



# Pa Kua Chang

Newsletter

Vol. 1, No. 5

July/August 1991

## George Xu discusses the Principles of Dragon Style Pa Kua Chang

*The information in this article was obtained during an interview conducted in January 1991 at the home of George Xu in San Francisco, California.*

In 1966, during the Cultural Revolution in China, the police function in Shanghai had virtually disappeared and groups of vandals were terrorizing parts of the city. Some concerned citizens banded together to try and stop the looting, among them was an 18 year old Xu Guo-Ming (George Xu). During a confrontation with the street gang Xu found himself face-to-face with the group's leader, a tough street fighter. Xu fought with the vandal and ended up with a head injury. After this incident Xu realized that in order to prevent this from reoccurring he would need to study the fighting arts - his parents agreed.

Xu's first teacher was Chu Hung-Pao who taught the Muslim styles of Ch'i Tsu, Cha Ch'uan, and Hsin-I Liu Ho Ch'uan (six harmony ten animal). Xu was most attracted to the Hsin-I Liu Ho Ch'uan because of the exploding power inherent in the style. After becoming acquainted with these styles from his first teacher, a friend exposed Xu to She Hsing Pa Kua Chang (Snake Pa Kua).

### Snake Pa Kua Chang

Xu's first Pa Kua teacher was Chang Ch'ing-Lun, who taught She Hsing Pa Kua (Snake Pa Kua) in Shanghai's Fu Hsing Park. Chang studied Snake Pa Kua and 12 animal, 5 element Hsing-I from Chao Hsiao-Yu who was a bodyguard for General Sun Ch'uan-Fang. Xu does not know who taught Chao. Chang still teaches the Snake Pa Kua Chang everyday in Shanghai's Fu Hsing Park.

Xu explains that Snake Pa Kua Chang is a synthesized style which incorporates elements of

Hsing-I Ch'uan and T'ai Chi Ch'uan with the Pa Kua Chang. There are eight separate forms in the Snake Pa Kua system as well as a two-man form which emphasizes hand training. Each of the eight forms is considered a complete set and they are learned in a sequential manner starting with the easiest set and progressing to more difficult sets which involve more complicated twisting movements. Xu explains that Snake Pa Kua utilizes the fist as well as the palm and the form does not stay restricted to the circle, it is more free moving. The Snake Pa Kua style incorporates eight animal characteristics in defining its fundamental principles.



George Xu demonstrates Dragon Style Pa Kua in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park

**See page 9 for the first in a series of articles from Bok Nam Park**

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## Pa Kua Chang Newsletter

Published bi-monthly by High View Publications,  
P.O. Box 3372, Reston, VA, 22090  
Editor: Dan Miller

### **Purpose and Policy Statement**

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

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

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

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

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

We solicit comments and/or suggestions.  
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## Letters to the Editor

*As newsletter Editor I periodically receive letters from Pa Kua Chang practitioners with information that I believe would be of great interest to the newsletter readers. In this column I will share portions of these letters with the readers. In all cases, permission of the author of the letter will be obtained before any portion of the letter is printed.*

A number of Pa Kua Chang instructors who have been teaching the art for many years have told me that they are against the "popularization" of Pa Kua because they feel like the art will become diluted if it becomes a "sport" or "performance" art. In the past, many teachers only taught Pa Kua to a handful of dedicated students who demonstrated the potential for applying a complex internal style.

The letter printed below, from James Keenan, and the article "Too Many Masters" printed on page 11 in the Viewpoint column of this issue will give you a perspective on how some teachers view the current state of Pa Kua instruction. Jim's letter is as follows:

"I received a letter from John Painter inviting me to attend the Pa Kua instructors conference planned to be held this year at the "Taste of China" Taiji competition in Winchester, Virginia.

I have strong reservations about the popularization or the sportification of Pa Kua.

All right, it's already been done in China. There is a wu shu Pa Kua competition held at local, provincial and national levels as part of the overall wu shu movement. I've seen Chinese champions perform. From an artistic, dramatic presentation of choreography perspective, I thought that those I saw were fine. From a martial arts point of view, that is, as carrying the foundation for serious martial application, they were awful. Anyone who says that it only takes minor adjustments to turn the sport art into the combat art plainly has no combat experience.

Pa Kua is an art of relationship. Its best powers are not shown in solo performance. The "beauty" of Pa Kua is its utility. To my mind, Pa Kua is the greatest system, the master system, superior to all others that I have learned or come in contact with. But, most people who study internal martial arts don't do it because internal arts are great combat systems, they do it for the "health" of it. Many teachers teach (cater) to this way of learning. Quite a few teachers don't even know how to apply their arts.

I've had more than one mainland Chinese practitioner

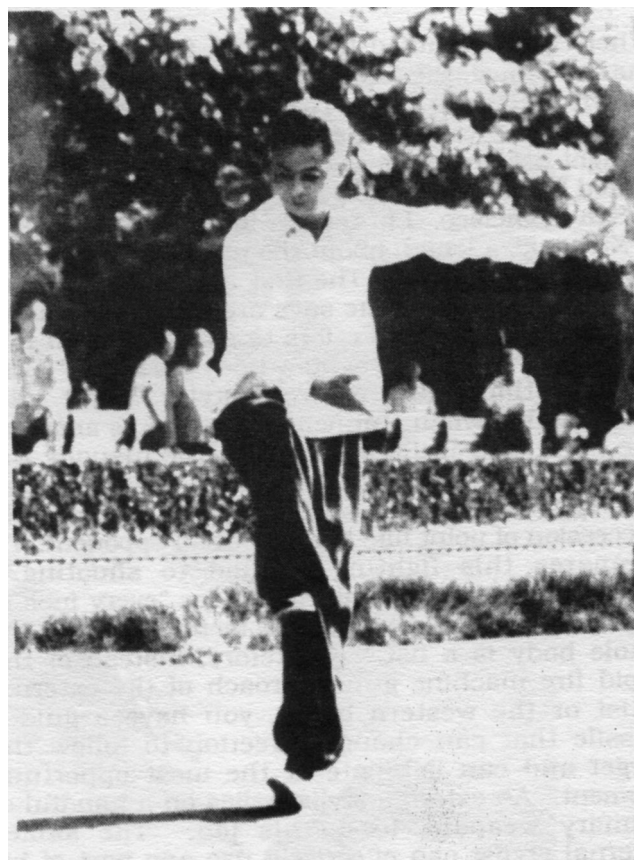
*Continued on page 14*

Xu briefly outlines the eight animal principles of Snake Pa Kua as follows: The first two principles of Snake Pa Kua movement are “head like a Lion” and “neck like a Tiger” which give the image of the head held high and the mind alert, ready to pounce. The next principle is “arm like a python” which Xu explains is meant to remind the practitioner that the entire arm is an attack weapon. In Pa Kua Chang, the strikes are not linear “point” strikes, the entire arm, connected into an integrated body movement, is utilized in striking. The fourth animal principle of Snake Pa Kua is “waist like a Dragon” and reflects the movement of energy in the body being initiated by the waist. The next principle is “feet like a horse” and gives the image of stability, strong balance, and powerful kicks. The sixth principle is “palm like an Eagle claw” which teaches the practitioner to grab like an Eagle, not simply grabbing flesh, but penetrating into tendon and bone. The seventh principle is “spirit like a Cat” - always alert and ready, but relaxed and supple. The last of the animal principles is “mind (I) like a Monkey” which reminds the practitioner to be cautious.

