



PA KUA CHUAN (The Eight Diagram Boxing Form)

Of all the styles of Chinese kung fu now being practised, Pa Kua Chuan (the Eight Diagram Boxing Form) is the one with the shortest history. Like Hsing-I Chuan (the Mind and Shape Form) and Tai Chi Chuan, the Pa Kua Chuan belongs to the internal school of martial arts. This style of martial art emphasizes the application of palm techniques and the footwork is mainly circular in movements. It lays stress on the stability and consolidation of the stance and the flexibility of the waist, which has to be complemented by the swiftness of the arms and the palms. The movements at three levels (i.e. lower, center and upper) should all be combined in harmony to act in unison and the whole constitution of the practitioner is charged with latent strength and vigour.

THE FOUNDER

The founder of Pa Kua Chuan was Tung Hai Chuan of Wen An District in Ho Pei Province. The time was about three centuries ago during the early

by Aaron Lee

PA KUA CHUAN

years of the Ching Dynasty. Peking was the place where this style of kung fu was first introduced. Strange as it may seem, the founder of this style of kung fu was a eunuch serving in the residential palace of an imperial prince. This eunuch Tung Hai Chuan showed nothing of significance and no one paid any attention to him.

Then one day the prince threw a banquet in his palace. Guests were many and the servants who were less experienced found it difficult to cope. Of the many servants ministering to the guests, there was one weaving his way like a butterfly among the guests. He caught the attention of the lord prince who was fascinated by his dexterity in movements. Subsequent enquiries revealed that this eunuch was an accomplished master of martial arts. The prince himself and some of the guests were intrigued, so they requested Tung the eunuch to demonstrate his skills for entertainment. Tung complied by demonstrating certain feats so fascinating that his audience was completely overwhelmed. The lord prince offered him the position of martial arts instructor in his palace which Tung gladly accepted. But how and where Tung had acquired his art, nobody knew.

Anyway, Tung's dexterity in martial arts became known to the elite of society after this episode and all the guests who came to visit the

prince would like to ask him to demonstrate his feats. Eventually they would all be fascinated by his superlative skill and dexterity. One day a stranger dropped in to pay a visit to Tung Hai Chuan and requested to have a friendly match of martial arts with Tung. Tung consented and the two of them proceeded to the garden where there was a plot in which he and his pupil trainees had their daily drills. The stranger began by demonstrating his feats of swordsmanship. It was indeed a breath-taking sight to view. Those who gathered round to view the demonstration could only see a spherical gleam darting forwards and backwards and bouncing up and down as the stranger wielded his sword with such incredible swiftness. The spectators exploded in a unanimous applause when the demonstration came to a halt. Then it was Tung's turn to demonstrate. He used no weapon except his bare palms. Light as a leaf he drifted in the air, his movements and techniques were entirely different from those he taught and exhibited before. After he had finished demonstrating, his pupil trainees asked him what style of martial arts he had just demonstrated. Tung told them only then that what he had just demonstrated was a combination of the excellent features of the Shao Lin (*Buddhist*) and Wu Tang (*Taoist*) styles of martial arts with their

superfluities pruned. The system he had just performed was called Pa Kua Chuan (8 Diagram Boxing Form). Tung declined to reveal his past history or from whom he had acquired his art.

Rumours had it that Tung declined to reveal his past history because he was in fact an outlaw with a price on his head. To avoid the dragnet he had sought refuge in a Buddhist monastery, was cloistered and became a Buddhist monk. Not much later, because of his incorrigible character, he had breached the rules of abstinence and was therefore ousted from the monastery. Desperate with the law hot on his trail, Tung resorted to the most dangerous scheme by castrating himself to become a eunuch so that he could be accepted as a servant in the imperial prince's residential palace, a hide-out which the law would least suspect.

