (both in Hebei). Several generations later (around 1813), young Tung Hai-Ch'uan was born in Chu Chia Wu township, Wen An, Hebei. Around the same time, another Tung, known as Tung Hsien-Chou, was born in K'ai K'o village (he will become important later in the story).

In Chu Chia Wu township, there were two predominant families, the Tung's and the Li's. The Li family was literary, a few of them passed examinations and became government officials. The Tung family was poor, but that was all right with young Hai-Ch'uan because he was only interested in practicing martial arts, not studying for scholarly examinations. It is not known exactly which arts Tung studied when he was young, however, it was most likely some form of indigenous Northern Shaolin. Systems that were known to have been practiced in Wen An around that time were: Pa Fan Ch'uan, Hung Ch'uan, Hsing Men Ch'uan, and Chin Kang Ch'uan. It is said that Tung practiced hard and gained a reputation as a skilled martial artist.

For some unknown reason, the Li's had a rivalry with Tung Hai-Ch'uan. The Li family, being officials, had friends in high places and used their influence to persecute Tung. Eventually he grew tired of the Li's games and decided to leave Wen An in about 1853. At this point in Tung's life, the story becomes vague. He

most likely went from Wen An to K'ai K'o to live with his relatives. Remember Tung Hsien-Chou? It turns out that he was also a martial arts enthusiast and had become very well known in and around his village for his skill at Pa Fan Ch'uan. He was so well known that bandits in the area avoided his village so they would not have to confront him. It is very possible that while in K'ai K'o, Tung Hai-Ch'uan studied Pa Fan Ch'uan with his relative Tung Hsien-Chou. Professor K'ang's investigation of Pa Fan Ch'uan revealed that many of the movements and techniques of this style can be found in Tung Hai-Ch'uan's Pa Kua Chang.

After leaving K'ai K'o, Tung continued south. Reports have him stopping in Jiangsu, Anhui, Zhejiang, and at the Ta Pa mountain area somewhere along the border of Shaanxi and Sichuan. Although K'ang was unable to determine exactly where Tung went and what he did during his travels, the one pertinent piece of information that K'ang was able to uncover was that somewhere along the way Tung became a member of the *Chuan Chen* (Complete Truth) sect of Taoism. This sect was part of the *Lung Men* (Dragon Gate) school of Taoism which was originated by Chou Chang-Ch'uan. Interestingly enough, Chou also invented a method of meditation whereby the practitioner would walk in a circle and, wouldn't you know, this method was practiced by the *Chuan Chen* sect. Delving further into this Taoist connection, K'ang was able to find a section in the Taoist Canon which reads:

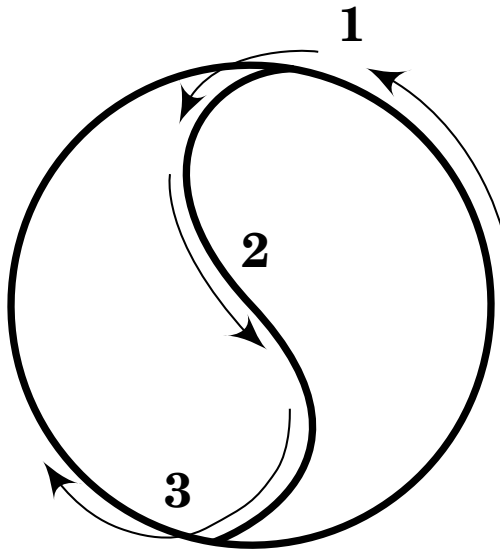
A person's heart and mind are in chaos.

Concentration on one thing makes the mind pure.

If one aspires to reach the Tao, one should practice walking in a circle.

This bit of evidence inspired K'ang to try and find out more about the circle walk meditation method practiced by the *Chuan Chen* Taoists. What he discovered was that this practice, which the Taoists called *Chuan T'ien Tsun* (Rotating in Worship of Heaven) is very similar in principle to the circle walk practice of Pa Kua Chang. Researching Wang Chun-Pao's book, *Taoist Method of Walking the Circle*, K'ang found that while walking, the Taoists repeated one of two mantras. The first of these mantras was used in the morning practice and translates to mean "When Rotating in Worship of Heaven, the sound of thunder is everywhere and transforms everything." The second mantra was used in the evening practice and translates to mean "When Rotating in Worship of Heaven, the great void saves us from the hardship of existence." It was said that the practitioner should repeat the mantra with each movement in the circle walk practice so that "one replaces one's myriad thoughts with a single thought in order to calm and ease one's mind." The Taoists said that in walking the circle the body's movements should be unified and the practitioner strives for stillness in motion. This practice was described as a method of training the body while harnessing the spirit.