Five other important fighting principles of the Snake style of Pa Kua Chang are Fang: yielding, protecting, and moving; Na: as in Chin Na joint locking - Xu teaches the student to break the entire body energy of the opponent utilizing his own entire body energy (legs, waist, weight, I, and ch'i) to attack the energy path of the opponent, not just an isolated part of the opponent's body; Pien: suddenly changing with explosive power; P'o: coming straight in to break the opponents protection - used in throwing and close in fighting; and Ta: punching - emphasizing that Snake Pa Kua does not only utilize the palm. These are the five major fighting techniques in the system.

Xu points out that when practicing Snake Pa Kua Chang the I (mind, intention) always changes with the movement. Each movement involves different energy and animal characteristics. A beginner's movements will reflect the character of only one animal, however, the advanced practitioner will demonstrate all of the animal characteristics in any given movement. Xu explains that there is an infinite number of functions that can be derived from one technique. Every inch of movement is a powerful technique and every punch is like a nuclear weapon.

When practicing Pa Kua Chang, Xu feels that the intention (I) should be clear and have an “animal flavor.” When he refers to animal flavor Xu emphasizes that the animal flavor or animal intention (I) should come from the inside. Some styles of martial arts copy the animal movements as if playing a dramatic role; Xu calls this “animal play.” To have animal flavor, Xu feels that is not necessary to copy animal shape and movement, but it is important to have achieved the animal I - an internal animal flavor or animal intention. Xu demonstrated this concept by performing a simple move from Chen style T'ai Chi



**Xu's Snake Style Pa Kua teacher, Chang Ch'ing-Lun, practices in Fu Hsing Park, Shanghai, China**

Ch'uan. The first time he performed the move it was technically correct, it had the animal shape and movement, but something was missing. The second time he performed the move he added the internal animal flavor and what was missing became obvious. Although the second movement was visually identical to the first, the second movement demonstrated alertness, intention, spirit, power, will, and energy. It was apparent that the body was not just moving, it was being driven by an internal force.

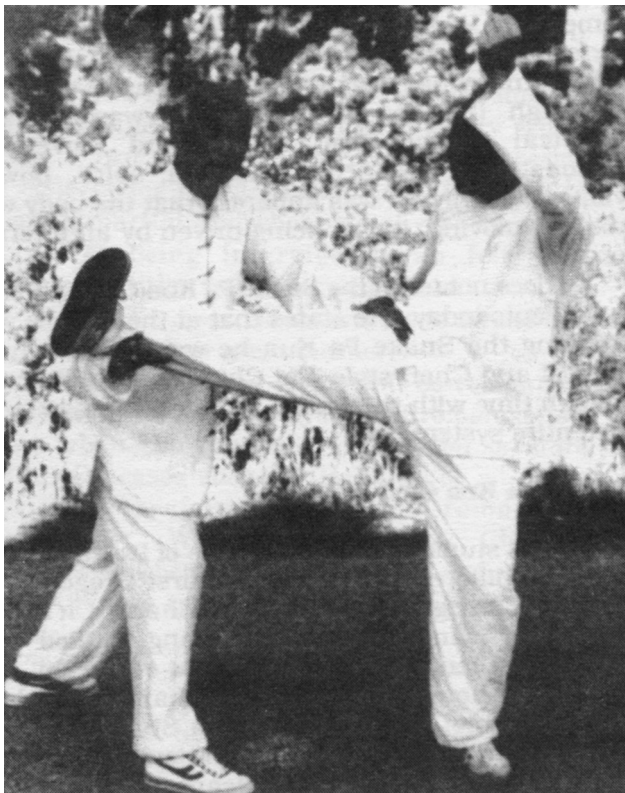
Xu does not teach the Snake Pa Kua Chang system to students today. He states that at the time he was studying the Snake Pa Kua he was also studying Hsing-I and Chen style T'ai Chi and did not spend enough time with the Snake Pa Kua Chang to learn the entire system.

### **Dragon Pa Kua Chang**

Xu has studied the Dragon Style of Pa Kua Chang from two different teachers. His first Dragon Style Pa Kua Chang instructor was Chang Ch'ing, a student of Wang Chuang-Fei. Wang studied with Kung Pao-T'ien, who was a student of Yin Fu. Xu states that he only studied with Chang for a short period of time. His main Dragon Style teacher is Liu Wan-Fu. Liu was the 1952 National full contact heavyweight champion and learned his Pa Kua Chang from Ch'eng Yun-Ch'ing. Ch'eng, who's main art was Lan Shou, was a “kung fu brother” of Liu's father. Chen studied

his Pa Kua Chang from his brother-in-law, the famous Chang Chan-Kuei (also known as Chang Chao-Tung). Chang Chan-Kuei was a student of Tung Hai-Ch'uan. In 1989 Xu brought his Dragon style teacher, Liu Wan-Fu to the United States for a short time to teach at his school in San Francisco. Liu resides in Tianjin, China.

Xu spoke a length about the principles of Dragon Style Pa Kua Chang. The first two principles that Xu discussed, which he says are common to all of the internal styles, he refers to as "Every inch is a technique" and "The whole body is a fist." He explains that many external styles "point hit," meaning that when a punch is thrown it is aimed at one point and utilizes one projectile (usually the fist, the foot, the elbow, or the knee). He states that this type of fighting style will rely on a rapid succession of point hits to take out an opponent. He compares this fighting method to shooting a machine gun. In the internal styles "every inch of any movement is a self-defense technique" and "the whole body is a fist." Therefore, instead of the rapid fire machine gun approach of the external artist or the western boxer, you have a guided missile that can change direction to follow the target and can detonate at the most opportune moment. An external stylist relies on a handful of primary weapons to do his job. The skilled internal stylist can effectively use any part of his body to deliver tremendous power because all parts of his body, I, and ch'i are linked and working in harmony. This makes every point of his body



**Liu Wan-Fu demonstrates Pa Kua Chang self-defense application on George Xu**

a potential fist.

Another principle that relates to all of the internal systems is what Xu calls "internal drives the external." He states that all movement in the internal arts starts from the lower tan tien and moves outward through the energetic and nervous systems of the body. The internal is the engine from which all movement is initiated. Xu states, "The inside is like an engine and the hand and foot is like a wheel - everything starts from the engine." He points out that fast movement in the internal arts is not based on muscular quickness alone. When you learn to allow the "internal to drive the external" and every part of the body works together in harmony, you will develop a rapid nervous system response. When the internal connections are optimized and the "internal drives the external" the time differential between thought and action is minimized.