The Propagation Of Pa Kua Chuan

Tung Hai Chuan had an able disciple called Chen Ting Hua who took part in the Boxer Uprising during the reign of the Empress Dowager. In an epic event, Chen had the experience of fighting a street battle with the European guards at Legation Quarter in Peking. He ignored the fire arms of the 'foreign devils' as he was very confident of his own expertise in Pa Kua Chuan. Incredible as it may seem, he did come through all the battles in one piece. He attributed this to his excellent footwork attained through his constant practice of Pa Kua Chuan. But Chen Ting Hua eventually found out that flesh and blood was no match for fire arms, so after putting up a stubborn fight, Chen and his comrade-in-arms finally retreated and withdrew from the Legation Quarter.

Chen Ting Hua could be regarded as the second generation disciple of Pa Kua Chuan, then Sun Lu Tang and Fu Chen Sung might be regarded as the third generation. Fu Chen Sung's erstwhile mentor was another famous master called Chia Ching Te, but he also chose to learn from Chen Ting Hua. Unlike most of the martial art masters who were jealous and narrow-minded in those days, Chen Ting Hua didn't mind his disciple Fu Chen Sung learning from two mentors at the same time. He passed to him all the secrets of his art without reservation. Fu Chen Sung was thus able to learn from two masters at the same time and so in his early thirties he had already become an accomplished master in martial arts of very high achievements.

In those days because of the people's low standard of education in the rural areas, armed duels caused by minor disputes were rampant. Sometimes hundreds of people were involved and the casualties were heavy. It happened one day that a group of about 200 men from a nearby village



Two outstanding exponents of Pa Kua Chuan of the younger generation. Li Kwang Ming (right), disciple of Sifu Sun Pao Kang, and Mak Po Sim, disciple of Sifu Sun's fellow student.

was marching towards the village where Fu Chen Sung and his clansmen were living. They were obviously looking for trouble. Blood-shed seemed to be inevitable and the Fu clansmen were prepared to fight for their lives.

Fu Chen Sung, being an accomplished master of martial arts, was composed and less hot-headed. He wanted to avoid blood-shed and settle the dispute in a dramatic manner. He pleaded his clansmen to keep calm and leave the matter to him entirely.

Hoping for the best while fearing the worst, his village elders gave him the authority to do whatever he thought was best in their own interest.

His proposal was a bit risky and looked more like a gamble. He confronted the mob all by himself and requested to speak to their leader. Fu challenged their leader to pick 20 or more of their men, well, versed in martial arts—to fight him. Annoyed and perhaps a bit amused by his boldness, the leader accepted Fu Chen Sung's proposal and even agreed to withdraw his men and return to their village should they fail to subdue the challenger Fu Chen Sung. But if fate had it that Fu Chen Sung should lose the fight, then only God would know what could happen next.

This was agreed and twenty odd pugilists and wrestlers were picked out by the leader of the opposing party to meet the seemingly crazy challenger. The combat started and Fu charged into their rank like a tiger dashing into a flock. People saw him bouncing up and down, darting backward and forward like an hornet among his opponents while his palms chopped and slammed whoever that was unfortunate enough to be in his way. He made full use of the circular movements of Pa Kua Chuan and its excellent footwork, making it impossible for his opponents to even touch him. Then when his opponents tried to encircle him, Fu exhibited his excellent feat of Pa Kua Hurricane Palm Technique. In executing this feat, Fu first withdrew his foot steps, stretched his arms and swung himself in a horizontal manner like a big wheel towards the direction where the nearest opponents were. In an instant six or seven people were knocked down. That was only the beginning which was followed by the real teeth of the Pa Kua Hurricane Palm Technique. A wave of centrifugal force was generated; it was so powerful that the people who surrounded him were compelled to step back for fear that they might get injured. A couple of them who ventured to get in close contact were instantly chopped down by Fu's forceful palms.

By this time more people converged to form a larger circle with Fu in the center, but he was unruffled. More attempts to subdue him incurred more casualties instead. The mob was perplexed by his Hurricane Palm Technique because in many cases when he was attacking the person in front, the one behind him would get hit first, but the target originally intended would get it all the same. Finally the leader of the mob called a halt to the fight. He even saluted Fu for his excellent feats and unequalled bravery. He ordered his men to withdraw and returned to their own village. From that time onwards they never bothered Fu Chen Sung and his clansmen again.

