

The Fundamentals of Pa Kua Chang Vol. II

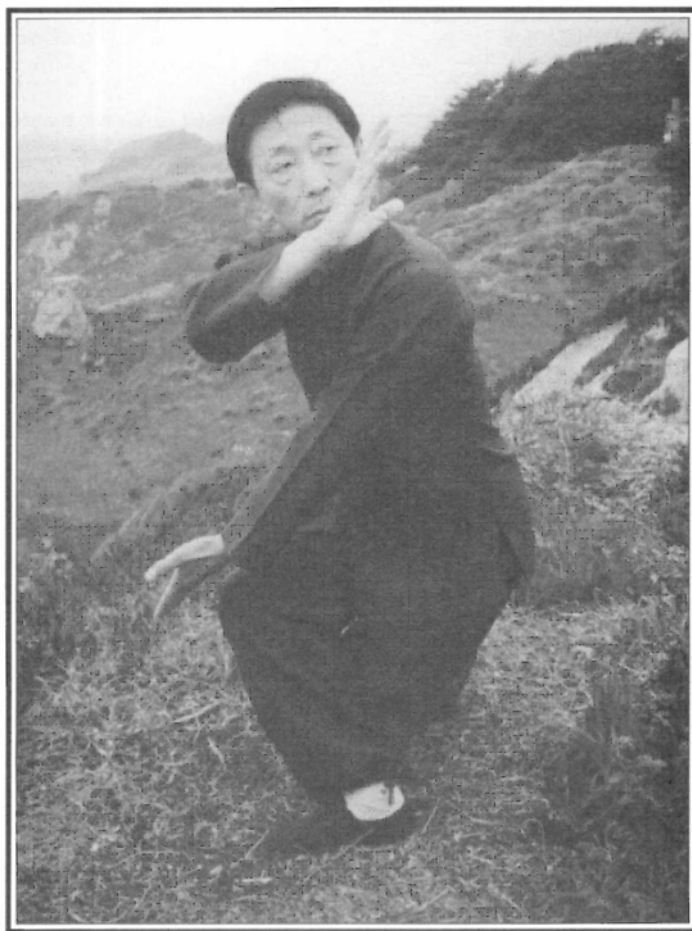


The Method of Lu Shui-T'ien as Taught by Park Bok Nam
by Park Bok Nam and Dan Miller

The Fundamentals of Pa Kua Chang

Volume II

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as Taught by Park Bok Nam***



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High View Publications, Pacific Grove, CA

*The Fundamentals of Pa Kua Chang,
Volume II:
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by Park Bok Nam*

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	vi
Dedication	vii
Preface	viii
A Note on Romanization of Chinese	xi
Chapter 1 - Introduction	1
Introduction	2
Getting the Most Out of This Book	3
Chapter 2 - Pa Kua Chang Fighting Strategy	7
Philosophical Connection to Pa Kua Chang Martial Application	8
Philosophical Connection to Pa Kua Chang Training	9
The Evolution of Pa Kua Strategy	10
The Birth of Pa Kua Strategy	10
Pa Kua Adaptability	11
Adapting to Fit the Situation	12
The Individual Expression of the Art	12
Principle Vs. Technique	13
Strategies of Pa Kua Chang Fighting	15
Distance and Degree	15
Know Your Distance	15
Rooting as a Function of Angle	18
Angle Vs. Strength	18
Allow No Time or Space	18
Jab, Bridge, Finish	19
<i>Lien Huan</i> (Continuously Linked)	20
Sequence of Training	21
Chapter 3 - Pa Kua Chang Footwork Training	23
Why Walk the Circle?	24
Physical Benefits	24

Table of Contents

Internal Cultivation	27
Circle Walking as a Meditative Practice	27
Circle Walking for <i>Ch'i</i> Cultivation	29
Fighting Skills	31
Circle Walking Variations	31
The Foot Placement	31
Snake Step	31
Lion Step	34
Crane Step	
Conclusion	35
Advanced Circle Walking: Training to Fight	36
The Opponent Attacks First	37
You Initiate the Attack	37
Advanced Circle Walking	38
Pivot Stepping and the Pa Kua Diagram	86
Circle Walking	87
T'ai Chi Diagram Circle Walk Pole Training	39
Spiral Pattern Pole Training	42
Two or Three Pole Practice	45
Adding More Poles	48
The Tee-Pee Pole Arrangement	49
Changing the Poles	49
Conclusion	50

Chapter 4 - Pa Kua Chang Body Training 51

Hiding Flower Under Leaf Exercises	55
The "Moving" Hiding Flower Exercise	57
The Single Palm Change	61
The Four Pillars of Pa Kua Training	61
The Study of Pa Kua Chang Movement	63
The Definition of Single Palm Change	65
The "Form" of Single Palm Change	66
The Movements of the "Standard" Single Palm Change	67
The Principles	69
Variations	71
<i>K'ou Pu</i> and <i>Pai Pu</i> in Application	81
<i>K'ou Pu</i> Usage	81
<i>K'ou Pu</i> and <i>Pai Pu</i> Kicks	85
The Single Palm Change: Conclusion	86

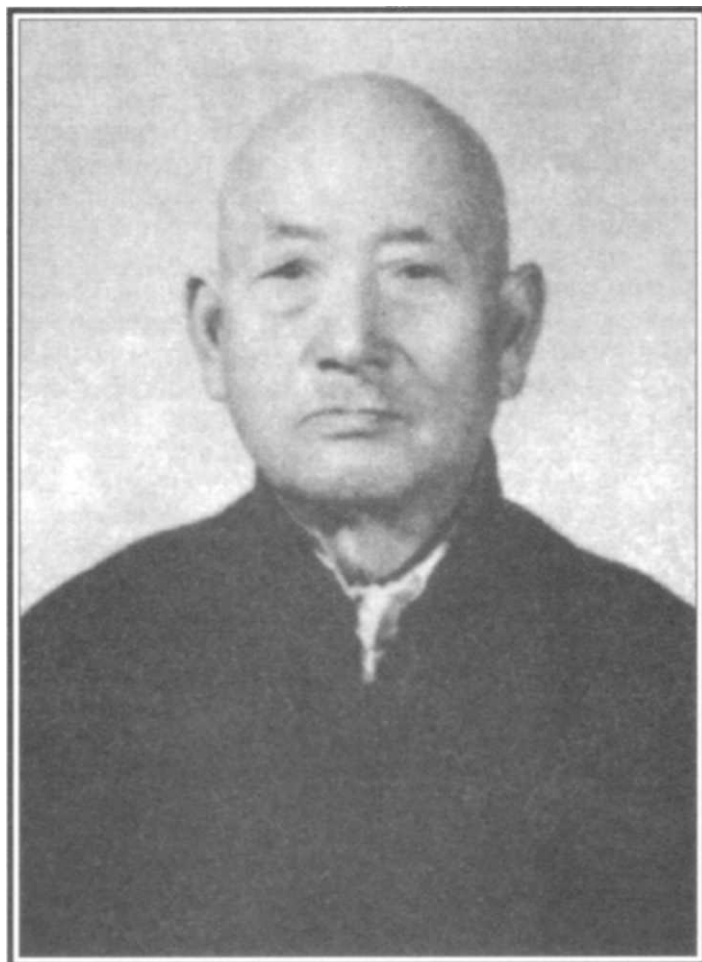
Chapter 5 - Pa Kua Chang Palm Training	87
The Eight "Forty Eight Month" Palms	90
Single and Double Palm Change	92
Throwing Palm	94
Slapping Palm	96
Lifting Palm	105
Chopping Palm	109
White Clouds Chasing the Stars Palm	118
Sliding the Window Shutter to Look at the Moon Palm	124
Follow-on 48 Month Palm Training	127
The Supplemental Palms	133
Piercing Palm	133
Swallow Penetrates Through the Forest Palm	137
Three Basins Settling to the Ground Palm	142
Embracing the Moon at the Chest Palm	146
Conclusion	148
Chapter 6 - Pa Kua Chang Elbow Training	149
The Basic Elbow Exercises	151
The Eight Elbow Combination Drills	157
Conclusion	167
Chapter 7 - Pa Kua Chang Ch'i Kung	169
Introduction	170
The Mind in Ch'i Kung Practice	174
Body Motion in Ch'i Kung Practice	181
Breathing in Ch'i Kung Practice	185
The "Standard Eight" Ch'i Kung Set	187
Sliding the Window Shutter to Look at the Moon	188
Double Palm Change	190
Unicorn Turns its Body	192
Serving Tea Cups	194
Serving Tea Cups with Throwing Palm	197
Yin and Yang Opposing Palms	201
Scooping the Moon From Sea Bottom	204
Closing	204
Conclusion	207
Chapter 8 - Conclusion	209

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There are three other individuals I would like to thank, not so much for their work on this particular project, but for the invaluable lessons they have taught me about martial arts in general. Although all of the material here is from Park Bok Nam's system of Pa Kua Chang and the ideas and principles expressed here are all taught by Park, my ability to put these concepts into words comes from a culmination of my martial arts background and experience. During my martial arts career, there have been three individuals, other than Glen Moore and Park Bok Nam, who have helped to greatly improve my understanding of the internal martial arts and my ability to explain the principles of the martial arts as I understand them. These individuals, Vince Black, Tim Cartmell, and Ken Fish, are all brilliant teachers and I am forever in their debt for the lessons they have taught me. Thanks guys.

Dedication



**Dedicated in Memory of
Pa Kua Chang Master
Lu Shui-T'ien
(1894 - 1978)**

Preface

It has been three years since I sat down to write the preface to the first volume of this book. In that three years I have learned a lot. I have learned a lot about Pa Kua Chang and I have learned a lot about Park Bok Nam's system of Pa Kua Chang. Since writing the first volume of this book I have made four trips to mainland China, two trips to Taiwan, and one trip to Hong Kong researching the art of Pa Kua Chang as it is taught by various instructors in China. Shortly after writing the last book, my status in Park Bok Nam's school also changed from that of being a student to that of being an assistant instructor and then, most recently, a licensed instructor. In making these transitions, my Pa Kua Chang training under Park Bok Nam changed. It was only after I started actually teaching Park's Pa Kua system as an assistant instructor that I really began to appreciate the depth of his art, his teaching style, and his systematic approach to helping his students reach their full potential in the art.

Park teaches all students by "prescription." This means that each student is given exactly what he or she needs based on age, sex, physical health, ability, coordination, occupation, size, personality, and goals. When I first began studying with Park, I had about seven years experience in the internal martial arts, I was relatively young and in fairly good shape, and so he began teaching me his Pa Kua Chang pretty much as it was presented in the last volume of this book. For the first six or eight months of training, all of my lessons were private and so I did not get a chance to see how any of the other students were training. I figured that they were being taught about the same thing I was being taught.

Later, Park started teaching a group class in Baltimore, Maryland, and I attended those classes. The prerequisite for the class was that the students have a martial arts background. What Park taught there was pretty much the way I had been taught.

There were no beginners in the class, everyone was male, and everyone was in about the same age group. Park did not teach beginning level material there. Because everyone there was just gaining a foundation in Park's system, all were taught the same basic material.

When I moved to California in late 1992, Park asked me to start a class here. I started teaching a few guys in a local school yard every evening. There were only a few people in the class and they all had a martial arts background. Basically I used the time to do my own workout and these guys followed along. I did not have to do a lot of teaching because they picked it up pretty fast. The way I taught was the way I had been shown. I started by teaching the material that was presented in the first book. The students learned the eight direction rooted stepping, the circle walk, the *fan Chang* exercises, the palm exercises, etc. Park came out to California about four times that first year and watched what we were practicing, made corrections, and taught some new things.

In late 1993, the local kung fu teacher decided he would move out of town the next Spring and he asked if I would be interested in taking over his school when he left in April of 1994. The school was located right across the hall from my publishing office and we had used the school on numerous occasions to host seminars conducted by Park and other visiting instructors. I thought it would be a good opportunity since the old teacher already had a group of students who wanted to continue training. I called Park and asked if he would give me permission to open up a school. He told me that I could open up a school and teach for him as an assistant instructor. He said that I did not have enough experience teaching to be an full instructor on my own. That was fine with me. I figured my small group would just carry on as we had been in the school yard, except for now we would have a place to practice indoors.

The next time Park visited, several months before I opened my school, he said, "You want to have a school, you need to learn how to teach." What I found out was that since Park teaches by prescription, all I'd really seen of his Pa Kua program was my personal prescription. I got the prescription that he gives to people who are young, in good shape, and already have a martial arts background.

What Park began to teach me next was the basic prescription he gives to beginners who have no martial arts background whatsoever. There was quite a difference. This program included basic posture holding in various low stances, basic low posture forms, jumping sets, Shaolin Long Fist forms, Praying Mantis forms, and rudimentary straight line sets. All of this was integrated in with the fan chang exercises, basic circle walking, palm exercises, and eight direction rooted stepping exercises in a systematic method designed for beginners.

When Park began teaching me these things, I asked, "How come I never learned this before?" He said, "You didn't need these things. You already had some background. But beginners who have no martial arts foundation, no flexibility, no coordination, no balance, need these basics." I learned all of these "beginners" exercises and began teaching them to the beginners who signed up at my school starting in April of 1994. In my classes, I mixed these exercises, forms, and practice drills in with the material which was presented in the first book in order to form a training curriculum for the school.

Now I thought I was on my way. I had a beginners curriculum and I started teaching all of the exercises, forms and drills in sequence to my students. The next time Park visited, he looked at my students practicing and he said, "Now you need to learn to teach by prescription." He began pointing out different characteristics about students at my school as they were practicing. He'd say, "This guy has a very stiff upper body. You need to teach him the first Long Fist form and have him practice more t'ien fan chang. He'd spot someone else, "This guy over here has trouble with coordination. You need to teach him the basic Shaolin kicking set." Through the course of his visit he would tell me what he thought all of the

students needed, "This one needs to concentrate on slow shaking palm because he has trouble with his body connections and his hips are tight, that other one needs more stance training because his legs are weak, etc." So I began to learn how to teach each individual student based on their unique needs. Some students needed more of one thing than others, some students needed to learn things the other students didn't need to learn, and some students could skip over some of the basics if they already had a good foundation, flexible body, or good balance. Over the past two years Park has continued to monitor my students and suggest what they need and don't need in their individual training programs.

What was interesting to me was that my research into the history of Pa Kua Chang and the biographies of the old masters which I conducted during my trips to China was very consistent with Park's method. In researching the backgrounds of the most famous Pa Kua Chang masters in China, I found out that the majority of them were from small farming villages, began their practice of martial arts with Shaolin based arts, and then later practiced Pa Kua Chang as a "graduate" level martial arts study. Park's teacher, Lu Shui T'ien, had this identical background.

In the old days, the pattern of development was such that the students first gain physical strength and endurance working around the village and in the fields performing manual labor. At the same time they gained increased levels of flexibility, coordination, balance, and basic martial arts skills in the study of a Shaolin based systems ("village" style, "family" style, or "farmer" style martial arts). Later they progressed to Pa Kua Chang where they learned how to refine the strength and skill they had already developed.

One of the main problems I see in the United States today is that many practitioners are trying to jump straight into the performance of Pa Kua Chang forms which are specifically designed to refine martial arts skill and polish "trained strength" without having any strength or skill to begin with. They are trying to build a house on a shaky foundation. Park's method is different. His training program develops basic strengths and skills in the performance of exercises which are designed to build a strong foundation before any

of the "classical" Pa Kua Chang sequences are taught. Park's idea is that if the student has not developed basic strengths and basic skills, they will not fully understand Pa Kua Chang. So his method develops students in progressive stages just as the masters of old.

In learning more about Park's Pa Kua and how to teach his Pa Kua, I've gained a great appreciation for the depth of this system and its adaptability to not only suit different practitioners, but also various opponent's and combat environments. In reading this book you will probably get sick of me emphasizing the point about how adaptable and variable Pa Kua Chang is to situation and individual practitioner. I emphasize this point in every chapter of this book because after answering literally hundreds of phone calls and letters about Pa Kua Chang in my capacity as the editor and publisher of the Pa Kua Chang Journal, the one point most people who are interested in studying Pa Kua don't get is that it can change from person to person and situation to situation. I've had dozens of people ask me, "Why are there so many different Pa Kua Chang styles if Pa Kua is only one hundred a fifty years old?" It is because every person should learn to do Pa Kua Chang differently in order to make it their own. As Park always says, "Pa Kua means changing."

On many occasions, I have seen Park get frustrated with the same kind of questioning. People at demonstrations and seminars will ask, "If somebody grabbed you like this, what would you do?" They do not understand that there is no "answer" to that question. The response to the grab would be a very spontaneous reaction and would be a result of exactly how the opponent executed the grab in terms of the direction of the force, the magnitude of the force, the energy of the motion, the angle and movement of the opponent's body position, the opponent's size and ability level, the surrounding environment, the timing and rhythm of the motion, etc. Out of 20 different grabs which appeared to be "the same" to an untrained observer. Park might execute a different response to each. The response is "in the moment," not a pre-calculated "technique." Instead of trying to explain all of these things. Park's typical response to an over zealous "what would you do if" question is, "Just die. That's all."

Personally, I would be very happy if the only things you got out of reading this book is an appreciation for the depth of Pa Kua Chang and a desire to take what is presented here and explore it on your own terms. Take what we have presented in these two volumes and see how many different ways you can combine them in practice. Once you have built a foundation, don't be afraid to experiment and try new things. If you already practice another style of Pa Kua, see how these ideas, movements, and concepts fit into your system. Explore the combinations and find out if they work in the two person practice environment. If something works for you in a very efficient and effective manner, then keep it, it's yours. If it doesn't work, go back to the drawing board and try to find out why. Was the distancing off? Was the timing wrong? Could the angle have been better? Everyone has different strengths and weaknesses and what works well for one may not work well for all. Pa Kua Chang study is about finding out what works best for you in any given situation. If it is natural, fluid, smooth, efficient, and effective, then it is Pa Kua Chang.

Enough of the component parts and principles of Lu Shui T'ien's Pa Kua Chang system have been presented in the two volumes of this book for the beginner to be able to learn to develop useful internal body mechanics and applications. It is up to you to do the work. If you are an experienced practitioner of Pa Kua, I hope that some of the exercises, ideas, and concepts presented here help you in the study of your own style. If you are new to this art, I hope that what we have written here will provide you with a foundation for future study. Have fun in your practice and research.

Dan Miller
Fall 1995
Carmel, CA

A Note on the Romanization of Chinese

The question of romanization of Chinese terms is always a difficult one. There is really no great romanization system for Chinese. Both of the commonly used systems, Wade-Giles and Pinyin have their shortcomings. We have chosen to express the Chinese terms in this volume in the Wade-Giles system of romanization simply because we used this system in the previous volume. We chose to use Wade-Giles in the first book because it had been the standard in the United States for years and we felt the terms were more familiar to the reader in that system. Now the Pinyin system seems to be more prevalent, however, for consistency we will stay with Wade-Giles. In order to help with the Chinese terms, we have included the Chinese characters for the terms in parenthesis after the first appearance of those terms.

As a simple guide to pronunciation in the Wade-Giles system, please refer to the chart below:

t, without apostrophe, as in Tao: is pronounced like d
p, without apostrophe, as in Pa Kua: is pronounced like b
k, without apostrophe, as in Pa Kua: is pronounced like g
j, without apostrophe, as in jen mai: is pronounced like r
ch, without apostrophe, as in Tai Chi: is pronounced like j

Chapter 1

Introduction



Chapter 1

Introduction

Welcome to the second volume of the *Fundamentals of Pa Kua Chang*! If you quickly skim through the contents of this book, you will see that the chapter headings are pretty much the same as those in the first volume. Hopefully you have taken the time to study and practice the material in the first volume in order to gain a foundation for the material which is presented here in the second volume.

In volume one, we introduced the reader to the background of both Park Bok Nam and his teacher, Lu Shui-T'ien, we discussed some of the basic theories of Park's system of training, and we presented some rudimentary footwork, body training, palm striking, and *ch'i kung* exercises. This volume continues from where the last book left off in terms of the training progression, but more importantly, this book will give you enough of the training methods, and ideas about how they might be combined in practice and in application, to enable you to begin to develop your own ideas about Pa Kua Chang training exercises, form routines, and martial applications. As we discussed in the previous volume, Lu Shui-T'ien's system of Pa Kua Chang, is a very systematic, progressive method of training which develops each individual student in a gradual, balanced, and complete manner. However, the goal of this progressive method is not to keep the student training exercise after exercise, form after form, year after year. Park's goal in developing a student is for the student to gain enough physical, theoretical, and practical

experience in the practice of the "fundamentals" that he or she can then begin to discover Pa Kua Chang on their own terms.

Park does not want the student to always follow his ideas, he wants the student to make Pa Kua Chang their own. He wants students to have their own ideas, come up with their own forms, have their own specialties, and create their own individual expression of this art. His job is to give students the fundamental tools, which includes the physical fundamentals as well as the theoretical principles, and then make sure that each student's individual expression of this art conforms to the overall principles. He does not try to insure that each student learns the exact same set of standard exercises and forms and performs them identically to everyone else in the school. That method of teaching is not Pa Kua Chang.

Park's method is to first develop the student's body in terms of flexibility, coordination, balance, and stability. Because every student starts from a different place in terms of these components, each individual has a slightly different training program. Along with that training, the student also practices methods which teach the proper mechanics of efficient physical motion for the development of subtle power, and begins to develop an internal-external harmony by uniting the mind, body, and breath through the practice of *ch'i kung* and meditation.

Once the student has made progress along these lines, he or she will then be taught the rudiments of Pa Kua Chang as we presented them

in the first book. The students learn a little bit about how to remain stable and balanced when employing various combat footwork methods, they learn how to begin to develop internal striking power, and they practice exercises which continue to develop their bodies in terms of flexibility, balance, and internal-external harmony. This is what we presented in the first volume.

Once the student has formed a foundation in all of the areas listed above, they will start expanding their knowledge in each of those areas. They will learn more about internal striking power by practicing the "forty eight month" palms and the "supplemental" palm exercises which are presented in Chapter 5 of this volume. They will learn how to use their elbows in both blocking and striking by practicing the elbow exercises which are presented in Chapter 6 of this volume. They learn how to begin to integrate some of the body training methods into the circle walk practice by executing a number of variations of the single palm change as presented in Chapter 3 of this volume. They will also learn more about footwork by practicing advanced methods of k'ou pu, pai pu, and walking the circle as presented in Chapter 2 of this volume.

Once the student learns all of these fundamentals, he or she is now ready to start learning an integrated Pa Kua Chang. Up until this point in the training program, the exercises and drills have only been components of Pa Kua Chang. The continuously flowing, twisting, turning, circling forms and applications which are characteristic of Pa Kua Chang have not really been prominent thus far in the training. This is because, in Park's system, the student was not ready for this training if he or she had not thoroughly practiced all of the fundamentals. So the beginning levels of practice in Park's school consists only of fundamentals, or prerequisites to an integrated Pa Kua Chang.

At the intermediate level, Park's Pa Kua Chang is made up of several basic component's as follows: circle walking, k'ou pu and pai pu footwork, eight direction rooted stepping, single palm change, double palm change, eight animal postures and their associated changes, forty eight month palms, supplemental palms, basic kicks, ch'i kung training, and the elbow blocks and strikes. Every circle

walking and linear combat form and application which is taught at the intermediate level consists of combinations of all of these exercises. If the students have practiced all of these components thousands of times as repetitive exercises, it becomes very easy for them to learn dozens of different form routines and applications based on these movements. More importantly, the students are also taught how to think about the combinations of the fundamental components such that they can begin to create their own forms, applications, and variations.

In Chapter 4 of this volume we present at least a dozen different variations of Pa Kua Chang's single palm change. All of these changes are based on exercises which were presented in the first volume of this book. Add to this the double palm executions from the palm training chapter, the sixty-four possible changes which come out of the eight animal training, the various circle walking components which are presented in Chapter 2 of this volume, and the elbow strikes which are presented in Chapter 6 of this volume, and you have an almost unlimited number of Pa Kua Chang forms, changes, variations, and applications that you can create by yourself.

In writing this book, we want to present you with enough material and ideas about how all of the components in both books can be integrated together so that you can begin to understand how to create your own Pa Kua Chang training routines and applications. If you only study a choreographed form routine, that is all you have. If you study component parts in a systematic method and then learn how those components can be blended in a variety of ways, then you have something with endless possibilities. You have something that can be adaptable in any situation and in any environment. You have something that is yours.

Getting the Most Out of This Book

Obviously, you are free to study any or all parts of this book as you like. However, we have some recommendations for how the exercises and drills in this book might best be studied in order for you to get the most out of this training process. Not all students in Park's school will train in this exact sequence because Park teaches each student by

prescription. However, this is a general sequence that you can follow for your own training purposes. The recommendations are as follows:

1) First, we recommend that you have practiced all of the material presented in the first volume and have a good experiential knowledge of that material. If you have not practiced the shaking palm, dragon back, and single and double palm change striking exercises sufficiently, you will not be able to get the most out of the palm and elbow exercises presented in this book. If you have not practiced the circle walking with the basic change of directions, the k'ou pu and pai pu exercises, and the eight animal circle walking form as presented in the last volume, the circle walking practice presented in this book will not be natural and fluid. If you have not practiced the "body training" exercises which were presented in the last volume, the single palm change variations which are presented in this book will be awkward for you.

So, number one, practice the material in volume one as a prerequisite to anything in this volume.

2) Begin the study of this book with the Tai Chi diagram circle walking as explained in Chapter 3 and the "standard eight" ch'i kung set presented in Chapter 7. It is best to practice the ch'i kung set for a few months before you try to practice the "forty eight month" palms. You should also practice the two "hiding flower under leaf" exercises that are shown in Chapter 4. These exercises will help to loosen your body and prepare you for the next level of training.

3) Next, begin to practice the single palm change variations as they are outlined in Chapter 4. These are all built from exercises you practiced in the first volume. Practice each one until it can be executed fluidly and smoothly with no breaks or hesitations in the movements. You can also start to practice the forty eight month palms (Chapter 5) and elbow sets (Chapter 6) after you feel you have gained an increased level of flexibility and suppleness through the practice of the standard eight ch'i kung set. Keep in mind that this practice includes a sequential study beginning with slow movements, then increasing the speed of those movements while maintaining smoothness,

fluidity, and precision; then practicing those movements with power; then practicing with both speed and power; and then integrating those movements will all of the eight direction rooted stepping techniques.

4) Now begin to practice the eight animals circle walking form (as presented in the first volume) utilizing the outside single palm change (variation #6 in Chapter 4) to change directions. You can also begin to practice combinations of the forty eight month palms and supplemental palm maneuvers. Experiment and see which ones flow smoothly and fluidly to the next. Create various combinations that feel comfortable to you and practice them statically at first, and then combine them with the eight direction rooted stepping footwork. A glimpse of Park executing some of these combinations is shown on the companion video.

5) After you have gained some experience with the material as outlined above, begin to incorporate the eight animal postures into the Tai Chi diagram circle walking. You can also begin to practice adding the forty eight month palm and supplemental palm maneuvers into the single palm change variations. Some hints about how to do this are given in Chapter 4. However, you can experiment and see which combinations work best for you. When experimenting, always keep in mind the *lien huan* ((連環 - continuously linked) principle which is explained in Chapter 2.

Now that you have practiced the eight animal form executing the simple directional change presented in the previous volume, the outside change as presented in Chapter 4 of this volume, and in the practice of the Tai Chi diagram circle walk as presented in Chapter 3 of this volume, you should now try and vary the order of the animal changes to learn how each animal can flow smoothly to the others. Thus far you have practiced this form changing from lion, to unicorn, to snake, to swallow, to dragon flying, to bear, to phoenix, to monkey. Now experiment and see how you can fluidly and smoothly change from lion to snake, from lion to swallow, from lion to dragon flying, etc. Experiment with all 64 possible

combinations of changes and see how you can smoothly and fluidly execute these changes on the circle and then on the T'ai Chi diagram walking pattern.

7) Next, begin to practice the basic two and three pole circle walking patterns, including the spirals, the small circles, and the figure eights. You can also begin to experiment with incorporating the eight animal changes in with the single palm change variations and the various palms and elbows. Some hints on the incorporation of the animals into the single palm change variations are given in Chapter 4 of this volume.

8) Next, try to incorporate the animal changes and the palms, elbows, and kicks into the one, two, and three pole footwork patterns. Sometimes you can avoid the poles in the execution of evasive maneuvers, and sometimes you can strike the poles with one of the palms, elbows, or kicks.

9) While transitioning through the steps listed above, try to find which component of Pa Kua Chang feels most natural and comfortable to you. It might be the footwork, it might be the palm executions, it might be the elbow strikes, it might be the kicks, the locks, the throws, etc. Once you have found your "niche," practice those drills with a greater intensity and more thought than the others. Park calls this "developing a specialty." In executing all of the exercises, forms, and drills outlined above, always think about how these things might be efficiently applied in combat. From all of the combinations of exercises and movements listed above, you can create an endless number of effective applications. Chapter 2 of this book will give you some ideas about the theory and strategy of Pa Kua Chang application. Research the utility of each of the motions you have created. Think in terms of the "jab, bridge, finish" sequence which is explained in Chapter 2. Some of the eight animal movements make great jab-bridge combinations. The bridge can easily be followed by other animal combinations in order to lock or throw the opponent, or the bridge can be followed by various palm and elbow combinations. Think about how all of

these things might be combined in a continuous and smooth manner, research the combinations with a partner, and then try them in a free sparring situation.

Throughout this book, we will emphasize variation and change. Park says, "Pa Kua means changing." It means changing in accordance with the situation, changing in accordance with the environment, changing in accordance with the opponent, changing in accordance with your individual character. Pa Kua Chang is about being naturally efficient, in accordance with your own individual nature, in any given situation.

In order to be able to learn how to adapt to any situation, you have to learn how to create from what you've been taught. Looking through the list of recommendations above, you may have questioned, "How do I link all of the animal forms together to create 64 changes?" or "How do I incorporate the forty eight month palms into the single palm change variations?" That is for you to find out. Practice the fundamentals until they become natural to you and then explore the combinations and variations. If you have practiced the fundamentals sufficiently, you will be surprised at what combinations start to naturally arise. Pa Kua Chang is for you to research and discover.

Park calls researching combinations and exploring variations "doing your homework." He does not give these answers to his students. He requires all of his students to do a lot of homework. They have to do the research and then show him what they discovered. If the changes and applications they created do not conform to the Pa Kua Chang principles, Park will lend suggestions and then tell the student to go back and re-do his "homework." His favorite line is, "I think you need to think about it some more."

By going through the process of researching the components of the art and how they are put together, the student learns about creating, adaptability, changing, and variability. This is the skill of Pa Kua Chang. Pa Kua Chang is something we teach to ourselves after being shown the fundamentals. That is why there are so many expressions of Pa Kua Chang in existence today, even though the art is only 150 years old. The old masters of Pa Kua Chang did not teach all of their

students the exact same way and the students did not follow the exact movements of their instructors. They all learned the fundamentals and then learned how to express the art in a way that worked for them. But it is all Pa Kua Chang because it is based on the same principles.

Park does not like to say that there are different "styles" of Pa Kua Chang. In his mind the Pa Kua Chang that everyone practices is all the same if the principles are there. Everyone is simply practicing different expressions of the same "style." Today everyone wants to categorize all of the different expressions of Pa Kua Chang into "this style" and "that style." In doing this, practitioners are limiting themselves by not seeing that all "styles" of Pa Kua include all of the same principles and thus they can all include the same methods. Variation of expression is part of the art.

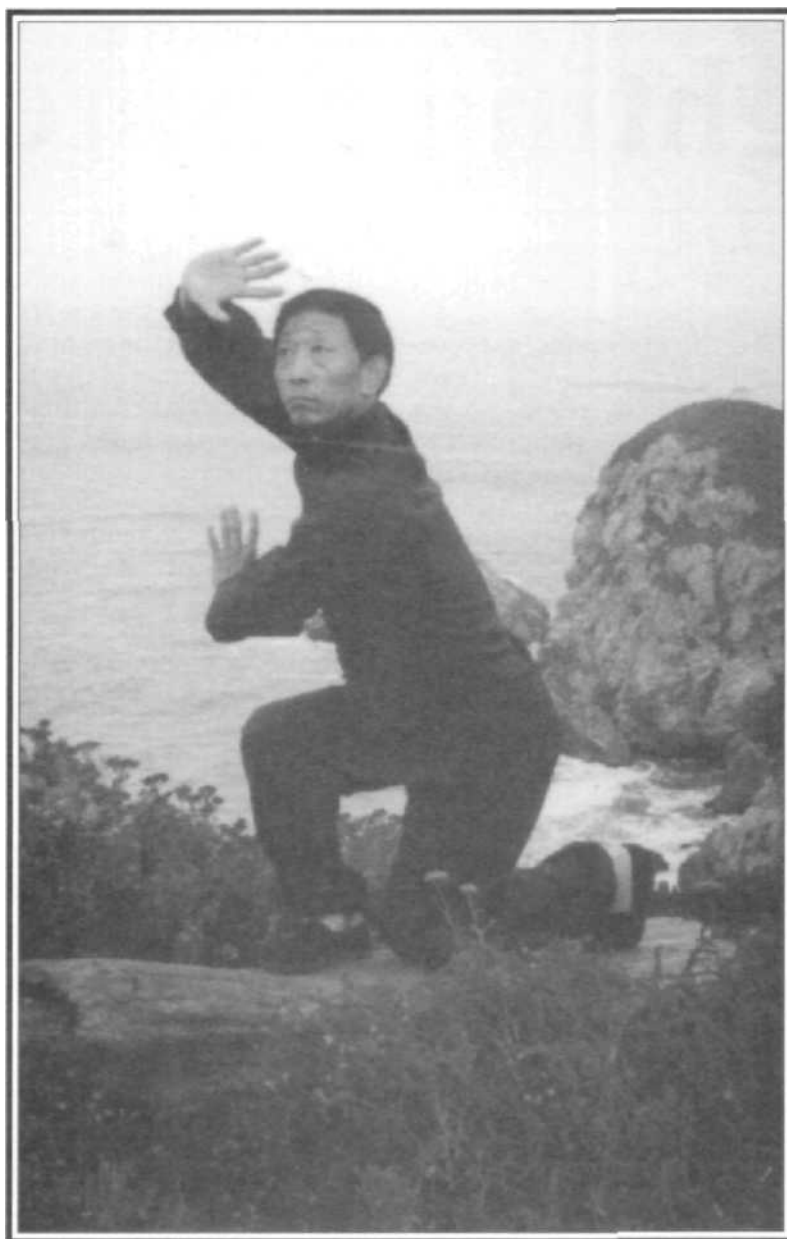
When I was visiting the late T'ai Chi Ch'uan master Fu Zhong Wen in Shanghai in 1991, he said the exact same thing about T'ai Chi Ch'uan. He said, "In the old days, no one who practiced T'ai Chi said that they did Yang style or Chen style or Wu style, T'ai Chi was just T'ai Chi." What he was saying was that although individual practitioners, or lineages of practitioners, expressed

the art differently, it was all practiced according to the same principles, so it was all just T'ai Chi Ch'uan. Limiting your understanding to the confines of a "style" will always limit your own individual expression of the art.