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***In the internal styles "every inch of any movement is a self-defense technique" and "the whole body is a fist."***

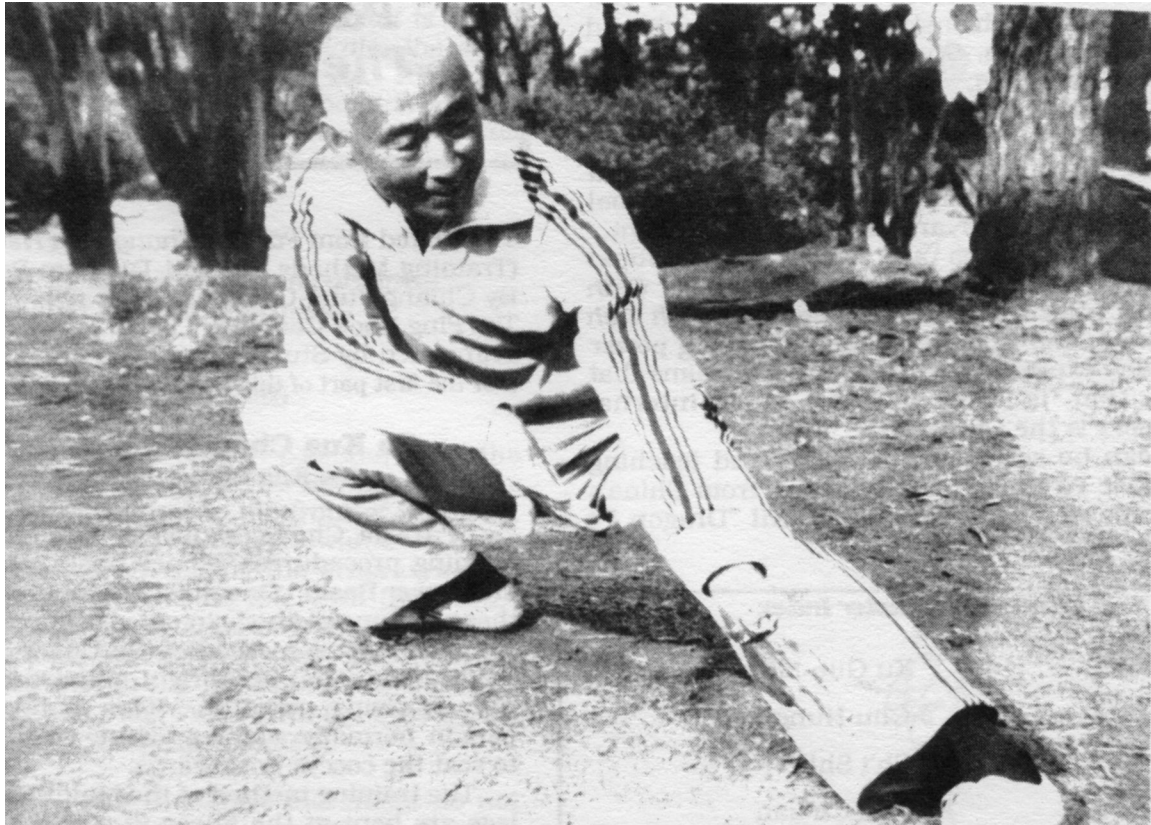
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Xu also spoke of levels of progression in Pa Kua Chang training. He states that when you first practice Pa Kua Chang the movements are relatively large and there is openness and extension. After the large muscles, tendons, joints, and bones have been properly conditioned through the extended movements and internal connections have been developed, the practitioner works to internalize the movement. The movements appear smaller and tighter externally, but on the inside, you are doing the the same thing. The movements become very subtle and extremely efficient. Small, secondary muscle groups are conditioned, the joints are opened, and the internal body connections are optimized. The Pa Kua Chang training program starts with the simple, moves to the complex, and then transitions back to the simple. When you fight you want the movements to be simple, not complex, however, the simple movement has complexity inside of it. Xu states that at this level "Change is inside change and the outside change cannot be seen." This is when the practitioner learns to develop "hidden power."

The Pa Kua student practices techniques and forms, however, at the higher levels of practice, Xu states that, "the whole form is one movement and every movement contains the whole form. Each movement is in relation to the one movement variation. If you get one palm movement correct, you have the whole art."

The next Pa Kua Chang principle Xu discussed was "change." Every move in Pa Kua Chang has an infinite number of techniques. In fighting, change is dictated by the movements of the opponent. Xu states that, "You are always moving, you cannot stand like



**Dragon Style Pa Kua Chang teacher Liu Wan-Fu of Tianjin, China**

furniture. The footwork is smooth and comfortable like a cloud and follows the opponent's energy like a dog chasing his tail. Circle around the opponent - always make him feel as though you are behind him. The energy is continuously moving like an ocean wave. The whole body is like a tornado rolling with no end - feel like there is a tornado running through you." Xu describes this "tornado power" as being the most difficult Pa Kua power to attain because it is not simply a silk rolling power, it also moves from side to side and up and down and there is complex turning power inside the silk rolling power. He grabs a cloth belt, holds one end in his hand and lets the other end drop straight down. He then begins to move his hand in a circular motion parallel to the ground; the belt begins spiraling like a tornado. "This is like the energy of Pa Kua. It is a soft spiraling energy that sticks to the opponent." Xu explains that when the opponent punches he does not feel anything because you are so soft and you are changing, then when he tries to retreat, he cannot get away because you have wrapped around him and are sticking to him.

Change also involves maintaining a balance between yin and yang and knowing when to change from one to the other. Xu states that some people are light and alive, others are heavy and sticky, some are soft like tofu, and others hard like steel. To be

effective in internal martial arts practice the student needs to know how to balance these characteristics and change from one to the other as the situation dictates.

Xu moved to the United States from Shanghai in 1982. His regular classes meet on Sunday mornings in Golden Gate Park in San Francisco, CA.

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***You are always moving, you cannot stand like furniture. The footwork is smooth and comfortable like a cloud and follows the opponent's energy like a dog chasing his tail. Circle around the opponent - always make him feel as though you are behind him.***

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Xu's advice to students is to concentrate on the basics. He compares accomplishment in the internal arts to climbing a mountain and the basic fundamentals of the art to the equipment you will need to make the journey. "Everyone wants to get to the top. If you have all of the equipment before you

begin to climb the mountain, you will always go up.” He says that the student should absorb information from different teachers. Find the essence of what each instructor has to teach and study the differences. Xu states that many people can see differences, but it takes study and contemplation in order to be able to explain the differences.

When asked about fighting with the internal styles Xu pointed out four characteristic of internal fighting that he feels are the most important. These four principles are: Tsou Hua (proper yielding and moving as opposed to avoiding), Chin Na (locking utilizing entire body energy), Chih Tieh (throw away), and Ching Chi (spring shaking power with sudden explosion). Of the four, Xu claims that the one that is missing from most internal practitioners is the Ching Chi.

Xu can be seen demonstrating and teaching Dragon style Pa Kua Chang on video from China's Living Treasures video series Vol. XII “Dragon Pa Qua Chang.”

## **Pa Chang Chang The Original Form**

- Part Two -

Translated from *Pa Kua Chang Lien Hsi Fa*  
(Training Methods of Eight Diagram Palms)

By Chiang Yung-Ch'iao

T'ai Ping Book Company, 1969

Translated by Stuart Alve Olson

(For the first part of this translation refer to Vol. 1, No. 4)

### **Pa Kua Chang's Three Basins's (Pa Kua Chang Ti San P'an)**

Pa Kua Chang is divided into three types of training procedures: Upper Basin, Middle Basin, and Lower Basin. One must go through each type of these training methods in order to succeed.