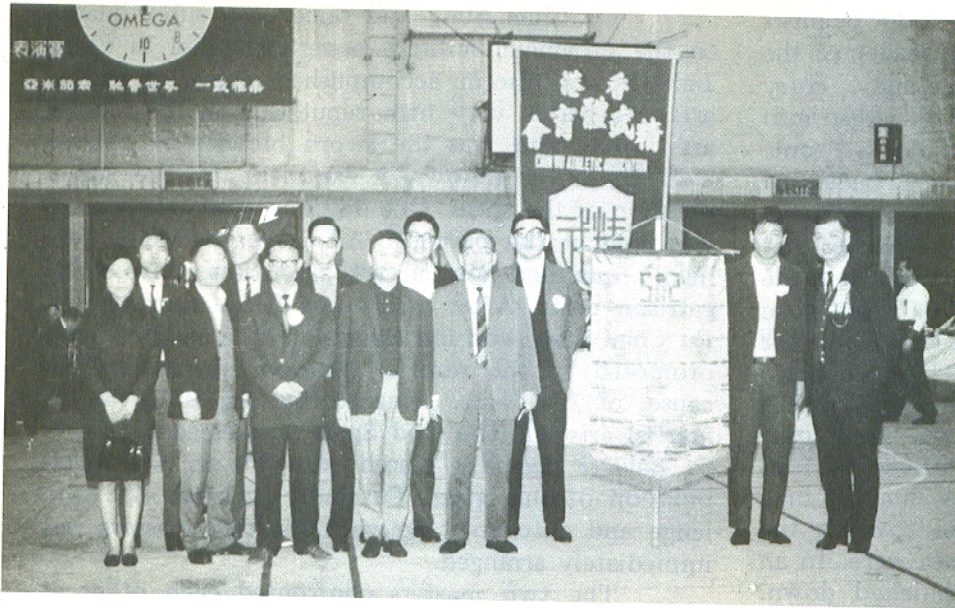
Fu Chen Sung had once been subordinated to the provincial military governor called Li Ching Lin who was also an accomplished master of martial arts. He had a very high reputation in the martial arts circle and was the sworn brother of Li, the God Spear, a renowned exponent in the manipulation of the spear. One day a martial arts contest was held at the barracks. All the participants were highly qualified martial art practitioners from the garrison units. After a series of fierce competition, Fu Chen Sung won the champion title and was later promoted to the rank of platoon commander because of his feats. Amazed by his expertise in martial arts, Li, the God Spear, expressed his desire to have a friendly match with Fu in the manipulation of the spear. Fu gladly accepted his challenge and a tourney between the two masters was immediately arranged.

The two masters confronted each other at the parade ground used as a xyst. Although Fu Chen Sung knew that his opponent was an expert whose prowess with the spear was unequalled, he was undaunted and imperturbable. He was also very confident of his own prowess in Pa Kua spear technique which he thought was superlative. When the two of them put on their fighting postures, Fu conserved his stamina by regulating his breath. His faculty was strong and his perception was sharp. Most important of all, he was not overawed by the overbearing manner of his opponent.

Although Fu Chen Sung was only in his early twenties, his skill in manipulating the spear was not the slightest bit inferior to that of his opponent, Li, the God Spear, who was considered the ace in that field. The spectators were amazed by a spectacular display of top-class martial art in the manipulation of the spear by both sides. They saw two shadows bouncing up and down, backward and forward wielding their weapons with incredible swiftness and dexterity. The fight ended in a draw which won the applause of all those who witnessed

A historical meeting of two great grandmasters of Chinese martial arts. Left figure (in black) is the late Master Yang Ching Po, the best known master of Yang's Style Tai Chi Chuan, and the figure at extreme right is the late Master Fu Chen Sung.





Sifu Sun in a shot taken, after the completion of a Kung Fu Demonstration Show organised by the Hong Kong Ching Wu Athletic Association, before the athletic stadium in which the Show was held. Sifu Sun was specially invited by the Association to give demonstration in the Show.

the contest. The military governor Li Ching Lin was pleased.