When instructing his students Tung was noted as saying, "Training martial arts ceaselessly is inferior to walking the circle. In Pa Kua Chang the circle walk practice is the font of all training." Pa Kua Chang



Method of changing directions in the Taoist circle walk practice of the *Chuan Chen* sect.

instructors instruct their students to walk the circle with the spirit, ch'i, intent, and power concentrated on a single goal. This is similar to the Taoist method whereby one clears the mind with a single thought. Although Pa Kua Chang's circle walk practice trains fighting footwork, it also shares the Taoist's goals of creating stillness in motion and developing the body internally.

The general requirements of the Taoist practice was to walk with the body natural and the movements comfortable. The practitioner strived to achieve a feeling of balance while moving slowly. The Taoist practitioners were to walk slowly and gently in such a manner that their Taoist robes were only slightly disturbed by the walking movement. The Taoists started the practice on the Eastern side of the circle with their body facing North. After three revolutions, they walked through the center of the circle to the other side following an "S" shaped pattern like that described by the T'ai Chi diagram (see illustration). They then reversed the direction and walked South to West. There was no set circle size. The size of the circle was determined by the practice area. As most Pa Kua Chang practitioners know, the Pa Kua Chang circle walking practice is very similar. The practitioner will usually start in the East and face North. In most systems the beginning practitioner will walk slowly, increasing speed gradually. The requirements of comfortable, natural movements while walking in a balanced, smooth manner with no bobbing and weaving are the same as in the Taoist method. While the Pa Kua Chang practitioner employs numerous methods in

changing the direction of the circle walk, the T'ai Chi diagram pattern is one of the many changing patterns which is practiced by most major schools of Pa Kua Chang today.

Convinced that Tung Hai-Ch'uan had learned the Taoist circle walk practice as a member of the *Chuan Chen* Taoist sect and had then integrated this practice with the martial arts he had learned in his youth to form Pa Kua Chang, K'ang Ke-Wu began to research the arts that Tung was known to have practiced to see if he could detect similarities. Since the Tung family was known for it Pa Fan Ch'uan and thus K'ang was fairly certain that Tung Hai-Ch'uan had studied this art in his youth, K'ang investigated the forms and postures of this art with the elderly practitioners of today. Not only did he discover that Pa Fan Ch'uan techniques rely heavily on the use of palm striking, he also found that many of the postures and movements of Pa Fan Ch'uan are identical to Pa Kua Chang. Included in K'ang's thesis are photographs of Pa Fan Ch'uan practitioners postures compared to Pa Kua Chang postures found in Pa Kua Chang books by Kuo Ku-Min, Sun Lu-T'ang, Sun Hsi-K'un and Huang Po-Nien. He concluded that many of the Pa Kua Chang postures and movements are identical to those found in Pa Fan Ch'uan, Hsing Men, Hung Ch'uan, and Chin Kang Ch'uan.

Training martial arts ceaselessly is inferior to walking the circle.

Having found no solid evidence to prove otherwise, K'ang concluded that Tung Hai-Ch'uan was the originator of Pa Kua Chang. He states that after practicing the circle walk practice with the Taoists, Tung recognized the utility of this footwork and body movement in martial arts. K'ang believes that Tung Hai-Ch'uan's genius was coming up with a system of martial arts whereby the practitioner could deliver powerful strikes while remaining in constant motion. Due to Pa Kua Chang's combination of unique footwork and body mechanics, the Pa Kua Chang stylist never has to stop moving. The feet are in continuous motion even when applying a block or strike. K'ang said that Tung's addition of the *Kou* (hooking) and *Pai* (swinging) footwork in directional changes was also an important addition.

Through his intense research K'ang has also discovered that Tung did not originally call his art Pa Kua Chang. His art was originally called *Chuan Chang* (Rotating Palm) and then later called *Pa Kua Chuan Chang* and finally *Pa*

A person's heart and mind are in chaos.

Concentration on one thing makes the mind pure.

If one aspires to reach the Tao, one should practice walking in a circle.

- excerpt from the Taoist Canon

Morning Mantra:

雷 声 普 化 天 尊

Lei Sheng P'u Hua T'ien Tsun

"When Rotating in Worship of Heaven, the sound of thunder is everywhere and transforms everything."

Evening Mantra:

太 乙 救 苦 天 尊

T'ai I Chiu K'u T'ien Tsun

"When Rotating in Worship of Heaven, the great void saves us from the hardship of existence."