The training method of the Upper Basin is: the entire body must be upright and erect, walking as though rising upwards. This is the same as a person normally walking about, with no tendency to seat the coccyx downwards.

The training method of the Middle Basin is: both legs are bent at the knees in a slight squat. The upper half of the body, along with the waist area, drops the weight and point of balance into the upper two thighs. Walk as though rising upwards, like treading through mud or a basin of water.

The Upper and Middle Basin training methods are more suitable if the footwork is performed at a quicker rate.

The Lower Basin training method is Pa Kua Chang's most difficult and arduous training method, as these must be added: the legs are to be bent and bowed with utmost energy; the heel of the foot, the buttocks and the knee cap must form a complete triangular shape; the entire weight of the body and the point of balance must be dropped into the two upper thighs, and; when walking the steps should be lengthened and slowed to ensure correctness.

It is considered that of the Three Basins, that the Middle Basin is the most suitable for practice. Presently, everyone in the country practices Pa Kua Chang's Middle Basin and only have time to practice the solo posturing, but real skill comes from practicing lower basin kung fu.

*Translator's note:*

*P'an is normally translated as “dish”, “basin” or “vessel”, but to understand this term better one must keep in mind that p'an also carries the meanings of “to twist”, “to wind around” or “to coil”. So in connection with Pa Kua Chang it is not enough to translate this as “The Three Basins” or to just think of it as three different levels of posturing the body, but as three degrees of coiling as well.*

*P'an is also a key character in Taoist thought, as*

### **Chinese Character Index**

徐	谷	鳴	Xu Guo-Ming
朱	鴻	寶	Chu Hung-Pao
七	勢		Ch'i Shih
查	拳		Cha Ch'uan
心	意	六 合 拳	Hsin I Liu Ho Ch'uan
張	清	崙	Chang Ch'ing-Lun
蛇	形	八 卦 掌	She Hsing Pa Kua Chang
趙	孝	友	Chao Hsiao-Yu
孫	傳	芳	Sun Ch'uan-Fang
意			I
防	拿	變 破 打	Fang, Na, Pien, P'o, Ta
張	清		Chang Ch'ing
王	壯	飛	Wang Chuang-Fei
宮	寶	田	Kung Pao-T'ien
尹	福		Yin Fu
劉	萬	福	Liu Wan-Fu
程	雲	清	Ch'eng Yun-Ch'ing
攔	手		Lan Shou
張	占	魁	Chang Chan-K'uei
張	兆	東	Chang Chao-Tung
董	海	川	Tung Hai-Ch'uan
走	化		Tsou Hua
擒	拿		Chin Na
擲	跌		Chih Tieh
驚	擊		Ching Chi

seen in the usage of P'an Ku, the mythic being who evolved from chaos is the source of what is called "spiral creation." The universe spirals, the solar system spirals, our planet spirals, etc. All plants sprouting from their seeds spiral upwards in their growth. Therefore, it is easy to see that Pa Kua Chang is imitating this law of nature with its constant spiraling.

**Pa Kua Chang Form Instructions  
(First Section Continued)**

**Posture Four:  
Wild Goose Leaves the Flock (Left)**

Part One: Both feet stay in position, while the upper body turns leftward. The left palm follows the right elbow down and to the front of the body, then to the left and front (circling towards the SW)., changing the circle by raising the arms upwards, holding them levelly and on line with the head. The right palm, simultaneously with the arm, circles outwards, following the left palm turning movement, directly to the inside of the left elbow. Both palms end in Yang Palm, with the eyes gazing at the left palm. (See Illustration #4)

Part Two: From the above movement do not pause. The left palm and arm circle inwards (towards the inside of circle-walking area), turning the body towards the left and ending in Shu Palm. The right palm follows directly with the arm when circling inwards (towards the center of the circle), the elbow bends, and towards the left flank side Press (An) down with the palm facing downward. The upper body is carried towards the left when turning; the head follows the left palm towards the left direction by twisting it around, and; the eyes gaze directly at the left palm. (See Illustration #5)

Part Three: The left foot turns out (Pai Pu), then the right foot steps forwards. Commence moving from the north (point of the circle) towards the west, to the south, to the east and towards the north again. Walk until reaching the north (point of the circle), the original position is at the time just like in illustration five. Then change by pressing down again in one gesture.

**Important Points:**

- The left shoulder and elbow use utmost energy when turning the body outwards and to the left.
- The left palm height is on line with the shoulder.
- The right palm faces downward and to the front as though pushing and pressing downwards.
- The waist is twisted to the left.
- The walking is quick and it is important that it be even and uniform.



**Illustration #4**



**Illustration #5**

**Posture Five:  
The Purple Swallow Darts and Cuts (Right)**

The right foot then comes to face the left front foot by advancing it forwards one step. Both feet end in an inverted Pa ( ). The left palm simultaneously with the left arm circles outward, bringing the thumb outside and pointing upwards. Following the upper side of the right arm towards the right side the hand then pushes outwards, with the palm facing outwards. The right palm stretches to the underside of the left arm, with the little finger outside and diagonally facing upwards. Both palms, upper and lower, are mutually opposite of one another. The head faces along with the rightward turning, with the eyes directly facing the left palm. (See Illustration #6)

**Important Points:**

- Relax the shoulders, relax the waist, and relax the coccyx.
- The two arms encircle and embrace the front of the chest, only do not embrace too near.

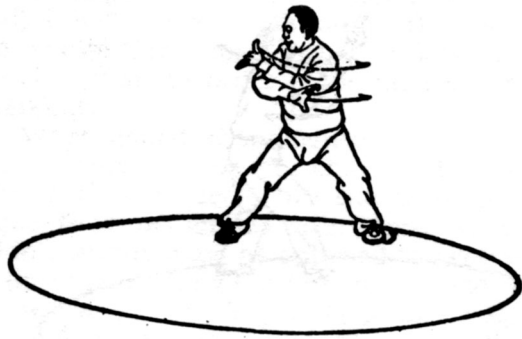


Illustration #6

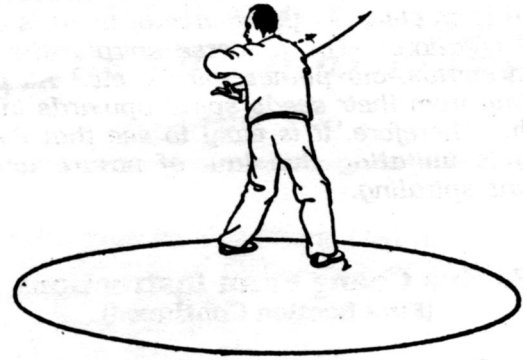


Illustration #8 (front view)

**Posture Six:  
Close the Door to Push the Moon (Left)**

The left foot turns with the whole body towards the left side by shifting it slightly (toe out), with the toes pointing towards the outer edge (of the circle). The upper body turns slightly towards the left. The left palm simultaneously with the arm circles inwards so that the thumb faces down towards the outer side. Following the motion from the right towards the left, bend the elbow as it is brought back, with the palm facing outwards. The right palm simultaneously with the arm circles outwards, bringing the palm and fingers to face downwards. Towards the left and down push out, with the palm diagonally facing upwards. The eyes gaze directly at both palms. (See Illustration #7)