My recommendation to anyone wanting to learn Park Bok Nam's system of Pa Kua Chang is to practice all of the fundamentals as outlined in these two volumes and their companion videos and then research how all of these components can be combined in a variety of forms, movements, and applications. Do not stop your training and look for "new" exercises when you have completed "learning" the exercises presented in these books. Once you have learned the exercises, your Pa Kua Chang training has just begun! Take the foundation and build on it by exploring how these movements in the exercises can be linked together and employed in fighting. In order to check your progress, periodically attend one of Park's seminars or training camps and show him what you have discovered. He will be glad to make suggestions and corrections if he has seen you have really put some hard work and effort into your practice.

Chapter 2

Pa Kua Chang Fighting Strategy



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In the last volume of this series we discussed the "philosophical roots" of Pa Kua Chang by explaining the basic theories of *yin/yang* (陰陽), *the pa kua* (八卦), and the five elements (五行- *wu hsing*). We also presented some examples of how these theories might be directly related to the practice of martial arts. Park Bok Nam refers to these three concepts in Chinese philosophy as the theoretical "trinity" upon which all Pa Kua Chang strategy, training, tactics, and techniques are based. Park believes that every aspect of Pa Kua Chang must adhere to the principles of this trinity. If one component is missing, the practice, technique, or application will be unbalanced and incomplete. In this regard, he makes an analogy to sustainable life on earth. He says that the sun and the moon are represented by the *yin* and *yang*, the five elements represent the earth, and the constant rotational movement of the sun and moon around the earth is symbolized by *the pa kua*. Just as life could not exist without all three of these components (sun and moon, earth, and constant motion), Park says that a Pa Kua technique which does not contain all three principles of the trinity is "dead."

Philosophical Connection to Pa Kua Chang Martial Application:

A few examples of the philosophical trinity not being complete in an application of a martial arts technique would be as follows:
1) If a practitioner executes a technique and does not obtain the most efficient angle of attack, the *pa kua* theory of utilizing angles and positioning the body optimally has not been

followed. The theory and rotational angles and linear motion is expressed in the *Fu Hsi*, or "early heaven" arrangement of the eight trigrams as presented in the last volume of this book. The concept of utilizing angles in fighting is presented in more detail in this volume.

2) If in executing applications the practitioner does not use the rotational, circling, and spiraling principles to overcome his opponent with the least amount of force, resistance, and invasiveness, the *pa kua* theory of utilizing circular and rotational motions is being ignored. The theory of circular and cyclical patterns of motion is expressed in the King Wen, or "later heaven," arrangement of the trigrams as presented in the last volume of this book.

3) If in the execution of a technique, the practitioner focuses too strongly on one direction and gets hit from another, the *pa kua* theory of extending awareness to all eight directions has been forgotten. This theory is expressed in the balancing of eight directions expressed in the early heaven arrangement of the trigrams.

4) If the practitioner uses force which is not appropriate for the technique, either in trying to overpower the opponent, applying force at the wrong time, or applying force at an incorrect angle, then the five element theory has been violated because the creative and destructive properties of the five elements are not flowing naturally.

5) If the practitioner's movements are not stable and balanced, if one movement or application cannot connect to the next in a fluid, smooth, and even manner, if the practitioner ignores

low while striking high, or forgets the left while moving to the right, then the yin/yang principle has not been followed.

Philosophical Connection to Pa Kua Chang Training:

A few examples of a practitioner not following the philosophical trinity in designing a training program would be as follows:

1) Not considering every possible fighting scenario in practicing the art would violate the combinatorial aspects of the pa kua. This not only applies to such combinations as high/low, left/right, inside/outside, attack/defense, and long range/short range as we discussed in the first volume, but also considerations of environment and terrain, such as light/dark, rough/smooth, hilly/flat, or open/confined should be considered when practicing. Additionally, the practitioner considers the type of opponent he or she might be facing. Is the opponent tall/short, heavy/light, left handed/right handed, fast/slow, a puncher or kicker, an inside fighter or outside fighter, a grappler or a boxer, etc.

In order to follow the combinatorial theories of the pa kua, the practitioner considers all combinations of these yin/yang pairs when researching his or her art. For instance, the practitioner may ask himself, "How would I best handle a large, strong, slow grappler on rocky terrain?" And of course the combinations can become more complex. One may be fighting a large, fast opponent who is skilled at using all sixteen of his striking weapons and the fight might take place in a dark, confined environment (like a bar). If all of these scenarios are not addressed in training, the practitioner is violating the pa kua combinatorial theory and thus the practice is not complete.

2) If the practitioner does not practice a balanced program of ch'i kung which addresses all of the five yin organs and their respective energy states in a balanced manner, the five element system of checks and balances is not being addressed. If the practitioner is concentrating too heavily on any one aspect of training and ignoring others, the five element theory of checks and balances is also being violated. Practicing too much ch'i kung, too

much fighting, too much footwork, too much circle walking, too many palm exercises, too much meditation, or too many breathing exercises, at the expense of all of the other aspects of training is not following the principles of the five element theory. 3) If the practitioner does not balance his or her overall training routine between yang exercise (fighting, power exercises, etc.) and yin exercise (energy building methods of ch'i kung and meditation), then the overall program is not balanced.

The philosophical correspondences which are listed above are just a few of the many that one should consider in practice and fighting. Although most of these aspects of martial arts training and application may seem like common sense requirements, having the philosophical model as a base will not only ensure that the practitioner does not forget any of these training or fighting principles, but will also provide a theoretical base in researching different aspects of the art. Without a theoretical base and a solid foundation, it will be difficult for the student to continually discover deeper levels of training.

In evaluating a student's martial applications or training program, Park will always look for the presence of the principles of the philosophical trinity. Park says that following the principles of the philosophical trinity means that the student is being natural and the training is complete. Park says that these theories are the theories of nature and all things that are natural follow these theories. Pa Kua Chang is an art which follows natural principles belonging to the earth, the environment, and the human. Because these principles are natural, they can be used universally and adapt to any given situation.

In the remainder of this chapter we will build on the basic concepts outlined in the previous book and we will discuss some strategy of Pa Kua application so that the reader will have some basic principles to use as guidelines when training to use Pa Kua as a fighting art. However, first we will discuss how some of the strategies of Pa Kua Chang have evolved from the theories of the philosophical trinity.

The Evolution of Pa Kua Strategy

As stated above, all Pa Kua Chang fighting strategies and applications come from the theory of *yin/yang*, five elements, and *pa kua* - the principles of nature. As we discussed in detail in the last volume of this book, *yin* and *yang* represent the dynamic interaction of opposites, the five elements represent a system of checks and balances and interactive play between components of a system, and the *pa kua* represents angular, linear, rotational, and cyclical movement, variation, change, and combinatorial theory. Throughout history, almost all aspects of Chinese religion, society, art, and culture have used these models as a philosophical base for their theories, and warfare is no exception.

All of the great military and martial minds in China's vast history have drawn from the philosophy of *yin/yang*, *pa kua*, and five elements in constructing their theories and strategies of warfare. The relationship between Chinese philosophy and the strategies of war become quite evident when one turns to the classic transmissions of warfare (*Sun Tzu's Art of War* being the most well known) which have guided China's military development from the Warring States Period through present time.

Throughout a large part of China's modern history (T'ang Dynasty through the Ch'ing Dynasty), all military leaders, in order to earn their military appointment, were required to pass the imperial examinations. These examinations were based on the compilation of information contained in seven classic military documents: *Tai Kung's Secret Teachings*, *The Methods of Ssu-ma*, *Sun-tzu's Art of War*, *Wu-tzu*, *Wei Liao-tzu*, *Three Strategies of Huang Shih-kung*, and *Questions and Replies Between T'ang T'ai-tsung and Li Wei-kung*. All of these classics emphasize similar strategies, such as overcoming one's opponent through subtle skill instead of brute force and outwitting one's opponent through speed, stealth, evasiveness, and flexibility. Even modern day military books in China, like *Mao Tse-tung on Guerrilla Warfare*, adhere to the same principles and theories that were valid centuries ago. All of these strategies can be traced back to the theoretical models of the *yin/yang*, *pa kua*, and five elements.

Drawing from the teachings of the classics and

the fundamental theories of Chinese philosophy, each generation of military and martial leadership has adapted to the situation at hand. In all varieties of warfare in China, from hand-to-hand, weapon-to-weapon, foot soldier-to-mounted soldier, mounted soldier-to-mounted soldier, combat with armor and shields, chariots, or cavalry; all the way to present day conventional weapons, the specific tactics and weapons of fighting have changed, but the theories and principles of warfare have remained the same.

Pa Kua Chang theory is no different than those principle laid out in the military classics and in fact, more than any other combative art form in China, it adheres to the principles of Chinese philosophy which formed the foundation for all military thought in China. Tung Hai Ch'uan's (董海川) genius was in taking fighting techniques he knew from his Shaolin based training and modifying what he knew in order to be consistent with the theories of Chinese philosophy. The originator of Pa Kua Chang went back to the roots of theory and strategy in inventing his art and in doing so left a true art form; one that is open to variation and change from one practitioner to another and one that is adaptable to an endless variety of situations.

The Birth of Pa Kua Strategy

Pa Kua Chang is an art based on natural principles, not on individual strengths, techniques, environments, or situations, and therefore it can be successfully applied in any situation and by any practitioner. However, an examination of its development shows that it was developed in a specific time and place in Chinese history and many of the techniques that have been passed down to today's practitioners are reflective of that moment in history. Pa Kua Chang was not originated, nor was it nurtured through its infancy, as an art for soldiers on the battlefield or for boxers in a ring. The art "earned its stripes" in its use as a guerrilla style tactic employed to fight multiple opponents. Therefore, in order to understand some of the primary fighting tactics the Pa Kua Chang practitioner has historically employed when applying his art, one must look back to the circumstances of its origin.

During the time when this art was becoming popular in China as a very effective combat

method, the majority of the practitioners utilizing this art were working professionally as body guards, caravan escorts, and residence guards. The bandits and thieves of the day, who were the primary opponents of the Pa Kua practitioners, usually carried light or concealed weapons and employed "dog pack" like tactics in attacking their opponents. Therefore, those who worked as bodyguards, residence guards, and caravan escorts needed to be able to handle simultaneous attacks from multiple opponents who were armed with weapons.

In order to successfully handle opponents employing these tactics, one needed to be highly mobile, very quick and thorough in application, and very efficient in dealing with more than one attacker at a time. Pa Kua Chang became famous in this era because its practitioners were able to draw from its underlying theories and adapt perfectly to this situation. The practitioners were highly mobile, lightning fast, observant and aware of all directions, and thus could deal with multiple attackers.

Pa Kua's strategy of outflanking the opponent was developed ideally for this situation because a practitioner who was faced with two or more attackers could get to the outside and behind one attacker and put that attacker between him and the other attackers. Pa Kua's use of turning and twisting maneuvers in rapidly changing directions was also ideal for being able to address multiple attackers. Pa Kua's use of quick and efficient percussive techniques which broke bones or otherwise quickly damaged the opponent in short order were also ideal for churning through one opponent after another.

Pa Kua Chang is a very effective fighting art because the practitioners who used the art when it was still in its infancy were employing it in a very difficult combat environment. In those days you either learned from your mistakes or died. Thus, those that were practicing the art in its early days were developing strategies and tactics which are highly effective in many situations. If an art is effective in fighting multiple opponent's who have weapons, it is certainly going to be effective against one opponent who is unarmed. However, because the principles of Pa Kua are adaptable to any situation it is incorrect to assume that the specific techniques that have been handed down

in Pa Kua Chang forms and fighting sets are all there is to Pa Kua Chang.

Pa Kua Chang Adaptability

While the tactics and techniques listed above defined Pa Kua at the period of time when it was being used most prevalently as a combat art in real life or death situations, these tactics and techniques do not strictly define Pa Kua Chang because there is no way to strictly define an art which is based on principle. The art changes as the situation dictates and it changes to a certain degree with each practitioner who practices the art. This is why Tung Hai Ch'uan taught each of his students differently and why every Pa Kua instructor has a different interpretation of the art. It is not an art which should be copied exactly from the teacher to his or her students. Every student is unique and thus every student should be taught to develop his or her Pa Kua based on their own individual strengths and weaknesses. Additionally, each practitioner takes the principles of the art and develops them in a way which is suited for a number of various combat environments. If every student was taught exactly the same and only practiced the art in a well lit, smooth floor martial arts school, the practice would not be following the philosophical trinity, nor would it be natural. Park Bok Nam's teacher, Lu Shui-T'ien, required that he practice his Pa Kua Chang in many different environments. Park was required to practice in the martial arts studio, on the beach, in the mountains, in rocky river beds, and in bamboo forests. He was also required to develop fighting "specialties" which best suited his aptitude, ability, and character. He was also required to research other styles of martial arts, both in studying those arts himself from Lu Shui-T'ien and Lu's martial arts friends, and in fighting opponent's who specialized in those other arts. *Sun Tzu* recommended:

"If you know the enemy and know yourself; in a hundred battles you will never be defeated. When you know yourself, but are ignorant of the enemy, your chances of winning or losing are equal. If you are ignorant of both yourself and the enemy, you will certainly be defeated."

In order to "know himself," Park was required to develop his own individual specialties based on his strengths and abilities. In order to "know the enemy" Park studied the enemy's strengths. In studying these other styles and fighting practitioners who specialized in those styles, Park was able to better research various Pa Kua Chang applications as they would apply in different environments and against different opponent's.

Adapting the Art to Fit the Situation

Although submissive joint locks which control an opponent, rather than break their joints and bones immediately, and grappling techniques which are used to take the opponent to the ground, wrestle with them, and choke them out, are becoming popular today, they are not very effective against multiple attackers or opponents who carry concealed bladed weapons. When fighting multiple attackers, if you take too long dealing with one, or you go to the ground with one, the others will quickly be on your back. Also, if you try to wrestle with someone who has a concealed knife, you will easily be cut or stabbed.

Because ground grappling and submissive techniques do not work well in the combat situations which the Pa Kua practitioners who developed the art most often found themselves, Pa Kua practitioners have historically not practiced submissive techniques or ground fighting. But it does not mean that Pa Kua Chang does not have these things. Pa Kua is an art based on sound theoretical principles and thus it can address any combat scenario. Practitioners who are taught to understand the principles of Pa Kua can learn to research and apply those principles in any situation.

Pa Kua Chang strategies in the late 1800's and early 1900's were designed to fight multiple attackers and deal with them quickly and efficiently. The forms and techniques which have been passed down in choreographed sets reflect these strategies. However, we should not think that Pa Kua Chang is limited to these specific techniques or the multiple attack scenario. It is wrong to think that because Pa Kua Chang was not practiced as a ground fighting art, that it does not have ground fighting, or because it emphasizes the palm strike, it does not strike with the fist, or because it primarily employs circular footwork, it

does not have linear applications. Pa Kua has ground fighting, punching, kicking, joint locking, inside fighting, outside fighting, etc., because Pa Kua principles can be effectively applied to all of these situations. Pa Kua Chang is an art based on principle, not technique or situation. Because it is based on principle, it is universal. It can be applied by any practitioner in any situation, environment, or scenario.

The Individual Expression of the Art

Pa Kua follows natural principles. The principles of nature dictate that all individuals are graced with their own unique nature, their own character, and their own personality. In order to follow the principles of nature, each individual follows his or her own individual nature. Taoist teachings invite each individual to discover his or her own nature and live life in accordance with their nature and natural principles. Following the "Way" in Taoism is discovering how one's own nature fits seamlessly into the ever changing ebb and flow of the natural world.

Since history indicates that Tung Hai Ch'uan was a Taoist and developed his art while living at a Taoist temple, it would seem natural that he would teach his art to his students based on the Taoist principles. An examination of what his students learned from him and how it was in turn passed on to their students reveals that he did teach every student in accordance with that student's unique qualities and characteristics.

In teaching his students, Tung Hai Ch'uan took into account each student's martial arts background, character, size, aptitude, ability, personality, age, and physical condition. Because he taught each student differently, based on that student's unique qualities, every lineage of Pa Kua Chang has its own flavor. Even fundamental components of the art, such as the "eight mother palms," are executed differently in every lineage. Tung's students and grand students all approached the transmission of their art as Tung did. They taught each student in a way that was unique to that student. Unfortunately, in recent years, instructors have begun to "standardize" Pa Kua forms and teach the same choreographed form routines and fighting applications to all of their students, regardless of the student's size, aptitude, or character. This severely limits the art and the

individual student's progress in the art.

The first and foremost principle of Pa Kua Chang is adaptability and change, thus those practitioners who try to define Pa Kua Chang practice or application and rigidly structure its practice and application are moving away from the art. Art is something that is individually expressed and is adaptable. Providing too rigid a structure to an art and judging it based on that structure is stifling the growth of the art and the progress of those who practice it. In Park Bok Nam's school, students are taught the principles of the art before they are taught forms or techniques, they are taught to identify their individual strengths and weaknesses and are given a prescription program which is designed to improve their weaknesses and highlight their strengths. They are taught how to adapt their art to various opponent's, environments, and fighting situations while remaining true to the fundamental principles of Pa Kua Chang.

Principle vs. Technique

Pa Kua Chang is an art which is based on principles, not on techniques. This does not mean that Pa Kua does not have techniques. It means that at the root of all techniques are the underlying principles and thus all techniques can be varied or changed in accordance to those principles. In studying an art which is based on principles instead of techniques, the practitioner is able to take his or her art and make it their own. If the principles are understood, the practitioner can take that art into any situation or scenario and learn how to apply it. This is why Park Bok Nam is so adamant in his teaching that the student learn and understand the principles as they apply to their individual body type and character, not learn choreographed forms or memorized techniques the same way as everyone else in the class or even the same way that the teacher executes them.

Learning Pa Kua Chang could be compared to learning to play music. And in this respect, Pa Kua Chang is the improvisational Jazz of martial arts. In learning music, a student will start out by learning the theory of the music and the rudiments of their instrument by practicing numerous drills with chords and scales, progressing from simple

to more complex. Here, all students are taught pretty much the same concepts, theories, and exercises. This is necessary in order to gain a foundation. Next they move on to learning simple compositions which were created by others. Here they are learning how to put the theories and exercises into practical usage. From there they gradually move on to play more challenging pieces. At this juncture they are playing music, but it is not their own, it is still someone else's music.

Some people are comfortable spending their lives playing the compositions of others, and that is fine, but it is not Pa Kua. As the musician progresses, he or she will first begin to add some of their own phrases, ideas, and embellishments to the melody line of those compositions that they have learned from others. They begin to take what someone else has created and add their own individual style, flavor, and taste to that music. They are creating their own expression based on another individual's ideas. From here some musicians will begin to compose their own pieces. By doing so, they are expressing themselves through their art. Now it becomes a real art because it is that individual's expression of him or herself through the music. But it is still not Pa Kua unless the composition is improvisational.

I relate Pa Kua Chang to improvisational Jazz because high level Pa Kua Chang is "in the moment." It is a correct, natural, appropriate individual response to each instant in time. This is the concept of *wu wei* (無為) which was discussed in the previous volume of this book. High level Pa Kua application is not pre-calculated or preconceived, it is not reproducing techniques that one has copied from another; it is true improvisation. High level Pa Kua is about creating in the moment, it is about responding to an opponent's movement in ways that you may have never expressed before in practice. It is about being unpredictable, yet still responding appropriately. A high level Pa Kua practitioner can respond to any situation, even if they have never faced it before because he or she has worked long and hard to make the principles of Pa Kua Chang a part of their natural response to any situation. Park calls this "fighting by feeling."

Many people ask questions like "Does Pa Kua have ground fighting?", or "Do Pa Kua practitioners use their fist?" The answer is, "Yes, because it is a

principle based art, Pa Kua can handle every kind of fighting situation and utilizes every available weapon." Although most Pa Kua practitioners do not practice a lot of ground fighting, the principles of Pa Kua fighting certainly apply as much to ground fighting as they do to fighting on your feet, or with weapons, or any other form of combat. If you watch any good ground fighter, you will notice that they adhere to all the principles of Pa Kua. They are relaxed, they don't use force against force, they utilize optimum angles of attack, etc. These are all principles of Pa Kua Chang.

Any good fighter will vary his fighting strategy based on his opponent and his environment. The opponent could be large or small, tall or short, male or female, fast or slow. The opponent's strengths and weaknesses vs. your own strength and weaknesses will also come into play. The opponent might be a boxer who is good with his hands, a kicker who is good with his feet, a wrestler who is good at grappling, he or she might be carrying a weapon, etc. Additionally, the environment plays a role; it might be dark, it might be sunny, the terrain might be rough or smooth, the area might be wooded or open, it might be in a confined area with limited space to move, etc. So how does one handle all these different situations? Do you say, well I'll study Pa Kua in case I'm attacked by multiple opponents, I'll study *wing chun* in case I ever get attacked in close quarters, I'll study *jujitsu* in case I ever have to fight on the ground, I'll study *ninjitsu* in case I'm attacked in the woods at night, etc. This sounds ridiculous, but there are a lot of people who are out there doing this type of thing.

I believe that individuals jump from one art to the next trying to complete their martial arts training because very few martial arts teachers are teaching complete martial arts methods based on principles which can be applied to any situation and/or students are not pursuing these arts in great depth. Any martial art which has been around for a hundred years or more is bound to be a good, complete martial art system, otherwise it would not have lasted. However, today too many people do not fully understand the art they practice or get bored with it before they reach a depth of understanding. Studying choreographed forms and applications and mimicking these memorized routines to get belt ranks falls far short of studying a complete method and understanding how its

principles are applied under varying circumstances.

When Park Bok Nam gives tests in his school, he does not require the student being tested to simply demonstrate a list of choreographed routines and applications that he has been shown. Park's only concern in testing a student is to see if the student understands the principles of Pa Kua and how they are applied. When Park tests a student, the student will be told, "Based on all of the drills, exercises, theories, principles, and forms which you have learned so far, design eight two-person application sets which adhere to the principles of Pa Kua." The student will then be given a few months to work with a partner and design eight two person sets which each consist of four or five offensive moves with defensive counter moves. Each set begins with the two partners walking the circle while facing each other, partner "A" will attack, "B" defends and counter attacks, "A" defends that attack and initiates another attack, etc. This exchange lasts for four or five moves and then ends with both partners walking the circle facing each other, yet walking the circle in the opposite direction. The same sequence is then demonstrated on the opposite side. The student must demonstrate eight such original sets. In evaluating the students who are being tested, Park looks to see that all of the principles of Pa Kua are being adhered to in the execution of the maneuvers and critiques the students accordingly.

By requiring the student to invent his or her own applications, Park is forcing the individual to really think about what they are doing and how the principles of Pa Kua are used. While other systems of Pa Kua have such two-person drills as part of their curriculum, they are usually handed down from the teacher as choreographed routines. Park would rather the student work to come up with their own ideas based on the principles he or she has learned rather than teach students applications directly. When the student is required to come up with their own ideas and then receive feedback about how well those ideas adhere to the principles of Pa Kua, it is easier for the student to begin to understand the principles of Pa Kua and apply them in various situations. At this point the art begins to become their own, not something they are mimicking from someone else.

Strategies of Pa Kua Chang Fighting

In this section we will discuss some of the important principles that a Pa Kua Chang practitioner will adhere to in fighting. These are ideas and strategies which are taught after the practitioner already has an experiential knowledge of proper mechanics of movement and body alignments. Relaxation, body mechanics, body alignments, internal and external harmony and connections, use of intention (the mind), *ch'i* awareness, and fluidity and continuity in motion are all principles that are first trained during solo exercises, practice sets, and forms. After the student has gained some knowledge of these components of Pa Kua Chang training, and learned how to control his or her own body in the martial arts context, he or she is ready to take these principles and learn how they relate to a two person encounter.

In addition to the principles listed above, there are other principles and theories which must be studied and practiced when the art is taken from the solo exercise to the two person, or fighting, environment. We will discuss a few of the principles which Park Bok Nam feels are most important in the sections which follow.

Distance and Degree

Whenever Park Bok Nam lectures about Pa Kua Chang's use as a fighting art, he always talks in great depth about what he calls "distance and degree." In order to be efficient and effective in fighting, you must always be concerned about the distance between you and your opponent and the body alignment, or angle between your line of power and your opponent's line of power. This applies to every part of your body and throughout the entire execution of a movement or application. Additionally, the two concepts of "distance and degree" can mean the difference between a technique which is masterfully executed with little apparent effort, and one that is awkward, cumbersome and requires the use of muscular strength in its application.

While "distance and degree" are important factors in every movement and thus each application should be studied in detail in order to appreciate the correct distances and angles which make that technique work best, there are a few guidelines to use when studying these concepts. We will now discuss a few of these concepts.

Know your Distance

When applying Pa Kua Chang as a fighting art, the practitioner has an arsenal of weapons at his or her disposal and a variety of ways to apply each weapon. In researching how each of these weapons can best be employed, it is important that the student know what distance the weapons and techniques are most efficiently used and how to combine these weapons and techniques as the distances change during the encounter. In general, the feet, heels, hands, wrists and palms are long range weapons, the elbows and knees mid-range weapons, and the shoulders, hips, and head are short range weapons. These weapons are most efficiently utilized at these distances and are best combined together as distances change. For example, it would be inefficient to throw an elbow at an opponent from a long range because the time spent closing the gap in order to get close enough to throw the elbow is wasted.

Another aspect of fighting which is related to distance is the target of attack. Park states that when most beginning students think about fighting, they are overly concerned with hitting the opponent's body or face. Park's idea is that instead of blocking, joining, or slipping the opponent's hand or an arm as you are working your way in to strike the body, there will be situations where it is best to hit or break the hand, arm, foot, or leg of the opponent as you are working your way in. His theory is that if the opponent throws a hand or foot at you in an effort to strike you and you block without damaging it, he is free to use that weapon again. In many instances, Park likes to take the opponent's

weapons away from him as he works his way in to strike the opponent's body or head. He calls this "taking the fang's out of the snake so it can't bite you." In examining distance, one must consider defending and attacking at various distances with one's own weapons and targeting the opponent's weapons and his vulnerable areas at different distances.

In studying attack and defense weapons, we always consider the joints. The joints are the best weapons we can use and they are also the ideal places to inflict damage on the opponent. The distances one must consider in researching the efficient and effective applications of the art are outlined below. When describing each distance we will give some examples of applications that might be applied at these distances. Keep in mind that all of these applications are appropriately combined with footwork and continuous combinations of techniques. Usually the combinations will follow a "continuously linked" pattern so there will be no hesitation between consecutive strikes, locks, or throws.

Regarding "blocks" versus "strikes," one must remember that in Pa Kua Chang there is rarely any real differentiation between an attack and a block. Most blocks are meant as attacks. Either the block itself damages the opponent, or the block is seamlessly linked to the follow-up attack. The practitioner's energy is always flowing towards the opponent when executing a "block." Consequently the rhythm of movement is "one," not "one-two."

Distance One: We will refer to the first distance as "being out of range." This is the "safe" distance where neither opponent can touch the other.
Distance Two: Your long range weapons meet the opponent's long range weapons. The second distance is the zone where your hand can touch the opponent's hand or foot. Obviously the opponent's foot can extend out farther than his hand and your foot can extend out farther than your hand, but for the purpose of this discussion we will count these distances as being in the same relative "zone."

At this distance, good techniques to use include striking the opponent's foot, ankle (if he kicks at you), hand, or wrist, with a sharp, crisp, powerful back fist using your knuckles as

weapons. This kind of strike is aimed at certain vital points on the back of the opponent's hand, top of his foot, or around his ankle or wrist. Utilizing whole body power and a whipping wrist action, you can easily damage the opponent's hand, wrist, foot, or ankle at this distance. If an opponent has grabbed you by the wrist, in some situations, a well aimed back fist to the top of his hand will work well at this distance. Of course, these kind of strikes in Pa Kua Chang are also always combined with footwork. From this distance you could also grab the opponent's extended hand or foot.

Distance Three: Your long range weapons meet the opponent's mid-range weapons and your mid-range weapons reach the opponent's long range weapons. At this distance, your hand reaches the opponent's elbow, your foot reaches his forward knee, and your elbow reaches his hand or foot.

At this distance you can strike the opponent's elbow with your fist or palm, kick the opponent's forward knee, or strike his extended hand or foot with your elbow. In some situations where an opponent has grabbed Park's hand and pulled it low, Park will execute a powerful elbow strike to the top of the opponent's hand. This strike is combined with footwork and immediate and continuous follow-on movements. At this range you can also apply joint locks to the opponent's wrists and elbows.

At this range a nice follow-on to an elbow to the opponent's hand is a back fist to the opponent's elbow. The combination of an elbow strike immediately followed by a back fist with the same hand is often used in Park's Pa Kua because the combination is very fast and efficient. This combination will always follow the progression of the opponent's joints. If someone kicks and you elbow his ankle, the elbow is immediately followed by a back fist to the opponent's knee. If the elbow is applied as an arm break to the opponent's elbow, then the back fist is to the opponent's shoulder. If the elbow is applied to the opponent's shoulder, then the back fist is to the face or head.

Also, keep in mind that when we are talking about the various distances here we are focusing on attacking the opponent's joints because these are generally areas where you can do the most

damage as you work your way in to the opponent's head and body. However, do not forget there are also many strikes you can use to the opponent's forearms, upper arms, lower legs, and upper legs.

Distance Four: Your long range weapons meet the opponent's short range weapons, your mid-range weapons reach his mid-range weapons, and your short range weapons meet his long range weapons. Here your hands can reach the opponent's hips, shoulders, body, and head. Obviously there are many striking targets here. Rules of thumb in Park's system is that the fist is applied to joints while the palm is applied to soft fleshy areas of the body. On big, muscular opponent's it is best to strike the joints. Well aimed strikes to vital points around the shoulders or hip joints will damage an opponent even if they have a lot of muscular cover on other areas of their body. Near the joints there are many nerves close to the surface of the skin that are not usually protected by muscle. The attack angle is always important when attacking the joints, nerves, and vital points.

At this distance your elbows can reach the opponent's elbows for applying both strikes and joint locks. Grabbing the opponent's wrist with either hand and then following up with an elbow to the back of the opponent's elbow is the most common lock at this distance. As always, footwork is important in these applications. In applying Pa Kua joint locking applications, the palm strikes can either set up the lock or follow the lock. Some of the best palm strike opportunities come out of joint locks which offset the opponent's balance, or break their joints. Keep in mind that in Pa Kua Chang we seldom, if ever, lock just one of the opponent's joints. If you do not lock the chain of joints that lead all the way to the spine, it will be easy for the opponent to escape.

At this distance your kicks can reach the opponent's rear leg and your knees can be used to parry the opponent's kicks or lock his knees. Your short range weapons (hips and shoulders) can also be used at this distance to parry an opponent's long range weapons. These parrying techniques are always combined with footwork.

Distance Five: Your mid-range weapons meet the opponent's short range weapons and his mid-range weapons reach your short range weapons. Here your elbows and knees can strike the opponent's body, hips, and shoulders. Of course, as we get into these closer ranges, the long range weapons can also be used. There are times when you are in close enough to strike the opponent's body with an elbow or knee and you might chose to use a fist, palm, or foot. It all depends on the angle, the setup, or the follow-on technique.

Besides the obvious elbow and knee strikes that can be used at this distance, one can also use the hips and shoulders in locking the opponent's elbows and knees. A nice application of the "hiding flower under leaf" body movement, which is presented in Chapter 4 of this volume, is to grab the opponent's wrist with your hand to deflect his strike and then step in and twist your body into the opponent's elbow while pulling his arm across your body.

There are many combinations of all of your weapons that you can apply at this distance. This is the distance where the Pa Kua Chang practitioner is comfortable. This is where he likes to get when a fight occurs in order to finish the opponent quickly.

Distance Six: Your short range weapons reach the opponent's short range weapons. Here you can apply many different kinds of hip and shoulder strikes, locks, and throws. This is the best distance to be at when executing throws because at this distance, and with the proper angle, it is easy to offset your opponent's balance (however, you have to be careful because you are also vulnerable to being thrown if your body alignments and angles are not right).

We have briefly run through these distances and some examples of possible applications at these distances so you can get the general idea of how Park thinks about distance. If you apply a sequence of combinations on an opponent and you attack him at distance two and then your next strike is at distance six, Park would say that you wasted time. You wasted time because it will take too long for you to get from distance two to distance six and thus you have left a window of opportunity for your opponent to counter.

Rooting as a Function of Angle

All practitioners of the internal styles of Chinese martial arts talk a lot about "rooting." Students are told to relax and align the body so that if someone were to push on them, the force would go into the ground. There are various exercises and two person drills which people practice in order to learn "how to root." However, what is often times over looked, especially by those who only practice static exercise in the process of learning how to root, is that rooting is a function of your body alignment in relation to the opponent's force. There is no such thing as "rooting" without the reference of an incoming force and there is nothing static about rooting unless the incoming force remains at a constant force vector. In Pa Kua the practitioner roots by constantly changing his or her line of stability (root) in relation to the opponent's incoming force. In Pa Kua, this is done primarily through footwork.

Maintaining one's stability, or root, while off balancing the opponent, or taking away their root, is one of the most important aspects to practice when learning how to set up an opponent for a technique which will "finish him off." In Park's Pa Kua, the stepping drills outlined in the first volume, starting on page 107, introduce the beginner to these concepts. Both distance and degree (angle) are important concepts when learning how to off-balance your opponent while remaining stable (rooted) yourself.

Angle Vs. Strength

The muscles of the human body are all designed to work at certain optimum angles of force. In applying internal martial arts techniques, especially joint locking and throwing techniques, one goal is to utilize your optimum angles of natural strength while controlling the opponent by taking his angles of strength and optimum alignments away from him. In applying all techniques, the practitioner needs to study the angles. This includes the angles which your body and lines of force are utilizing in relation to the body alignments and movements of the opponent. If the practitioner learns to execute techniques through the optimum series of angles, he or she can manipulate and control the opponent without

using much force. Pa Kua Chang's use of circular and rotational motions was founded on the principle of using appropriate angles of force that take away the opponent's strength.

It is very easy for someone to resist a constant linear force. However, it is difficult, even for a strong person, to resist a force which is constantly changing angle (i.e. a circular force). It is even more difficult to resist multiple forces which are constantly changing angle (more than one circle). And it is the most difficult to resist these multiple forces when they are applied at optimum angles (taking advantage of the opponent's weaknesses). When the Pa Kua practitioner applies his art, the techniques should all present the opponent with a multitude of circular and rotational forces applied at the optimum angles and areas of vulnerability.

Allow No Time or Space

When a Pa Kua practitioner attacks an opponent, from the beginning of the attack to the time the opponent is incapacitated, the practitioner should never allow the opponent time to react or space to maneuver. Pa Kua attacks are continuous. Once they are initiated, the attacks do not stop until the opponent is finished. There is constant flow and constant movement. The practitioner moves like water flowing rapidly down stream. There should be no gap in any series of attacks or attack/defense combinations. Like Pa Kua Chang forms, Pa Kua Chang application is seamless. An observer should not be able to tell where one attack ends and the next begins. Attack becomes defense and defense becomes attack.

Too often we find beginners launch an attack, or counter an opponent's attack and then wait momentarily or back off a little bit to see what happened. This is a waste of both time and space. If you hesitate between movements or give the opponent space to maneuver, you are not using time or distance efficiently. Pa Kua Chang fighting is about learning how to be efficient, using both time and distance to your advantage.

All of the above listed principles relate to the concepts of distance and degree. Primarily all of these concepts, if applied optimally, will serve to increase the practitioners efficiency, speed and targeting. When testing students on their fighting

applications, Park will always look to see that the student continuously maintains the optimum distance and angle on the opponent.