Two of the Mantras used by the Ch'uan Chen Taoist sect while executing the circle walk meditation practice

Kua Chang. While conducting his research and writing his thesis K'ang relied heavily on the writings of Ts'eng Hsing-San. Tsung was a Manchurian scholar (Ts'eng Hsing-San was his Han name) who had studied Pa Kua Chang with both Tung Hai-Ch'uan and Yin Fu in the Palace of Su. When the Ch'ing government was overthrown in 1911, Ts'eng was out of work and thus had a lot of spare time. Since he had so much free time Ts'eng began to write down all that he had learned from Tung Hai-Ch'uan and Yin Fu. Ts'eng's written work was never made public, however, K'ang Ke-Wu has Ts'eng's original manuscript. According to Ts'eng's written work, Tung Hai-Ch'uan did not relate his fighting art to the Pa Kua until late in his life. It is possible that he was looking for a way to explain the theory of his fighting style in such a manner that his descendants could research and improve the art after he was gone. K'ang says that in Ts'eng's writing he uses many references to the *I-Ching* in explaining the principles of the Pa Kua Chang fighting art. The first published work which related the fighting art of Pa Kua Chang to Pa Kua philosophy was the book published by Sun Lu-T'ang in 1916.

When K'ang's findings were published widely in 1984 many Pa Kua Chang practitioners in China who had held onto one of the other three major theories regarding Pa Kua Chang's origins were upset. Many responded with magazine articles of their own, however, reviewing these articles one will find that no one has presented any solid evidence to back up any of the other theories. The best one can say is that no one can really know for sure what Tung Hai-Ch'uan learned from the Taoists and what he came up with on his own. Any recorded

information from second or third generation practitioners, those who were closest to Tung, simply states that Tung learned his art from a Taoist in the mountains. Evidentially this is the only clue Tung himself gave to the arts origins. After years of research Professor K'ang's best guess is that Tung only learned the Taoist meditative circle walking practice from members of the *Chuan Chen* sect and the rest he created on his own.

Is Tung Hai-Ch'uan the originator of the art we know of today as Pa Kua Chang? The evidence we are left with today leaves me to believe that he did indeed invent Pa Kua Chang. But it is still anyone's guess, and I suppose it will always be a topic of discussion among Pa Kua Chang enthusiasts.

Special thanks to Professor K'ang Ko-Wu for his work in researching Pa Kua Chang's origins and for his time and patience in answering all of my questions.

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| | |
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| 董 夢 麟 | Tung Meng-Lin |
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| 郝 | 恩 | 光 | Hao En-Kuang |

半步崩拳打天下

Pan Pu Peng Ch'uan Ta T'ien Hsia

The Passing of Li Tzu-Ming

On 24 January, 1993, Li Tzu-Ming, the last living representative of the third generation of Tung Hai-Ch'uan's Pa Kua Chang passed away in Beijing. Li Tzu-Ming's Pa Kua Chang was featured in the last issue of the *Pa Kua Chang Journal* and as that issue was reaching Pa Kua Chang enthusiast all over the world, we received word that Li had passed away.

Although Li is no longer with us, his Pa Kua Chang legacy will continue through his students and his written work. Li's Pa Kua Chang treatise *Liang Zhen Pu Eight Diagram Palm* is now available in English thanks to the hard work of Li's American disciple Vince Black. Vince is also currently collaborating with some of Li's other students to present a book on Li's 64 straight-line attacks and a comprehensive video on Li's Pa Kua Chang.

Throughout the 1980's Li Tzu-Ming stood as a symbol of Pa Kua Chang in mainland China. For more than twenty years he presided over the world's largest Pa Kua Chang association and did so magnificently. His knowledge, wisdom, and guidance will be sorely missed.



Pa Kua Chang instructor Li Tzu-Ming
June 24, 1900 - January 24, 1993

Pa Kua Chang Related Periodicals

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

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

1993 Calendar of Pa Kua Chang Workshops and Seminars

| <u>Instructor</u> | <u>Location</u> | <u>Date</u> | <u>Contact for Information</u> |
|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| Bok Nam Park | New York, NY | 10 April 93 | Ken Delves (718) 788-7190 |
| Johnny Lee | Gainesville, FL | 17 April 93 | Bill Smith (904) 377-9692 |
| Bok Nam Park | Boston, MA | 8 May 93 | Marc Sachs (508) 668-2239 |
| Andrew Dale | Los Angeles, CA | 15-16 May 93 | Harvey Kurland (714) 796-3332 |
| Heinz Rottmann | Nelson, B.C., Canada | 23 May, 93 | Heinz Rotmann (403) 288-9184 |
| Liang Shou-Yu | Boston, MA | 29-30 May 93 | Yang Jwing-Ming (617) 524-8892 |
| Bok Nam Park | Capon Bridge, WV | 4-8 June 93 | Glen Moore (804) 794-8384 |
| Bok Nam Park | Richmond, VA | 10 July 93 | Glen Moore (804) 794-8384 |

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