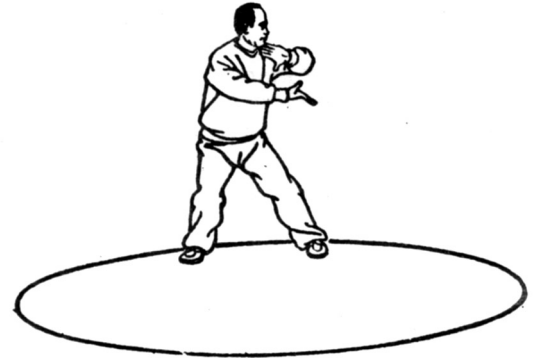


Illustration #8 (back view)

Stuart Olson is the Publisher of *The Bamboo Tablet*. We thank him for sharing this translation from Pa Kua Chang Lien Hsi Fa and look forward to future installments.



Illustration #7

**Posture Seven:  
A Flower Hidden Beneath the Leaves (Left)**

The right foot is brought towards the left foot by stepping forward one step to the front direction, with the toes turned inwards (k'ou). The two legs are slightly bent. The upper body circles leftward directly towards the north direction. The left palm simultaneously is carried towards the left. The right palm simultaneously moves towards the left with elbow bent and held levelly, with the palm facing upwards, ending in a Yang Palm. (See Illustration #8)

**Pa Kua Chang Related Periodicals**

For those of you who may be searching for more information related to the Chinese internal styles, Chinese Medicine, and Taoism, we provide a list of related periodicals:

**Qi: The Journal of Traditional Eastern Health and Fitness:** Insight Graphics, Inc., P.O. Box 221343, Chantilly, VA 22022

**Internal Arts Magazine:** P.O. Box 1777, Arlington, TX 76004-1777

**The Bamboo Tablet: The Journal for T'ai Chi Ch'uan and Related Internal Arts :** P.O. Box 90211, City of Industry, CA 91715-0211

**The Journal of the Tao Experience Foundation:** 316 S. Cherry St., Richmond, VA 23220

**The Way: The Newsletter of Taoist Contemplatives:** 5139 South Clarendon St., Detroit, MI 48204-2926

**YMAA News:** Yang's Martial Arts Assoc., 38 Hyde Park Ave., Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

**Journal of Asian Martial Arts:** 821 West 24th Street, Erie, PA 16502



# **Bok Nam Park emphasizes the Fundamental Principles of Pa Kua**

*The information in this article was obtained during an interview conducted in March 1991 at the Pa Kua Kung Fu School in Richmond, Virginia.*

After the first issue of the Pa Kua Chang Newsletter had been published, I approached Bok Nam Park to ask if he would be interested in being interviewed for this publication. Park's response to the first newsletter was, "History does not make progress, students need to learn principles." Park feels that martial arts publications print too much history, generalized information, and abstract theory when what students need is a detailed explanation of fundamental principles. If the student does not understand the principles, he will not progress. "Respect for parents is good, but when the baby is hungry he does not want to know who his father is and who his grandfather is - he wants food. After his belly is full, then you can tell him about his ancestors," Park adds.

Pa Kua Chang stepping, sparring, ch'i circulation, ch'i development, meditation, breathing, palm movements, how to move the body with the steps, how to combine speed and balance with ch'i, how to develop power - these are some of the topics Park would like to discuss in detail. He gets the feeling that students know that Pa Kua practitioners walk the circle, practice eight "mother" palms, and practice a variety of stepping patterns, but he does not feel that many students know why these things are practiced, how they are specifically applied in self-defense or ch'i kung, and how they relate to the fundamental theories of the I-Ching, the Wu Hsing (Five Elements), and Yin-Yang. Park contends that if Pa Kua students were asked why they walk a circle or how each of the "mother palms" is used specifically, most students would not be able to give an explanation that displays any depth of understanding.

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***History does not make progress, students need to learn principles.***

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Because of the level of detail Park wishes to discuss all of these topics, we do not have enough space in one article or one issue of the newsletter. He asked that this first article be a general introduction to a series of articles which will explain Pa Kua Chang principles in detail. I agree with Park's opinion that martial arts publications should present more practical details concerning martial arts practice and application and I have received several letters from



**Pa Kua Chang instructor Bok Nam Park of Richmond, Virginia**

subscribers asking me to print this kind of technical information. Thus, I hope that this first article will introduce an ongoing series of articles where teachers will discuss the practice and application of Pa Kua Chang fundamental principles.

When discussing Pa Kua Chang training in general, Park compares teaching a beginning student the art of Pa Kua Chang to transforming a family sedan into a finely tuned, high performance race car. The new student in Park's school will not learn the Pa Kua Chang form movements or the circle walk right away. The form is like the body of the car and Park sees no sense in building a body before the engine reaches high levels of performance. The engine is built on fundamental principles. Each component and sub-component of the "engine" must be developed and balanced separately and then brought together to form a complete equation which will equal perfect health and self-defense. Some of the components of this equation are power, speed, balance, flexibility, ch'i circulation, and internal and external ch'i development.

While any martial arts practitioner would most likely define the components of power, speed, balance, flexibility, and ch'i development as fundamental principles of martial arts practice, Park's approach is to explore each one of these components in detail and teach the student how to develop each component



**Lu Shui-Tien taught Park Pa Kua Chang for eighteen years in Korea**

until it can be performed effectively and efficiently. However, Park explains that it is not enough to develop these principles separately. In order to be effective in self-defense and healing, these principles must be integrated and balanced. Taking speed as an example, Park feels that in order to develop speed the student needs to have a relaxed and flexible body as well as good balance. Additionally, the student needs to learn how to circulate ch'i rapidly. Parks states that feeling external (wei) ch'i is not difficult to do. He can take any student and teach them how to feel external ch'i in one lesson. What is more difficult is learning how to feel, circulate, and control the internal ch'i movement.

Park teaches his students how to develop the principles of relaxation, flexibility, balance, and rapid ch'i circulation in order to increase speed, but more important, he teaches the student how to integrate these principles while optimizing the use of angles in conjunction with stepping and body movement. When a student learns how to move efficiently through an understanding of the principles, and he/she has no wasted movement, speed will naturally increase.

Park, who likes to teach through the use of analogy, explains that when the Wright Brothers built their plane, it flew successfully, but it didn't fly very far. This first attempt was defined as "flying" but it is trivial compared to what aviation has become today. To evolve from the Wright Brothers to the Space Shuttle, engineers had to research and develop each

component of the plane and bring all the components together into a fine working balance. Park looks at Pa Kua Chang development in a similar vein.

Park teaches by "prescription." Each new student will be given a personal training program geared towards their individual needs. He prefers to teach students one-on-one. When a new student comes to his school, Park will first determine the student's general condition. He is looking to see if the student has any specific health problems or imbalances. He looks at the student's overall coordination and strength in the muscles, nerves, and breathing to determine the student's condition. Park will then design a personal training program for the individual which is designed to strengthen weak areas and bring the body into an overall balance. He also believes in a balanced approach to teaching Pa Kua, requiring students to learn health building exercises, breathing exercises, meditation, and self-defense application.