Jab, Bridge, Finish

Park Bok Nam defines the three stages of a Pa Kua Chang attack as "jab, bridge, and finish." The "jab" phase of the attack is simply the first move which is executed in an attempt to gain a reaction from the opponent or "set him up" for what is to come next. This could be one of any number of realistic moves or techniques which offset or gain a response from the opponent. The "jab" is usually a realistic technique which will damage the opponent or offset his balance if he does not appropriately respond to it. A skilled opponent is not usually going to fall for a false ploy, a faint, or a fake. You have to give them something realistic which causes them to react. The jab could be a strike to the opponent's hands, wrists, or arms, shoulders, or head, a deflection of their arms, a kick to their legs, a grabbing and swift pulling of their wrist, a grabbing and bending of their fingers, etc. There are many possibilities.

Park Bok Nam's teacher, Lu Shui-T'ien, would use his knuckles, fingers, or palms to strike vital points on Park's hands, wrist, and arms when he was "jabbing." Park said that his teacher was so accurate at striking vital points and so powerful in these subtle strikes that Park would cringe in pain as his entire arm would go numb. Park's teacher would say, "You don't worry. This damage is a long way from your heart. You will not die."

In executing the "jab" phase of the attack we will always assume that the opponent is skilled and will effectively counter the jab. Depending on the opponent's reaction to the jab, the practitioner will jab again, or enter the "bridging" phase of the attack.

The "bridge" is the move which follows the jab and is executed in order to "bridge the gap" or otherwise close with the opponent in order to get inside to the opponent's vital areas where you can really do some serious damage. Although the practitioner always approaches the jab-bridge combination with an idea in mind, the exact type of bridge which is used will always depend upon the opponent's initial reaction to the first move.

Park says that there is only one "idea" when attacking. Everything that follows is an appropriate response to the opponent, the environment, and the energy flow. This typifies the concept of *wu wei* which was discussed in the previous volume of this book.

Park's ideas about bridging include techniques and movements which are designed to effectively create an opening of what Park calls the opponent's "center door" (中門- *chung men*) or "side door" (側門- *ts'e men*). Opening up the center door includes any entry which opens up the opponent's center (head and chest). Opening up the side door includes any entry which exposes the opponent's flanks, and sides.

Park's rule of thumb here is that it is always better if you can open the opponent's door and/or keep your own doors closed using one hand. This means that in either attacking the opponent or defending yourself, you rarely want to have two of your hands (here the term "hands" can include the whole arm) on one of his hands or one of your hands on his hand while your other hand is on his other hand. In other words, you want to avoid tying up both of your arms at once. You always want to try to have one hand free. The way to do this is to employ the use of the elbows and the footwork.

For example, if the opponent grabs one of your wrists and then tries to strike you with his other hand, do not block that strike with your free hand. That strike can be "blocked" by using your footwork, and/or the elbow of the arm he has grabbed. This way you can gain a superior position and be free to simultaneously strike him with your free hand. Park frequently uses his elbows and shoulders as second and third "hands" when he is attacking and defending. He can successfully do this because of his superior knowledge of angles, precise footwork, and a high degree of flexibility in his joints.

Once the Pa Kua Chang practitioner gets inside on the opponent, he will continue to stay inside until the job is finished. There is no bouncing in, striking once, and then bouncing back out as in sport fighting for points. Once you are inside, you stay until the job is finished. Again, it is your footwork and knowledge of angles and distance that keeps you there.

If the bridge is successful, then we can follow up with a finishing technique. If the opponent is skilled, we may need to employ several quick, repetitive bridging maneuvers before we can get inside on him or out flank him. A skilled opponent is not going to let you continue hitting him from a vulnerable angle. He is going to move. Utilizing your footwork, you stick on the opponent like glue. Where he goes, you go and you don't let up until the job is done. Park Bok Nam calls getting inside on the opponent "opening his door." He says that once the door is open, you do not let the door close until you have finished the job.

The "finish" is the strike, break, kick, or other technique or series of techniques which literally finishes the fight. While a worthy opponent will not always allow one to get away with a quick one, two, three attack, Park has students think about initiating attacks with this philosophy in mind.

When attacking an opponent, Park says that you have in your mind a "one, two, three" idea which consists of a jab, bridge, and finish, but at each stage you are ready to change based on the opponent's movements. In most instances, you will execute "one" (a jab), and begin to initiate "two" (the bridge) before you will be able to feel if you can execute "three" (the finish).

When you initiate "one," you will be sensitive to what the opponent's reaction to that jab will be while you are beginning your execution of the bridge. Because the bridge has been calculated to be a technique that will work against the opponent's most likely response to the jab (and therefore the jab is also a set up) the bridge has a good chance of working. If the bridge works, the practitioner rolls right in to the finish (which is usually a series of techniques combined together). However, the opponent may move in a manner which is unexpected, or execute a good counter to the jab or bridge and therefore the practitioner needs to know how to sense the opponent's movement and change appropriately. He or she may have to execute several bridging techniques before the opponent is opened up for the finishing techniques. All of these technique combinations should be applied smoothly and continuously.

When Park's students are researching fighting combinations, they will keep the jab, bridge, finish theory in mind. A worthy opponent is not

going to let you just walk up and hit him. In studying the jab-bridge-finish sequence when designing attacks, the practitioner is prepared to first offset the opponent or otherwise gain a reaction from them. Based on the opponent's reaction the practitioner will immediately follow with an appropriate bridge to get inside the opponent's defense and bridge the gap to set up for a finishing technique. This series of movements must all flow smoothly from one to the other with no hesitation or loss of momentum, otherwise the opponent will be able to easily counter all of the techniques. The skilled Pa Kua practitioner relies on his footwork, ability to rapidly change directions, and a continuous flow of well placed, efficient techniques to overcome the opponent.

Lien Huan

(連環 - Continuously Linked)

There are many forms and styles of Pa Kua Chang which identify themselves as being *lien huan* (continuously linked). All good Pa Kua instructors will emphasize the idea of being continuous, or seamless, in the execution of forms. Continuity, fluidity, and smoothness are important aspects in the practice of Pa Kua Chang. This idea is emphasized in forms because it is vitally important to Pa Kua fighting.

If executing any combination of techniques, the practitioner always wants to apply the combination in such a manner that each strike is easily followed by another effective strike. You never want to put all of your eggs in one basket or reach a dead end in the chain of possible combinations. If each execution can easily connect with another, Park says that the movement is "natural." If the student executes a technique and then is situated such that there is no easy, smooth, and continuous way to flow to another technique, Park says the technique is "dead."

When fighting, or in the practice of solo forms, a Pa Kua practitioner looks as though he never stops moving. There are no breaks, cuts, or hesitations in his movements or energy. Every move flows seamlessly into another. This ability to continue adapting, moving, and changing

according to the situation is a prominent characteristic of Pa Kua Chang fighting.

In linking form movements and applications together, Park says that there has to be at least a series of three in order for the movement or application to be "linked." In order to practice this principle, Park's students will be required to take movements they have learned as single practice sets or form movements and begin to link them together in smoothly flowing sequences. For instance, after learning the eight animals form, the forty eight month palms, and a number of single palms change variations, the student would be required to do "homework" and discover how these different movements might be linked together. As an example, a good linking sequence would be "hiding flower under leaf" followed by "swallow penetrating through the forest" followed by "sliding the window shutter to look at the moon."

In building these linking sequences in practice, the student learns how to create, execute, and apply his or her own form sequences. First the sequences are linked together and the student practices them in a slow, smooth, and continuous manner. Once the student has linked the movements together in this manner, he or she will then learn how to develop a "rhythm" which is appropriate for the sequence. All movement sequences and forms have a rhythm which is based on *ch'i* flow, power generation, and application. If a student executes a form and it does not have rhythm, Park says that the form is "dead."

Pa Kua Chang form sequences are not supposed to be performed all at the same pace like T'ai Chi. Beginning level forms can be executed this way in order for the student to focus on fluidity and continuity in motion, smoothness of energy flow, internal and external harmony, and linking of body alignments. However, once these components have been sufficiently developed, the student progresses and learns how to integrate a rhythm into the form. If the student puts movements together which do not flow smoothly, or do not have proper rhythm, Park will say, "This does not connect. You need to try something else to make a good connection."

Sequence of Training

The beginning student in martial arts training is a long way from utilizing the concepts of *wu wei* and being improvisational in their execution of techniques which are appropriate to any given situation. In order to get from one place to the other there should be a progressive sequence of training. Pa Kua Chang, as well as the other internal styles of Chinese martial arts, are considered by many to be "graduate level" martial arts. It makes sense that before you get to the "graduate level" you have done your undergraduate work.

The undergraduate work will consist of exercises, drills, and forms which improve the students overall strength, balance, coordination, flexibility, and stability. Along with these basics the student will also learn about alignment, whole body connection, whole body power, harmonization of mind, body, and breath, and efficient body mechanics. These skills must be practiced until they become second nature or, as Park says, the student develops a "*kungfu* body." Awareness also plays a big part of this basic training. In training repetitive drills and exercises the student not only conditions the body, but he or she gains a keen awareness of their own body, its energy, balance, center, and connections. This is a vital step in the training process because until the student gains a keen awareness of the movements and energy of his or her own body, it will be difficult to interact with an opponent. In fighting with another person the practitioner must develop an awareness of the opponent's movements and energies and know how to control the opponent's body. If the practitioner cannot already control his or her own body to a high degree, it will be difficult to learn how to control someone else's body and be aware of the relationships between the two bodies.

Training to Fight

Once the student in Park's school gains a good foundation as described above, he or she will then begin to take the movements which have already been taught and learn how to apply him in a fighting situation. As discussed previously, Park does not teach applications to his students. He

teaches them principles and the students must then discover how those principles can be applied in combat.

In Park's school, this is a three step process. The student will first engage in what Park calls "imagination" sparring. In this stage the student will try and put together what he or she thinks to be effective sparring combinations. When approaching any Pa Kua Chang application or researching any Pa Kua fighting technique or strategy, Park Bok Nam always has his students keep one rule in mind. He says, "Always imagine that your opponent is bigger, stronger, and better than you are."

In researching Pa Kua applications, the student will imagine an opponent in front of them and then execute a fighting sequence either as an attack or a reaction to an opponent's attack and try to get a mental image of whether it would work or not. Once the student comes up with an attack or defense sequence he or she thinks is in accordance with all of the principles of distance and degree and continuously linked movement, he or she will begin to imagine possible ways the opponent might react to the execution of the combination and then work out variations in order to conduct further research.

After the student has researched a particular combination sequence and the fighting scenario and variations, he or she then begins to work with a partner to see if the combinations will work in reality. First the partner just plays the dummy and the student executes the movements to see if the movements adhere to the principles as he or she "imagined" they would. If the student is satisfied with the sequence, then the partner begins to try and counter the sequence and test the student's ability to vary the sequence in accordance with the partner's movements and counters.

In researching variations, the partners try to use a methodology based on the principles of Pa Kua Chang. They explore all possible footwork angles the partner could employ to counter the student's original move, they explore all of the possible arm counters and leg counters that might go along with the footwork angles. They try out all of these possibilities and think about the best solutions.

These two person drills begin with very short

combinations and sequences. The students may start researching simply two or three move sequences. Once they are comfortable with these short sequences, longer combinations and sequences can be added. From here the students will continue to escalate the length of the sequences, the speed of the combinations, and the power behind the movements until they have reached a free sparring mode.

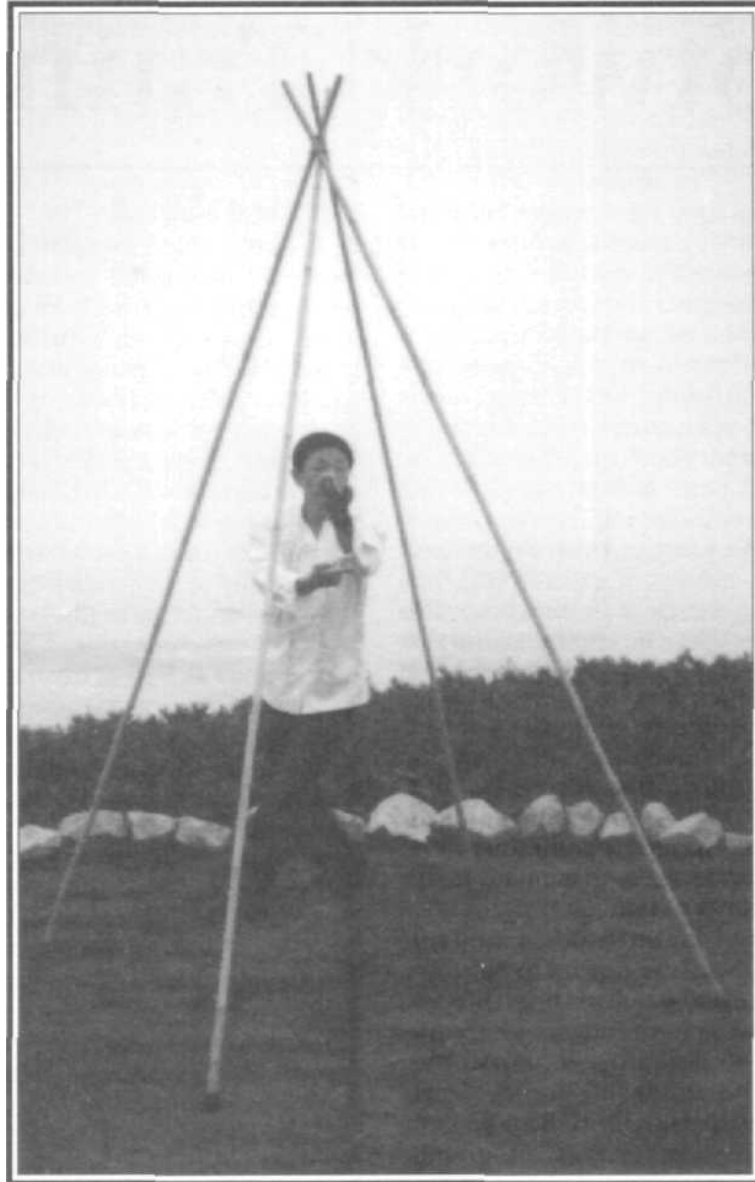
In the free sparring mode, the combinations and sequences which were practiced in research sparring are all going to change as the situation dictates and this is precisely how these combinations are tested. Combinations in Pa Kua are not strictly defined as one-two-three techniques where "I do this, then he does this, then I do this." They are more like branches of a tree. The student begins a sequence and from that beginning learns about which branches are strong and which will break. Learning sequences and combinations becomes a process of learning how to flow with and adapt to the movements of the opponent.

In going through this process over and over with different variations to given sequences, the student is not trying to gain an arsenal of techniques as much as he is gaining an innate feeling for how to move and adapt. Memorizing the sequence of techniques that work is not as important as gaining a body knowledge of how and why these things work. Once this knowledge is gained, the student can learn how to fight by "feeling" instead of "technique."

Once the student finds out what works on one partner, he or she will then go and find out if the strategies and sequences work on different partners who are of various sizes, strengths, ability levels, and martial arts backgrounds. The student can also research the applications on different surfaces such as a slick floor, a paved street, a grassy lawn, a wooded area, a hill side, or a sandy beach, to find out how the applications might have to be varied in order for them to work in all environments. Once he or she feels comfortable that a certain sequence is workable, then Park will take a look at it and make suggestions. This is how students in Park's school learn how to apply Pa Kua.

Chapter 3

Pa Kua Chang Footwork Training



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Pa Kua Chang Footwork Training

In the footwork training chapter of the last volume of this book we primarily focused on the "eight direction rooted step training." This training provided a strong footwork foundation for many types of Pa Kua Chang practical application. Included in that chapter we also presented an introductory section on Pa Kua Chang's circle walk practice and the practice of the *k'ou pu* (扣步) and *pai pu* (擺步) maneuvers. Once the student in Park's school has a basic understanding of the "eight direction rooted stepping" footwork, he or she will continue to practice those techniques, but the focus of the footwork training will then turn primarily to the circle walk practice. This practice begins with the basic circle walking that was presented in the last volume of this book and gradually builds to more advanced techniques and training. In this chapter we will discuss Pa Kua Chang's circle walking practice in more detail and then present some of these more advanced circle walking components.

Why Walk the Circle?

The circle walk forms the foundation of Pa Kua Chang training for a number of important reasons, each of them having to do with the development of fundamental physical skills, internal cultivation skills, and fighting skills. In this section we will describe some of the physical benefits, internal skills, and fundamental fighting skills the Pa Kua Chang practitioner gains from the practice of circle walking.

Physical Benefits

The physical benefits of the circle walking practice include an increased overall physical strength, improved balance, full body coordination, and functional flexibility. Additionally, cardiovascular health can be improved with the walking conducted at a semi-rapid pace for a sustained period of time. While the basic circle walking practice will give the practitioner benefits in all of the above mentioned areas of physical skill, there are also circle walking variations and special methods which will specifically focus on each of these areas.

Legs: In terms of physical strength the circle walk practice will benefit both the legs and the upper body as well as torso and upper and lower body coordinated strength. Obviously the legs benefit from the walking itself. A practitioner who wants to focus on strengthening the legs will walk in a lower posture. Additionally, all circle walk variations (as outlined in the next section of this chapter) benefit the legs in different ways. In other words, the stepping method can be modified depending on what aspect of leg strength the practitioner is trying to develop. For example, sometimes practitioners practice a high "crane step" whereby the foot of the stepping leg is lifted to about knee height before stepping forward. This trains the practitioner to be stable and balanced on one leg and thus provides a foundation for Pa Kua's leg trapping, kicking, and sweeping techniques. Some practitioners take this idea a bit farther and walk on top of bricks, poles that have

been driven into the ground, or different sized stones that have been arranged in a circular pattern. These are all methods of improving balance and stability while remaining in motion. Park Bok Nam's teacher had him walk the circle in a river bed full of different sized stones which were placed various distances apart. He utilized the crane step in this training.

In general, a Pa Kua practitioner who is walking the circle with the focus on developing leg strength will primarily be concerned with leg strength which facilitates stable, balanced, and smooth whole body movement in coordination with the steps.

Upper Body: When training specifically for upper body strength the Pa Kua practitioner will walk the circle for long periods of time while holding static upper body postures. This practice facilitates the training and strengthening of secondary muscle groups and tendons. When holding the static upper body positions the practitioner will try to relax the major muscle groups and thus access the smaller secondary muscles and tendons which are responsible for body alignment and stability. These muscle groups are not usually under conscious control because they are not the muscles which actually perform physical body movements. Their function is to keep the body in place and stable while the bigger muscles are actually performing the movement of the torso and limbs.

By holding upper body postures until the major muscles are fully fatigued, the secondary muscles have to work harder and thus they are trained more completely. Exercises such as weight-lifting work to strengthen the major muscles, however, they do not train the secondary muscles and "stability" muscles, ligaments, and tendons as fully. The result of static posture holding is a very stable, connected, and integrated whole body power. In Park's school the students train this aspect of the circle walk practice while holding the eight "animal" postures which were presented on pages 189 to 198 of the first volume of this book. Park recommends that students work up to walking the circle for one hour while transitioning through these eight postures. A one hour work out of this nature will have the student holding each of the eight postures continuously for about

eight minutes each.

Torso: In Pa Kua it is extremely important that the torso (which will include the areas of the waist, hips, pelvis, and inner thighs) is strong and flexible. The torso provides the connection between the upper and lower extremities. In all internal styles the principle of power "coming from the legs, directed by the waist, and expressed in the hands" is very important. The "waist" in this case includes the inner thighs/groin area, the hips and pelvic region, and the lower torso. If the movement of the torso is not strong and coordinated with the entire body, the power in the legs will not be expressed in the hands.

During the circle walk practice the torso is trained during the change of direction. While practicing the basic circle walk practice most schools will change directions by executing the single palm change. The movements of the single palm change are extremely important in training the torso. When changing directions and executing the twisting and turning movements of the single palm change the practitioner focuses on the movement being driven by the legs and being directed by the inner thigh/pelvic region. Numerous variations of the single palm change are presented in Chapter 4 of this volume.

The primary movement utilized to change direction during all circle walk practice is the single palm change. The single palm change is the most important move in Pa Kua in terms of training the body and developing the power of Pa Kua. The single palm change is also the most important component of Pa Kua in its combat application. If a practitioner can learn how to execute and apply the single palm change properly, he will be well on his way to developing a high level of Pa Kua skill.

Like everything else in Pa Kua, there are many variations of the single palm change. Each school will execute the single palm change in a slightly different manner and within each school there are also many variations that are practiced. Pa Kua is based on the principle of change, therefore, nothing is fixed. In practicing any aspect of the art, whether it be stepping method, the single palm change, or any given technique, the Pa Kua practitioner will execute a wide variety of variations. I know of no complete system of Pa

Kua that only executes one variation of single palm change. Most schools will have at least five or six different ways of executing this movement. Everything from the hand and arm positions, to the direction the body twists, to the positioning of the feet, to the positioning of the body are varied in the practice of single palm change.

Whole body coordination relies on the proper movement of the upper legs and lower torso and thus the change of direction on the circle during the circle walk practice also develops the practitioner's ability to coordinate the upper and lower body. Additionally, the turning and twisting movements executed during the change of direction on the circle serve to develop a functional flexibility.

By functional flexibility we are referring to training which works to stretch and loosen muscles that will need to be supple and loose during the execution of Pa Kua. It is great if someone can perform the full splits, however, performing the splits or being able to put your foot behind your head is not nearly as functional in Pa Kua as having a loose and supple twisting and turning movement throughout the whole body, especially in the pelvic region. There are many individuals who have very limber leg muscles, however, when asked to stand with their feet and knees facing forward and twist their hips as far as they can to one side or the other, they discover that the muscles in their pelvic region are not so loose. In Pa Kua, functional flexibility involves twisting and rotating the muscles and suppleness in the joints; twisting the legs, twisting the hips, twisting the torso, twisting the shoulders, and twisting the arms. Additionally, the twisting is executed in a coordinated fashion while maintaining whole body connection. These elements are all trained in the single palm change and the other exercises that were presented in the "body training" chapters of both volumes of this book.

In terms of learning how to apply Pa Kua in an actual combat environment, the change of direction is the most important component of the basic circle walk practice. It is within the change of direction that the techniques of Pa Kua are usually applied. The change of direction in the circle walk practice also trains the Pa Kua body coordination, full body integration, functional

flexibility, and whole body power. The torso is trained so that the upper and lower body are in harmony and Pa Kua's rotational power is developed while executing the change.

Body Methods: Here we will use the term "body methods" to describe the height of the body, the alignment of the body, and the upper body positions used when walking the circle. When speaking of body height in reference to Pa Kua Chang circle walking practice, practitioners often refer to the "three basins" (*san pan* - 三盤). The three basins are the upper, middle, and lower, and refers to the height of the body as determined by the bend in the knees. In the upper basin posture the knees are only bent slightly. In the middle basin posture the knees are bent more and thus the body is lowered, and in the lower basin posture the knees are bent so that the thighs are almost parallel to the ground while the practitioner walks the circle.

Obviously, the lower one bends the knees while walking the circle, the stronger the legs will become. Lower basin posturing is primarily a leg strengthening exercise. The normal circle walking position is middle basin. One will walk in the upper basin posture if they are a beginner and have weak legs or if they are focusing the practice on the development of the upper body and do not want the legs to tire before the arms.

The alignment of the body when practicing the circle walk primarily has to do with the position of the torso, which includes the waist, hips, pelvic region, and inner thighs/groin area, and the spine. Some schools will teach the beginning students to walk the circle with the hips, shoulders, and head square to the path of the circle instead of looking in towards the center of the circle. In this practice the beginner is concentrating on the foot work and the hands are either held down by the sides of the body with the palms pressing downward or are in front of the body (either at lower abdomen or chest level) in an "embracing" posture. Some schools also utilize this body posture while holding arm positions where both hands are extended out to the sides of the body in some fashion (there are many variations on this theme).

Eventually all schools of Pa Kua teach the students to walk the circle with the eyes looking in

towards the center of the circle. The body is twisted from the inner thigh area so that the hips are facing at a 45 degree angle in towards the center of the circle. The shoulders are aligned with the hips. The different upper body postures the practitioner will hold while walking the circle in this manner are many. Each school will have their own set of eight separate postures that they use. The most common posture is the "guard stance," which is also known as the "millstone" posture, the "dragon" posture, or the "green dragon thrusts its claws" posture. In Park's school the other variations of upper body postures are depicted in the "eight animal" postures.

Another variation which occurs in the circle walk body posture is the position of the spine. While most schools will maintain a straight spine, some teachers will have their students hold the spine perfectly vertical while others will have their students tilt the spine forward slightly. The tilted spine, characteristic of the Yin Fu style, brings the body weight forward a bit so that it is centered between the legs (or just slightly in back of center). When the weight of the body is more towards the center, between the legs, the change of direction can be executed faster.

Internal Cultivation

Internal cultivation during the circle walk practice involves the cultivation of a mind/body connection, the development of what is referred to in Chinese as "stillness in motion," a connection between the "inside and the outside," and a keen awareness of one's "center." During the circle walk practice the mind is calm and the breathing smooth. The combination of a calm mind and smooth breathing is the first step in creating a strong mind/body connection and a feeling of being "still while in motion" (the inside is "still" while the outside is in motion). Beyond that there are many different images and visualizations that different schools of Pa Kua will utilize during the circle walk practice in order to create a stronger mind/body connection. Some use something as simple as focusing on an object such as a tree or pole which is placed in the center of the circle while others have more elaborate visualizations. Some imagine walking through water, thick air, or waist deep mud, others imagine that they are walking on thin ice

or on a very slippery surface, while others imagine energy moving in their body in various ways. The images and visualizations that can be used are endless. Personally, I have found the KISS (Keep It Simple, Stupid) principle to be the most effective. The more elaborate the visualization, the farther removed from the concept of "stillness in motion" one becomes. In Park's school we primarily use a center pole or tree to focus on and the visualization of walking on thin ice.

Awareness of one's center and how that center relates to the rest of the body while walking the circle and changing directions is another important concept. In Pa Kua Chang the practitioner is very concerned with the relationship between his center and the opponent's center. He will want to "protect" his center while trying to off-balance the opponent's center. Additionally, most of the movements in Pa Kua require that the practitioner become skilled at moving from his center or moving around his center. Thus, the keener the awareness of the center and how it relates to the rest of the body during movement, the more effective and efficient the practitioner will become. The practitioner works to become aware of his center in the circle walk practice both during the walk and during the directional change. At various times, Park will have students focus on their *tan t'ien* (丹田) during the circle walk practice to improve the student's awareness of his or her center.

Internal cultivation in the practice of circle walking can be further divided into *ch'i* (氣) cultivation and mental cultivation as described below.

Circle Walking as a Meditative Practice: The circle walk exercise of Pa Kua Chang originated as a Taoist *ch'i* cultivation and meditative practice. In the world of Chinese martial arts, this practice can be compared to the *Chan Chuang* (站樁), or standing meditation practice which is an integral part of the Shaolin and Hsing-I Ch'uan training systems. However, there is one important difference; in Pa Kua Chang circle walking the practitioner is constantly moving. The circle walk, or moving meditative practice directly reflects the Taoist influence. The Taoists were

concerned with a unification of Man, Heaven, and Earth and therefore believed that if the meditative practice was conducted while in constant motion, one could better blend with the patterns of nature and absorb the *ch'i* of Heaven and Earth. Nothing in nature stands perfectly still and thus remaining in constant motion while meditating is more natural. Whereas the Buddhist meditation is static and the focus is inward, the Taoist circle walking practice is a moving meditation with the intention focused outward. In this circle walking practice, the practitioner seeks to blend with the natural world.

The practitioner who walks the circle with the meditative aspect of the training as a focus will walk at an even, fluid, steady pace. The speed of the walk can be slow to moderate. The walking step should be natural, comfortable, and continuous. The knees should be bent and the hips and waist sunk slightly so that the *ch'i* sinks to the *tan t'ien*. Lowering the center of gravity encourages the *ch'i* to sink; maintaining a smooth, fluid walking motion stabilizes the *tan t'ien* so that the *ch'i* will settle. If the body bobs up and down or wobbles back and forth while walking, the *tan t'ien* will be disturbed. When the *ch'i* sinks to the *tan t'ien*, the mind can more easily maintain a meditative focus.

While walking, the practitioner will maintain focused on an object such as a tree or pole which is placed at the circle's center. The breathing is smooth and relaxed and the practitioner may choose to repeat a "mantra" while walking. This mantra does not need to be of religious significance, it can be as simple as repeating, in your mind, the number of times you have walked around the circle. It can be anything that will keep the mind from wandering.

Typically the practitioner will walk in one direction for a desired number of rotations and then switch directions and walk the other direction for the same number of rotations. Training sessions last between 30 minutes and one hour with the practitioner circumnavigating the circle's perimeter, alternating between the clockwise and counterclockwise walking directions. The method utilized to change directions will vary from school to school. When training the circle walk as a meditative practice, the change of direction is

always very simple and executed in a smooth and fluid fashion so as not to disturb the practitioner's mental focus and concentration. The upper body posture the practitioner assumes while walking will -also vary from one school to another. The practitioner may choose to hold the same upper body posture throughout the practice session, or change the upper body postures with the change of directions on the circle. Each of the different upper body positions is designed to have a specific influence on the body's energy.

Mind/Body integration is one of the most important aspects of any internal martial art. Therefore, the mind plays a very important part in the circle walk practice. At the beginning levels, when the student is trying to work on becoming comfortable with the physical movements of the circle walk, the mind remains calm and relaxed, focused on the center of the circle, while gently reminding the body of the important points of practice. Basically the mind is trying to become aware of the physical body and thus takes a physical inventory. Are the elbows sinking downward? Are the shoulders relaxed? Are the steps light? Am I bobbing up and down or wobbling back and forth? Am I allowing my energy to sink to the *tan t'ien*? These kind of gentle reminders serve to increase body awareness and help the practitioner remember the important points of the practice.

After the practitioner becomes comfortable and familiar with the physical movements of the practice the mind can become increasingly aware of what is happening in the body. Some schools of Pa Kua will teach certain mental visualizations designed to move energy in the body. While some of these visualizations can become quite intricate, Park feels that the mind should begin to become more quiet instead of more active. The physical movements of the circle walk and the changes of direction will move energy where it needs to go in a naturally correct manner. Therefore, the student should allow the energy to move as it will and simply observe the movement and become aware of how the energy is naturally moving in the body.

Once there is an awareness of the energy in the body, the student can then follow the natural movement with the mind. Park simply

recommends that the mind be relaxed, the energy sink to the *tan t'ien*, and that the mind have a keen awareness of the physical movement. If all movements are executed smoothly and continuously with focused intention then there can be a full mind/body connection.

Circle Walking for *Ch'i* Cultivation: Walking the circle with *ch'i* cultivation as the main priority in practice will not differ greatly, in terms of mental focus, from the meditative circle walking practice discussed in the last section. In the meditative practice the practitioner's goal is to maintain a calm mind and focused concentration while the *ch'i* collects in the *tan t'ien*. In walking the circle for *ch'i* cultivation, the mental focus and breathing pattern will remain the same, however, the walking step, body posturing, and direction change will become a bit more complex.

When walking as a meditative practice, the practitioner's step is smooth and natural. A natural heel-toe walking step executed in a smooth, fluid natural walking manner is well suited for meditative practice as it is the most natural and comfortable. This step is sometimes referred to as the "lion step" or the "tiger step" by Pa Kua Chang practitioners and was presented in detail in the last volume of this book. In walking with *ch'i* cultivation as a priority, the practitioner may want to change the walking step to the "snake step" (also known as the "dragon step" or the "mud walking step") or the "crane step" as these stepping methods are designed to encourage a strong flow of *ch'i* from head-to-toe. In the "snake step" the heel is only brought up off the ground slightly when stepping, and as the foot is brought forward, the bottom of the foot remains parallel to the floor and hovers just slightly above the floor. When the foot has come forward and is ready to step down, it is placed on the ground such that the entire foot lands flatly on the ground at the same instant. There is no heel-toe rolling motion as in the "lion step." The "snake step" is a bit more difficult to perform than the natural heel-toe walk of the "lion step," however its advantage is that it helps bring *ch'i* down to the legs and feet and thus it is a good method to employ in *ch'i kung* circle walking practice.

The "crane step" is similar to the "snake step," in that the stepping foot slides out above the ground and is placed down flat, however, in the "crane step" when the back foot is picked up off of the ground it is brought up to the level of the knee of the other leg before it slides out to take the advancing step. Lifting the leg helps "pump" the *ch'i* down to the stepping leg and also helps the practitioner develop balance and stability.

While the "snake step" or "crane step" footwork encourages a balanced flow of *ch'i* to the legs while walking, the practitioner's static upper-body posture and focused intention will influence *ch'i* movement in the upper body. Each school of Pa Kua Chang will typically have eight different walking postures which the practitioner will transition through during the course of the *ch'i kung* circle walking practice. Each posture is designed to have a different influence on the body physiologically and energetically.

Typically the practitioner will walk in one direction holding a certain upper body posture for a desired length of time and then change directions and walk in the opposite direction holding the same posture. Upon the next change of direction the practitioner will then change to a different upper body posture and perform circle revolutions in both the clockwise and counterclockwise directions holding that posture before changing to another posture.

By the end of the practice the practitioner has spent time walking in both clockwise and counterclockwise directions holding all eight of the static upper-body postures. Each posture is usually held for the same number of circle revolutions. However, since each posture influences the *ch'i* circulation to the body's vital organs in a different manner, a student who is experiencing a particular health problem may be advised to hold one or two postures longer than the others in order to help his or her body seek a balance.

Holding a static upper-body position while walking the circle with focused intention and calm mind helps to balance the *ch'i* in the body and gather *ch'i* in specific areas as influenced by the unique posturing. The movement sequence executed while changing directions on the circle is designed to take the *ch'i* that has been gathered

and direct it to new locations. The movement of *ch'i* will differ with each different changing maneuver. Some changes will promote a spiraling movement of the *ch'i*. Some changes will influence its movement upward or downward, while other changes will encourage the *ch'i* to collect or disperse. Each change effects the movement of *ch'i* in the body in a different way. In Park's school students begin with simple changes of direction and gradually move on to more complex changes which promote the energy flow in the body in different ways.

Through the process of continually gathering *ch'i* during the static-posture walking phase of the practice and then moving it through the body during the various changing maneuvers executed when changing directions on the circle, the aware practitioner will gain valuable experiential knowledge concerning the ebb and flow of *ch'i* in the body. However, if the student begins to practice complex changes too soon, he or she will not be able to maintain *ch'i* awareness throughout the changes.

In the first volume of this book Park Bok Nam recommended that the student practicing the *ch'i kung* circle walking method walk in one static posture until a "*ch'i* feeling" is developed throughout the body. After the practitioner has cultivated the "feeling," he or she should then execute the directional change in a smooth, fluid, and connected manner so that the *ch'i* feeling remains constant during the change. The focus while walking in the static posture is to feel the body fill with the energy of that posture. When executing the change, the awareness is placed on maintaining the full body *ch'i* feeling while the body's energy shifts and adjusts with the physical movement of the change.