In about the year 1928, an outstanding martial art exponent held an open tourney in which he had defeated many contestants. The body of the Martial Arts Advisory Committee convened a meeting to select an exponent of excellent prowess for the contest. Fu Chen Sung was selected. The fight in which the two exponents took part proved to be an occasion of historical significance. Both of them realized that they had encountered the most worthy opponent in their life. None of them dared to make a rash attempt to strike out at the other for fear that an unsuccessful attempt would result in immediate defeat. Two hours had elapsed after the commencement of the bout and they were both on their fighting stances except changing their postures alternately from time to time, observing and testing each other's power of endurance and will and most important of all, trying to detect the other side's loophole in defence.

Two hours had passed and Fu Chen Sung was still vigilant without getting tired. His stamina seemed to have increased with the passing of time: this he achieved by regulating his breath — a secret which only top Pa Kua Chuan practitioners know how to manipulate. Both sides were watching each other intently trying to detect the opponent's loophole in defence. Then suddenly the crowd heard a loud hoot. Quick as lightning they saw the two contestants in the ring clash and immediately afterwards they heard a thud; one of them was floored. They then discovered that Fu Chen Sung was the victor, who raised his hands to greet the crowd gathering to watch the fight.

Last year a delegation of Chinese Martial Arts set off for a tour to U.S.A. Before they left Hong Kong they held a demonstration show in which their leader exhibited his skill in Pa Kua Chuan. A certain publication commenting on the demonstration criticised that the art of Pa Kua Chuan had very much deteriorated after the death of Fu Chen Sung. Although such comments might be a bit too critical, it did reveal the fact that this art is very demanding and it is very difficult to master.

But Sun Pao Kang — a university graduate who majored in physics, may be considered the only master of renown specializing in Pa Kua Chuan. Following is the story of how he had acquired this art.

Sun Pao Kang was from Shanghai. He is now 68 and a very active martial arts practitioner. However, he was very skeptical about the true value of Chinese martial arts when he was young. But his attitude changed when he met Fu Chen Sung who was invited by the chairman of the Kwangtung Provincial Government to teach martial arts in the army stationed in Canton — the capital of Kwangtung Province. Sun Pao Kang was then only 22, he had the opportunity of learning from Fu Chen Sung because he was also serving in the army. He was glad that he had learned the art of Pa Kua Chuan because he thought that this style of martial art possessed the following qualities: (1) It is beneficial to physical health. (2) The amount or volume of exercise is big. (3) The hand techniques are ingenious. (4) Its application is artistic. He was very happy that Fu Chen Sung accepted him as his disciple.

Sifu Sun Pao Kang's primary objective in learning martial arts was physical training to improve body health. He never wanted to show off his skill and therefore very few people knew that he was a martial arts expert. Because of his modesty he never had any quarrel with others let alone violent

fighters. He was always mindful of his mentor's warning against pugnacity especially when he lacked the experience of actual contacts.

The first occasion in which Sifu Sun Pao Kang had the opportunity to put his art to practical use took place some thirty years ago. He was then living in Hong Kong. One night when he was walking home alone, he was intercepted by a thug holding a knife. This thug demanded him to hand over his brief-case and whatever money or valuables he might have with him. Sun was a little disturbed at the beginning as he had never experienced such incident in his life. But the thug had underestimated his victim. Sun complied with the thug's demand by handing over his brief-case docilely and when he put out his hand to take it Sun struck out with his free hand. With just one blow the thug was brought to the ground.

Sun thought that this was the end to the incident. But a few seconds later after he had walked a few more steps, a group of about five to six hoodlums suddenly emerged from the dark rushing towards Sifu Sun. They all had knives with them. "This is it. May God help me," thought Sun to himself. With reflexive response he knocked down the first hoodlum who had the misfortune of coming to contact with him first.

A fierce battle ensued of which the hoodlums could take no advantage although they were far superior in number. Soon afterwards the scuffle had roused the whole neighborhood. Many people came out to find out for themselves what was happening. It was then that the hoodlums dispersed and disappeared in the dark.