Park, a native Korean, started his own study of Pa Kua Chang in Korea in 1960. Park's teacher, Lu Shui-Tien, was a native of Shantung Province who had moved to Korea after fighting in the Sino-Japanese War. Lu, a student of Li Ch'ing-Wu, taught a number of Chinese who were also living in Korea, but Park was his only Korean student. Park studied with Lu from 1960 until Lu's death in 1978. Park opened his own school in Korea under his teacher's supervision in 1970. He moved to the United States several years ago at the request of his senior student Glenn Wright. Wright began studying with Park 13 years ago while he was stationed in Korea. Bok Nam Park currently teaches in Richmond, Virginia and was recently appointed the Chairman of the Pa Kua Chang rules committee for the AAU.

#### **Chinese Character Index**

八 卦 掌	Pa Kua Chang
氣	Ch'i
氣 功	Ch'i Kung
易 經	I Ching
陰 陽	Yin, Yang
五 行	Wu Hsing
衛 氣	Wei Ch'i
盧 水 田	Lu Shui-Tien
李 慶 五	Li Ch'ing-Wu

# Too Many Masters?

by Ken Fish

A friend of mine recently asked me how many Pa Kua and Hsing-I teachers there were in the U.S. today. A tournament promoter thinking of holding an internal martial arts tournament, he was visibly confused by my answer. "Three, maybe four Pa kua teachers, perhaps four or five Hsing-I teachers. In China maybe a couple dozen of each." When he regained his composure, my friend began to reel off the names of teachers whose names or articles regularly appear in print. He felt sure I must have omitted them by mistake. At this point I realized we were not speaking in the same terms, and proceeded to explain what I meant. What follows is the essence of a rather lengthy discussion.

For practical purposes, Pa Kua and Hsing-I are on the brink of extinction. The flowering of articles on both written by numerous authors might seem to refute this, but what we are really seeing is a case of good money being driven out by baser currency. By this I mean that there are many who claim to teach both, and who do indeed teach Pa Kua and Hsing-I forms (good, bad, and indifferent), but for the most part they are without any real skill or understanding. As these teachers become accepted as the standard bearers of Pa Kua and Hsing-I, the real arts, never broadly taught, become harder to discern through the confusion. In some cases even these teachers, whether by self delusion or indoctrination, are convinced that the form is the sum of the art. I encountered the latter case when speaking to a mainland China wushu coach. I had stated my belief that there was a qualitative difference in physical and mental development when a student trained with the goal of acquiring fighting skills, as opposed to training for competitive public performance. The coach was adamant that there was no difference, and no illustration of concrete examples could convince him otherwise. He had been indoctrinated this way by the powers that be in China, and was not about to question this line of reasoning.

The situation here is in some ways just as tragic. Lacking access to teachers, frequently having only read about Pa Kua or Hsing-I, Americans (and many Chinese) accept what is taught unquestioningly, no matter how divorced from common sense. Some even attempt to teach themselves or create their own systems, complete with faux lineages, and then go on to teach others. As Lenin said "What is to be done"? Obviously, some criteria for discerning true from false.

In a nutshell, one should know the mechanics of Pa Kua and Hsing-I, and not have to settle for some metaphysical paradigm of what one's body is doing. Traditional boxing teachers were generally poorly

educated, and taught mostly through example. One knew a teacher was teaching if he allowed the students to touch his body in order to feel which muscles were doing what. Considerable time and effort was spent placing student's bodies in the proper positions. In this way, most of the content of the system was taught in a few years, not the decades long apprenticeships one hears about here.

A teacher should also be able to demonstrate the applications of the art in a realistic manner. Defense requiring several moves for each of the opponent's moves are nothing but a dance. Closely tied to this should be explanations of power development, levels of physical development, and different qualities of force learned and applied at each level. Any resort to cosmic concepts should be taken as a sign of either ignorance or unwillingness to teach, usually the first. Again, explanations should begin with what joints are doing what, in what sequence, powered by what muscles.

At first blush the above reads like a prescription for rational instruction of any martial art, and in fact it is. How then, are Pa Kua and Hsing-I unique? Both of these arts emphasize unified body motion (moving as a single unit in a horizontal or vertical plane), power and stability derived from flexing, extending, and rotating major articulations of the axial skeleton, control over small muscle groups not usually fully enlisted in other martial arts (or even other activities), and an emphasis on structural strength derived from proper alignment rather than brute strength. In addition, the concept of movement with intent is stressed to a greater degree than in most other martial arts.

A good teacher should not only fully understand all of the above, he or she should be able to communicate these essentials clearly and effectively (although not necessarily verbally, as I indicated above). How many Pa Kua and Hsing-I teachers have this kind of depth and clarity? How many can communicate what they know? I know of only a few.

The astute reader will have noticed that I have avoided mentioning terms such as "internal" and "external", and the first appearance of the term "ch'i" is in this sentence. I will leave these issues for future columns.

*Kenneth J. Fish spent over a decade in Taiwan, where he received a Chinese middle school and University education. While there he had the good fortune to learn from several well respected teachers of the older generation. His Hsing-I and Pa Kua teacher was Chang Chun-Feng.*



# **Pa Kua Chang News Desk**

This column will focus on current Pa Kua Chang events. We will try to present Pa Kua Chang competition results, seminar information, updated instructor information, and news from the Pa Kua Chang rules committees of the AAU and NACMAF. If you have any current events that you would like to share with the Pa Kua Chang community, please write to the Editor.

## **Spring Issue of Internal Arts Magazine Features Pa Kua Chang**

The Spring 1991 issue of Internal Arts Magazine is this year's "annual baguazhang issue." Those of you who are not regular subscribers, but are interested in Pa Kua Chang may want to pick up this issue which features articles by John Baker, John Painter, Jerry Alan Johnson, Johnny Kwong Ming Lee, Kumar Frantzis, Clarence Lu, Bok Nam Park, Nan Lu, Daniel Farber, and others. Non-subscribers may order this issue for \$6.95 in U.S. funds. Write IAM, Dept BV1, P.O. Box 1777, Arlington, TX 76004-1777.