When talking about how long a student should practice the circle walk, Park says that in order to gain the most benefit from the practice and cultivate the most energy, the student needs to learn how to use the will to overcome a lazy mind and body. Park says that when the body begins to tire, the body's natural protection mechanism will start to send signals to indicate it is time to stop the exercise before the body becomes overfatigued. At this point, Park says that it is the "lazy mind" that will succumb to these signals

and stop practice. Park recommends that at this stage in the practice session the student walk faster and lower. The mind and body will then realize that this exercise is not going to stop, so more energy is sent throughout the body to give it extra stamina and endurance. In effect, you get a "second wind." This energy surge is very evident when it occurs. Muscles that were beginning to become fatigued do not seem to be so bothersome and the whole body feels the new burst of energy.

After the practice has continued a little longer, the body will once again try to protect itself by sending signals for the exercise to stop. When this second wave of signals come, Park recommends that you use your will once again to overcome the fatigue, walk lower and faster, and gain a new burst of energy. Park says that if the student does not learn how to use the will to overcome the mind and body, he or she will never progress to the higher levels of experience.

After the you have practiced a little bit longer, the body will again begin to send signals of fatigue. Park says that this third wave of distress signals from the body must be taken seriously because they are "true." If the practitioner continues to use strong will to overcome this third wave of signals, the body can be damaged.

Upon ending the circle walk practice, Park Bok Nam recommends that the practitioner remain standing in a comfortable posture with the hands resting down by the sides of the body for several minutes. Attention is focused on the palms and the *ch'i* that has gathered there. The student allows the hands to hang loosely by the sides, relaxes all of the body's joints, and places the concentration on the "*ch'i* feeling." Typically this "*ch'i* feeling" will first manifest itself in the hands as fullness, heat, and/or tingling.

When the practitioner has obtained this *ch'i* feeling during the execution of any exercise, he or she will want to relax for several minutes and concentrate on this feeling after the exercise has been completed. By concentrating on the feeling, a mind/body/nervous system connection associated with this feeling will develop. The more developed this connection becomes, the easier it will be for the practitioner to bring *ch'i* to the palms or other parts of the body. With continued practice, the student will be able to

produce this effect just by thinking about it. Later, increased amounts of *ch'i* will flow to the palms naturally, when it is needed, without conscious thought.

One goal in practicing Pa Kua Chang as a self-defense art is to be able to move *ch'i* very rapidly to the palms (or any other part of the body) when striking. When the mind/body/nervous system connection has been fully developed, as soon as the body moves the *ch'i* will be there and the movement of *ch'i* to the palm will be rapid and spontaneous. Forging the mind/body/nervous system connection during and after the circle walk practice will help the practitioner reach this goal.

Fighting Skills

In Pa Kua Chang fighting, footwork is primary. The footwork must be executed such that the upper body is always stable so that no movements are "telegraphed" and so that the body is always rooted into the legs and ground. Additionally, this stability must be maintained even when the practitioner is moving quickly. All of the skills mentioned above (strength, flexibility, coordination, balance, awareness of one's center, etc.), are important fighting skills which are

trained, at their most basic level, during the circle walk practice.

In a combat situation, the most important skill for the Pa Kua practitioner is the ability to change directions rapidly and smoothly while maintaining balance and stability (rootedness in motion). Bending the knees slightly and sinking the *ch'i* to the *tan t'ien* when walking the circle in a smooth, continuous manner stabilizes the body and places the center of body mass and center of gravity in a position which optimizes the ability to maintain balance and rootedness while in motion.

The walking practice trains stability in motion and stillness in motion. Here the concept of "stillness in motion" not only refers to stillness on the inside, but also refers to stillness of the upper body while the legs are in motion. If the upper body is bobbing, swaying, weaving, or otherwise moving with each step, you will be telegraphing your motion. The change of direction during the circle walk practice also trains the ability to move rapidly and efficiently around one's center. This skill is also extremely important to the Pa Kua fighter. For more information about circle walking as it applies to fighting skill see the section "Advanced Circle Walking: Training to Fight" on page 36 of this volume.

Circle Walking Variations

As discussed in the last section, there are many benefits the Pa Kua Chang practitioner can gain from the circle walk practice. The circle walking method employed will depend upon the result desired. Below we will discuss the three stepping methods employed in Park Bok Nam's system of Pa Kua Chang.

The Foot Placement

While there are literally dozens of different stepping methods Pa Kua practitioners will employ while walking the circle, there are three main methods which are practiced by most schools. Each school may have its own special names for these steps. However, these three methods are most commonly known as the "mud walking"

step (or snake step), rolling step (or lion step), and the crane step. Below we will outline the characteristics of these steps as practiced in Park Bok Nam's school.

The Snake Step: The snake step, also commonly known as the "dragon step," the "gliding step," or the "mud walking step," is one of the most common Pa Kua stepping techniques. Park refers to this as the "snake step" and thus that is what we will call it in the remainder of this book. In Park's school, this step is not a method that is used very often in combat, however, it is an excellent training step. This step trains balance and stability in motion, thrusting or shoveling power in the legs and encourages an increased energy flow to the legs



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The Snake Step

and feet.

Although there are numerous variations of this step being practiced by the various schools of Pa Kua, the basic step consists of the stepping foot sliding out along the ground, or hovering just over the ground, as the foot steps forward. As it is one of the most commonly practiced stepping methods in Pa Kua, a wide variety of variations have subsequently developed. In order to explore the snake step that is practiced in Park's school, I will divide the mechanics of the step into three sections: picking up the rear foot, the actual step forward, and placing the stepping foot down.

1) Picking up the rear foot: While executing the snake step, Park allows the heel of the rear foot to come off the ground when the rear foot begins to

move forward, as in normal walking. The heel lifts slightly and then as the foot is brought forward it flattens out parallel to the ground. There should be no hesitation in the transition of the foot to the flattened orientation. The steps are very smooth and continuous.

2) Stepping forward: Here the foot glides off the ground slightly and hovers just over the surface of the ground when stepping.

3) Placing the stepping foot down: In the snake step, when the stepping foot moves forward and is placed in position on the ground the foot is placed down flat so that the entire surface of the foot contacts the ground at the exact same time.

Other variations and combinations of the snake step exist and each instructor will have his own methods of teaching and points of emphasis. Above we have described Park Bok Nam's execution of this step. However, no one technique or one school is more "correct" than the other; they all have merit.

The Lion Step: The "lion step," also commonly referred to as the "rolling step," the "continuous step," and the "small fast step," is executed in a comfortable heel-toe walking fashion. Since it is the quickest most natural step and is easily and efficiently combined with the *k'ou pu* and *pai pu* steps, it is often used in combat when speed and agility in motion are required. This is the step that was described in the last volume of this book. For completeness we will briefly revisit the principles

of this step here.

The lion step is very similar to natural walking, however, the knees are bent lower and the practitioner keeps the upper body stable without allowing it to bob up and down, wobble forward to back, or sway side to side. The hips, shoulders, eyes, and top of the head are all held level and the only movement occurs below the hips. The entire upper body remains relaxed, comfortable, and motionless. If someone were watching a practitioner walk the circle in this manner from the other side of a wall that was about hip height, the practitioner's upper body should be so smooth that it would appear as though the practitioner is sitting on an object which is moving around in circles. The upper body should give no indication of what the feet are doing.

In order for the walking to be smooth and the



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The Lion Step



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The Crane Step

upper body motionless the legs must act as shock absorbers and the heel-toe rolling motion of the feet must be very smooth. When the practitioner's heel is set down there is no thud, it is set down very light and soft. The transition from heel to toe is very smooth, as if the practitioner had small rocking-chair type rockers on the bottoms of the feet. The transition of weight across the stepping foot is very smooth and continuous. At the tail end of the rocking motion across the bottom of the foot, the practitioner will "grab" the ground with his toes and slightly push off so that there is always a smooth forward momentum.

Park explains that the smooth gradual transition of weight across the bottom of the foot in the execution of the lion step serves to stimulate the reflexology points on the bottom of the practitioner's foot and thus aids in the overall health of the body. When students are having a

hard time with the smooth even flow and quiet stepping of this technique, he tells them to imagine that they are trying to sneak into someone's room without that person knowing it.

The Crane Step: The "crane step," which is also sometimes called the "chicken step," is executed with the stepping foot being lifted to about calf or knee height before it steps out. This step is primarily practiced to improve balance and rootedness on one leg for use when kicking, trapping, and sweeping with the legs. Yin Fu (尹福) was said to have been fond of utilizing the crane step. Yin Fu was also said to be so skilled at leg trapping and sweeping that his feet and legs were as sensitive as a skilled push-hands practitioner's hands and arms. Walking with the crane step will help to develop the balance and stability necessary for these leg skills. Park's

teacher had him practice this step while walking on top of river stones.

The Foot Placement: When practicing the various circle walk steps described in this section, all foot placement, in terms of the angle at which the foot is placed in relation to the line of the circle, is the same. The outside foot (foot furthest from the center of the circle) cuts in at approximately 45 degrees to an imaginary line which is tangent to the circle. The inside foot steps relatively straight ahead (parallel to the line which is tangent to the circle). Angling the outside foot helps the practitioner circumnavigate the arc of the circle. The exact angle of the outside or inside foot will depend on the size of the circle. However, as stated above, this foot will usually angle in approximately 45 degrees when walking in an average sized circle (see illustration on page 45 of the first volume of this book). For instance, in the photographs shown in this chapter, Park is walking a fairly small circle and thus his inside foot is angled inward. In the next section of this chapter, we will discuss circle walking variations in which the angles of the feet are much greater in order for the practitioner to navigate very small circles and spiraling arcs.

While the above mentioned stepping methods each have their own unique purpose in terms of foundational skill development, they also have purpose in fighting. Each of the stepping methods has an optimum time it can be employed in a fighting situation. Some steps are ideally suited to different kinds of techniques and different kinds of terrains. The stepping method employed (both linear and circular) in combat will constantly change depending on the situation, the opponent, and the environment. In all complete systems of Pa Kua Chang there are complete methods of training and this means the usage of a wide variety of stepping methods in both practice and application.

No matter what circle walking technique is utilized, if the practitioner is relaxed, the body is aligned properly and the intention is focused, positive results in the physical, mental, and spiritual realm will follow. The practitioner's

primary goal in practice will determine the walking technique employed and the technique employed will result in a more pronounced level of growth in one or more of the components which make up our physical, mental, and spiritual existence. In the first section of this chapter we briefly described some of the direct benefits a practitioner might experience if the focus of the practice is in one of three areas: meditative practice, *ch'i* development practice, and/or physical development practice. The Pa Kua Chang purist will be concerned with development in all three of these areas in training the complete art.

Conclusion

Pa Kua Chang circle walking is not one exercise practiced for one specific purpose, it is many exercises practiced to achieve a variety of physical, mental, and spiritual benefits. Variations on the theme are numerous. What we have presented thus far in this chapter are only some of the most common circle walk methods. There are many other methods that we have not mentioned. Anything is possible as long as the practitioner adheres to the basic principles.

Aside from the fact that the circle walk practice will help improve concentration and focus, develop strong legs, aid in *ch'i* development, and improve physical and respiratory stamina, this practice helps the practitioner develop the ability to remain relaxed, integrated, stable, and rooted while in constant motion and teaches the practitioner how to execute the highly evasive footwork required in tactical application. This ability is vital when applying Pa Kua Chang as a fighting art.

Holding static upper-body postures while walking enables the practitioner to develop his or her body and forge strong structural connections and alignments. Maintaining structural integrity and root while constantly walking is the first stage of learning how to apply powerful strikes to an opponent while remaining in constant motion. As discussed previously, this ability is characteristic of Pa Kua Chang. In the next section of this chapter we will discuss some advanced circle walking techniques and describe some uses of the circle walking footwork in fighting.

Advanced Circle Walking: Training to Fight

Everyone who has ever practiced Pa Kua Chang has been given the lecture about the importance of the circle walk practice. Stories abound about the old masters having been allowed to practice only basic circle walking methods for the first several years of their Pa Kua training. While the previous section of this chapter discussed some of the great benefits of the circle walk practice, many readers may still be wondering exactly how this footwork is employed in a combat situation.

The basic circle walk practice is primarily a training exercise that the beginning and intermediate level student practices to build a strong Pa Kua Chang foundation. The advanced Pa Kua practitioner will also continue to practice the basic circle walk to continually reach deeper levels of internal awareness. No matter how long an individual practices the basic circle walk, there are always deeper levels to discover.

When Park Bok Nam was training with his teacher, Lu Shui-T'ien (盧水田), in Korea, his teacher required that Park practice the basic circle walk exercise every morning for one hour. At the end of one year of practice Park came to his teacher one morning and very proudly reported, "After practicing for one hour everyday for the past year, I now understand this circle walk practice." Lu only shook his head and laughed. He said, "Just keep practicing."

After another year of practice Park came to his teacher again and said, "I now know why you laughed at me last year when I told you that I understood the circle walk practice. After practicing another year my knowledge is much deeper and I can say that I now really understand this practice." Again, Lu laughed, shook his head and told Park to keep practicing. Park has now practiced the basic circle walk exercise every morning for nearly 35 years and he says that he has discovered that there is always something more to learn.

Although there are always deeper levels of experience one will gain from the basic circle

walk practice, a skilled Pa Kua practitioner engaged in a fight is not going to walk in complete circles around his opponent. This is just not practical in a realistic situation against a seasoned fighter. If you are fighting a skilled opponent and take more than two or three steps in one direction, you have set up a pattern that he will immediately use against you. It is ridiculous to think that you will be able to stalk your opponent by walking in circles around him waiting for an "opening." If this is your idea about how Pa Kua circle walking is used in a real fight you are going to be in for a rude awakening when you meet a skilled opponent.

The key element in Pa Kua's employment of footwork is not to try and move in circles around the opponent at arm's length, but it is to either try to out flank the opponent or open up his center. In either case, as soon as you move, you are closing with the opponent, not running around him. Your goal is to gain an advantageous angle of attack. Simply running around someone at arms length is a big waste of time in a real fight. A skilled opponent will eat you alive before you take your third step if you try such a thing. The only time this tactic might be used is if you are trying to bait the guy to set him up.

We can look at Pa Kua's employment of circle walking footwork from two perspectives; one is when the opponent initiates the attack and the other is if you want to initiate the attack yourself. Preferably you will initiate the attack yourself or bait the opponent into attacking you where you want him to attack you so that you can set him up. The idea that some practitioners have of Pa Kua being a "passive" and "defensive" martial art is a pile of "new age" nonsense. If you are going to fight with someone, you do not sit and wait for him to attack or walk in circles around him waiting for him to attack. Once you have made the decision to fight, you move in without hesitation and you flatten the guy in the most efficient

and effective way possible.

During a Pa Kua Chang fighting demonstration Park gave in California, a spectator asked Park how he prepared his mind when he was waiting for the opponent to attack. Park said, "Why wait? If you are going to fight, you attack, if you are not going to fight, you go home. There is no waiting."

The Opponent Attacks First

If the opponent initiates the attack and you chose to employ the circle walking footwork (circular footwork is not the only stepping method used in Pa Kua), the initial idea is to move out of the way of the opponent's attack. However, we do not want to simply run away. We want to move in such a manner that we avoid the opponent's attack while simultaneously setting ourselves in a position for immediate counterattack.

Evasiveness in Pa Kua is not about running away from the opponent. It is about closing with and destroying the opponent as quickly as possible without meeting force against force. We do not want to engage directly. We want to be a bit sneaky about how we close with the opponent. We want to use optimum angles of attack and use the opponent's force against him, but we will do so very efficiently with no wasted movement and we will allow no gaps for him to move. This means moving around his attack, but at the same time moving towards him and inside his defenses. A skilled opponent will immediately take advantage of any gap in either time or distance you give him to work with. Your footwork, body movements, and hand techniques should be executed such that the opponent has no time to react or space to move.

While evading an opponent's attack and instantly delivering a magnificent, fight-stopping counterattack is a dream come true, more times than not, it is not reality. If the opponent is skilled, he will not let you get away with it. We can also never forget about Murphy and his laws. If something can go wrong, it will go wrong. This is where having the ability to change direction very quickly while remaining stable becomes vitally important.

When you launch your counterattack against your opponent's initial attack you are already "thinking" about what comes next and you are prepared for anything. (This "thinking" is more a body knowledge than an actual thought process. In other words, your body is prepared to continually attack, adapt, and move.) You never assume that your first technique is going to work. You never want to think like a "one shot wonder" who imagines his first attack, or first counterattack, will devastate his opponent.

There are many martial artists who feel that they can hit so hard that one shot is all it will take to defeat the opponent. There are others who think that they have some special techniques that no one can counter. "Welcome to fantasy island." If your opponent is skilled it will be very difficult for you to ever land your first shot and it will be even more difficult to land a direct hit with full force. You must be prepared to continuously attack while changing and adapting to the situation. This ability is expressed in the *lien huan* (continuously linking) skill which was discussed in Chapter 2 of this volume.

When training to fight, you always imagine that your opponent is much bigger, much stronger, and at a much higher skill level than you are. You also must respect Murphy and consider that what can go wrong, will go wrong. Your mind must stay one step ahead of your body at all times, you use your listening skill and as soon as you feel how the opponent is reacting to your initial attack, you immediately change appropriately and continue attacking. The art of Pa Kua Chang is philosophically rooted in the concept of change and physically rooted in the footwork and single palm change. Being able to change directions rapidly with balance, stability, and power is the important part of Pa Kua's use of the circle walk practice in fighting. Therefore, advanced circle walk training is focused on training these components.

You Initiate the Attack

In the second instance mentioned above, that of you yourself initiating an attack, the

same principles apply- As we discussed in Chapter 2 of this volume, initiating an attack is a three step process: gain a reaction, bridge the gap, finish him off. The first step is to gain a reaction from the opponent. This can be accomplished in any number of ways. This can also be viewed as a "set up" or a "jab." but it is not simply a false ploy. Most of the time it is a realistic movement which will hurt the opponent if he does not respond to it. But we will always assume that he is a good fighter and will be able to successfully counter our initial movement.

The next step is the "bridge." The bridge is used to open up the opponent and get inside

where we can really do some damage. The type of bridge which is used will depend upon the opponent's initial reaction to the first move. If the bridge is successful, then we can follow up with a finishing technique. If the opponent is skilled, we may need to employ several quick, repetitive bridging maneuvers before we can get inside on him or out flank him. Also, once inside we may need to apply a series of fast, powerful finishing techniques before the opponent is thoroughly defeated. Once the Pa Kua Chang practitioner gets inside on the opponent, he will continue to stay inside until the job is finished. There is no bouncing in, striking once, and then bouncing back out as in sport lighting for points. Once you are inside, you stay until the job is finished. Again, it is your footwork that keeps you there.

A skilled opponent is not going to let you continue hitting him from a vulnerable angle. He is going to move. Utilizing your footwork, you stick on the opponent like glue. Where he goes, you go and you don't let up until the job is done. Park Bok Nam calls getting inside on the opponent "opening his door." He says that once the door is open, you do not let the door close until you have finished the job.

Advanced Circle Walking

Skillfully executed rapid changes of direction, in conjunction with changing the palms and whole body power, provide excellent opportunities to bridge the gap and open up the opponent. If you can execute rapid change of direction in combination with stable steps and flanking movements it will be difficult for the opponent to keep up with the changes. This is why the change of direction is so important in Pa Kua Chang. In advance circle walking practice the circles become smaller and the change of direction more frequent.

In advanced circle walk training the practitioner learns to change directions rapidly while changing the palms and maintaining balance, stability, and full body coordination. While these concepts are also trained in the basic circle walk practice the difference here is



Park Bok Nam practices the Pa Kua Chang pole training

that instead of continually walking around the center of the circle, in the advanced practice, the practitioner walks around the center while also moving towards the center. The circles become very small and the walking patterns turn into "figure eights," small circles or spirals (see the diagrams on page 98 of the first volume of this book). Because of the difficulty of walking in tight circles and changing directions rapidly while maintaining balance, speed, and coordination, all of the important concepts that are trained during the basic circle walk practice must be in place before the practitioner moves on to the advanced circle walk training.

T'ai Chi Diagram Circle Walk Pole Training

While each school of Pa Kua Chang will have its own methods for developing the advanced circle walk practice, in this chapter we will explain the advanced practice as it is taught by Park Bok Nam. In Park's system the first practice a student will graduate to after the basic circle walk is the *yin-yang* circle walking pattern as shown in the diagram below (the arrows indicate the walking pattern) and the photographs on the next page. The changing of the palms in this pattern is executed as the practitioner transitions through the middle of the circle. A pole or tree is placed in the center of the circle and the changing of the palms and the directional change of the body is coordinated with the movement towards and around the pole as if the pole was an opponent.

The important component of this practice is the timing of the palm change, the smoothness of the steps and the ability to keep your center facing the opponent. In order to accomplish this, the turning of the body around its center as the palms are changed while you move around the pole becomes very important. You maintain a consistent optimum angle in relation to your opponent by turning your hips and shoulders at the appropriate time during the transition. The timing of the palms changing position and the rotational movements of the arms in conjunction with the rotating torso are also important points in this practice.

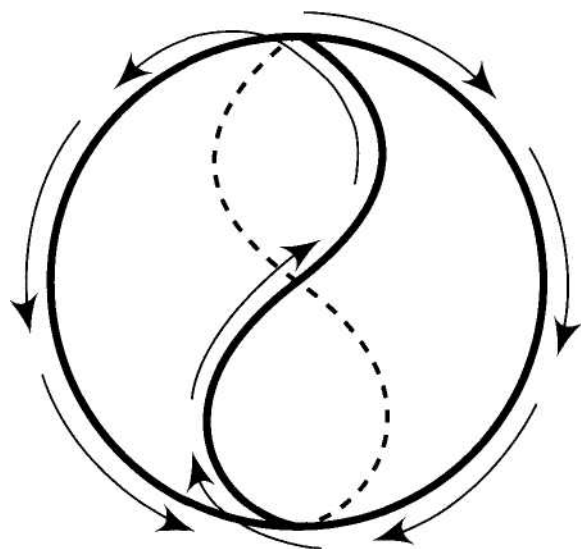
The *yin-yang* pattern walking of the T'ai Chi

diagram is executed as follows:

- 1) Park begins walking the circle in the clockwise direction. See photo 1.
- 2) Park begins to change directions by cutting a small curve and then heading towards the center of the circle. He does not cut straight into the center. His footwork follows that of the T'ai Chi diagram. As he begins to head towards the center pole he starts to execute a straight *fan chang* (翻掌) maneuver. See photos 2 through 4.
- 3) As Park approaches the center pole, the centerline of his body turns around its center twisting in towards the pole as the *fan chang* maneuver is completed. The footwork continues to follow the pattern of the T'ai Chi diagram. See photos 5 through 8.
- 4) Park continues to walk the circle in the other direction having executed the change of directions. See photos 9 and 10.

Park will now walk around the whole circle until he feels like changing directions again. When he changes he will then execute the same sequence walking the opposite T'ai Chi diagram.

When practicing this exercise, you can walk the entire practice at the same pace, or you can vary your walking pace. After students gain a bit of experience with this practice, Park will usually



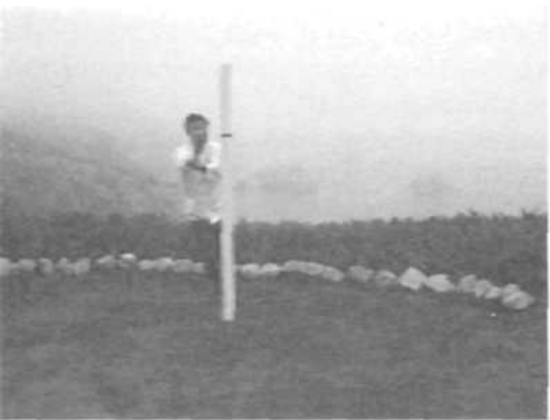
T'ai Chi Diagram Circle Walking Pattern



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The T'ai Chi Diagram Change Around One Pole



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The T'ai Chi Diagram Change Around One Pole (con't)

have his students walk the outside of the circle at a smooth steady pace, and then speed up the walk when they move through the middle. Varying the pace is good for practicing combat oriented footwork while maintaining the same smooth, steady pace is good for *ch'i kung* and meditative practice.

Usually, when the students transition to the *yin-yang changing* practice they notice a difference in the way the *ch'i* moves in the body as opposed to the previously practiced changing of direction. In executing this change the energy movement is very smooth and continuous because the feet never stop moving and arm transitions are very smooth and continuous.

After the student has gained experience walking the *yin-yang* circle utilizing the dragon posture and the *fan ch'ing* maneuver, he or she will then begin practicing all of the eight animal postures and learn how to smoothly transition the upper body postures from one animal posture to the next. At first the student will practice the animal transitions in the order which was presented in the first volume of this book (i.e., lion, unicorn, snake, swallow, dragon flying, bear, phoenix, and monkey). Later the student will learn how to transition between any given animal. He or she will practice changing from lion to unicorn, from lion to snake, from lion to swallow, etc. Because there are eight animals, there are sixty-four possible

changing combinations.

In learning and studying the sixty-four possible changing combinations, the student will discover a multitude of martial applications and become aware of numerous patterns of energy movement in the body. Each change presents a number of possible martial applications. Most of the smooth continuous changing postures in the eight animal combinations work very well in throwing and locking applications. However, they also offer the student jabbing, bridging and striking possibilities, especially when combined with the forty-eight month and supplemental palm strikes which are presented in Chapter 5 of this volume.

As a variation to the *yin-yang* pole training, the student can combine the *yin-yang* change with all of the other changes he or she has learned on the circle. In other words, the student will change directions one time by using the *yin-yang* pattern change, and then the next time they can perform a standard single palm change on the circle. The practitioner can vary or alternate these changes as he or she wishes.

Spiraling Pattern Pole Training

After the student has become proficient in the execution of the *yin-yang* footwork pattern, he or she can also begin to practice the "spiraling" pattern around one central pole. This change employs the use of the *t'ien Jan chang* maneuver which was presented in the first volume of this book. In executing this change, the practitioner will utilize the footwork of the "outside" single palm change as shown on page 78 of Chapter 4 of this volume. Therefore, Park will always teach this variation of the single palm change on the circle before the student learns how to employ the change utilizing the spiraling footwork pattern. The spiraling footwork pattern is executed as follows:

- 1) In this example, Park begins by walking the circle in the counter-clockwise direction. See photo 1.
- 2) Park begins to execute the change as if he were going to perform the *yin-yang* pattern. See photos 2 through 4.
- 3) As Park approaches the pole, he begins to

perform the *t'ien fan chang* maneuver as he begins to walk around the pole. At this point the footwork looks exactly like the *yin-yang* pattern footwork. See photos 5 through 7.

- 4) Instead of continuing to walk around the pole, Park now plants a *k'ou pu* step with his right foot and begins to execute another *t'ien fan chang* (天翻掌) back in the other direction with his back to the pole. See photos 8 and 9.

5) As the *t'ien fan chang* maneuver continues, Park takes a pronounced *pai pu* step with the left foot and begins to turn back to face the same direction he originally approached the pole from. See photos 10 through 12.

- 6) Park now steps around with the right foot and begins walking the spiral back to the outer circle. He smoothly follows the spiral with his steps until his path joins back with the path of the circle. See photos 13 through 17.

You will notice that Park is now, once again, walking the circle in the counter-clockwise direction. This is because he has executed two palm changes during this sequence, one as he approached the pole and another as he changed directions to go back the way he came. From here Park could execute a single change on the circle or a *yin-yang* change through the center to begin walking in the other direction.

The spiraling pattern practiced here can vary from a large gradual inward spiraling pattern to a very sharp spiral. The student can work with numerous variations. Also, the *t'ien fan chang* is not the only move that can be practiced during the change. Any of the eight animal changes that were practiced in the *yin-yang* pattern training can be used here as well. Park usually teaches the *t'ien fan chang* change first because it is a difficult move and challenges the student's coordination, stability, and flexibility.

The *yin-yang* pattern and the spiraling pattern are the first of the many patterns that are practiced as part of Park's "pole training." After the student has practiced the *yin-yang* pattern and the spiraling pattern around one central pole and becomes proficient in the mechanics and timing of these movements, he or she will then begin to practice walking a



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The Spiraling Pattern Change Around One Pole



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The Spiraling Pattern Change Around One Pole (con't)

"figure-eight" pattern around two poles. From there the student will progress to walking a double figure-eight around three poles.

Two Or Three Pole Practice

When the student begins to work with the two and three pole arrangements, he or she will practice the *yin-yang* and spiraling patterns as practiced during the one pole training. However, with two or three poles the patterns become smaller, the footwork tighter, and the movements more complex.

When working with either the two or three pole configuration, the distances between the poles are varied so that the student will become accustomed to navigating smaller figure-eights and larger figure-eights. When working with three poles, the distance between each of the poles will be varied so that the first figure-eight around pole # 1 and pole #2 might be small and the subsequent pattern around pole #2 and pole #3 might be larger. In addition to the figure-eight patterns, the student will also practice small circles around the various poles in conjunction with the figure-eight patterns. In other words, the practitioner might execute two consecutive figure-eight patterns around the three poles, then execute a full circle or two around pole #1 before continuing the figure-eight pattern. Then the student might execute a large circle around all of the poles, execute a standard single change on the large circle and then go back to the figure eight pattern. The change which was executed during the spiraling pattern footwork is also employed to change directions when the student is practicing the figure eight pattern. Some of these possibilities are depicted in the diagrams which were shown on page 98 of the first volume of this book.

In addition to varying the size of the circles and the walking patterns in, between, and around the poles, the student will also vary the rhythm of the practice by changing the speed of his walk. Usually the larger outside circle is walked at a slow smooth pace and then the practitioner will speed up when entering the circle and navigating the poles. Varying the patterns and the rhythm gives the student experience in varying the timing of the palm

changes, varying the footwork patterns, and varying the coordination of the body's turning and twisting movements.

Walking in smaller, tighter circles, and changing directions frequently facilitates the development of the *k'ou pu* and *pai pu* steps as quick directional changes. The ability to apply *k'ou pu* and *pai pu* quickly and efficiently not only teaches the practitioner how to change directions rapidly while remaining stable, it also develops flexibility and adroitness in the pelvic region. Additionally, the student begins to develop the ability to utilize the *k'ou* and *pai* steps in quickly hooking and trapping the opponent's legs (these techniques are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4 of this volume).

The three pole figure eight circle walking pattern is shown on the next page. The practice is as follows:

- 1) In this sequence we catch Park having just rounded the left outside post and he has entered the circle going towards the center pole just as in the *yin-yang* pole pattern footwork. He has just completed a change of palms by executing a *fan chang* maneuver. See photo 1.
 - 2) As Park rounds the center pole, he executes a tight turn around the pole and begins to execute a *fan chang* maneuver to change palms once again as he heads for the right outside pole. See photos 2 and 3.
 - 3) Park has now finished the palm change as he navigates around the right outside pole. He continues walking a small circle around the right outside pole, keeping the right hand forward. See photos 4 through 6.
 - 4) Once Park has completed the circle around the outside pole, he will then begin to execute another *fan chang* maneuver and head for the opposite side of the center pole. See photos 7 and 8.
 - 5) Once around the center pole, Park will again execute a *fan chang* and head for the far side of the left outside pole and walk the circle around that pole to complete one full lap. See photos 9 through 12.
- Once Park reaches the position in photo 12, he is ready to start the circuit again.

As you might imagine, the combinations



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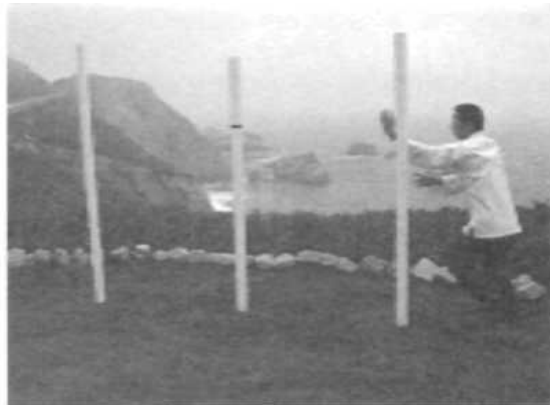
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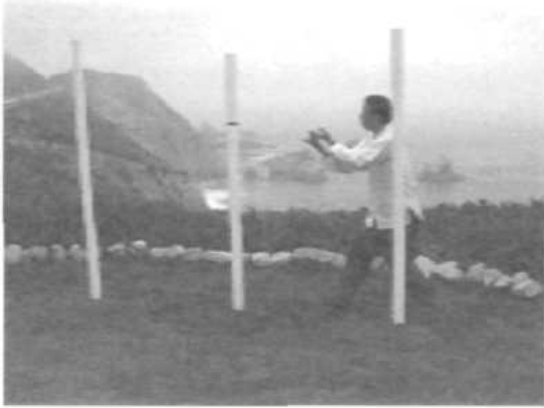


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The Figure Eight Pattern Change Around Three Poles



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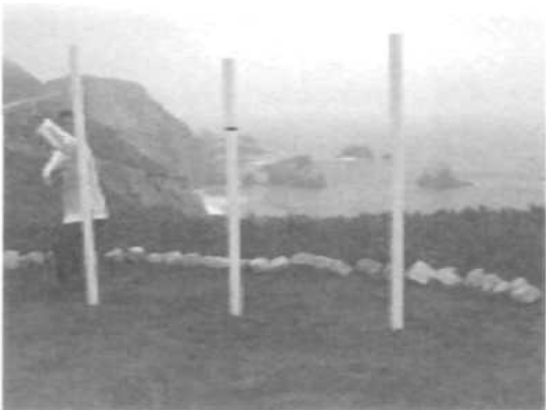
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The Figure Eight Pattern Change Around Three Poles (con't)

here become endless. Utilizing the standard circle walk around one pole, the practitioner now has six different circles to walk around (one large circle around all poles, one small circle around each of the three poles, and one medium size circle around each pair of two poles). In addition to the standard circle around each of the circle sizes listed above, the student can practice various combinations of the *yin-yang* pattern around any pole or combination of poles and also incorporate the spiraling pattern around any pole.

In addition to utilizing the *Jan chang*, or overturning palm movement when navigating amongst the poles, the student will also practice

changing amongst the "eight animal palms" that were also practiced during the basic circle walk exercise. By executing these movements the student not only becomes familiar with the rapid twisting and turning movements of the body, but he also becomes familiar with various basic arm movements. When the arms, body, and legs can all be coordinated while the practitioner is navigating the tight twists and turns amongst the poles, he will discover many new applications of these basic movements. Once the student becomes adept at changing amongst the poles utilizing the basic arm movements of the "eight animal palms" he will then begin adding striking and kicking

maneuvers to the pole training practice. The poles are made from bamboo, rattan, PVC pipe, or some other flexible material that is buried into the ground. The practitioner can kick or strike the pole and the pole will have some give to it so that it absorbs some of the energy of the strike and bounces back. In this practice the practitioner will never stop moving amongst the poles while simultaneously kicking, striking, and rapidly changing directions. Some poles are kicked, some are hit, and others are not touched but evaded as the student continually moves around the poles. In this practice, the student learns to strike while remaining highly mobile and learns how to quickly change and move after a strike has been applied.



Adding More Poles

After the three pole practice, the student will move to four poles in a square pattern and then to five poles (one in the center and one on each side). Again, the distances between the poles are not always the same; they are all varied. After the five pole practice, the student will continue adding poles, one at a time as his practice improves,

until there are nine poles, one in the center and then eight out to each direction. This is Pa Kua's famous "nine palace" pole training practice.