Internal Kung Fu Unfathomable

The basic palm techniques of Pa Kua Chuan is called Pa Kua Cheng Chung (Orthodox Eight Diagram). This splits into two sets i.e. Yin and Yang. The Dragon Form of the Pa Kua palm technique is of the highest level for Pa Kua Chuan practitioners. The basic principle of this Pa Kua Dragon Form is one of circular movements. Its footwork enables the practitioner to swing or hop around the opponent in circles at various speeds vexing and perplexing him. Attacks are mostly executed when you have turned to the back of the opponent. Particular attention is paid to develop the flexibility and strength of the waist as most of the movements are generated from that part of the body. According to the theory of Pa Kua Chuan, the practitioner's mind controls the waist, the waist controls the movements of the body with his coordinating foot-work.

Because the practice of Pa Kua Chuan emphasizes the flexibility and strength of the waist, its constant training results in the effective exercise of the joints, sinews, muscles and even the internal

organs. Therefore the practitioner will not only acquire the art of self-defence by practising Pa Kua Chuan, his physical health will also benefit from it. The movements of the Dragon Form palm technique of Pa Kua Chuan resemble the dancing of the dragon:— undulating and encircling, flexible and yet rigid when it is necessary, response is reflexive, and all the movements are interwoven with one another. This is how "Dragon Form" got its name.

Of the several sets of Pa Kua palm techniques, the most basic system is called Tan Huan Chang (Palm Changing Technique) The principle of this set of palm technique, same as the others, lay stress on circular movements. Its hand patterns may look very simple but it is not so easy to perfect. The reason is that these hand patterns block, intercept and ward off enemy blows or strikes with circular movements, causing the opponent's blow or strike to minimize in force and thus lose its impact. A Pa Kua Chuan practitioner will never attempt to block or intercept an enemy blow head-on with brutal force.

The above theory sounds simple enough, but just like so many other simple theories, it is easier said than done. To achieve this, a practitioner needs constant practice and a keen perception.

Another feature of Tan Huan Chang, Palm Changing Technique, is that its movements generate from the waist while the upper trunk stays rigid. The practitioner concentrates his mind on his abdomen to regulate his breath. He should muster his strength on the wrists. In actual contact, palm technique applied should be able to divert the opponent's striking force to another direction, thus nullifying its impact.

Pa Kua steps is a unique system of footwork specially designed to complement Pa Kua palm techniques. Its advance, retreat and all the variations are activated by an inner force which may be described as the internal work of Pa Kua Chuan. In executing this system of footwork the energy required comes from and is controlled by the center — the abdomen. The advance and retreat of the steps are called Tang Pu (Rippling steps). It is so called because, although the steps are wide and swift, they gather no momentum and can stop abruptly. Whereas footwork employed by other styles of kung fu is entirely different, they inevitably gather momentum whether in advance or retreat, thus making them look clumsy and ineffectual. Pa Kua steps footwork not only complements Pa Kua palm technique, it can also be used for attacking even by itself. Its favorite target is the opponent's ankle because it is nearest to you, and your opponent least expects your attack on it. The highest target Pa Kua steps would attack is the opponent's groin.

Che Yun Shou (Cloud Shadowing Hand) is a hand pattern specially designed to deal with the opponent attacking from behind. In executing this hand technique, the practitioner swings his arms upwards in a circular movement as if to shadow the clouds overhead while turning backwards to deal



All the students of Sifu Sun Pao Kang are amateurs practitioners who come from different trades and profession and none of whom have taken on instructing kung fu as a profession. Hence Pa Kua Chuan is not so popularly known to most people as many other styles of Chinese martial arts.

with his opponent at the back. The idea of swinging the arms upwards while turning is to neutralize the rigid force or momentum gathered while turning round, thus maintaining the lithe movements of the body and enabling the practitioners to move freely to counter-attack his opponent and also to ward off his blows. This would also minimize the impact of the opponent's blows. For the non-practitioner who is inexperienced, the above theories may sound a bit mystifying and difficult to comprehend.