## **Liang Shou-Yu's Pa Kua Seminar in YMAA**

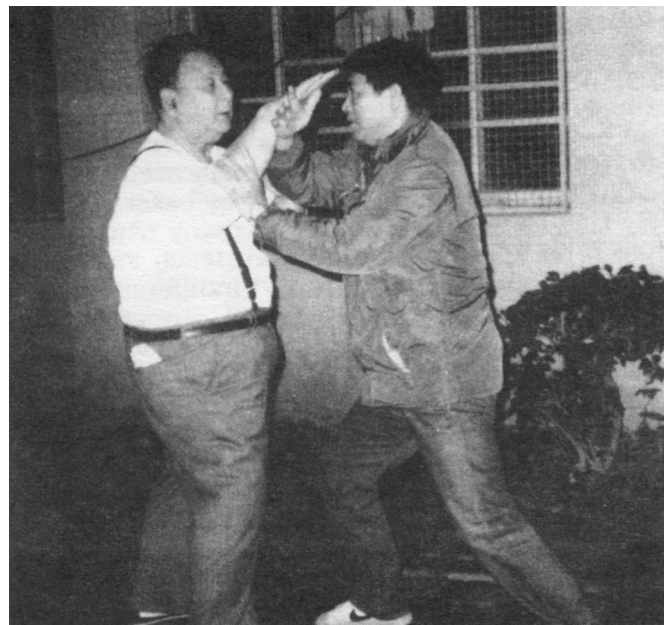
On April 20th and 21st, 1991, Pa Kua Chang instructor Liang Shou-Yu from Richmond, B.C., Canada was invited to Yang's Martial Arts Association (YMAA) headquarters in Boston for a two day Pa Kua seminar, which 30 people attended. This was the first time that Liang taught Pa Kua at YMAA. He taught the basic eight palms of E Mei Pa Kua, along with their martial applications, and he also taught a fighting set which uses the applications of the eight palms.

Liang also demonstrated the Swimming Body Pa Kua sequence, a sequence using a unique Pa Kua weapon, the Deer Hook, and some traditional Pa Kua power training.

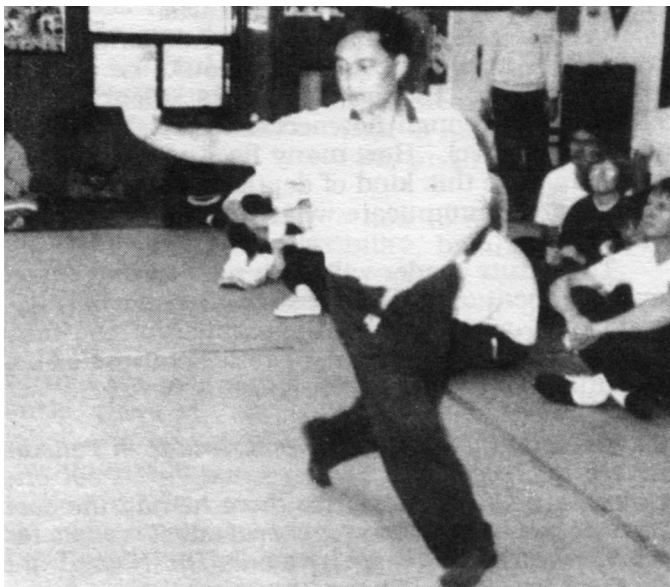
In the next two years, two more Pa Kua Chang seminars will be offered by Liang at YMAA headquarters. In addition, Dr. Yang Jwing-Ming and Liang are now cooperating to write a book about E Mei Pa Kua, which will include both theory and applications. This will be the second book co-written by Liang and Dr. Yang, the first one being Hsing Yi Chuan, published in 1990. The Pa Kua book is expected to be published in late 1992.

## **Wong Her-Yue visits with Hung I-Hsiang**

While celebrating the Lunar New Year with friends and relatives in Taiwan in February 1991 Wong Her-Yue (see Vol. 1, No. 3, pg 9) found time to practice with his friend Hung I-Hsiang. Wong wrote to say that Hung led a group of about 40 martial artists from Taiwan to visit Fujian Province in Mainland China in 1990 and while there he was appointed the Associate Chief Judge in the martial arts competitions in Fuzhou and Xiamen. Wong also reports that Hung is still in good shape and practices every morning.



**Wong Her-Yue practices with Hung I-Hsiang in Taipei, Taiwan**



## **Tournament Results**

On April 14th, 1991 the AAU/NACMAF Sanctioned Internal Arts Regional Championships were held in Gaithersburg, Maryland. The tournament was hosted by the students of the Great River Taoist Center in Washington, D.C. and the Shaolin Kung Fu Center in Gaithersburg, MD.

During the Master's demonstration Bok Nam Park demonstrated Pa Kua Chang Spear and one of Park's Assistant Instructors, Glenn Moore, demonstrated the Dragon style of Pa Kua Chang.

Tournament results in the Pa Kua Chang competition were as follows:

Champion: Husain Qaragholi

Second Place: William Young

Third Place: Paul Ronca

Fourth Place: Dan Eagen

The top three placing competitors represented the Pa Kua Kung Fu School in Richmond, VA. The fourth place competitor represented the Bethesda Tai Chi School.

Welcome back. I'm going to take a quick step back to the last column (see Vol. 1, No. 3) to answer a question from a Louisiana friend.

Question: In Chan Kung (standing skills), is *Chan Ch'un* (tree standing) different from Chan Chuang (stake standing)? Answer: Yes. And no. Yes, they are different words with different meanings; no, because they can be substituted for each other without serious injury.

*Ch'un* and *Chuang* are often used interchangeably, sometimes within one text from one line to the next. We could debate over which word came first. The use of Chuang in internal martial arts may be word borrowing from older martial traditions.

*Chan Chuang* practice can be found in external Chinese arts. Some practices actually involve standing and moving around on stakes driven vertically into the ground. *San chiao chuang* (tri-corner stakes), *ch'i hsing chuang* (seven star stakes), and *mei hua chuang* (plum flower stakes) are examples of these practices. (Note: Don't confuse plum flower stakes with another Chinese word meaning 'palisades.' The *mei hua* image refers to the five plum 'petals' or stakes in the exercise.) *Shaolin ch'uan chuang tzu pu* (stake walking) is found in ground sets as well. There are other arts which also have practices labelled with "stake."

If we insert chuang in place of ch'un in the phrase "*ch'un ju shan yueh*" (see Vol. 1, No. 3), the phrase can still make sense. Here's how:

A frequently seen form of standing meditation, *pao ch'iu chan li* (standing embracing a ball), involves standing with one's feet apart shoulder width or so, knees bent, torso straight, arms held in front like holding a large ball.

If we translate the phrase as "the stake is like a mountain", we see that the image of mountain, shan, visually approximates the position of body and legs in the above-mentioned version of standing meditation. From this translation, we arrive at commentaries on how stable one's mind and posture must be in this exercise.

An alternate translation, using ch'un instead of chuang, emphasizes more specifically the ch'i developing aspect of the practice. This approach is more in line with the *tao kung* (Taoist skill) aspect of our arts and less with the *wai kung* (external arts) of "hard" styles. (Another translator, very health and therapy oriented, has combined the 'embracing the ball' name with the tree image to arrive at 'embracing the tree' as a variant name of this particular practice.)

It's clear, though, that the two different words are not mutually exclusive and are, in fact, complementary. In his essay *Cheng Ming* (Rectifying Names), Hsun Tzu says that names have no independent objective reality, but are assigned meaning by popular custom. So when

it comes to ch'un or chuang, should we have an identity crisis or what? I suggest you keep an open mind, but follow your teacher's conventions. Lest you worry that a controversy swirls around choosing either *ch'un* or *chuang*, it might be some comfort to you to realize that both ch'un and chuang are supplanted by many other names! You should also know that, from style to style and art to art, the same name can refer to very different things. For instance, *Chiu Kung* (nine palace) Pa Kua exists in *Tung Pei Ch'uan*!