Many of the schools of Pa Kua practice the nine palace pole method. However, Park believes that it is important that the practitioner develop the pole training in gradual steps by first starting with one pole, then two poles, then three, etc. The training should be developed step by step. If the practitioner cannot utilize the proper movements when walking around two poles, he will only become confused if more poles are added. As each successive pole is added the student adds a new dimension to his practice.

There are many different "games" one can play while working the pole training method in order to develop different Pa Kua skills. Some poles are kicked, some hit, some avoided and the circular pattern is always varied. Sometimes small circles are executed; sometimes the circles are bigger; sometimes the figure-eight pattern is utilized; sometimes a spiraling pattern is employed; sometimes the speed of the footwork is varied; sometimes the practitioner walks smoothly and steadily to build *ch'i*; the height of the stance is also varied. All possible variations are explored.

When Park was practicing the nine pole method with his teacher, Lu Shui-T'ien, Lu had tied a small rope to the top of each of the bamboo poles. As Park was circling, moving, and navigating amongst the poles Lu would pull on one of the ropes and one of the poles would shake. When Park noticed a pole shake he would immediately have to move in and attack the pole that was shaking. There are many such variations that can be practiced with the nine palace pole training.

The Tee-Pee Pole Arrangement

The pole training practice in Park's system does not end with the nine palace pole arrangement. After the student has become familiar with working the nine poles, he will then remove the center pole and slant the four side poles in towards the center, thus forming a tee-pee shape with these poles. Utilizing this

configuration the practitioner is not only required to navigate among the poles, but a height variable is added due to the slanting poles. While walking, circling, and turning the student must also adjust the body height to go under and around the slanting poles. The angle at which these poles are slanted can also be varied.

Changing the Poles

After the student has gained experience working with the nine pole arrangement and the tee-pee pole arrangement and all of their respective variations, he or she is ready to begin a multitude of new nine pole variations. Park calls each of these pole variations a "course." In the practice of the complete method there are eight different courses each having the nine pole arrangement. One course, which Park calls the "power course" has thick bamboo that is struck with the palms, elbows, shoulders, hips, feet, and knees as the practitioner continually employs the footwork patterns maneuvering around the poles. All of the movements on this course are very expressive and powerful.

After transitioning through this course, the student will move on to another course which will have the standard nine pole arrangement. Here the student practices all of the walking and changing in a very smooth, continuous manner to build *ch'i*. The character and attitude of this course is balancing the powerful expressions of the previous course.

Another course will have thin bamboo with both vertical and slanting poles that are never to be touched as the practitioner moves around the nine poles utilizing various footwork and palm changes. Movements such as "swallow penetrates through the forest" are emphasized in this course. Other pole arrangements are placed in areas of rough terrain with various sized stones placed randomly around the course. Here the practitioner must navigate the poles while walking on the stones.

In practicing each of the eight courses, the student can experiment with all of the variations we have discussed thus far in terms of the form movements and walking patterns. The theme of each course is such that after practicing all

eight of the courses, the student has practiced all of the footwork patterns, palm, elbow, shoulder, hip, knee and foot strikes, all of the eight animal movements, all of the stepping variations, the power training, the *ch'i kung* work and all other components of the major system. Park says that when he was practicing the eight courses in Korea, it would take him from three to four hours of non-stop practice to finish all eight of the courses.

Conclusion

In the application of Pa Kua as a fighting art the practitioner must learn how to be highly mobile and evasive while at the same time moving in and continuously attacking the opponent. Evasion in Pa Kua does not mean running away or escaping an attack. It means avoiding the opponent's force and strength while simultaneously counterattacking at the most efficient angle and then continually changing so as to maintain those efficient attacking angles until the fight is over. The advanced circle walking practice as described above helps the practitioner begin to develop this ability.

Chapter 4

Pa Kua Chang Body Training



Chapter 4

Pa Kua Chang Body Training

In the last volume of this book, we presented a number of body training exercises which were designed to begin to develop the student's body in terms of basic flexibility, balance, stability, and coordination. These exercises are a necessary part of Park's Pa Kua Chang system for several reasons. The first is because the exercises begin to help the student open up the body in the area of the spine, hips, rib cage, and shoulders. It is critical to health maintenance, Pa Kua Chang application, and power development that these areas of the body be supple, relaxed, and flexible beyond "average" ranges of motion.

Gaining an increased degree of suppleness and flexibility in the areas of the spine, hips, and shoulders also aids in the balanced, smooth flow of energy in the body. Practicing exercises which challenge the flexibility and range of motion of the joints while breathing naturally and smoothly and maintaining a focus on the movement of the palms, greatly increases the energy movement in the body and also develops the practitioner's awareness of this energy. By practicing exercises such as the three *fan chang* exercises, and the "scooping moon from sea bottom" exercises, in a slow, smooth, repetitious manner with the mind, body, and breath coordinated, the practitioner gains great physical and mental benefits and lays a strong foundation for future development in the art.

Another reason why these exercises are important in Park's system of Pa Kua is that after these exercises are practiced as static drills, as

outlined in the last volume of this book, all of these exercises will serve as component parts of the various single palm change maneuvers of Park's system performed while both executing straight line footwork maneuvers and while walking the circle. If the student has not spent time practicing these exercises hundreds of times in repetitive body training drills, his or her execution of these movements in the circle walking forms will be stiff, uncoordinated, unnatural, disconnected, and lacking in proper energy flow and intention.

In this chapter, we will first present one more important static exercise, which is a companion to the *fan chang* exercises that were presented in the last book. After this exercise, which is called the "hiding flower under leaf" exercise, is presented, we will combine this exercise with the "white snake coiling its body" posture, which was demonstrated in the last volume, with a *k'ou pu* and *pai pu* footwork drill that was also presented in the last volume of this book. Once the student has experience with all of these body training and footwork drills, he or she is ready to start to put these components together in the execution of the single palm change. In this chapter we will also take a look at the single palm change and some of its numerous variations.

Those readers who have spent time with the body training exercises, the *k'ou pu* and *pai pu* exercises which were presented in the last book, and the "hiding flower under leaf" exercises which are presented in this book, will have a very easy

time with the half dozen single palm change variations which are presented in this chapter. In addition to the single palm change variations presented in this chapter in photograph form, we will also discuss numerous other variations of the single palm change that can be built from the basic body training exercises. To the student who has not spent numerous hours with the body training exercises, all of these single palm change variations will seem awkward and hard to learn. For the student who has put in his or her time with the basic prerequisite body training drills, all of these changes will seem very natural.

After gaining a foundation with the body training exercises and seeing how they can be combined as component parts of the single palm change variations, the student will then have an arsenal of at least one dozen different single palm change maneuvers to practice. This is how Park's Pa Kua Chang system is built. Basic exercises are practiced until the student develops an understanding of the movements and energy of the exercise, and then the movements of the exercise are combined with circle walking, *k'ou pu* and *pai pu* footwork, and the body movements of other exercises, footwork drills, elbow and palm striking combinations, and kick sets to produce an abundance of form movements and variations.

In my school, after the students have trained the basic body training exercises and have been presented one or two versions of the single palm change and their component parts, (the "turn around," "winding, and "unwinding" as presented in this chapter) I give the students a homework problem. I tell them to research the single palm change and, based on the exercises they have learned thus far in their training, come up with six different variations of the single palm change. After they have an understanding of the principles of the single palm change, most students can easily come up with six or more variations which adhere to all the principles. In having to put the pieces together on their own and create their own expressions of the single palm change principles, each student gains a better understanding of Pa Kua Chang.

After the students have created their own single palm change variations, they are then required to come up with their own ideas about how these

movements might be applied in combat. They first have time to think about it on their own and then they get together with a partner to research their ideas and see if they work in partner practice. After they have what they think are workable applications, they perform them for the class and everyone critiques their application looking for adherence to Pa Kua Chang principles. Was the distance and angle optimal? Could the timing have been better? Was the power expression applied at the right angle and at the right time and from the right body alignment relative to the opponent? We examine all of these principles as a group and the student then learns how he or she can improve the application.

In going through the learning process described above, the students begin to learn how to apply the principles they have been taught. If a student creates his or her own expression of the art and can invent workable applications without being spoon fed answers by the teacher to "what would you do if" or "how is this applied" type of questions, the student will be able to continue to grow in the art even when the teacher is not around.

People always ask me if Park has "a Pa Kua Chang form" that he teaches. When I respond that Park really has an unlimited number of forms, the person asking the question becomes confused. Hopefully our presentation of the single palm change variations in this chapter will clear up some of that confusion. Park's Pa Kua Chang is designed from fundamental exercises which act as interchangeable building blocks in the execution of numerous "forms."

Park wants his students to get away from the mind set that there is just one Pa Kua form and start to think about how the principles of Pa Kua can be applied to an endless number of movement sequences and variations. Park would much rather the student invent his or her own form, which is built from component parts of his Pa Kua system and expresses the principles of Pa Kua Chang, than have to teach a given set of form movements to a student and call that "the" form. Instead of a student asking Park if he or she could learn a new Pa Kua Chang form, Park would much rather have the student say, "I've invented this Pa Kua form based on what you have taught me, could you take a look and see if it adheres to all of the

principles?" This student is now learning the art of Pa Kua Chang.

There is a famous saying in China which both Park and his teacher have used frequently. It says that "if the teacher says 'one,' the low level student will repeat 'one,' the intermediate student will figure out 'two,' but the advanced student will know how to count to ten." Park is very happy if he can give a student one component part of the system and the student can take that part and figure out numerous useful ways to employ that part without having to be told. If the student never understands how to research and discover things on his or her own, Park's comment about that student is, "Every time, I say 'one,' he says 'one.' He can never figure out 'two.'"

In Park's mind, Pa Kua Chang is based on principles of movement, not "forms." Once the practitioner understands the principles and has experienced a sets of basic movements which are based on those principles, the number of forms one can invent on the spot are endless. Asking a Pa Kua Chang practitioner in Park's school to "show you their Pa Kua form" would be like asking a jazz band to "play you their one song." The jazz musicians feel their music and can jam on an endless number of "songs." Park wants his Pa Kua students to be able to do the same with their Pa Kua. Park wants his students to understand the art of Pa Kua Chang, not the choreography of Pa Kua Chang.

Park does teach several different *ch'i kung* and combat circle walking forms to beginning and intermediate level students. There are forms which are based on the "eight animal" postures; there are forms based entirely on the single palm change; there are forms which combine the single and double palms changes; there are forms which combine all eight of the "forty eight" month palms; there is a circle walking form which focuses on elbow work; there are forms which add the elbow sets in combination with other things. There are many forms. However, Park will usually only teach each student four or five of these forms. This is just to give them an idea of how Pa Kua Chang components might be put together. All of the forms that he teaches are built from component parts of exercises and drills the student has already practiced. Later, Park wants all

his students to be able to express Pa Kua Chang in a free style manner and improvise the "forms" based on all of the component parts of circle walking, body training, elbow training, kick training, and palm training that they have been taught. This free style practice is mostly executed during the "pole training" phase of development, which is discussed briefly in the circle walking chapter of this book.

Park's approach to teaching Pa Kua Chang is different than most because he demands that the students understand the principles of Pa Kua and create their own expression of those principles. When a student asks Park about an application to a movement, Park is most likely to say, "You think about it and show me." He wants his students to think, not just mimic. He wants the student to understand what he or she is doing, not just copy and repeat. Park's adage is that "The teacher is only a guide, you have to teach yourself through hard practice and research if you really want to learn." Park believes that if the student always relies on the teacher, he will always be practicing the teacher's art. If the student creates his own expressions of the principles the teacher has taught him, then the art is his own to keep and he will always progress. It is much more difficult to learn this way. However, in the long run the students come out way ahead because they learn to think for themselves and they learn how to be creative.

Of course, Park is not nearly as severe as his own teacher was in his approach to teaching this method. When Park would ask his teacher a question which his teacher thought Park should be able to figure out for himself, his teacher would strike him with his cane and say, "What do you have in your head? Only water! Shake your head back and forth, let me listen to the water in your head." Park would shake his head and his teacher would say, "Doesn't sound like water. I think it is rock. You have nothing but rock in your head!" Park would get the unsubtle hint and go back to the practice area to try to figure out the answer to his question on his own. Later, Park would show his teacher what he was able to figure out. If he had not quite got it correct, his teacher would say that he still had rocks in his head and Park would go back to the drawing board. If Park was able to figure out a viable solution, his teacher would

nod.

During the seventeen years Park studied with Lu Shui-T'ien, Lu challenged Park with many "homework" problems. These problems mostly consisted of different fighting scenarios or combat applications in which Park would be required to come up with the most effective and efficient solution. Park said that sometimes it would take him months to figure out the best solution to the problems he was given. Sometimes he practiced all day thinking about the problem and then he would stay awake all night with the problem still in his head. He would come up with many solutions he thought would be adequate. However, most times the response he received from his teacher was, "You need to think about it some more."

On one occasion Park was required to figure out an efficient and effective application to a palm strike similar to the "sliding the window shutter to look at the moon." Park had figured out what he thought to be an efficient entry, bridge, and application of the move. The final execution of the technique was a palm strike to the opponent's ear. Park knew that with a properly executed palm strike to the opponent's ear, it was easy to pop the opponent's ear drum and the effect was quite damaging. Every time Park showed the application to his teacher, Lu would say, "You are missing something. You go think about it some more."

What Park finally figured out was that after he applied the palm strike to the ear, his teacher wanted him to grab the ear and rip it off. If the ear is grabbed and pulled at the correct angle, it does not take a lot of force to rip the ear. At first Park was thinking that popping the ear drum was a technique that would "finish" the opponent. His teacher thought he ended the attack too early. Lu's way of thinking about Pa Kua applications was that the practitioner should inflict the most amount of damage in the shortest amount of time. If you strike someone in the ear, your hand is already there, so you should continue by ripping the ear. You never assume that any given technique will devastate the opponent. In Pa Kua you always continue until you have inflicted the most damage possible in the shortest amount of time. To Lu, stopping at popping the ear drum was a waste of a good ear ripping technique.

Of course, in this day and age, there are always moral restraints that one should put on oneself. You would not want to maim someone if you did not absolutely have to. Lu Shui-T'ien used his art as a guerrilla fighter in war time and so he did not have such restraints. In today's world you need to think before you act. However, in some cases, this kind of vicious action might be required and so in researching the art, you never leave out possibilities.

Hiding the Flower Under the Leaf Exercises

The "hiding flower under leaf" exercise is performed in the same manner as the three *fan chang* exercises which were presented in the last volume of this book. In fact, it is usually practiced as a forth exercise in the *fan chang* series. The student practicing this series will transition directly from the *t'ien fan chang* exercise to the "hiding flower under leaf" exercises.

If you recall from the body training chapter of the last volume, we said that the straight *fan chang* exercise primarily worked to stretch the low back, the circle *fan chang* exercise worked the mid-back, and the *t'ien fan chang* exercise worked the upper

back and neck. The "hiding flower under leaf" exercise is a nice follow-up to these exercises because it works the twisting action of the entire spine from the bottom of the spine all the way up to the neck. Because of the arm positioning, this exercise also provides a very good stretch across the upper back and mid back regions and the outer shoulder.

The exercise is executed as follows:

- 1) The feet and knees are held together as in the *fan chang* exercises. The knees do not press together, they are just held together in a natural manner. The right hand is held out in front of the face and the left hand is held under the right



1



2



3



4



5



6-front view



6-rear view

Hiding Flower Under Leaf Exercise



A



B



C

To change from *T'ien Fan Chang*, add these three postures in front of Photo 1 above

elbow. The hand position is the standard "dragon posture" arm position that was explained in the last volume of this book. See photo 1.

2) Begin to turn the lower palm to face upward and the upper palm to face downward as you twist your body to the right. The eyes follow the lower palm. As in the *fan chang* exercises, you will exhale when you are turning to the rear and inhale as you are changing sides across the front. See photo 2.

3) Continue turning as far as you can to the right. Look over the right shoulder at the palm of the left hand. The left palm extends out from the armpit toward the rear as far as possible. The right palm remains about shoulder height and slightly out away from the body. Relax the right shoulder. See photo 3 and the rear view of photo 6.

4) Execute a *fan chang maneuver* as in the straight *fan chang* exercise. Both palms turn to face upwards as the body begins to twist back to the front. See photo 4.

5) As the left hand begins to come around to face the original forward direction, it begins to turn to face downward and the right palm begins to insert under the left elbow as the body begins to twist to the left. See photo 5.

6) Twist the body as far as possible to the left with the eyes following the right palm as it extends to the rear. You are now executing the exercise on the opposite side to complete the first full repetition. See photo 6 (front and rear).

You are now ready to turn the body back to the right and execute the next repetition of this exercise.

The sequence described above is the exercise performed as a set by itself. If you would like to tack this exercise on to the end of the *t'ien fan chang* exercise and thus perform this exercise in series with the three *fan chang exercises*, the photos at the bottom of the previous page indicate how this is done. From the last *t'ien fan chang* movement (see photo A), execute a straight *fan chang back* to the front (see photo B), and you will now be in a position similar to that of photo 1 (see photo C). From here begin to execute the "hiding flower under leaf" exercise as described above.

The Moving "Hiding Flower Under Leaf" Exercise

After you have gained some experience with the static "hiding flower under leaf" exercise as described above, you are now ready to combine this exercise with the *k'ou pu* and *pai pu* footwork, the "white snake coils its body" *k'ou pu* posture, and the "giraffe" *pai pu* posture which were presented in the first volume of this book. The *k'ou pu* and *pai pu* footwork you will execute in this exercise was presented on page 104 of the first volume and was called the "intermediate *k'ou pu* and *pai pu* stepping pattern."

Execution of this exercise serves several purposes. First is upper and lower body coordination. In executing the turning and twisting motions of the body in conjunction with the *k'ou pu* and *pai pu* footwork, the practitioner will gain experience in coordinating the upper and lower parts of the body in the execution of complex motions.

The second purpose of this exercise is an increased flexibility. As discussed previously, the "hiding flower under leaf" motion is ideal for stretching the spine, hips, and shoulders. When this twisting of the upper body is combined with the *k'ou pu* and *pai pu* footwork, all the joints of the body are twisted through a full range of rotational motion. This flexibility helps to build the foundation for the turning and rotating power which is associated with Pa Kua Chang application. The third purpose of this exercise is to train the student to develop a strong sense of balance and stability around the center of the body. In Pa Kua Chang, if the student cannot twist and turn rapidly around his or her body's central axis, he or she will be off balance in executing many of Pa Kua Chang's characteristic applications. As the student becomes familiar with the exercise and begins to execute it faster and more fluidly, he or she will begin to develop a keen sense of the central axis of the body and how the hips, shoulders, and limbs can be rotated around that center in the application of power moves.

Finally, this exercise prepares the student for learning the single palm change movement which is the fundamental building block of all Pa Kua Chang circle walking combat forms. As we have

stated previously in the first volume of this book, it is always good for the student to practice exercises which challenge the body in terms of coordination, balance, flexibility, and stability in an overemphasized nature before they learn the more subtle movements of the art. If they can execute the overemphasized movements, they will certainly have no trouble, in terms of flexibility, balance, and coordination, with the movements which follow. After executing hundreds of repetitions of the *fan chang* exercises, the *k'ou pu* and *pai pu* footwork drills, basic circle walking, and the "hiding flower under leaf" exercises, the student will have no problem executing a smooth, fluid, balanced, and powerful single palm change. We find that students who try to execute the single palm change without a background in these other drills, struggle with the practice, looking very awkward and uncoordinated.

The next exercise, which we will call "the moving hiding flower under leaf" exercise, is executed as follows:

The opening to this exercise is exactly like the opening for the single palm change exercise which was presented on page 91 of the first volume of this book. Instead of turning to walk the circle after photo 12, the practitioner will *pai pu* and step into the giraffe posture. From that point, the practitioner steps into the "white snake coils its body" posture (here after referred to as the "white snake" posture) as shown in photo 1 on the next page.

1) Park starts in the "white snake" posture. See photo 1. His feet are in the *k'ou pu* position as shown in the footwork illustration on page 104 of the last volume of this book. From here his footwork pattern during the remainder of this exercise will follow that of the illustration shown on page 104 and the explanation on page 103 of the previous volume.

2) Park begins to take a pronounced *pai pu* step (approximately 135 degrees). At the same time he unwinds from the "white snake" posture and transitions to the giraffe posture. See photos 2 and 3 on the next page.

3) With the right foot remaining in place, Park begins to wind into the "hiding flower

under leaf" posture (hereafter referred to as the "hiding flower" posture). The left foot steps around into *k'ou pu*.

The body continues to wind as far as possible as in the previous "hiding flower" exercise. Although the *k'ou pu* is facing outside the circle, the body turns such the Park's upper body faces the center of the circle. See photos 4 through 6.

4) From the "hiding flower" posture, Park begins to unwind his body and transition into the giraffe posture as his left foot executes a 135 degree *pai pu* step. See photos 8 through 10.

5) From the giraffe posture, Park keeps the left foot stationery and steps into a *k'ou pu* with the right foot. At the same time he transitions into the "white snake" posture with his body facing the center of the circle. The eyes follow the upper hand in this posture. See photos 11 through 14. From here he continues stepping in this manner continuing around the circle.



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9

The Moving Hiding Flower Under Leaf Exercise



10



11



12



13



14

The Moving Hiding Flower Under Leaf Exercise (con't)

The Single Palm Change

Every complete Pa Kua Chang method embraces a systematic approach to practice. The practitioner who engages in the repetitive practice of fundamental skills for hundreds of hours before attempting more complex, intricate, or subtle skills, will always find that the solid foundation enables continued growth and development in the art. At the root of almost every Pa Kua system there are several key elements of training which should be thoroughly practiced and experientially understood prior to progressing to more advanced training. These components are: circle walking, some variation of the eight "mother" palms (Park's "eight animal" palms), the single palm change, and the double palm change. These could be considered the "four pillars of Pa Kua Chang."

The Four Pillars of Pa Kua Training

Thus far in these two volumes most of the exercises and drills that have been presented in the footwork and body training chapters have been building blocks which lead the student to the execution of the single palm change, one of the four main components of every Pa Kua Chang system. Below we will briefly describe the "four pillars" of Pa Kua Chang.

Circle Walking: Circle walking provides numerous physical and mental benefits for the practitioner in terms of health, longevity, body strength, stamina, coordination, balance, *ch'i* cultivation, calming of the mind, mental concentration, mobility in combat, body/mind unity, and acquiring the skill of "stillness in motion." The basic circle walk practice of Pa Kua was presented in the first volume of this book and was then covered in more detail in Chapter 3 of this volume and so we will not discuss it further here. Each system of Pa Kua will have its own requirements for basic circle walk practice and, like anything in Pa Kua, there exist a multitude of variations on the theme.

The **Mother Palms:** The eight animal palms, also

called the "mother palms" the "*nei kung*" palms or the "*ch'i kung*" palms, are the foundational static upper body postures which are held while the practitioner is practicing the circle walk. These postures are designed to train certain structural alignments while the practitioner is walking the circle. The upper body is held static while the lower body is continuously moving. In the practice of holding these eight palms the practitioner trains structural strengths, internal body connections, internal/external body integration and harmony, development and awareness of muscle groups not usually under conscious control, tendon strength and conditioning, and joint opening and suppleness in each of the eight postures that are held. Again, the exact postures will vary from one Pa Kua system to the next. Each system of Pa Kua will have its own version of these palms. Park's expression of these palms was covered in the previous volume of this book.

In Park's system of Pa Kua, after the student has gained a basic foundation in the practice of the eight animal circle walking as presented in the last volume, he or she will gradually execute more advanced change of direction maneuvers when switching from one animal to the next. Later this practice will be combined with the pole training which is described in the circle walk chapter of this volume. In this training, the practitioner will first learn how to execute the *yin/yang* circle walking around one central pole while changing from one animal to the next in the same sequence presented in the first volume of this book. That is, they will change from lion, to unicorn, to snake, to swallow, to dragon flying, to bear, to phoenix, to monkey. Later they will learn how to change from one animal to all of the others while executing the *yin/yang* circle walking around one pole. After the student has learned these 64 combinations of changes, he or she will then expand the practice to two poles, three poles, four poles, etc.

In learning how to change from any animal

posture to another in a smooth and fluid manner, the student is ingraining a multitude of possible Pa Kua applications. Most of the applications which come directly from the eight animal movements are either bridges which are used to open up the opponent, *chin na* locking techniques, or throwing techniques. However, there are also striking techniques which combine the eight animal movements with the mechanics and power of the forty eight month palms.

The Single Palm Change: The purpose of training the single palm change is primarily to learn how to change power, strength, energy, awareness and mental focus from one side of the body to the other while remaining centered, stable, and balanced. In fighting, the basic single palm change is primarily used to change direction quickly, accurately, and appropriately in response to an opponent's movement. The single change can be used to change from any posture to another, or from any situation to another.

There are literally hundreds of ways to execute the single palm change. Its execution in practice aids the practitioner in learning how to change strength, power, and awareness from one side of the body to the other, develops central equilibrium, coordinates the upper and lower body, trains whole body "twisting power," and teaches execution of coordinated rotational motion for use in both offensive and defensive action. Additionally, it develops the ability to maintain consistent mental focus when shifting the awareness from left to right or vice-versa. In Park's system the single palm change is present in a multitude of variations by combining its basic components with the movements of the eight animals, the forty eight month palms, the elbow sets, and the speed combinations. All of the aspects of the single palm change will be discussed in detail in this chapter.

The Double Palm Change: The double palm change movements will develop many of the same components as the single change, but it serves to add a bit more complexity to the changing of direction and it involves a division of body power, strength, awareness, and mental focus to both sides of the body at once. In most systems of Pa Kua, the double palm change movement sequence is a bit more complex than

the single palm change. The added complexity helps the practitioner take the lessons learned from the practice of the single change and carry them a step farther. Additionally, whereas the single palm change taught the practitioner to change the body energy, power, and focus from one side to the other, the double palm change teaches the practitioner how to divide the strength and power to both sides at the same time. The mechanics of developing power, energy, and awareness in a balanced manner to both sides of the body at the same time also takes the training to a new level. The practitioner begins to learn the principle of extending power to have it arrive at the four tips simultaneously. This is an important concept in developing internal power. The classic writings of both Hsing-I and Pa Kua advise the student to learn how to extend power to the four tips (hands and feet) simultaneously in order to develop whole body, coordinated strength.

In most systems of Pa Kua Chang the single palm change and the double palm change are practiced separately from the other form sequences. In other words, they are not a part of any one of the system's eight sectional forms, but form the foundation for those forms and are practiced separately before the other form sequences are learned. In fact, many systems of Pa Kua have developmental eight section forms which are made up entirely of variations of the single and/or double palm change movements. The first few combat forms students in Park's system will learn are made up entirely of single and double palm change variations.

In other Pa Kua systems the single palm change and the double palm change will be the first two sections of their first eight section circle walking form. In all systems of Pa Kua Chang the single palm change and the double palm change (although they may be called different names) are the basic building blocks upon which all other Pa Kua movements are placed.

If the Pa Kua Chang student spends a considerable amount of time studying Pa Kua's circle walk practice, eight mother palms, single palm change, and double palm change and gains a solid experiential understanding of these movements and their underlying principles, he or she will have developed a very solid foundation

in Pa Kua and will be able to easily assimilate all aspects of Pa Kua training.

Before we begin to present some of the variations of the single palm change which are practiced in Park Bok Nam's system of Pa Kua Chang, we will first discuss some ideas about how all Pa Kua Chang movements and techniques might be approached.

The Study of Pa Kua Chang Movement

As we have pointed out previously in this book, Pa Kua Chang is an art of principle. It is not an art of choreography, it is not an art of technique, it is not an art of "form." This does not mean it does not have choreographed sequences, techniques, or forms. This means that all of these things are rooted in theory and principle and thus there is an almost unlimited potential for variation in technique or form as long as the technique or form adheres to the underlying principles or energies of the movement being studied. Therefore, in examining, researching, or training the moves of Pa Kua Chang, one should try to capture the principles of body motion, the internal harmony associated with the motion, and the energy movement inherent in the motion, not simply memorize a sequence of physical motions. While components of body alignment and mechanics are always important concepts to grasp in any motion, the underlying principles become far more important once the body alignments, connections and mechanics are understood.

In the study of any Pa Kua Chang motion, some of the components the practitioner wants to try to grasp are: the rudiments of the physical movement, the energy or principles conveyed in the movement, and the adaptations or variations of those principles, this allows for an unlimited expression of the art form.

Physical Movement: In the study of the physical movement, the student will be first interested in simply learning the "form" of the movement. This study would include components such as the proper sequence of

movement; the body alignments associated with all of the sequences, gestures, and posturing of the movements; the mechanics of the motion which will provide efficient execution, natural strength, and subtle power; the internal and external body connections, the structure, and harmony of the movements; the timing of the movements and the rhythm of the movement sequence; the energetic flow, smoothness in transitions and fluidity of the movements; the mental intention and focus of each movement and the overall sequence; the harmonious use of breath in the movements; and examples of possible combat applications of the movements.

Principles of Movement: After the study and practice of the physical movement or sequence of movements has been thoroughly researched as outlined above, the practitioner should then turn his or her attention to a study of the overall principles associated with the sequence. One should ask, "What is this sequence of movements trying to teach me in terms of body mechanics, power generation, and martial application?" Taking the single palm change as an example, after the student has spent time practicing the proper execution of the sequence, he or she should step back and say, "What am I really doing here?" Brainstorm and make a mental list: "I'm changing direction, I'm changing my power, strength and awareness from one side of my body to the other, I'm exchanging my lead and rear hands, I'm developing rotational power around my body's center, I'm developing the ability to maintain constant strength, power, awareness and concentration while changing direction, the rotational movement of my body around its center extends into a rotational movement of my arms around their center axis and circular paths of movement of the hands, etc."

After thinking about what the specific movements are and how the power is being developed and how the balance and stability is being maintained, the student can then start to think about how these movements might be applied in a fighting situation. He or she thinks about the relationships of these movements and the movements of an opponent. Ask yourself, "How can I execute these movements in a martial

environment?" "Where is the power being expressed and to what part of the opponent's body could it be optimally expressed?" "What is the timing of this expression of power in relation to the movements of my opponent?" "How can I position myself to execute these movements and maintain stability and balance while at the same time disrupting my opponent's stability and balance?" "How can I execute this motion without meeting my opponent with resistance or struggle?"

In asking these questions about movement principles and efficient martial applications, and researching the answers to them, the student not only learns more about his or her art, he or she will know where to focus the mental intention when practicing the motions. In all Pa Kua Chang practice, the movement and energy follows the intention. If the student does not know what the particular movement sequence is training and/or how it is applied, they will not know where to focus the intention. Researching each movement, the practitioner gains the awareness and mental focus necessary to unify the mind and body in the execution of Pa Kua Chang.

By learning how to look at the overall principles, patterns, and energy flow associated with movement sequences, the student will be able to develop the ability to vary and change the movements, but continue to maintain the principles and patterns associated with those movements and sequences.

Variation and Change: Variation and change are the most important concepts a student can grasp in the study of Pa Kua Chang. Learning how to take fundamental principles of body motion and adapt them to any given situation is what the *art* of Pa Kua Chang is all about. Once the student has learned a movement sequence such as the single palm change and becomes aware of its inherent principles, he or she can then begin to vary the motion. Instead of turning inside the circle, execute an outside change (as shown by Park on page 80); instead of maintaining a high posture during the execution, scoop down low when executing the change (as shown by Park on page 77); instead of executing

big movements, tighten everything up and make the motions small, quick, and subtle, etc.

The student may also think about how the move may be changed to fit various combat scenarios and self-defense situations, but still maintain the same underlying principles. This variation does not only apply to combat or a response to the movements of an opponent, it also applies to the practice environment and terrain, the individual's physical condition, age, body size, personality characteristics, physical abilities, physical and mental aptitudes, and specific training focus.

As we discussed when we examined the circle walk practice, the circle walk practice can be varied many different ways depending on what aspect of training the practitioner wants to practice. The student can adjust the training for purposes of upper body strength and connection, for leg strength training, for endurance, for cardiovascular training, for meditation training, for *ch'i kung* training, for training agility, mobility, and evasiveness, etc. Additionally, the student should learn how to vary the stepping techniques of the circle walk dependent on the combat application of particular moves. The smart student will also learn how to vary the steps depending on the terrain. What is the best way to step when on a flat surface?, a rocky terrain?, sandy terrain?, slippery surfaces?, etc. In each different environment the execution of the movements may change in order to best suit that environment. Every aspect of Pa Kua training should be studied in accordance with a consideration for all possible variables.

The idea in practicing Pa Kua Chang is not to learn a choreographed form sequence, but to capture the principles and essentials of Pa Kua Chang and then apply them to physical motion in the martial art and/or health maintenance context. Each individual should have a unique flavor to his or her Pa Kua based on their individual strengths and weaknesses as determined by their instructor. Therefore, there are almost as many interpretations of Pa Kua form as there are instructors of Pa Kua. However, the underlying principles are always the same. Practitioners who grasp the principles of the practice can easily learn how to modify the practice to suit different situations, environments,

and personal training agendas. As Sun Lu Tang said in his book *Pa Kua Ch'uan Hsueh*, "There is a central idea. Merely practicing is not understanding. Seek to understand the human ability. Study diligently for deep ideas. The result after a long time is that one is able to know."

Those who do not learn how to research the principles and vary the motions according to circumstance will always be simply following choreographed form routines without any real understanding of what Pa Kua Chang is about. They will always need an instructor to tell them how to think, how to practice, and how to apply the art. Their art will never belong to them and they will always be on the fringe of understanding. A Pa Kua stylist is a master of varying and changing appropriately to fit any circumstance, not someone who is good at mimicking choreography or mindlessly repeating standardized competition routines.

The Definition of Single Palm Change

By definition, "Single Palm Change" simply means that in executing a maneuver, the palm that was originally the active palm, or *yang* palm, changes and becomes the inactive or *yin* palm. Additionally, in executing the palm change, the practitioner will change the direction of forward motion (at times this change may be very slight). With the change of the *yang* palm also comes a shift in the practitioner's energy, power, focus, awareness, and intention from one side of the body to the other, from one palm to the other, and/or from one direction to another.

The variations on the single palm change theme are endless. The change can be simple, complex, high, low, inside, outside, left, right, fast, slow, big, or small. The change can occur from any given posture or position to any other given posture or position. Each complete school of Pa Kua will have many various ways of executing the single palm change and the execution of the single palm change will also vary from school to school. Practitioners who believe that there is only "one way" to execute the single palm change are severely limiting their practice and their understanding of Pa Kua Chang.

Although there are a large variety of single palm change movements (many of which will be discussed later in this chapter), there are some consistencies in the execution of this maneuver which serve to define it. In examining a variety of single palm change motions we can recognize four main characteristics which appear to be common among all varieties of the single palm change movement. They are as follows: the *yang* palm changes to become the *yin* palm and vice-versa, the practitioner's path of motion changes direction, the general mechanics and power of the motion involve a rotational movement around the center line of the practitioner's body (this includes center line of the torso, center line of the arms, and center line of the legs), and the *k'ou pu* and *pai pu* foot maneuvers are employed in some manner. These characteristics define the single palm change and give the practitioner a basis for variation of this method.

Similarly, in seeking to define the "Double Palm Change" movement we notice that in the execution of this maneuver the palms are changed and then both palms are applied in unison. They could both be applied in the forward direction, in the downward direction, one up and one down, one back and the other forward, both to the backward direction, etc. As long as the body's energy and movement is split between right and left simultaneously and equally in the execution of a maneuver, this maneuver can be called "double palm change."