Same as Tai Chi Chuan, Pa Kua Chuan also has a system of Tui Shou (hand pushing exercise). There are 24 hand patterns altogether and these are vividly expressed by 8 methods. As regards practical hand techniques, they have such hand patterns like:—

Ching Tien Chui Hsin Chang (Sky Pushing And Heart Jabbing Palm)

Cha Hou Chang (Throat Jabbing Palm)

Chan Shen Chang (Body Entwining Palm)

Yao Tzu Chung Tien Chang (Sparrow Hawk Soaring Palm)

Chung Chang (Thrusting Palm)

Pei Shen Chang (Back Striking Palm)

The last of the six hand techniques mentioned above is most vicious because it hits the opponent's

scrotum and therefore it is seldom applied unless in a desperate situation.

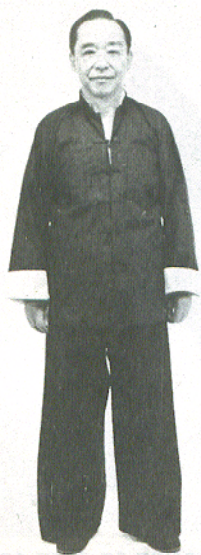
All the above hand patterns are unique to Pa Kua Chuan because their scopes of movement are small but the impact is immense. As we have mentioned elsewhere in this article, Pa Kua Chuan specializes in the use of palms and finger grips or jabs. Clenched fists are seldom used. Therefore this school of practitioners does very little sand-bag punching. Their whole body is full of lithe movements and flexibility and they believe in the theory of overcoming rigid strength with lithe movements and flexibility. Another characteristic of Pa Kua Chuan is that its movements are smooth and continuous, exercise is strenuous without being exhaustive.

As regards weapons, there are the Pa Kua spear, with spear-heads at both ends. It is also called double-headed spear. Then there are the Pa Kua sword and Chuan Kuan (The Universe) sword. The basic theory of manipulation for all these weapons is the same as for Pa Kua Chuan — circular movements. One must have a fairly good experience in the boxing form before he can proceed to learn how to manipulate the Pa Kua weaponry. 真功夫

Tan Huan Chang (Palm Changing Technique) and Pa Kua Hurricane Palm Technique are two of the most important and practical combat techniques unique to Pa Kua Chuan. Superficially, the movements and hand patterns of these techniques are simple and plain, and appear quite easy to practise. In reality, however, unless a practiser has reached a high standard in exerting force with the waist, it is almost impossible for him to put these techniques into effective use.

During the course of movements in exercising these techniques, all the motions of the body are originated from the waist, while the shoulders remain entirely passive. Turning, twisting and rotation of the body are done along an imaginary pivot in the centre of the body. The movements of the limbs are of course outside this pivot and thus form a sphere of centrifugal force as the body turns, twists or rotates. Movements of the arms are performed in circular forms, which, being generated by the strong force originated from the waist, are very effective in neutralising and diverting the attacks of the opponent. If skilfully applied, an attacking blow of the opponent will not only be diverted away from its target, but the force exerted may be returned and become detrimental to the attacker himself. The practice movements of these two techniques are demonstrated below personally by Sifu Sun Pao Kang.

Execution of practice movements of Tan Huan Chang (Palm Changing Technique)



(1) *Standing at ease*



(2) *Stepping forward and lifting both hands*



(3) *Completion of hands lifting*



(4) *Contracting the waist and withdrawing the hands*



(5) *Stretching the waist and lifting up with crossed arms*



(6) *Release both arms to push with the right hand and guard with the left*

Execution of practice movements of Pa Kua Hurricane Palm Technique



(1) Stepping and pushing



(2) Turning the waist to the right



(3) Contracting the waist and withdrawing the hands



(4) Turning to the left



(5) Completion of turning to the left



(6) Preparing to turn to the right



(7) & (8) Turning to the right



(9) Completion of turning to the right



(10) Palming with right hand

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