A multiplicity of names has affected Pa Kua since early times. Yin Fu, in a letter written in 1908, said that already *Pa Kua san shou* (couple and group set practice) was also called *Pa Kua tui ta, tui shou* and *tui tzu*. All these names referred to the same 64 sets that Tung Hai-Ch'uan had passed on.

Even the name of the art was tossed into the pot of confusion. Chiang Jung-Chiao, writing in August, 1929, said he knew of several streams of Pa Kua: *Liang-I*, *Ssu Hsiang* (two righteousness, four semblances), *Lung Hsing* (dragon form), and *Lin Hsing* (Ch'i Lin style). What he didn't mention was that there were other systems of Pa Kua which had no relation to the one promulgated by Old Master Tung, such as the *Fu Hsi* style and many more. This, plus some confusion with Hsing-I, likely contributed to the old misunderstandings in the West over the existence of, and differences between, "straight line" and "circular" Pa Kua. The situation was not helped by the fact that even Tung-descended streams varied in the way they named their art, using both Pa Kua Chang (palm) and Pa Kua Ch'uan (fist). (Note: Practitioners of a Tung-descended style other than ones mentioned by Chiang should not feel left out. Not only would it have been difficult for him to be aware of every contemporary style, but some arose after he wrote that letter.)

If you happen to have the chance to explore original writings in Chinese on your own, just remember: An individual name, word or phrase cannot properly be understood without its context. The cultural connotations as well as the historical and educational settings that the words appear in are important determiners of meaning. Wholesale dissection of character combinations (or of the characters themselves) and attempts to make meaningful connections may give, at best, naive results and, at worst, misleading or wrong readings. This is especially true when dealing with writings which may be highly symbolic in nature rather than graphically descriptive.

You should also keep in mind that I'm not giving you the whole "truth", just some major signposts pointing there. I'm limited to a short column which cannot replace your teacher.

Till next time, thanks to all those who called and wrote. I hope you'll stay in touch.

About the author:

James F. Keenan has been a student of Chinese culture, language and literature since 1969. From 1970 through 1972, he was assigned to the military language school in Monterey, CA, where he was trained as a translator. In 1974, he attended the Master's program in Chinese at the University of Pittsburgh. A 24 year veteran of martial arts, Mr. Keenan was the first non-Asian Pa Kua Chang teacher to be featured in a national martial arts magazine article (*Black Belt*, May, 1977). From 1985 through 1987, he manned the China Desk for the Universal House of Justice in Haifa, Israel. He now works for the Massachusetts Dept. of Education as a specialist in bilingual education. He is currently on leave from his Ph.D. studies in cross cultural communication.

"Letters" Continued from page 2

tell me that, in their opinion, "real" Pa Kua had already died out. I'm not sure I agree with them, but I will say that I think a lot of people who teach Pa Kua -- including a few "expert" Chinese -- are faking it.

A friend of mine once said "Give me the truth and I will defend it, but I can't defend lies." I can think of no reason why I would defend sport popularization of Pa Kua." - James Keenan.

## From the Editor

### Readers Want More Details

I have received a number letters and phone calls from Pa Kua Chang Newsletter readers who would like to see more technical information printed in the newsletter. Readers want to hear about the details and mechanics of the art. In addition to the series of technical articles that will be presented by Bok Nam Park, I have started to ask the teachers I interview more technical questions. To present adequate explanation of Pa Kua mechanics, a good deal of space is required for both the written and photographic/illustrative presentations. As we grow and expand the newsletter in size, I will attempt to provide as much information as space allows on the mechanics of the Pa Kua movements, proper energy alignments, subtle secondary muscle movements and subtle body connections.

### The Hsing-I Ch'uan Connection

Over the past few months I have received a half a dozen letters asking me to include some articles on Hsing-I in the newsletter. While I would like the newsletter to remain dedicated to Pa Kua Chang, I think that it would be interesting to run a series of articles which discuss Hsing-I and Pa Kua similarities and differences.

A number of Pa Kua instructors, past and present, require their students to learn Hsing-I before studying Pa Kua. I think it would be interesting to present a few articles on how learning the mechanics of Hsing-I will help improve Pa Kua Chang practice. I have spoken with some instructors who expressed interest in writing this type of article and I hope to be including this series in the near future.

### Chinese Character Index

站 功	Chan Kung
站 椿	Chan Ch'un
站 椿	Chan Chuang
三 角 椿	San Chiao Chuang
七 星 椿	Ch'i Hsing Chuang
梅 花 椿	Mei Hua Chuang
椿 字 步	Chuang Tzu Pu
椿 如 山 岳	Ch'un Ju Shan Yueh
抱 球 站 立	Pao Ch'iu Chan Li
道 功	Tao Kung
外 功	Wai Kung
正 名	Cheng Ming
荀 子	Hsun Tzu
九 宮 八 卦	Chiu Kung Pa Kua
通 背 拳	T'ung Pei Ch'uan
尹 福	Yin Fu
八 卦 散 手	Pa Kua San Shou
八 卦 對 打	Pa Kua Tui Ta
對 手	Tui Shou
對 子	Tui Tzu
兩 義 四 象	Liang I, Ssu Hsing
龍 形	Lung Hsing
麟 形	Lin Hsing
麒 麟	Ch'i Lin
伏 義	Fu Hsi
姜 容 樵	Chiang Jung-Ch'iao
董 海 川	Tung Hai-Ch'uan

If you have any suggestions or comments pertaining to articles or interviews printed in the newsletter, or would simply like to share some thoughts about Pa Kua Chang, feel free to write to the Editor and we will print comments of interest for the other readers to enjoy. We would like to see the newsletter develop into a vehicle for teachers and practitioners to exchange ideas about the art of Pa Kua Chang. We hope that this column will help facilitatesuch an exchange.

## **1991 Calander of Pa Kua Chang Workshops and Seminars**

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

<b><u>Instructor</u></b>	<b><u>Location</u></b>	<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Contact for Information</u></b>
<b>Bok Nam Park</b>	Gaithersburg, MD	29 July 91	Ken Fish (301) 330-8008
<b>T.Y. Pang</b>	Orcus Island, WA	1-8 July 91	Robert Fong (see address on page 12)
<b>B.P. Chan</b>	Warwick, NY	9-13 July 91	Tai Chi Farm (914) 986-9233
<b>Jerry Johnson</b>	San Francisco, CA	Sept 91	Jerry Johnson (408) 646-9399

**Adam Hsu** will be conducting a series of Pa Kua Chang seminars this summer in Cupertino, CA as follows:

- Traditional Pa Kua Palms - 20 & 21 July 1991
- Twin Dragon-Horn Crescent Knives - 3 & 4 August 1991
- Ancient Pa Kua Basic Training - 17 & 18 August 1991
- Secret Pa Kua Post Training - 31 August & 1 September 1991

For more information call:

SF (415) 824-2857

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***In the next issue of Pa Kua Chang Newsletter: An interview with Kumar Frantzis. Also, a report on the Pa Kua Chang teacher's conference.***

***For those of you who missed the first two issues, they are available for purchase for \$2.50 each.***

***Send check or money order to High View Publications at address shown below.***

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(703) 979-8748

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

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