Practitioners and instructors who understand that Pa Kua Chang is an art of principle and not one of choreographed form routines will be able to execute dozens of variations of the single and double palm changes because their idea of the single or double palm changes is that which is defined by principle, not form.

On one occasion I attended a seminar given by Park Bok Nam in Maryland. One of the seminar participants asked if Park could execute "his style's version of the single palm change." Park was confused because to him the single palm change is a principle, not a sequence of choreography. Park's reply was that there were many ways to practice the single palm change. He was very hesitant to go out and demonstrate any given one of them because he did not want

the seminar participants to think that the single palm change was this one sequence of moves. Park said, "This single palm change, this is a principle, not a form."

The "Form" of Single Palm Change

In defining the general motions of the single palm change in the last section, we gave an idea about how this move might be executed. In this section we will discuss numerous examples of how the single palm change sequence might be executed in an attempt to give the reader an idea of the variety which is present in the execution of this maneuver. Most of these examples will stem from the exercises which were presented in the "Pa Kua Chang Body Training" chapter of the first volume and from the "hiding flower under leaf" exercises shown in the beginning of this chapter.

A very simple single palm change movement is demonstrated below by Park Bok Nam. This single palm change was also shown as the simple change of direction in the circle walking chapter of the last volume of this book. As you can see from the photographs, all of the single palm change characteristics are present. The palms change, the body rotates around its central axis, the direction of forward motion changes, and the *k'ou pu* and *pai pu* footwork methods are employed. This execution of the single palm change is very simple and direct and is used as a basic method of changing directions in the

beginning level circle walk practice in Park Bok Nam's school.

Park believes that the beginning student should practice a very simple change of direction like this one before more complex single palm change maneuvers are practiced. Park's entire training method is based on first learning and becoming proficient at simple methods before moving onto more complex sequences. As a practitioner develops in Park's system, the single palm change maneuvers move gradually from the simple method shown below to much more complex methods which challenge the students flexibility, agility, maneuverability, balance and coordination.

Simple changes such as the one shown below are somewhat characteristic of the Yin Fu styles of Pa Kua as Yin Fu style fighting tactics tend to be quick and very direct. Of course this does not mean that all of their variations of the single palm change were simple, many of the training sets have more complex variations. However, Yin style tends to be very direct in applications and thus the simple changes were preferred.

The next execution of the single palm change which we will discuss is demonstrated by Park on the page 68. As a reference, we will present this as a "standard" change with which the others will be compared. Following the discussion on this next change, we will present six other single palm change variations in photograph sequences and talk about many others.



A Simple Execution of the Single Palm Change

The Movements of the "Standard" Single Palm Change

Although we are referring to this single palm change as the "standard" it is not any more important than any of the others. We are simply allowing this to be our reference sequences because all of the component parts of the single palm change are clearly recognizable in this expression of the single palm change movement. The execution of this single palm change is as follows:

1) In the photos shown on the next page, photo 1 shows Park walking the circle in the clockwise direction. When the practitioner is ready to change directions on the circle, the single palm change is executed.

2) In our example, this maneuver begins in photo 2 with the execution of a *k'ou* (hooking) step. In this photo Park's foot is still in transition to this step. As this step is taken, the body begins to rotate around its center line. The lead arm begins to come across the front of the body while maintaining a rounded shape. As Park steps into the complete *k'ou pu* (see photo 3), the lower arm comes up under the upper arm. There can be many possible variations in the arm movements associated with this first *k'ou* step. In photo 3, Park is using what he calls the "panther" posture. In this posture, the lower arm crosses the upper arm, however, the upper arm extends out farther. A slight variation of the "panther" posture is the *shih tzu* (十子), or "character ten" posture. In this posture the lower arm is held up higher and crossed equally with the upper arm. In other words, the arms form an "X" in front of the body. It is called the "character ten" posture because the Chinese character ten looks like a cross. A third variation of the arm position held during this phase of the change is the "white snake coils its body" posture shown on page 74.

3) From this position, the practitioner continues to turn the body smoothly around its center line and executes the *pai* (swinging) step as shown in photograph number 4. As the swinging step is executed, Park turns the lead palm over (thumb

pointing outward) and swings the arm outward with the step. He executes this maneuver with the "giraffe" movement which was discussed in the first volume of this book and was practiced in the "moving hiding flower under leaf" exercise. When discussing variations of the single palm change later in this chapter we will refer to this segment of the single palm change (as depicted in photos 2 through 4) as "the turn around."

The arm movements which can be executed during the "turn around" phase of the single palm change are numerous. For instance, other common movements to execute with the arms in during this phase of the single palm change are the "sliding the window shutter to gaze at the moon" movement which is described in the "forty eight month" palms section of the palm training chapter or the "embracing the moon at chest" move that is discussed in the supplemental palm training section of the palm training chapter. Other variations are discussed later in this chapter.

4) Next the practitioner will begin to step up into a *k'ou* step with the right leg as depicted in photo 5. The body continues to turn around its center as the lower hand comes underneath the upper elbow as in the "hiding flower under leaf" exercise shown earlier in this chapter. The upper hand is held at about shoulder height with the palm facing down and the lower hand is held under the upper elbow with the palm facing up. When discussing variations of the single palm change later in this chapter we will refer to this segment of the single palm change (as depicted in photo 5) as the "winding."

5) Next the practitioner begins to unwind the body, change the palms, and execute a *pai* step (as shown in photos 6 through 9). The upper palm turns to face upward and leads the motion as the body begins to turn. Then the bottom palm moves up along the upper arm (palm up) and both arms lift upward as the body turns. As the body begins to reach the full extent of its turn, both palms begin to rotate and then the arms fall down into the original circle walking posture on the other side. When discussing variations of the single palm change later in this chapter we will refer to this segment of the single palm change



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The "Standard" Single Palm Change

(as depicted in photos 6 through 9) as "the unwinding."

When performing the "unwinding" segment of the single palm change, there are also numerous variations one might use. One which is used frequently in Park's system is to execute a *t'ien fan chang* maneuver here instead of the circle *fan chang* which is depicted in the photos.

The Principles

In this section we will briefly describe some of the principles that are being trained during the execution of the "standard" version of the single palm change in its three phases: the "turn around," the "winding," and the "unwinding." We will then address several of the possible single palm change variations which are based on those principles.

The Turn Around: The turn around, and its associated footwork, is perhaps the most important aspect of the single palm change in terms of training for fighting mobility. The practitioner who is interested in training Pa Kua as a fighting art should learn to execute this turn around movement (the *k'ou* step) swiftly and fluidly while maintaining stability and balance. The first *k'ou* step, and the associated coordination of the upper body motion rotating around the body's center axis with this step, are the key principles in this maneuver. The key element in this move is the swift, fluid, efficient change of direction while maintaining stability and a continuous, connected strength. If there is a break in the fluidity of motion or the whole body connection and strength, the movement will be awkward, clumsy and inefficient.

As one variation, the simple change of direction and change of palms can be executed directly after the *k'ou* step. If you look at photo 3, you can see that Park is in a good position to execute a direct change of palms and change of direction if he were to take a straight step with his left leg cutting through the center of the circle while executing a piercing palm maneuver to change palms (the piercing palm is discussed in Chapter 5). This technique, which would be

similar to the change demonstrated by Park on page 66, is a very useful move when evading an opponent's attack and maneuvering to outflank him.

The *pai* step and turning of the upper arm which is executed in photo 4 develops the practitioner's ability to coordinate the upper and lower body and develop a horizontal power which is manifest from the rotation of the body. In this motion, the upper and lower body should move in a unified manner rotating around the practitioner's center. The hip/shoulder, elbow/ knee, and hand/foot alignments (referred to in the classics as the "three external harmonies") should always be maintained. Additionally, this movement trains the practitioner's ability to generate power from the body out to the hand utilizing the alignment of the body and the power of the rotational movement. This being the case, the importance of coordinating the timing, alignment, and unity of the upper and lower body in this motion cannot be overemphasized.

This first "turn around" motion, as depicted in the "standard" change, is usually used as a deflection of an opponent's attack. However, as we have stated previously, in application the movements are far more compact. As the opponent punches, the overturning of the palm is used to deflect and "stick" to and slide up the opponent's attacking arm. The overturning of the palm and the sliding motion act to form a wedge which deflects the punch. Used as a strike, this motion is discussed in Chapter 5 during the discussion of the "white cloud chasing the stars" palm. As mentioned previously, the "sliding the window shutter to gaze at the moon" palm or the "embracing moon at chest" palm could also be used in striking applications during the "turn around" phase of the single palm change.

The Winding: The winding up of the body is demonstrated by Park in photo 5. The principle in this portion of the change is in learning how to once again rotate the body around it's center while maintaining balance and stability. In doing this the practitioner is also learning how to generate horizontal power. The degree of the body turning, or winding, can vary depending on the experience level of the practitioner or the focus

of the practice.

The maximum twist of the body, which Park is demonstrating in photo 5, helps develop suppleness and flexibility in the spine as the spine is twisted from the base all the way up to the top of the neck. This large twisting motion can also be utilized in application when the practitioner is executing an arm break, shoulder strike, and/ or as a set up for a throw. In order to condition the appropriate muscles, ligaments and tendons of the legs and torso to be able to train the body to generate this kind of power, the beginning student will maximize this twist. The "hiding flower under leaf" exercise shown in the beginning of this chapter aids in developing the body for this motion. When practicing the maximum twisting motion the practitioner should always maintain the proper body alignments so the knees are not twisted to an unnatural angle.

In all applications, this motion is usually executed close into the opponent's body in order to employ a joint lock, arm break, set up for a throw, and/or flanking maneuver. The practitioner will apply crisp power at the end of the winding motion when utilizing this move for an arm break or shoulder strike. Thus when practicing with this type of execution in mind, the practitioner will usually perform the more pronounced rotation and tight *k'ou* step in order to insure stability. A discussion of the usage of the *k'ou* and *pai* steps is presented at the end of this chapter.

The footwork of the single palm change will also vary with the intent of the application. Whereas the *k'ou pu* footwork in the "turn around" segment of this maneuver was utilized to change direction rapidly, the *k'ou pu* in the "winding" section can be used to hook and lock the opponent's foot and leg or to set up for a leg sweep. Practitioners who are executing the single palm change with this strategy in mind will have a pronounced *k'ou pu*. Others, who may use this movement for a fast throwing application, may use a very small, quick *k'ou pu*. The practice of the single palm change can always vary depending on the intent of the practitioner's fighting application.

In addition to variations relating to different

fighting strategies, variations of this winding motion can also be tailored for training flexibility and suppleness in the spine, back, shoulders, and hips. Various arm positions are utilized to facilitate different varieties of stretching motions. You will notice that Park's lower hand is tucked in under the armpit and close to the body. This facilitates a stretching motion in the back which aids in the development of flexibility and suppleness in the back and shoulder areas.

The Unwinding: Part of the purpose of the winding motion discussed in the last section is to prepare for the unwinding motion which is to follow. It is during the execution of the unwinding that the actual changing of the palms occurs.

Like the winding, the unwinding is training the practitioner how to develop rotational power around the center axis of the body, legs, and arms. However, whereas the winding primarily trained horizontal power, there are also components of vertical and oblique power exhibited in the motion of the unwinding. You will notice that as the body unwinds and the palms change, the hands are brought up high before they reach their final position. This is shown in photos 7 through 9. The upward lifting and subsequent falling and rotating of the arms and palms as the body turns back in this unwinding phase is the key principle here. This is the "rise, drill, fall, and overturn" sequence that is discussed in both the Hsing-I and Pa Kua classics. These four different kinds of energy are trained in this motion. In Park's school, this component is practiced to varying degrees. In other words, in the execution of the unwinding students practice all variations from a very flat change as in the straight *fan chang* maneuver, to a very high arcing change as in the *t'ien fan chang* maneuver. All variations in-between these two extremes are also practiced.

In application, the unwinding motion of the body and "rise, drill, fall, and overturn" motions of the hands and arms are usually utilized in the execution of a deflection, redirection, or throw. In some instances it can be also used as a strike to the side of the head or the back of the head or neck. In the abbreviated version of the single palm change from the Yin Fu style of Pa Kua,

which incorporates the piercing palm motion, the pierce can either be use as an entry, deflection, or a strike.

The unwinding of the body and the uplifting, rotating, and falling of the arms and hands also aids the practitioner in developing functional flexibility in the legs torso, spine, shoulders, and arms. By functional flexibility I am referring to training which works to stretch and loosen muscles that will need to be supple and loose during the execution of Pa Kua. It is great if someone can perform the full splits, however, performing the splits is not nearly as functional in Pa Kua as having a loose and supple twisting and turning movement throughout the whole body, especially in the pelvic region. There are many individuals who have very limber leg muscles, however, when asked to stand with their feet and knees facing forward and twist their hips as far as they can to one side or the other, they discover that the muscles in their pelvic region are not so loose. In Pa Kua functional flexibility involves twisting and rotating the muscles and suppleness in the joints - twisting the legs, twisting the hips, twisting the torso, twisting the shoulders, and twisting the arms. This is why the series of *fan chang* exercises and the "hiding flower under leaf" exercise are so important. Additionally, these twisting are executed in the single palm change in a coordinated fashion while maintaining whole body connection. These elements are all trained in the single palm change.

Variations

Now that we have presented and discussed one possible single palm change expression, we will use that as a model in discussing variations on the theme. In all cases we will discuss the variations in terms of the "change of direction," the "winding," and the "unwinding" components.

The first variations we will explore are those involving the "change of direction" phase of the single palm change. For simplicity, we have included photo sequences of these variations which do not include the pronounced "winding"

and "unwinding" sections of the change as practiced during the execution of the "hiding flower under leaf" posture. The winding and unwinding phase of the following examples will appear to have been left out because the pronounced *k'ou pu* and *pai pu* movements and the "hiding flower under leaf" winding of the body that were presented in our last example have been shortened considerably. However, the winding and unwinding principles are there in the execution of the *fan chang* maneuver, they are just very subtle. Of course, as variations to these examples, the pronounced winding and unwinding of the last example could be added to any of them.

Variation #1

In the first variation example, we will demonstrate what we mean by the subtle winding and unwinding. The photographs on the next page depict a single palm change sequence where the winding and unwinding phases of the exercise have been omitted except for the subtle rotation of the body around its center during the *fan chang* maneuver. The example is as follows:

- 1) Park is walking the circle in the clockwise direction. See photo 1.
- 2) Park now executes the first *k'ou pu* maneuver and changes directions using the "panther" and "giraffe" postures as in the last example. See photos 2 through 4.
- 3) Now, instead of moving in to the "hiding flower under leaf" posture, Park executes a straight *fan chang* maneuver and begins to walk the circle in the other direction. See photos 5 and 6. In photo 5, Park is executing a very subtle "winding" of the body. The hips and shoulders are slightly rotating to the right as in the previous change, however, the body does not turn near as far and the inside foot does not step into *k'ou pu*. In photo 6, Park is executing a subtle "unwinding" in that the body has rotated around its center and is facing back towards the center of the circle.

One thing to notice here is that Park has lifted his inside leg high during the change. This is another variation. Instead of stepping straight out with the inside foot close to the ground, this high lifting action of the leg during the change is



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Single Palm Change Variation #1

practiced for an application the practitioner might use in sweeping the opponent's leg in a throw. In this instance (photo 5), Park could have stepped low to the ground or lifted the leg in a crisp motion which is coordinated with the turning of the body and changing of the palms. The low footwork is executed in application when the practitioner is using the *fan chang* phase of the single palm change to open up the opponent's defenses and get inside. The twisting of the body, overturning of the hands, and crisp lifting of the leg is executed in close to the opponent's body in the execution of a throwing technique.

Another thing to notice here is that this change is very similar to the change shown on page 66.

However, that change does not include the "giraffe" posture during the change. The example on page 66 is a more direct expression of the change. This more direct expression could include numerous variations. For example, from the position shown in photo 3 above, instead of executing the straight *fan chang* and changing into the standard "dragon" posture (photos 5 through 7), Park could have transitioned into an one of the eight "animal" postures as presented in the last volume on pages 189 through 198.

Other variations can also occur from the position shown in photo 3. One change students in Park's school will learn is to step into the *k'ou pu* shown in photo 3 and then execute three

piercing palms from this position. After the third piercing palm, the left hand is forward and so the student simply turns the body to the right, steps off with the left foot and walks the circle. In executing the three piercing palms, the changing of the forward palm occurs without having to perform the *fan chang* maneuver. The piercing palm maneuver is presented in this volume in the "supplemental palms" section of Chapter 5.

Other possible variations to this change which Park's students practice involve combining the movements of single palm change variation #1 with the "full step with a jump" footwork and palm striking which was presented on page 136 of the first volume of this book. This sequence would fit in-between photos 5 and 6 of the single palm change variation #1. In other words, as the palms change and the left leg steps forward (see photo 5), instead of lifting the leg and turning the body to the center as shown in photo 6, the practitioner executes a full step with a jump straight along a line tangent to the circle in combination with a powerful shaking palm strike. After the shaking palm is executed, the practitioner then executes the movements shown in photos 6 and 7 on the previous page to walk the circle.

One last variation to this single palm execution can occur from the posture in photo number 6. From this position, instead of continuing a smooth turn to the center of the circle and a circle walking step, the practitioner can execute a jump step and double "slapping palm" application. After the double slapping palm is executed, the practitioner can turn the body towards the center and continue walking the circle (photo 7). The slapping palm is described in the "forty eight month palm" section of Chapter 5 of this volume. As you can see from the few single palm change examples presented thus far, the variations to the single palm change that the student in Park's school will practice can employ all of the previous training, including: the eight direction rooted stepping, the body training exercises, the forty eight month palms, and the supplemental palms. There is not one part of Park's system that exists in isolation from the others. Eventually it is all brought together in the characteristic Pa Kua Chang circle walking format.

Variation #2

Now that we have defined one simple change where the "hiding flower under leaf" posture has been shortened to a straight *fan chang*, we will present a variation to the "turn around" which involves the "white snake coiling its body" *k'ou pu* posture you practiced in the "moving hiding flower under leaf" exercise. This change is executed as follows:

- 1) Park is walking the circle in the clockwise direction. See photo 1.
- 2) Park steps into *k'ou pu* and the arms begin to form the "white snake coils its body" posture. See photos 2 and 3.
- 3) Park now turns his body to the right by opening up his right foot and executes a *fan chang* maneuver at the same time. He then steps off and walks the circle in the other direction. See photos 4 through 6.

As variations to this theme, Park could have executed the "hiding flower under leaf" maneuver directly from the position in photo 3. Or he could have executed the "giraffe" posture from the position in photo 3 and then executed the "hiding flower under leaf" posture as you practiced in the "moving hiding flower under leaf" exercise. Again, as he stepped off to walk the circle in the other direction he could have stepped off directly as he did in the photos, or he could have lifted the leg in a sweeping motion as he did in the last example. Additionally, he could have executed any of the other variations discussed in the last section after he executed the "white snake coils its body" posture. The number of different combinations the practitioner can invent become endless.

A nice application of this "white snake coiling its body" move is to slightly side step an opponent's attack, blocking it with the upper arm and catching the opponent's forearm with the upper hand as you step into the "white snake coils its body" posture. As you step in, the lower elbow clips the opponent in the ribs. This forward moving elbow (forearm leading) is immediately followed by another strike with the same elbow in the reverse direction (upper arm leading). At the same time the second elbow is connecting to the opponent's ribs in the front of his body, the



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Single Palm Change Variation #2

upper hand releases the opponent's forearm and rides up his arm to jab him in the throat with the fingers of the upper hand. In this position (photo 3) the practitioner's body is very close to the opponent's body, the practitioner's foot has hooked around the opponent's lead foot, and the opponent's head is moving back after he has been jabbed in the throat. At this point, the practitioner's upper arm grabs the opponent's arm at the crook of the elbow as the lower arm comes across the opponent's chest (giraffe movement) and the foot sweeps out the opponent's leg in the execution of a throw. This application can be executed very fast and in a matter of seconds the opponent has received two elbow strikes to the ribs, fingers jabbed into his throat, and he is

thrown on the ground.

Variation #3

The next two variations of the "turn around" are based on the "scooping moon from sea bottom" exercises which were presented in the first volume of this book. The first is executed as follows:

- 1) Park begins by walking the circle in the clockwise direction. See photo 1.
- 2) Park steps into the *k'ou pu* of the turn around and then brings the upper hand to block across the face. See photos 2 and 3.
- 3) The upper elbow comes down to block in front of the right ribs. See photos 4 and 5.



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Single Palm Change Variation #3

- 4) The fingers of the right hand turn under to face away from the body and spear through. See photo 6.
- 5) As the hand spears in the direction of the change, the body follows by turning. See photo 7.
- 6) The body makes a quick turning motion which comes from the back foot, up the leg, the hips, the shoulders, and out to the hand in the execution of the palm turning over. This is a whole body motion and a very important coordination to comprehend in the execution of this phase of the movement. See photo 8.
- 7) Begin to execute the *fan chang* maneuver to change palms. See photo 9.
- 8) Execute the *fan chang* and continue walking in the counterclockwise direction. See photos 10 and 11.

As always, the practitioner has the option of executing the "hiding flower under leaf" maneuver after reaching the position shown in photograph 8. This motion has numerous useful applications, most of which block an opponent's strike and then use a wrapping motion to "snake" inside of the opponent's defenses.

Variation #4

This next variation is the same as the last except that the low "scooping moon from sea bottom" is executed. This is known as a "lower single palm change." This variation is executed as follows:

- 1) Park begins by walking the circle in the clockwise direction. See photo 1.
- 2) Park steps into the *k'ou pu* of the turn around and then brings the upper hand to block across the face. See photos 2 and 3.
- 3) From here the fingers of the upper hand turn in and the hand begins to shoot down by the side. See photos 4 and 5.
- 4) The right hand continues to extend down the right leg, traveling along the leg with the palm facing upward as Park shifts his weight down on the left leg. The left hand is placed by the left ribs with the palm facing upward. A variation of this posture would be to have the left hand extend out to the back with the palm facing upwards or

pushing to the rear. See photo 6.

5) From the low position shown in photograph number 6, Park will push off of the back leg and turn the palm over as the body comes up. Notice that there is a straight line from Park's back foot, up his leg and spine. A common problem beginners run into in this motion is to allow the upper body to bend forward as the body comes up. This breaks the body's alignment and energy flow. See photos 7 and 8. The entire sequence from photo 3 to photo 8 is performed very fluidly in a swift "swooping" type of motion. There should be a very smooth and swift transition across the body in the low posture. The practitioner swoops down with the weight all coming down on the left leg, then the weight is immediately transferred across to the right, by a pushing motion from the left leg, as the body begins to raise up and turn and the palm rotates. This movement is sometimes referred to as "swallow skims the water."

6) Park begins to execute the *fan chang* maneuver to change palms. At this point, the practitioner could transition into a *k'ou pu* and perform the "hiding flower under leaf" posture. Executing the "hiding flower under leaf" posture at this juncture is very good on the legs because it is difficult to transition smoothly from the low scooping, extended body position of "swallow skims the water" directly to the "hiding flower under leaf" posture. See photo 9.

7) Park executes the *fan chang* maneuver and begins walking the circle on the other side. See photos 10 through 12.

This expression of the single palm change is very useful in opening up the hips and groin areas as well as stretching the legs. In applications, this palm is useful in throwing larger, taller opponents by cutting away their legs. Park says that one rule of thumb to follow in fighting a tall opponent is to take away his legs.

Variation #5

In the next variation of the single palm change, the "turn around" phase of the motion is, in a sense, combined with the "winding" phase of the "hiding flower under leaf" posture. Instead of executing the first *k'ou pu* movement and an obvious "turn around," the practitioner will



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Single Palm Change Variation #4

transition directly from walking the circle in the clockwise direction to the "hiding flower under leaf" posture.

Executing the single palm change in this manner is a way of overemphasizing the "winding" motion of the "hiding flower under leaf" movement. In doing this, the student learns how to better balance his or her turning motions around the body's center line. If the student can learn to execute this variation of the single palm change smoothly and fluidly while maintaining stability, he or she will find that the standard "hiding flower under leaf" change becomes much simpler. In Pa Kua Chang application there are many instances where the practitioner will use this "winding" energy. The more stable, smooth, and fluid the practitioner is in the execution of this movement, the more useful it will be in application. Through practice of this version of the single palm change, the student will learn how to rotate the body around its center axis in a smooth, continuous, crisp, and fluid manner. The change is executed as follows:

- 1) Park begins by walking the circle in the clockwise direction. See photo 1.
- 2) As he takes a step with the outside foot, Park executes a 180 *k'ou pu* turn while the hands immediately begin to transition into the "hiding flower under leaf" posture (for an explanation of the 180 *k'ou pu*, see the first volume of this book, page 102). See photo 2.
- 3) Park executes the full "hiding flower under leaf" posture. See photo 3.
- 4) Park begins to unwind and then executes a *fan chang* maneuver. See photos 4 and 5.
- 5) Park completes the *fan chang* and steps off to walk the circle in the other direction. See photos 6.

A variation of this change which will further challenge the practitioner's balance and stability around the body's center line is to execute a *t'ien fan chang* maneuver from the "hiding flower under leaf" posture of photo 3. In practicing this variation, the winding into the "hiding flower under leaf" posture and the unwinding using the *t'ien fan chang* movement are executed swiftly and fluidly. This change of direction is very fast.

Another variation is to execute the "swallow penetrating through the forest" movement from the "hiding flower under leaf" posture during the "unwind" portion of this movement. This change also challenges the practitioner's balance and stability during the unwinding phase of the single palm change. Additionally, there are several nice applications of the "hiding flower under leaf" changing to "swallow penetrating through the forest."

Variation #6

The next variation of the single palm change is called the "outside single palm change" because the change of direction occurs while the practitioner is facing outside of the circle instead of inside the circle. This is a smooth and continuous change of direction which employs a continuous tornado-like energy instead of the typical winding and unwinding. This variation is performed as follows:

- 1) Park begins by walking the circle in the , clockwise direction. See photo 1.
- 2) Park executes the first *k'ou pu* movement and immediately begins to perform a *fan chang* with the left hand coming under the right elbow. See photo 2.
- 3) Park turns to the outside of the circle, rotating to his left as he executes the *fan chang* maneuver. Notice that he first executes a 180 degree *pai pu* movement with the left foot as the arms begin to change (the 180 degree *pai pu* is shown on page 103 of the first volume of this book). Then as the arms continue to change he swings the right foot around into a *k'ou pu*. See photos 3 through 5.

After the first *k'ou pu* as shown in photo 2, Park only needs to execute a 180 degree *pai pu* followed by a *k'ou pu* and he is now in position to step off and walk the circle in the other direction.

- 4) Park now completes the *fan chang* maneuver and walks the circle in the other direction. See photos 6 through 8.

As a quicker variation of this movement, Park could have immediately stepped into a *pai pu* with the outside (left) leg from photo 1 and thus skipped the first *k'ou pu* movement altogether. This type of change is very fast and tornado-like.



1



2



3



4



5



6

Single Palm Change Variation #5

This type of change can also be used when executing the "sliding the window shutter to look at the moon" hand movements which are shown in the palm training chapter of this volume.

In application, this footwork maneuver is not used in turning the back to the opponent. Park's rule of thumb is that you should never turn your back to your opponent's front. So, in this maneuver, although you turn your back to the center of the circle as you change, you should not think of this as turning your back to your opponent. Usually this pronounced *pai pu*, followed by a *k'ou pu* in the same direction is used to move in behind an opponent who has tried to outflank you. For instance, if Park was facing an

opponent in any kind of posture just before photo 4 was taken and the opponent tried to use his footwork to get to Park's left side or back, Park could execute the footwork shown in photos 4 and 5 to outmaneuver the opponent and get around to the opponent's left side or back. This kind of footwork is also employed in walking a very tight circle or walking a spiraling pattern (see the spiraling change shown on page 63).



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8

Single Palm Change Variation #6

K'ou Pu and Pai Pu in Application

The *k'ou pu* and *pai pu* footwork which is used in the single palm change movement to quickly maneuver and change directions also has various leg locking, tripping, trapping, and sweeping applications. Whenever a Pa Kua Chang practitioner moves in close to an opponent, he or she is always thinking about trapping, sweeping, or locking the opponent's lower body while applying upper body techniques. Any employment of an upper body strike, lock, grab, or throw must have a lower body component in order to be complete.

The key idea in trapping or locking the legs is to cut off the opponent's route of escape from the upper body strike, lock, or throw. When you get into position to apply a technique on an opponent, you do not want them to be able to use their footwork to maneuver out of it. By trapping or locking the opponent's legs, he will not be able to easily escape your attack. Additionally, lower body techniques are used in tandem with upper body techniques in order to divert the opponent's attention high and low. Many times, in order to apply an upper body technique you might distract the opponent with a kick or leg lock. Alternatively, you can also employ an upper body technique as a distraction for a kick or leg lock.

In practicing partner drills and researching Pa Kua Chang applications, you will always want to consider the movement of the opponent's legs. Whenever you move in to attack an opponent you want to position yourself so that the opponent cannot kick you, knee you, or otherwise use his legs in attack or retreat. You always want to try and "take away" the opponent's legs. His legs are his base of power, strength, stability, and balance. If you can take away his legs, you can easily finish him off.

Most martial artists spend a lot of time practicing arm trapping, sticking, redirecting, "listening," blocking, locking, seizing, and pushing drills. However, when it comes to the legs, few consider the use of the legs beyond basic kicking, sweeping, and trapping. Pa Kua Chang

practitioners will work to obtain the same degree of sensitivity in the use of the legs that Tai Chi Ch'uan practitioners obtain in pushing hands drills. A good Pa Kua Chang practitioner will always position his legs relative to the opponent's legs in a way that he can easily feel the opponent's leg movements and redirect that movement or force by using his own legs. It is said that Tung Hai-Ch'uan's famous student Yin Fu was so good with his legs that he could trap, lock, trip, or sweep the opponent's every move. Yin Fu stylists are known for their high degree of leg sensitivity.

In Park Bok Nam's system of Pa Kua, the "leg locking" skill is one of the highest expressions of the circle walking, eight direction rooted stepping, and *k'ou pu* and *pai pu* footwork training. When Park is demonstrating these techniques, his partner can seldom move or take a step without being tripped, swept or locked. When Park is demonstrating these techniques on me, I feel as if I cannot move anywhere. Every time I try to maneuver, he will cut off my steps with his legs and I am either tripped, locked, or trapped.

In this section we will discuss a few of the various applications and follow-up leg techniques that might be used in the execution of the *k'ou pu* and *pai pu* leg movements. After learning how to employ the eight direction rooted stepping, the circle walking, and the *k'ou pu* and *pai pu* footwork to gain superior body angle and position, learning how to employ these leg maneuvers in either locking or trapping the opponent's legs, or in setting up for kicks, will be the next step in learning the leg techniques of Pa Kua Chang.

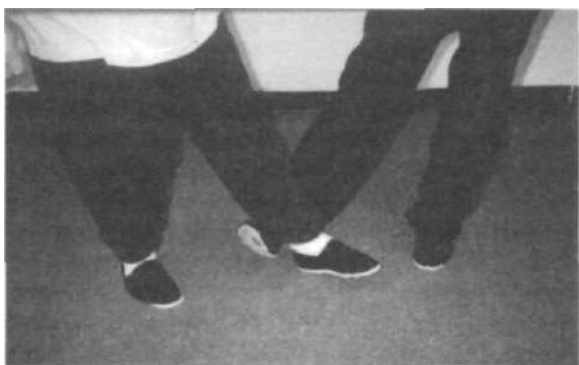
K'ou Pu Usage

Aside from being used as a stepping technique to quickly change directions and execute tight circular stepping movements to gain superior body position, the *k'ou pu* footwork is an excellent leg trapping technique. In the examples given below we will show how one might use the *k'ou pu* step to trap the opponent's leg and then, based on the opponent's reaction, follow-up with an

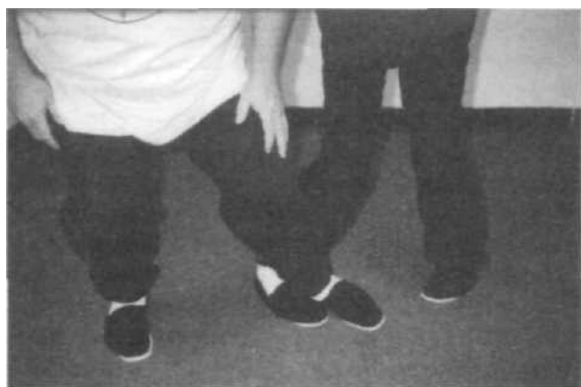
appropriate technique.

The two photos shown below (*k'ou pu* photos 1 and 2) show how one might step in to trap the opponent's lead leg from the outside. Several key points apply to this maneuver. First, no worthy opponent is going to let you simply step in and place your foot behind his. This leg maneuver will always be used following, or in conjunction with, an upper body technique that distracts the opponent's attention. It could be a distraction you created, or it could be a distraction the opponent created himself in attacking you. Either way, there must be a "setup."

Secondly, the angle of the *k'ou pu* step will depend on the upper body technique being applied. In the photo shown below, Park has executed a very pronounced *k'ou pu* because he is getting ready to lock the opponent's leg. If he was applying an upper body attack and simply wanted



***K'ou pu* application photo 1**



***K'ou pu* application photo 2**

to insure the opponent could not step back and retreat, the angle of the *k'ou pu* would not have to be so great.

Thirdly, you want this step to come in tight to the opponent's leg. You do not want to leave him room to maneuver. You want your foot behind the opponent's foot and your shin along the opponent's calf. If you are going to execute a leg lock, as shown in photo 2, you want the foot turned in tight against the inside of the opponent's inner foot. You want to begin to add pressure with your shin as you bend your knee down. As you begin to add pressure, you are sensitive to the opponent's response.

From the position shown in photo 2 below, there are several follow-ups that one might apply. The follow-up you apply will always depend on the opponent's response to the initial leg trap (photo 2). You cannot just step in and assume that you are going to be able to lock the opponent's leg just because that is what you want to do. You have to gain the positioning and then execute whatever move is appropriate based on the opponent's response. You have to "feel" what the opponent is doing as you apply the pressure and "follow" his motion to create an opportunity. You do not want to fight against the opponent's will. You have to adhere, or stick, to the opponent's movement, redirect, and finish.

In order to give you an idea of what we mean by "following" the opponent, we will now present several possible follow-ups to the move executed in photo 2.

Follow-up #1

The first follow-up, which is shown in photo 3 on the next page, can occur if the opponent does not respond to the leg placement of photo 2. This technique is to simply continue the motion of the leg lock by bending the knee and breaking the opponent's ankle. Once the opponent's knee starts to buckle inward, as shown in photo 3, you can also sweep that leg, by executing a jump step forward, and cause the opponent to fall. In the last volume of this book we explained that in the execution of the jump step, the rear foot remained on the ground for root as it is quickly and crisply pulled forward. This foot sweeping technique is an excellent use of that stepping power.

Follow-up #2

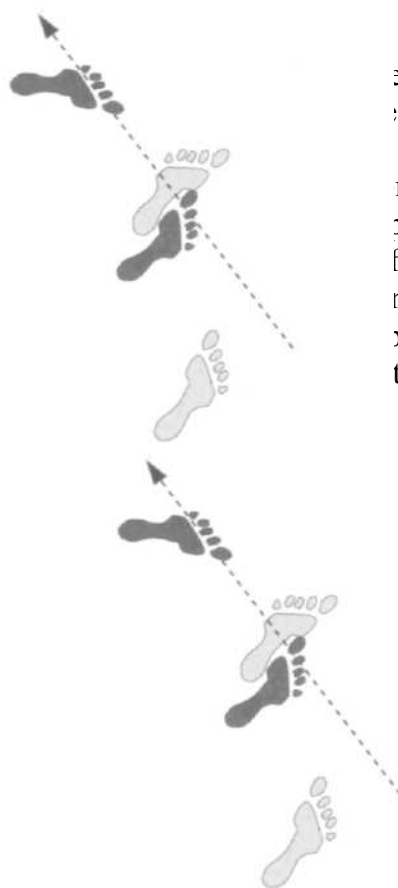
The next example will also utilize a foot sweeping motion to trip the opponent and take away his balance. This technique is best employed if the opponent tries to "root" down into the front leg in order to forcibly resist your knee locking I on *pu* move of photo 2. If you try to execute the *k'ou pu* leg lock and you feel the opponent resisting, you quickly change the direction of your force and pull the opponent's forward leg out from under him by stepping away from him and pulling his foot.

As in all applications, the direction of force which you apply has to be at the correct angle in order for it to work. If the opponent is much bigger than you and he roots onto his front leg, it will be difficult to sweep that leg if you do not apply the sweeping force at the right angle. The illustration at right shows the correct angle to sweep the leg. The principle applied here is one of applying your force where the opponent's ability to resist is weakest. The opponent's strongest force is along the black solid line as shown in the illustration. You want to apply your force at a 45 degree angle to that line. (See the dotted line in the illustration). Once you get the opponent's legs spread out, you can then lift your foot and sweep his leg out from under him as shown in photo 4.

Follow-up #3

The last alternative we will show here is executed if the opponent tries to step out of your lock. If he tries to pick up the foot and step, you

want to "stick" to his leg as he tries to lift it up. You then help to lift it up by providing pressure under his leg as shown in photo 5. After his forward leg is off the ground, you can then follow-up with a side kick to the opponent's opposite knee as shown in



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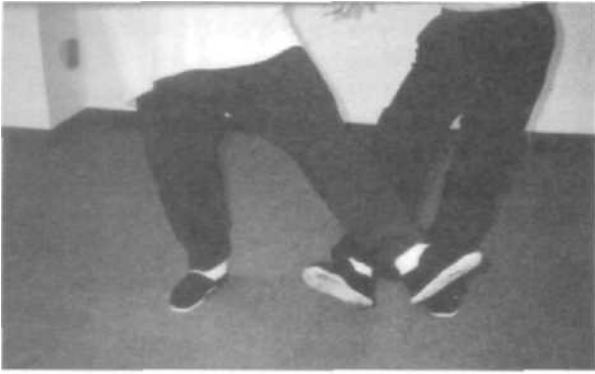
***K'ou pu* sweep angle illustration**



***K'ou pu* application photo 3**



***K'ou pu* application photo 4**



***K'ou pu* application photo 5**

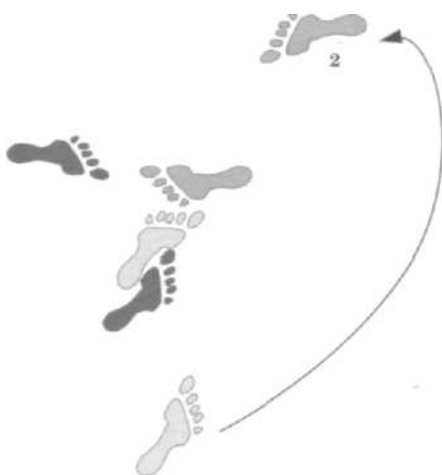
as he felt the leg lock occurring (just prior to photo 2). This pivot is shown in the illustration below. By using the pivot step, the opponent has gotten totally clear of the lock.

Another possible counter to a *k'ou pu* lock is a *pai pu* counter-lock. If you feel the opponent's leg locking in behind your leg on the outside, you can quickly execute a *pai pu* maneuver into the opponent's leg as shown in the photo below. Of course the upper body techniques will always play a part in dictating what kind of lower body maneuvers and counter-maneuvers you might employ in any given situation. All possibilities must be researched and practiced in order for one to be prepared for all situations. Here we simply presented a few possibilities for you to think about



***K'ou pu* application photo 6**

in hopes that you will then create alternatives of your own. For instance, in this section we have only presented the *k'ou pu* lock to the outside of the opponent's forward leg and the *pai pu* lock to the inside of the opponent's forward leg. The *k'ou pu* lock can also be applied to the inside of the opponent's forward leg and the *pai pu* lock to the outside of the opponent's forward leg. These executions are not quite as common, but they can be effectively employed. It is up to you to explore the possibilities.



Pivot counter to *k'ou pu* leg lock



Pivot counter to *k'ou pu* leg lock

K'ou Pu and Pai Pu Kicks

The *k'ou pu* and *pai pu* style foot placements can also be used as low kicking techniques in Pa Kua Chang. In Parks system of Pa Kua Chang there are three types of kicks which employ the "toe-in" and "toe-out" foot postures.

The "Toe-In" Kicks

The first "toe-in" kick is called "foot kick," because it is used to sweep the opponent's foot. This kick is executed as if stepping into a *k'ou pu* step, however, the weight is kept back on the rear leg. The kick hooks in to sweep across the opponent's ankle or calf. This kick is executed as shown in photo 1 on page 82. The force of this kick is a low sweeping motion which hooks across from outside to inside.

The next toe-in kick is simply a low side kick. The direction of force can be straight in or it can sheer at a cutting angle. The photos on the right depict some nice places on the knee to apply this type of kick. It is nice to apply this kick to the inside or outside of any of the opponent's lower joints: ankles, hips, or knees. The kick can be a sharp crisp kick, or it can be a pushing or sheering force used to lock and/or break the joint. The foot can kick out and pull back, or push through as it makes contact with the target. Park likes to employ this kick to the opponent's knee when the opponent is taking a step. As soon as the opponent steps forward and the weight starts to shift, he kicks the knee at a side angle.

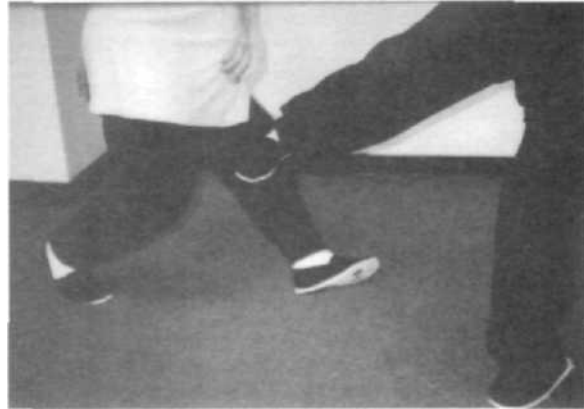
This side kick can also be applied to the rear leg in combination with the "foot kick." This kind of application is similar to the sequence shown in photos 5 and 6 at the top of the previous page. A swift upward sweeping kick to the area of the opponent's leg just under the calf and over the ankle will usually cause the opponent to lift that leg. When the forward leg is lifted, the practitioner can then kick out the back leg with a side kick as shown in photo 6 on the previous page.

The "Toe-Out" Kick

In Park's school the "toe-out" low kick is called "women's kick." Park's teacher called this the "women's kick" because when women he knew got angry and kicked someone, this is the way

they would kick.

This kick is also best applied to the opponent's joints. Below we have shown applications to the knee. One is to the inside and one is to the outside of the opponent's knee.



Side Kick to Opponent's Inner Knee



"Toe-Out" to Opponent's Outer Knee



"Toe-Out" Kick to Opponent's Inner Knee

The Single Palm Change : Conclusion

In terms of learning how to apply Pa Kua Chang in an actual combat environment, the change of direction is the most important component of the basic circle walk practice. It is within the change of direction that the techniques of Pa Kua Chang are usually applied. The change of direction in the circle walk practice also trains the Pa Kua practitioner's body coordination, full body integration, functional flexibility, and whole body power. The torso is trained so that the upper and lower body are in harmony and Pa Kua's rotational power is developed while executing the change. The primary movement utilized to change direction during the basic circle walk practice is the single palm change.

The single palm change is the most important move in Pa Kua in terms of training the body and developing the inherent power of Pa Kua. The single palm change is also the most important component of Pa Kua in its combat application. If a practitioner can learn how to execute and apply the single palm change properly, he will be well on his way to developing a high level of Pa Kua skill.

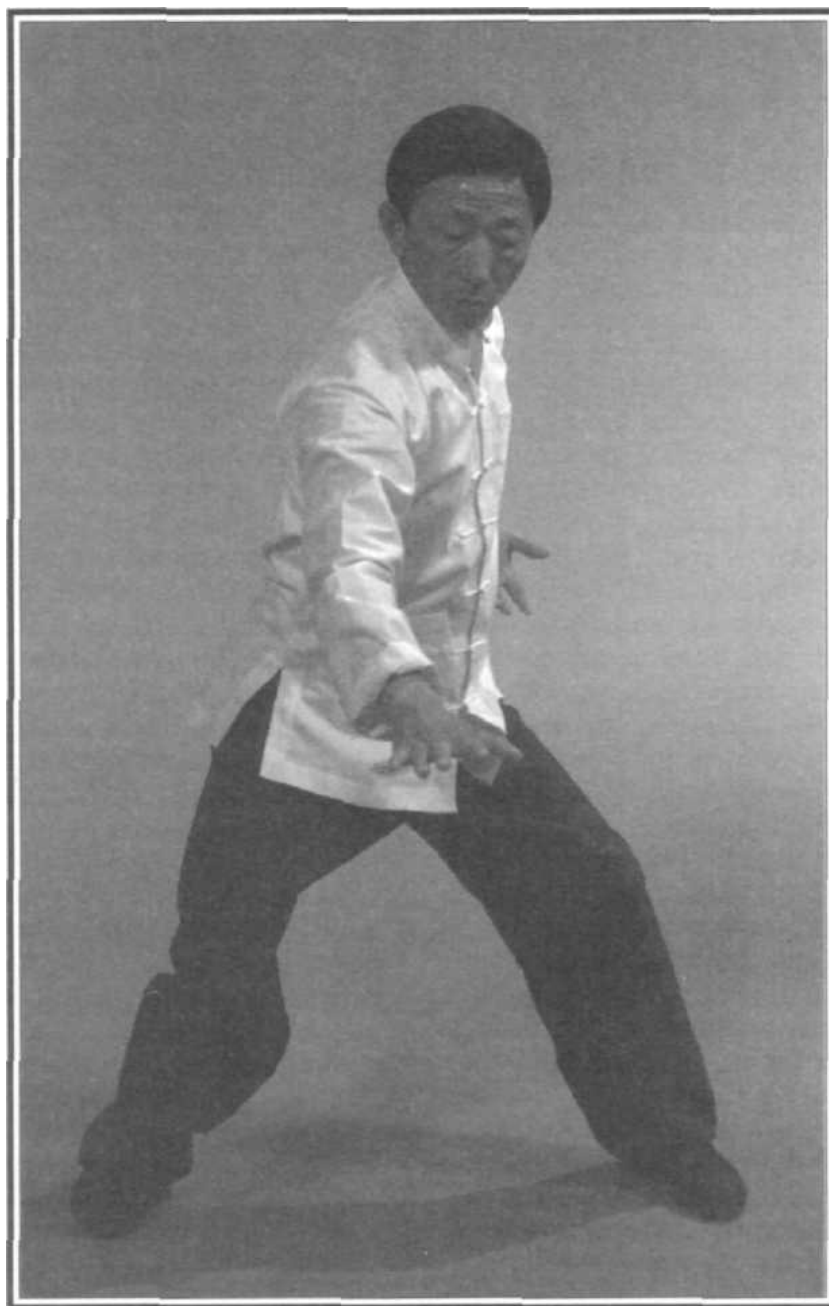
Like everything else in Pa Kua, there are many variations of the single palm change. Each school will execute the single palm change in a slightly different manner and within each school there are also many variations that are practiced. Pa Kua is based on the principle of change, therefore, nothing is fixed. In practicing any aspect of the art, whether it be stepping method, the single palm change, or any given technique, the Pa Kua practitioner will execute a wide variety of variations. I know of no complete system of Pa Kua that only executes one variation of single palm change. Most schools will have at least five or six different ways of executing this movement. Everything from the hand and arm positions, to the direction the body twists, to the positioning of the feet, to the positioning of the body are varied in the practice of single palm change.

After you have practiced all of the exercises that are preliminary to the single palm change

practice, you should then practice executing the single palm change in all its variations as described in this book. After you have a good feel for these variations, it is time to create new variations on your own. In Park's school we will utilize the eight animal postures and the movements of the forty eight month palms and the supplemental palms, as presented in Chapter 5 of this volume, and create new variations and research how they might be applied in combat. If you have already studied another style of Pa Kua Chang, you can take what we have presented here along with the Pa Kua movements you already know and try to create some new single palm changes of your own.

Chapter 5

Pa Kua Chang Palm Training



Chapter 5

Pa Kua Chang Palm Training

In the first volume of this book we discussed a few of the basic palm training exercises of Park Bok Nam's system. These basic exercises are designed to introduce the beginning student to the fundamental body mechanics relevant to developing Pa Kua whole body striking power, including the details of correct body alignments, use of mental intention, and the breathing methods utilized when striking with the palm. The movements and exercises discussed in the first volume are somewhat crude in relationship to the refined mechanics of an experienced practitioner, but experience with large body motions is necessary to develop the muscles, tendons, and ligaments properly before the student is ready for more refined movements and more precise timing.

The primary purpose of the beginning level exercises is to develop the body in the area of the hips, spine, and shoulders. These exercises not only work to train correct body mechanics, but also serve to condition the muscles involved in these motions and give the practitioner a good sense of body alignment and timing while learning how to relax the body, loosen the body, and move fluidly. Once these basic exercises have been practiced for a sufficient amount of time, the student is then ready to develop the entire torso in a more complete fashion, further develop suppleness and flexibility, and experience details and subtleties that the rank beginner's body would not be able to understand or experience.

In Park Bok Nam's system, this intermediate

level palm training is accomplished through the practice of what Park calls the "Forty Eight Month Palms." As we explained in the first book, Park calls these exercises the "forty eight month palm" set because it took him that long to learn all of them. His teacher required that he practice each of the eight exercises for six months before he was taught another. Practicing in this manner it took Park forty eight months to learn all of these palms.

The palm training exercises in the forty eight month palm set are not the only palm training exercises Park learned from his teacher. There are many more "supplemental" palm exercises that Park was taught in the course of his training. With so many palm training exercises in this system, one might ask why this group of eight was set apart from the others and taught as a specific training set and in a specific sequence. The answer lies in an investigation of the mechanics involved in training each of these specific exercises.

In Pa Kua Chang, the power for striking with the palm is initiated from the legs, directed by the hips and waist, and then expressed in the hands. In order to have complete training, the student must learn how to strike efficiently and effectively in six directions (left, right, front, back, up, down) with each hand.* In striking to the front, to the sides, to the back, and in striking with both hands simultaneously in one or a combination of these

* Note: There are really a total of eight directions. The other two directions, inside (close to the body) and outside (at arms length from the body) can be trained as variations of each of the exercises.

directions, the mechanics of motion and power generation in the legs and torso are slightly different. Each of the eight exercises of the forty eight month palm set teaches the student how to strike to each of the six directions and therefore also develops a different part of the practitioner's leg-torso connection, alignment, and power. After training with the complete set of palm exercises for several months, the practitioner will find that the entire body has not only been developed such that power can be delivered in every direction, but additionally, the complete development of the entire torso aids the overall ability to generate internal power in general. However, simply looking at the exercises will not give one as clear a picture of this process as actually spending time training the exercises. After practicing about 500 repetitions of any one of these exercises in one practice session, the practitioner need only recognize which part of the body is sore the next day to know what part of the body that particular exercise has trained. In the following section we will describe each of the forty eight month palms in detail.

The foundations of an internal strike are found in the subtle body connections, intricate body alignments, functioning of the joints and tendons, flexibility of the entire body, and secondary muscle movements. In training these exercises you will be finding and using muscles you didn't even know you had and you will be developing suppleness in areas that are difficult to stretch during normal daily activity or standard flexibility exercises.

Developing the kind of twisting, turning and "whipping" power which is prominent in Pa Kua Chang, the practitioner must develop a level of suppleness in the joints which is beyond that of the average athlete or martial artist. It is not only the major joints, such as the shoulders, hips, elbows, and wrist which must gain a new degree of suppleness. This looseness must also extend to the entire spine and the junctures of the ribs to the spine and sternum.

In many of the exercises outlined in this book you will be striving to achieve levels of flexibility in your joints that you may now think are impossible. The "standard eight" *ch'i kung* set shown in Chapter 7 of this book is a good

supplemental set to these palm exercises as it helps train the flexibility necessary in the execution of the palm striking drills. The "hiding flower under leaf" exercise also helps develop the kind of flexibility which is required in developing Pa Kua Chang striking power.

This training is not easy, the number of subtle physical connections, alignments, and secondary muscle movements required to produce an effective internal strike will be overwhelming to the uninitiated. This is one reason why Park always starts beginners with simple exercises and drills as the ones we presented in the last volume of this book. Without putting in a great deal of time with the basic exercises, the student will not be able to make sufficient gains with the exercises which follow.

The genius of this particular set of exercises is that in correctly training all eight of the "forty-eight month" palms, after obtaining a good foundation with the prerequisite exercises, the correct alignments, connections, energy, and power will be naturally developed. The practitioner does not have to search to uncover the "secrets" of internal power. He or she just has to practice these exercises correctly for a sufficient amount of time. That is the beauty of this set, you just practice and the results will come.

In order to properly train your body, each component and subcomponent of the internal strike must be trained and understood through experience before they can all be brought together. This is what the practice of this particular set in the correct sequence and for a sufficient amount of time can do for you.

The Eight "Forty Eight Month" Palms

Before beginning the forty eight month palm training sequence, it is imperative that the student has spent a sufficient amount of time perfecting the mechanics of the Shaking Palm and the Dragon Back Double Palm as described in the first volume of this book. All of the forty eight month palms rely on the mechanics developed during the practice of these first two basic palms and thus without a thorough "body knowledge" of these palms, and the internal connections and alignments practice of these palms will develop, the student will not be able to correctly perform any of the forty eight month palm exercises.

It is not enough to simply know how to perform the first two palms correctly. Once the student can correctly perform these first two palm exercises, Park will require that they be practiced daily for six months to a year before any of the forty eight month palm exercises are taught. Only through correct practice of these two fundamental exercises for an extended period of time will the body be developed sufficiently in terms of flexibility, alignment, and coordination.

Park Bok Nam visits my school several times a year and monitors the progress of my students. On several occasions he has looked at one of my students who I have taught a particular exercise and says, "His foundation is not good enough. You taught him this exercise too early. He needs to go back." I will then require the student to go back and concentrate on the previous exercises before trying to proceed. After a period of concentration and practice on the fundamentals the student will then go back to the original exercise and notice a big difference and is glad he or she was not allowed to progress too fast.

Rules to Follow in Practice

Before beginning training for "power" in the use of the palms as weapons, there are two key points to be aware of in order to avoid negative repercussions. The first rule is that before any power is applied to the exercise, the movements must be correct and exact. As we mentioned in

the first volume, in all of Park Bok Nam's training, when the student begins any new exercise, it is first executed slowly with no power (the six training stages of Park's system are explained in relation to palm training on pages 155-156 of Volume I).

Before power is applied in any new exercise, the student should have become familiar with the exact movement, alignments, and mechanics through practice of the exercise in a slow and exact manner for a considerable length of time. Practicing correctly and slowly while executing hundreds of repetitions will also serve to form the proper internal and external body connections and alignments which must be in place before trying to execute an exercise with power.

If the student applies power to a motion before he or she has experiential body knowledge of the correct movement, alignments, and mechanics of the motion, there could be damage done to the body. Any time power is generated from the legs up through the torso and out to the hand and the motion is not exact, the alignments and connections are not right, or the timing is off, that power can be misdirected in the body instead of flowing out through the hand. This can cause a condition where both the internal and external systems of the body can be shocked. The external parts which are usually affected are the area between the shoulder blades, the shoulders, and the elbows. The internal system which is usually affected is the heart.

In order to avoid placing an inappropriate amount of stress on the body in either an internal or external manner, the practitioner must first go slow and practice correctly when engaging in power training exercises. Executing thousands of repetitions of these palm striking exercises in a very slow, natural manner, paying attention to correct body alignments and positioning, will ensure that problems do not arise. Even if the alignments and motions are correct on the first repetition, thousands of repetitions still must be practiced so that the joints, nerves, tendons, ligaments, and muscles are conditioned and the

internal and external body systems are harmonized.

Performing exercises slowly also trains more of the muscle fiber in the muscles which are related to a given motion. By executing movements slowly in the beginning, the student will train the exercise giving each muscle group more time to engage the complete muscle. Also, when moving slowly other supporting, structural muscles will engage because a slow moving arm requires more structural support from the body than a rapidly moving arm. If you train a movement fast from the beginning, the motion will utilize fewer muscle groups and muscle fibers and thus the body will be limited in both power and connection. If trained slowly, the muscles of the body are developed more completely (more fibers firing at the same instant for the same purpose). Later, when the exercise is performed at full speed, the body's "memory" of that movement will still engage the complete muscle as it was trained in the slow practice, thus the structure, power, alignment, and timing will all be optimal.

The second rule of thumb involves the mental intention and the movement of energy in the body during the practice of power palm exercises. When the student is practicing the exercise in a slow and exact manner, the intention is placed on the striking palm. As we explained in Volume I, this is to facilitate a movement of *ch'i* and blood to the palm. This also provides correct internal connections and harmonizes the mind, breath, and body. This type of harmony must first be developed in the practice of slow, smooth, fluid motions.

During the execution of slow exercise, Park tells his students to "keep the *ch'i*." This means that the student does not allow the *ch'i* to extend past the hand. In other words, the intention stays in the hand as if the exercise is a *ch'i kung* exercise. The intention does not go out past the hand as if the practitioner were thinking about striking someone. In the beginning stages of working with any of these palm exercises it is best not to think about the movement as a palm "strike," but think about it simply as a *ch'i kung* exercise.

When Park talks about "keeping the *ch'i*" in the hand between movements he tells students to visualize the *ch'i* moving from one hand to the

other as the sides change. He says that when doing this the "*ch'i* must be full" from the *tan t'ien* to the hand at all times because it takes so long to bring *ch'i* from the *tan t'ien* to the hand in a fighting situation when changing from one technique to another or throwing multiple strikes. It must already be there and be full at all times.

Glen Moore explains this principle using "Pascal's Law of Hydraulics." He says that in any hydraulic system if the pressure is applied on one end of a closed loop it is felt immediately on the other end. If a fire hose is charged and the root valve is on, one will get pressure as soon as the nozzle is opened. If the system is not charged and the root valve is opened, you will have to wait for the pressure to get to the nozzle. In our case, the *tan t'ien* is the root valve and the palm is the nozzle. When practicing, you will want to always keep your system "charged" by not "losing" the *ch'i*.

In regards to *ch'i* development, this type of exercise is designed to build a strong energetic connection between the *tan t'ien* and the palm, and cultivate a full circulation of *ch'i* in the body. It is a *yin*, or "building" exercise. In this exercise the *ch'i* should not be "used" by projecting it outside the body with the motion or the intention, it should be kept, or "recirculated" within the body.

After the student progresses from the slow, exact movement to the quick, whipping style, "power" building movement, the mental intention changes. Here, when the palm is thrown forward, the intention extends past the hand as if the practitioner is trying to throw something far into the distance. This use of intention takes the *ch'i* from the *tan t'ien*, out the hand and away from the body. Training the intention in this manner is important when cultivating the ability to use internal energy to damage the opponent. This type of energy usage, or *yang* style exercise, should always be balanced with the *yin* style exercise described above. If the student does not balance the training between energy rebuilding and energy usage, the body's energy will become drained.

A good rule of thumb to follow in practice is to begin a palm training set with the slow energy building set, execute the power training sets, and then end the practice with a long, slow set or circle

walking. Every training program and every training session should have a balance between exercises which expend energy and exercises which cultivate, or rebuild energy.

In a seminar Park Bok Nam gave in California several years ago, an acupuncture student watching Park execute the power palm exercise asked Park if the practice of this exercise would deplete the practitioner's *ch'i*. Park explained that practice always must be balanced between energy cultivation and energy usage and that the *ch'i* in the body is always being used and replaced. "This is natural," Park said. Park believes that it is actually good to practice exercises which expend *ch'i* as long as there is also practice of exercises which cultivate *ch'i*. Approaching a complete training program in this manner, the *ch'i* in the body is always being cycled and thus there is less chance of *ch'i* stagnation.

Your body develops *ch'i* in order for you to use it. You should not avoid difficult exercise or taxing situations just so you can save or build *ch'i* for the sake of having it. However, you should never deplete your body of more energy than you have. A common sense balancing of food, drink, internal and external exercise, and rest will maintain your health in a natural manner. Too much rest, too much energy conservation, too much of a sedentary life style can be just as bad as over work and over stress. Always seek a balance.

The Training Sequence

In training the forty eight month palms, the student will progress through a graduated sequence of training in order to properly develop the power associated with these palms and then learn how to use them in fighting. This sequence begins with each of the palms being practiced as a solo, repetitive exercise as described in this book. As with all training drills in Park's system, the exercises are first practiced slowly, then with power, then with speed and power, then the palm strikes are integrated with the eight direction rooted stepping footwork which was described in the first volume. After the student gains an experiential understanding of how all of these palms are combined with the eight direction rooted stepping exercises, he or she will then learn how to combine these palms together in particular combinations,

how to combine these palms with the elbow sets and "eight animal" movements, and how to integrate these palms into circle walking forms. The student will also learn "apparatus" training for each of these palms. Each of these stages of training which follow the practice of the basic repetitive palm exercises will be briefly discussed at the end of this chapter.

In regards to the exact training sequence of the forty eight month palms themselves, each student will start by learning the "single palm change" and the "double palm change" exercises as the first two of the series. From that point, the other six might be taught in a variety of different orders depending on what part of the body Park feels the student should be developing. He bases this decision on the individual's body size, level of flexibility, coordination, and development of the "kung fu body."

Single Palm Change and Double Palm Change

The first two palms of the forty eight month palm set were examined in detail in the first volume of this book. These two palm training methods are the first two exercises taught in the forty eight month palm set because the mechanics and movements of these exercises are naturally developed from the two fundamental exercises (shaking palm and dragon back). Since these palms were explained in the last book, we will not discuss them in much detail here. However, as a reminder, we have included new footage of Park executing these exercises on the companion video. The Single Palm Change exercise combines the mechanics of the shaking palm (rotation of the body around a central axis) and the dragon back (segmented whipping of the spine) into one exercise. Additionally, in both the Single Palm Change and Double Palm Change exercises, the stance of the exercise is changed from a "horse stance" to a "bow stance" and thus the mechanics of the movements become more difficult to perform as the hip and back motion become more restricted as a result of the stance.

Additionally, the combination of the shaking palm and the dragon back motions performed

while standing in the bow stance serves to further train the legs, hips, shoulders, arms and spine in both strength and suppleness. The whole body is trained in the execution of these palms. Of special importance for developing internal power is the work these two palm exercises do to condition the psoas muscle and the intercostal muscles between the ribs. These two muscle groups work together in the performance of the dragon back motion to provide the mechanical power associated with these palms.

Anyone who has practiced these two exercises correctly can testify to the fact that the day after first training these exercises, they could feel it in every part of the body. Of all the palm exercises a student is taught in this system, Park states that if the student wants to develop a great deal of striking power, these two exercises should be practiced for a considerable length of time. Remember that when you are practicing these palms, be sure to keep your head facing forward. If the head looks to the side as the power comes up the spine, you can injure your neck muscles or cause a severe headache.

Now we will begin to describe the remaining six of the eight "forty eight month" palms. In each of these sections we will present the following: an introduction to the physical mechanics of each palm, the exact movements of the exercise, and some combat applications or uses of each palm.

In introducing the physical mechanics of the palms we will address each palm's mechanics of movement by describing what part of the body it is training and how practice of this palm helps train the physical body. When we discuss these mechanics, we will be talking in physical, mechanical terms. There will not be much discussion of *ch'i* energy in this section. We are getting down to detailed basics here.

Many practitioners think that the "secrets" of the internal arts are found in the *ch'i kung* - the energy work of the system. The *ch'i* and the mental intention do play an important role in the overall picture. However, today, in some circles, *ch'i* has been built up as a mysterious power that, when obtained, will allow the practitioner to have "superhuman" abilities. In many cases *ch'i* and

ch'i kung have been overemphasized to the point where correct natural body alignments and efficient movements have been practically ignored. The real knowledge to an internal system should not strictly be defined in terms of the *ch'i* development. It is equally as important to gain experiential knowledge of the physical mechanics of the system - learning how to use your body the most efficient and effective way possible. This is what we will address in this section. When this is accomplished, the development and efficient movement of *ch'i* will be a natural progression. *Ch'i kung* practice is then used to amplify this natural process, and the good habits of body mechanics that have been trained are combined with breath and intention to form an integrated mind and body.

In writing these sections on body mechanics we are assuming that the practitioner has gained an experiential knowledge of the two body motions which were emphasized in the first volume. These mechanics are: axial rotation around the skeleton as trained in the "shaking palm" exercise, and segmented whipping of the body as trained in the "dragon back" exercise.

After describing the mechanics of the palm, we will then describe the exact execution of the palm exercise. This section will be aided by the use of photographs of two types. One is a "slow set" taken with a still camera. The other is a "fast set" extracted from video footage.

The exercises section will be followed by some descriptions of how the palm might be employed in combat. In this section we will emphasize that the application of these palms is not necessarily exactly like it is practiced in the exercise set. Each palm has numerous variations in application that differ from the exercise. The important point to grasp when practicing these palms is not the exact palm shape, height, or angle of the strike, but, more importantly, developing an understanding of what part of the legs, hips, waist, and torso are being trained and how the power is being issued. When practicing, ask yourself, "How is the power being developed in this palm?" Answering this question will allow you to use the mechanics of the palm strike in numerous situations, not just the situation which pertains directly to the exercise. Paying attention to only the application which is

an exact copy of the exercise itself will severely limit your usage of these palms in fighting.

Throwing Palm

Introduction: In practice, the "throwing palm" trains the practitioner's ability to totally relax the hand, arm, and shoulder while utilizing centrifugal force and gravity to help move blood and *ch'i* to the hand. After practicing this exercise you will notice that your hands become very red and feel heavy and "full."

Practicing this exercise in a relaxed manner really facilitates an opening up of the *ch'i* and blood pathways in the arm and hand, and because of this, it is important that you are quite warmed up before you start this exercise. It is best to practice the shaking palm, dragon back, and/or single and double palm change striking exercises prior to practicing the throwing palm. Because of the great amount of *ch'i* and blood that naturally moves to the hand when practicing this exercise, if the body is not first already circulating the *ch'i* and blood to a slightly elevated degree, the vigorous movement of *ch'i* and blood to the hand which occurs during this exercise can cause the hand to ache as the channels and pathways in the hand are dilated too quickly.

In the execution of the throwing palm exercise it is also important that the arm and shoulder remain very relaxed as the arm and hand are "thrown" by the twisting of the torso and bending of the body. The hand is "thrown" from an over head position to a position between the legs and just above the ground as if one is trying to flick water off of the hand. To achieve this feeling the wrist must also remain very loose.

Because the arm, hand, elbow, wrist, and shoulder are very relaxed and the hand is being thrown downward vigorously through a circular arc, the movement facilitates a great rush of *ch'i* and blood to the hand. This helps to open *ch'i* and blood channels in the arm and hand and teaches the student to completely relax the shoulder and arm while generating power from the legs and torso. Additionally, the bending motion associated with this exercise conditions the muscles of the abdomen and lower back and the twisting motion

further conditions the muscles around the hips and inner thighs that were used in the shaking palm and single palm change exercises.

When most beginners are first learning how to use power in striking, they will inevitably "try" and produce power by utilizing the muscles in the shoulder and arm to forcibly produce a powerful effect. Usually a beginner's idea of power is such that when they are thinking of striking, their mind automatically engages the muscles of the upper body. Because this exercise does not really look like a strike, the practitioner's mental image of striking someone is less vivid and thus it is easier to relax the shoulder and arm and generate the "power" from the lower body.

The extreme twisting and stretching of the body in the area of the rib cage with the "wind-up" and the complete collapse of this area when bending forward aids in training the muscles around and between the ribs and the abdominal muscles in both flexibility and coordination. These areas of the torso become important to the production of a vertical component of power when striking with subtle power. The execution of this exercise also loosens the spine and helps to maintain the health of the lungs and kidneys because the arching of the spine and twisting of the body when the arm is raised up, followed by the bending of the spine and the body with the downward throwing motion, aids in helping the kidneys and lungs move within their respective internal cavities.

Performance of the Exercise: The throwing palm exercise is performed as follows:

- 1) Begin in a "horse" stance with the palms held in beside the ribs. See slow set photo 1.
- 2) Extend the right hand forward and bring the left hand in behind the right elbow. See slow set photo 2.

Raise the right hand upward with the palm facing downward and twist the torso to the right. Relax the area around the right rib cage and allow these muscles to expand with the lifting of the arm. Twist the hips as far as you comfortably can. Inhale as the hand is raised. Allow the left hand to fall back down by the ribs with the palm facing up. Ensure that the shoulder remains relaxed. If



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Throwing Palm (slow set)

you would like to facilitate a greater stretch in the area of the ribs, you can twist your right hand until the thumb is facing downward. The slow set photo shows the palm facing downward, the fast set photo (#6) displays the twisting of the hand to a greater degree. See slow set photo 3.

4) While maintaining a completely relaxed shoulder, arm, and hand, twist the torso back to the left while bending straight over from the waist. Audibly exhale through the nose with this motion as you did in the shaking palm exercise described in the first volume. (To review this breathing method, refer to pages 156 and 157 of the first volume). Allow the hand to be thrown between your legs with the bending of the waist and twisting of the body. Allow the wrist to be very loose and snap at the last moment as if you are trying to flick water off of your hand.

You can see in the photos for the fast set shown

on the next page that in the execution of this segment of the exercise the elbow is brought down first and leads the lower arm and hand (fast set photos 7 and 8). This occurs because the arm is relaxed and as the power is generated from the body it creates a chain reaction on the arm much like a whip. The shoulder is thrown first (fast set photo 7), then the elbow follows (fast set photo 8) and then the hand is subsequently whipped downward rapidly in an arc (between photos 8 and 9 of the fast set). This chain reaction, or chain of movement, will naturally occur if the mechanics of the body motion are correct and the shoulder, arm, and hand are relaxed. You do not need to think about it. It is the centrifugal force of the hand arcing around the axis of the elbow which provides the first moment of power in this exercise which results from the leg, hip, shoulder connection. The next moment of power in the

chain is facilitated by the "flicking" of the fingers in an arc around the axis of the wrist.

As the hand moves downward, you should hear the rushing sound of the air passing your hand. If your arm, wrist, or hand is stiff, the rushing sound will not be there or will not be too prominent. All the joints should be relaxed and supple and the wrist should be flicked at the very end of the movement in order to complete the chain of power, or whipping effect.

Be careful not to hit the ground with your hand and do not allow your arm to swing too far under your legs or you might hit yourself in the groin with your arm. The shoulder is very relaxed and hanging downward in this position. The energy of this strike is primarily downward with just a slight swing to the rear. Do not swing too far out in front of you when striking.

In this position, the spine is rounded and the shoulder and hip relaxed. The knees are bent such that the legs carry the weight of the body and there is not unnecessary stress on the lower back. The lower back should be relaxed. See slow set photo 4.

5) From the downward hanging position, begin to raise up and bring the right hand upwards with the palm facing up. As the right palm comes up, bring the left arm underneath the right.

Both

palms are facing upwards. See slow set photo 5.

6) Continue bringing the palms upward to face level. See slow set photo 6.

7) You are now ready to execute this palm on the other side. Continue to allow the left palm to rise to the position the right palm is in as shown in photo 2. Now repeat the steps on the other side.

Application in Fighting: In application, the throwing palm emulates the power generated at the very tip of a whip. Park's teacher told him that in China the whip was a very popular weapon and this palm is an attempt to generate the stinging power of the whip with a strike of the hand.

This palm is used to create a very uncomfortable stinging or burning sensation on the area of the opponent's body where it is delivered. This feeling is similar to what is referred to by some people as the "fire" palm. The energy of this palm does not penetrate as deeply into the opponent's body as some of the other palms, but the intense stinging

or burning sensation it inflicts will definitely get the opponent's attention. If delivered properly, there will be welts on the opponent's body which rise up to produce an exact outline of your fingers and/or hand.

The "flicking" motion of the wrist and the image of flicking water off the hand become especially important when training to use the throwing palm in fighting. This palm can be delivered from almost any angle, it does not need to be applied as a downward strike as practised in the exercise. The key in its usage is to allow the wrist to be totally relaxed and let the power generated by the body transfer through a loose and relaxed shoulder and elbow and then allow the motion to "flick" the wrist. It is as if one is cracking a whip or snapping a towel.

When applied to the opponent, this palm is typically delivered to soft, fleshy areas of the body for the best effect. When applied to the arms or legs it is usually used as a block which is immediately followed by another strike to body, neck, or face. However, it can also be used effectively as a primary strike which rakes the eyes or smacks the face or head in a vulnerable area. The most dangerous area to hit with this palm is the opponent's temple. This strike can be delivered with either the fingers or the whole hand and the back of the hand works as well as the front of the hand.

Slapping Palm

Introduction: The slapping palm exercise trains the body to develop vertical striking power in a downwards moving direction. In the execution of this exercise, one side of the torso will be trained to relax, open and expand and then compress downwards as the palm is thrown along a strictly vertical path. To take full advantage of the muscles between the ribs aiding in the power of this strike, breathing will also play an important role in this strike.

The expansion and compression of the torso (area between the hips and shoulders) will be utilized in this and the next palm (lifting palm) exercise and is an important component in generating vertical striking power. This does not



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Throwing Palm Change (fast set)

only apply to directly upward or downward striking motions because eventually your strikes that are applied directly in front of you can have a vertical component to them and thus the execution of these exercises aids the development of all striking possibilities.

In this exercise, the muscles in and around the rib cage must learn how to relax and expand and then contract in a unified and coordinated manner. However, this is not a "tense" muscle contraction. It is more like an intentional dropping, or collapsing, of the ribs. The expansion and contraction which naturally occur as a result of this exercise will "wake up" muscles that you are not accustomed to using and teach them how to coordinate with the rest of the body to provide unified whole body power. If the exercise is practiced for a sufficient length of time, the coordination of the entire body and the breathing will begin to naturally occur and will become habit.

As with all developmental exercises and their corresponding applications, these exercises are executed with big movements while the actual movements in application become quite small, quick, and subtle. In order to develop subtle vertical striking power, the tendons, ligaments, and muscles need to be conditioned, the joints loosened, and the proper mechanics trained in the execution of the slapping palm and the lifting palm.

The downwards compression of the torso is a drawing together of the muscles in the torso in a completely vertical manner. The spine remains vertical and the power is generated by rotating the body around its center axis and compressing the torso. In this exercise the torso (from hip to shoulder) works like a spring. When the palm is lifted up, the spring is stretched. When the palm is thrown downward, the spring is released and snaps back to its original shape. The spine is to remain straight as this exercise is practiced. A common mistake is to let the body collapse forward and thus the connection between the shoulder and torso is sacrificed.

In the execution of this movement, the arm and shoulder are relaxed and thus the power comes from the torso and legs. The movement in the area of the torso is similar to that of the

"throwing palm" exercise, but the motions are much more subtle. Also, the "slapping palm" does not utilize the "flick" of the wrist like the throwing palm does. It is a more solid, penetrating, downward strike. This is one reason it is good to practice the throwing palm before the "slapping palm," it provides a good warm up and stretching of the body.

The last component of power utilized in the execution of this strike is the lower torso and legs. If you watch Park Bok Nam execute this exercise on this book's companion video, you will notice that there is a slight movement of the lower body up and down as the striking hand is brought up and then thrown down. The dropping of the body with the downward thrust of the palm in this exercise helps to work the legs and the coordination of the upper and lower body. However, it is important to know that this up and down motion of the body is not employed in actual application. In actual application the body will not move up and down in this manner. The up and down motion of the lower body is simply a part of the exercise designed to teach the student to sink and relax the body with the strike and it helps to train the legs. Like all motions in Pa Kua Chang, this component of the exercise will eventually become very subtle when this type of palm application is used.

The subtlety of any up and down motion of the lower body when applying a Pa Kua strike is important to understand because some practitioners mistakenly believe that dropping the body weight with a strike by relaxing and physically lowering the body is *the way* to get "internal power." While dropping the body weight with a strike can certainly help an individual develop a strong punch (especially big people), we stay away from using this method of developing power when applying Pa Kua because speed and maneuverability are sacrificed when this method is employed. Pa Kua Chang is an art that applies its strikes when the practitioner is continuously moving. It is hard to keep moving if you are dropping your weight with every strike. Additionally, Pa Kua practitioners learn how to strike numerous times in a matter of seconds. If the practitioner has to drop the body weight with every strike, it slows down the striking

combinations significantly.

Performance of the Exercise:

- 1) Begin in a "horse" stance with the palms held in beside the ribs. See slow set photo 1.
- 2) Raise the right palm with the palm facing upwards as shown in slow set photo 2.
- 3) Turn the hips and waist to the right allowing this rotational motion to continue up the body and rotate the shoulder and twist the arm over so that the palm is facing downward. At this point the shoulder should remain relaxed and the area of the rib cage up to the area under the arm pit on the right side of the body should relax and expand. It is important to feel an opening in the area of the right rib cage when executing this move.

The whole torso, from hip to shoulder, on the right side should feel like it is being stretched open, but the shoulder muscles should not tense and raise up and the elbow should not be brought up too high. Because the arm is being lifted, the shoulder will naturally rise to a small degree, but the muscles around the shoulder should remain relaxed.

The left shoulder should also remain relaxed downward. Do not allow the left shoulder to rise upward when the right arm is raised - you should actually feel like the left shoulder is sinking downward when the right arm comes up. This is a subtle sinking and is facilitated by a degree of looseness in the area of the sternum, not because the shoulders are being moved to any large degree. As the left shoulder sinks downward, also feel the rib cage on the left side compress (sink downward). As the right rib cage expands and the left rib cage sinks down, you should feel a slight sheering and twisting movement in the area of the sternum if the ribs/sternum junctures are supple enough. Inhale during the execution of this movement. The inhale will also help the left side rib cage expand as the arm is raised up.

The rotation of the hips and the expansion of the torso in the area of the rib cage are the two important motions to execute properly in this move. See slow set photo 3. Notice that the palm is facing straight downwards as if it is lying flat on a high table which is parallel to the floor.

- 4) When the palm is in the upper position and

ready to be brought downwards, the power for this motion comes from allowing the expanded rib cage on the right side to contract with the exhale and turning the hips swiftly back towards the left (left hip moving back). While this motion is occurring the rib cage on the left side remains relaxed downward. Ensure that the hips and shoulders stay in alignment. Do not allow the right shoulder to thrust forward too far.

It is important that the palm be brought straight down along a vertical trajectory. It should not be thrust forward when it comes down. As in all Pa Kua strikes, the joints of the body remain very loose and supple and the arm very relaxed. This being the case, the power generated from the body first affects the elbow and the elbow is brought down before the palm. This can be easily seen in the fast set photos 6 and 7. You do not need to force this to occur, it will naturally occur if the movements are correct and the arm is relaxed.

When the palm is brought down, allow the butt of the palm to "snap" downwards while the fingers are brought slightly upwards in such a way that the palm ends up being flat as if setting on a table. In this exercise you do not want the fingers to extend down past the level of the wrist as they did in the throwing palm. When the wrist snaps down and the fingers pull up slightly, it feels as if you are striking with the butt of the palm, but you actually strike with the heart of the palm (palm center). In the throwing palm you allowed the fingers to slap down and follow through, here you want them to pull up slightly so that the palm is flat. This snapping motion of the wrist is an important element in applying the final bit of power to this palm strike. Park says that his teacher strongly emphasized "wrist power" in applying all Pa Kua strikes. See slow set photo 4.

- 5) After the palm is thrown on the right side, the right palm turns upwards and comes up the center line of the body. The left palm follows behind it coming from the elbow of the right arm, up the right forearm and past the right wrist. This motion was described in volume one when we discussed the *fan chang* exercises. See slow set photo 5.
- 6) Now the left hand raises up and the hips and shoulders turn to the left. The exercise is then executed on the left side. See slow set photos 6



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Slapping Palm (slow set)

and 7.

During the evolution of this exercise the knees should face directly forward. Do not allow the knees to buckle inward when throwing the palms. One of the most common errors beginners make when executing any of the palm exercises from the horse stance is that they allow the knees to move too much. The reason this occurs is that the hip and pelvis are not loose enough to allow the hips to turn freely without the knees moving also. If you notice that your knees are moving side-to-side when you are practicing any of these exercises, you will need to back track and practice the shaking palm exercise slowly until the hips loosen up sufficiently.

Practice Variation: In the execution of this exercise, the strike can be practiced as either a "heavy" or a "shock" strike. The general difference between the heavy and shock strikes was explained in the first volume of this book on page 167. As these variations apply to this palm one can imagine the difference between the slamming down of a bear's paw versus the cracking of a whip.

In order to practice the "heavy" strike, imagine that the arm is very heavy when you lift it up and drop it down. When the hand reaches the lowest point in its downward motion, allow it to stop there with a "thud" as if the arm and hand were just dead weight falling out of the sky. Also



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Throwing Palm Change (fast set)

imagine that the energy of the strike continues and penetrates down into the ground when the hand stops.

In order to practice the "shock" strike variation, when the palm is thrown down and reaches its lowest point imagine that you are slapping the surface of a tub of water. As the palm "strikes" the water, allow it to bounce back up slightly as if was rebounding off of the surface. This "bounce back" is subtle and should be allowed to occur as a natural recoil. Do not physically force this rebounding motion. If you do, your muscles will be too tense.

The image of the energy of the shock strike should be as if you are slapping a ball to the ground and catching it with the rebounding of the palm as it bounces back up very quickly (faster than a normal rubber ball would travel).

Application in Fighting: The slapping palm is applied in fighting when any vertical (downward) strike is required. It could be a downward moving strike to any part of the opponent's body leg, foot, arm, hand, back, or head. The crown of the head is an especially dangerous place to employ this strike in its "shock" variation. Sometimes the slapping palm is also applied as a simultaneous double strike with one palm hitting the head and the other hitting the chest. This double strike is a nice follow-up to a single palm change maneuver which opens up the opponent's center.

One other useful application of the slapping palm occurs after the practitioner has thrown an opponent to the ground. Immediately after the opponent is thrown to the ground, the practitioner will execute a slapping palm to the opponent's face, chest, or back, depending on how the opponent has landed. One precaution to use in the execution of this kind of strike is to avoid bending over at the waist to reach the opponent. If you bend over at the waist in order to strike the opponent, it will be easy for him to grab you and pull you off balance. In this situation it is better to kneel down on one leg (with that knee not quite touching the ground). This way the upper body remains upright and the legs are in a strong position to quickly stand up again and keep moving should that be necessary. Also, in this position it will be more difficult for the opponent to try and

pull you off balance.

The slapping palm strike does not have to move in a strictly downward direction as it is practiced in the exercise, the downward motion can also be applied with a horizontal component (forward movement). This strike is similar in application to the "splitting fist" of Hsing-I Ch'uan. When employing this palm, the practitioner can use the "heavy" or the "shock" application. The heavy strike is used when you want to control the opponent's body or break bones. The slapping palm is very effectively used in arm breaking techniques when it is combined with the lifting palm. The shock energy is used when you want to damage the opponent internally and is usually applied to the chest or head.

Starting on the next page we show two examples of how the slapping palm might be used in application.

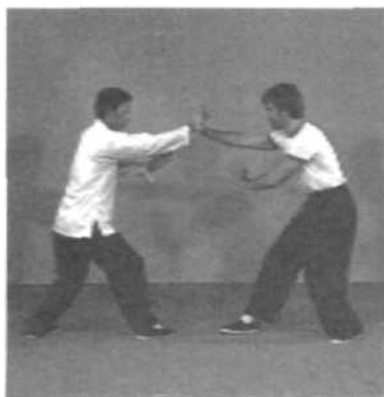
Example 1:

- 1) The opponent tries to come inside Park's defenses by deflecting Park's forward arm too the side. See photo number 2.
- 2) Park pulls down on the opponent's arm with his right palm. Even though this downward pulling motion is not a "strike," it employs the mechanics of the slapping palm. Keep in mind that the execution of any of these palm mechanics does not have to be a "strike." The applications can include pushing, pulling, leading, guiding, trapping and many other types of martial art technique. See photo 3.
- 3) As Park blocks the opponent's left arm, the opponent attempts to hit Park with his right arm. Park once again uses the slapping palm to trap the opponent's attack. Notice that Park blocks the opponent's upper arm so as to better control the opponent. As Park is blocking he prepares to strike the opponent's head with a slapping palm. See photo 4.
- 3) Park continues to control the opponent's right arm as he begins to execute the slapping palm to the opponent's head. See photo 5.
- 5) Park executes a slapping palm to the top of the opponent's head.

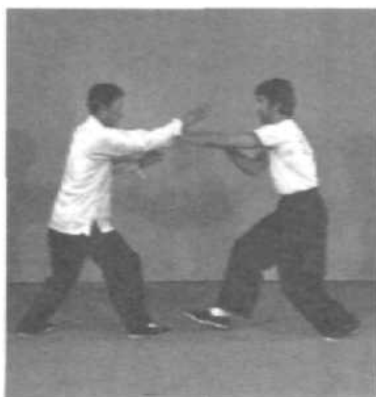
Example 2:

- 1) Park's opponent reaches to grab his wrist. See

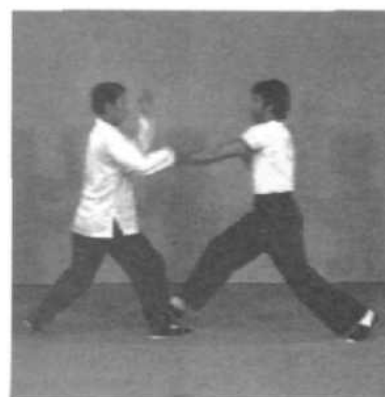
Slapping Palm Application #1



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photo 1.

2) Park's opponent grabs the arm and tries to pull Park off balance. See photo 2.

3) Park begins to step backward and out to an angle to the opponent's right side. At the same time he rolls his wrist around to place his hand on top of the opponent's wrist and brings his other hand up to the opponent's head. Stepping out to an angle and rolling over the wrist will dissipate the opponent's pulling force and put the opponent in a disadvantageous position. See photo 3.

4) Park begins to step backward and begins to pull the opponent's arm across the opponent's body in order to off balance the opponent. See photo

4.

5) As the opponent begins to lose his balance, Park continues pulling the opponent's arm across the opponent's body as he steps backwards. Many times in the execution of the sequence shown in photos 4 and 5 Park will execute the "dragon back" whipping motion as he is pulling the opponent. This not only off balances the opponent, but sends a shock wave up the arm to the opponent's neck. This technique produces a whiplash effect on the opponent's neck. See photo 5.

6) Park releases the opponent's arm with his right hand as he continues to control the opponent

Slapping Palm Application #2



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Slapping Palm Application #2 (con't)



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with his left hand still grabbing the opponent's right wrist. He also begins to move out to the opponent's right flank. See photo 6.

7) Park continues moving to the opponent's flank and, as the opponent falls forward, he begins to execute the slapping palm to the opponent's back. See photos 7 and 8.

8) Park executes a slapping palm to the opponent's back with his right hand and begins to immediately follow the right slapping palm with a left slapping palm. See photo 9.

9) Park executes the slapping palm with the left hand and then follows that with a right elbow. See photos 10 through 12.

Although this application may seem like a time consuming sequence of events when it is broken down step-by-step, Park's execution of this sequence is blindingly fast, especially the one-two-three combination of two slapping palms followed by the right elbow.

Lifting Palm

Introduction: The lifting palm exercise trains the body to develop vertical striking power in an upwards moving direction. Its expression of power is exactly opposite of the slapping palm. The expansion and compression of the torso (combined with the rotation of the body around the center

axis) is also the key source of power in this palm, however, whereas the power in the slapping palm was applied during the compression phase, the power during the lifting palm is applied during the expansion phase.

One thing to notice when performing this exercise is the relative motion of the left and right sides of the rib cage when applying the strike. You should notice that while one side is expanding with the application of the strike, the other is compressing, or sinking. This action also occurs during the slapping palm when one arm is raised up to strike and the ribs on that side open, the ribs on the other side close as the shoulder sinks.

The movement and action of the respective sides of the body in the area of the ribs is consistent with the theory of *yin* and *yang*. In order to have power and stability, the body must be balanced. If one side moves forward, the other side moves back, if one side moves up, the other side moves down - this is how we maintain balance and stability when fighting and applying power. In the execution of the slapping palm and the lifting palm, there are two forces which should be balanced. One is the respective forward and backward motion of the hips and shoulders and the other is the upward and downward motion of the opposite sides of the torso.

When twisting the body around its center, the hips and shoulders on the side of the nonstriking

(receptive, *yin*) side should move backward with an equal and opposite force and intention as the hips and shoulders on the side of the striking (active, *yang*) hand. This not only provides balance in the body, it also allows the body to generate more power around the center. It might be called the "wing-nut" principle. If you had to unscrew a wing nut, you wouldn't just push on one side, you would apply equal and opposite force on each side. This was the main principle of body mechanics and motion that was practiced in the shaking palm exercise described in the first volume.

In the practice and application of the slapping palm and the lifting palm, the motion of the body moving around its center (wing-nut principle) is combined with the equal and opposite upward and downward motions of the upper torso and chest in the area of the ribs. In the slapping palm, the ribs of the active hand were expanded when the hand was raised upward and the opposite ribs compressed (relaxed downward). During the execution of the strike, the striking side ribs were compressed while the opposite side ribs held their compression in order to support the compression of the active side. When executing the lifting palm, the power of the expansion on the striking side is greatly aided by the simultaneous compression on the passive, or nonstriking side.

The principle of using both sides of the body in an equal and opposite expression is one of the key developmental concepts to grasp in the practice of the lifting palm. An uncommon degree of suppleness of the muscles between the ribs, around the sternum, and around the spine in the mid-back region helps facilitate these body mechanics and the development of power.

Performance of the Exercise:

- 1) Begin in a "horse" stance with the palms held in beside the ribs. See slow set photo 1.
- 2) Bring the left hand forward to about face level and then bring the right hand underneath the left elbow and execute a *fan charts* maneuver. The right hand comes up in front of the face and the left hand is by the right elbow. See slow set photo number 2.
- 3) From this position turn the right hip and shoulder to the right, rotating the body around its center. Do not allow the right hand to drop down

lower than the level of the shoulder when you turn the body. Ideally you want the right hand to stay in front of the face and not be dropped down in an effort to "cock" the strike. However, it is recommended that beginners allow the hand to drop down to about shoulder level when first executing this palm so that it will be easier to get a feel for what the body is doing.

When the body turns, allow the right shoulder to relax and sink down and allow the ribs on the right side of the body to compress. Again, this "compression" is not a muscular adjustment you have to force, it is merely a relaxing of the area of the ribs and an "intention" of compression in that area. (There is no slow set photo of this move. Please refer to the fast set photos.)

- 4) Now, twist the body around its center so that the right hip and shoulder move forward. At the same time, thrust the palm upward. As the body twists and the palm is thrown, allow the right side of the torso to relax and extend while the left side compresses downward with the drawing back of the left hand and the sinking of the left shoulder. If this is done properly you should actually feel a very slight shearing motion up and down the center of your chest in the area of the sternum. See slow set photo 3.

In this movement, there is also a slight pushing upward with the legs as the palm is thrust upward. It is not very noticeable in the body, but you should feel the legs actively participating in the upward thrusting of the palm.

When the palm is about to reach its apex, the wrist is thrust quickly upward in a snapping motion while the fingers are pulled down slightly. This is a similar action to that performed in the slapping palm, although the palm is facing up instead of down. As we will discuss later, the "wrist power" is very important in every palm strike. Not only does the wrist power help optimize the mechanics of the movement, additionally, the wrist, elbow, and shoulder articulations stimulate the motor nerves of the arm. The more flexibility, suppleness, and movement there is in the joints, the more messages are sent by the sensory nerves to the brain telling the brain to send more energy to that part of the body.

With the upwards thrusting of the palm, the practitioner exhales audibly. The mechanics of



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Lifting Palm (slow set)

the dragon back can also be used by more advanced practitioners to aid in the development of power for this strike. As the body turns around its center to throw the palm, the spine can add a subtle whipping motion to the movement. This motion can be seen in Park's execution of this palm on the companion video tape.

The dragon back motion actually occurs in all of these palms to some degree, depending on the palm. All of the palms strikes are a combination of *yin* and *yang* motion which is derived from the shaking palm and the dragon back. In all palms there is linear and wave-like movements executed simultaneously. Executing the dragon back motion in a palm strike also excites the sensory nerves of the spine facilitating a greater degree of

energy being sent through the body and to the muscles which are performing the movements.

5) After the palm is thrown on the right side, execute a *fan chang* maneuver to prepare for the left side strike. See slow set photos 4 and 5.

6) Repeat the exercise on the left side. See slow set photo 6.

Application in Fighting: The lifting palm is applied in fighting whenever an upward moving strike is delivered. This strike could be to the groin, the arm, the chin, the body, or even the face if the opponent has bent forward. In many instances, this palm will be immediately applied to the area of the opponent's chin after the application of a slapping palm or a straight palm



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Lifting Palm Change (fast set)

strike to the chest. In applying this palm, the fingers do not have to be facing straight forward. For instance, if one were to hit the opponent under the chin with this palm, the fingers could be turned to the side as the heart or heel of the palm hits the opponent.

Another common application of the lifting palm occurs in conjunction with a simultaneous usage of the slapping palm. One can catch the opponent's arm and apply the lifting palm strike to the elbow while simultaneously applying the slapping palm to the opponent's wrist with the other hand. This is a nice arm breaking application.

In the photo sequence shown on the next page, Park demonstrates a use of the lifting palm after setting up the opponent with an application of the "hiding flower under leaf" maneuver. The application is as follows:

- 1) The opponent attempts to move inside Park's defenses by rolling around his wrist from the outside while stepping in towards Park. See photos 1 through 3.
- 2) Park blocks the opponent's arm with a rolling block that moves the opponent's arm outside and down. The motion is one which comes from the "scooping moon from sea bottom" exercise presented in the first volume. See photos 4 and 5.
- 3) Park catches the opponent's hand with his left hand while continuing to guard the opponent's elbow with his right forearm. See photo 6.
- 4) Park steps in with his left foot and then executes a 180 degree pivot around that leg. As he begins to pivot, his left arm hooks underneath the opponent's arm and his shoulder is planted into the opponent's upper arm. This maneuver causes the opponent to spin around a tornado like force set up by Park's rapid pivoting. See photos 7 through 10.
- 5) As the opponent begins to lose his balance, Park quickly changes the direction of his rotation and turns back into the opponent with a lifting palm strike. The opponent's momentum carries him into the strike, thus increasing the effectiveness of the strike.

This type of application, where the practitioner sets up the opponent's momentum to be accelerated in one direction and then the practitioner quickly changes direction to take advantage of that momentum is very prevalent in

Pa Kua Chang.

The lifting palm is also frequently combined with the slapping palm as either a one-two combination, or as a simultaneous two palm strike. One palm strikes upward and the other strikes downward. As mentioned previously, this double palm application is useful as an arm breaking technique.

Chopping Palm

Introduction: The palm exercises demonstrated in the first volume of this book series developed a palm striking foundation that primarily worked on striking straight to the forward direction. The last two palm exercises worked on developing the ability to strike in the vertical direction (up and down). In practicing the two preliminary palms (shaking palm and dragon back) and the first two of the forty eight month palms (single palm and double palm) the practitioner develops the ability to generate power by rotating the body around its central axis and by a segmented whipping of the spine. The next of the forty eight month palms (throwing palm) facilitated a loosening of the entire body in the twisting and bending motion and helped the practitioner learn how to completely relax the shoulder and arm. The next two forty eight month palms (slapping palm and lifting palm) trained the torso in the area of the rib cage to generate power in a coordinated expansion and contraction of the body.

The next three exercises will train the ability to strike diagonally, to the sides, and the rear. In executing these motions repetitively in the exercises, the muscles of the lower and middle torso will be conditioned and trained to coordinate with the hips, spine, and upper torso in a variety of different ways thus forming a solid connection and strength between the upper and lower parts of the body. After practicing these exercises the practitioner will notice a big difference in the ability to generate power in the performance of previous exercises such as the shaking palm.

The chopping palm will develop strength, flexibility, and coordination in the area of the flanks (sides of the torso), lower chest, and mid-

Lifting Palm Application



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Lifting Palm Application (con't)



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back. The twisting motion of this palm, combined with the extended positioning of the arms and hands, works the area of the torso which surrounds the lower part of the rib cage. This helps build a strong connection between the upper and lower parts of the torso and suppleness in the mid-back region. Exercises four, five, and six of the "standard eight" *ch'i kung set* shown in Chapter 7 are excellent exercises to practice in order to prepare oneself for executing the chopping palm. Like those exercises, because of the twisting motion in the mid-torso region, this exercise aids in maintaining a healthy liver.

The mechanics of this exercise will also develop skill and power in striking across one's own body. So far in this set we have learned to strike straight forward with one palm and both palms, straight up, and straight down with a single palm on the same side of the body as the striking hand. In training this exercise the practitioner learns to strike across the body in order to develop a diagonal striking force. As discussed in the applications section of this palm, this type of "shearing" force is used very successfully in controlling the opponent's body in the execution of *chin na* or throwing techniques.

Another important aspect to consider in the execution of the chopping palm is the articulation of the wrist. Because the wrist motion and follow through is very important in all of these palms, we

will take a brief side track here and discuss this concept.

Wrist Power and Follow Through: In each of these palm exercises, the power developed in the motion of the wrist is very important. If the wrist is not loose and the wrist action not proper in the execution of the palm strike, the power and energy of the strike will not be complete. The wrist action provides the "follow through" which completes the energy in the movement. Baseball pitchers, basketball players, bowlers, golfers, tennis players, and many other athletes understand the importance of the follow through in the execution of their movements. Just as the baseball pitcher will use the articulation of his wrist and follow through in order to vary the type of pitch he will deliver, the Pa Kua Chang practitioner will do the same in order to change the energy of the strike which is executed.

Before we discuss the type of wrist action associated with each of these palms, we will first need to establish some vocabulary of wrist motion so that these concepts will be easier to explain and understand. The wrist can rotate around three axes as shown in the illustrations on this page. It can rotate along the axis of the forearm and middle finger as shown in illustrations 1 and 2. It can flex and extend around the axis of the wrist itself as shown in illustrations 3 and 4. Lastly,



**1 - Outward Rotation
of the Forearm**



**2 - Inward Rotation
of the Forearm**



3 - Flexing the Hand



**4 - Extending the
Hand**



**5 - Inward Contraction
of the Hand**

can contract and expand around the axis of the wrist's center as shown in illustrations 5 and 6 (imagine the palm flat on a table, the center of the wrist held stable and the fingers moving back and forth in an arc around the wrist's center).

In the above illustrations 3 through 6 you will notice that the fingers are moving in an arcing pattern around the wrist. As variations to these four movements, these actions can also be performed with the fingertips held in place and the wrist moving up and down or side to side. Now that we have defined these motions, we will discuss their significance to the palm exercises.

In the shaking palm, dragon back palm, single palm, and double palm striking exercises discussed in the first volume, the "wrist snapping" was performed as a result of two motions of the wrist. The first is the rotational motion. The wrist was turned and "snapped" at the end of the strike as it quickly followed the rotational motion of the bones in the forearm. You can think of this hand motion as being a sharp rotation of the hand



**6 - Outward Contraction
of the Hand**

around the axis of the middle finger. Additionally, because the palm is facing away from the practitioner and the fingers are pointing straight up and the end of the strike, there is a second articulation of the wrist in that it bends along its horizontal axis (the extending motion shown in illustration 4).

This ending position of the wrist, palm, and hand in the execution of the palm striking exercises shown in the first volume of this book is not only important for the development of proper wrist power and follow through, it is also an important aspect of the mental intention and energy of these exercises. If the hand is held limp or too relaxed



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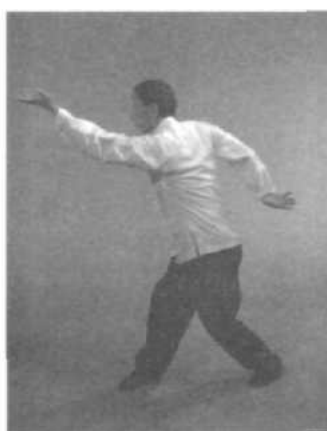
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Chopping Palm (slow set)

with the fingers facing forward instead of upward as shown in illustration 4, the follow through of the strike will be incorrect, the intention will be lost, and the palm shape will not facilitate optimum energy flow to the hand. Whenever a power palm strike is thrown the mental intention follows the movement and then extends beyond the hand when the motion reaches its apex. However, it is very important that the mind immediately come back to the hand after the projection of intention occurs with the energy flow of the strike. With this intention, energy will continue to flow to the hand and it will be available for the next move. As an additional aid in keeping the energy flowing to the hand, the palm shape should be such that it is not limp or lax. There should be a slight bit of tension across

the heart of the palm. This concept applies to all of the palm striking exercises and it is part of the follow through.

In the throwing palm exercise, the wrist was held very loose and the hand was allowed to whip in an arc around the axis of the wrist (flexing of the hand as shown in illustration 3). It is as if you are waving "good-bye" to someone. This action helps to provide the stinging power associated with this palm in that the fingers act as the tip of the whip. While most of the throwing palm applications are performed with the hand flexing for a forehand strike and extending for a back hand strike, there are some applications where the hand will be whipped in the arc of the inward contraction. This type of strike is usually applied to the eyes or bridge of the nose.

In both the slapping palm and lifting palm exercises, the wrist articulation was around the same axis as in the throwing palm, but the hand was extending (illustration 4) instead of flexing. Another difference is that in the throwing palm the fingers arced around the wrist axis while in the slapping palm and lifting palm the fingers are held fairly static while the wrist snaps up or down to produce power in the butt of the palm. The only difference is that in the slapping palm the palm is facing down and the force is downward while in the lifting palm the palm is facing up and the force is upward.

In the chopping palm we encounter the third type of wrist articulation. The chopping palm exercise itself utilizes the outward expansion movement as shown in illustration 6 (the only difference being that in the exercise the palm is facing up). However, in application, the chopping palm utilizes both the inward contraction and outward expansion (as shown in both illustrations 5 and 6) and it utilizes these motions with the palm facing up (*yin* palm) or down (*yang* palm).

Performance of the Exercise:

- 1) Begin in a "horse" stance with the palms held in by the ribs. See slow set photo 1.
- 2) Start this motion by bringing the left palm out to the front of your body slightly and then curl the fingers in towards the body while keeping the palm facing upwards. Continue the twisting motion of the left hand as the fingers move behind the back past the left flanks to the rear. Begin to twist the hips to the left and start to throw the right palm across the body to the left side. The palm is facing upward and the wrist is bent so that the hand is in the position of outward expansion. While the right palm is moving across the body to the left, the left hand is moving back behind the body to the right. The left hand is in the position of inward contraction with the palm facing up. The left hand is out away from the body. Do not have it come in close to the back.

The movement of the left hand balances the motion around the body's center and facilitates a greater amount of twisting in the area of the torso. This twisting helps to open and stretch the muscles of the chest and mid back. In application, the

nonstriking hand will help the power of the strike by hooking or grabbing the opponent's arm and pulling him off balance while the strike is being executed. This technique can be seen in the chopping palm applications shown on page 116.

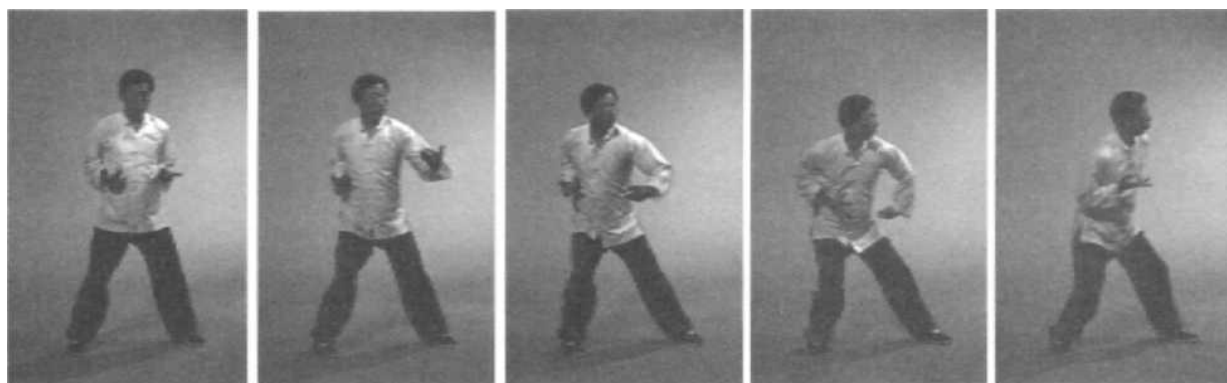
- 3) Once the right palm is thrown, the right hand curls under with the fingers facing back in towards the body. The right hand remains facing upward. As the right hand curls under, the left hand is brought back by the left side ribs.

- 4) The body begins to twist back to the right as the right hand moves toward the right flank of the body and then back behind the body.

Application in Fighting: In fighting, the chopping palm is not used as a straight strike, but is a deflective, or shearing strike or force, executed with the side of the hand. It is primarily used in attacking the opponent's joints, temple, neck, between muscles, or in raking the ribs.

While the chopping palm can be used as a "strike" in the percussive sense, it can also be used as a shearing force in the application of many *chin na* (locking) and throwing techniques. The shearing force of the chopping palm is used to control and offset the opponent's body during a throw or lock and can also be used to break the joints in the application of *chin na*. For instance, if you caught the opponent's wrist with one hand when he punched and then applied the chopping palm as a circular, upward changing to downward, shearing force to the area just above the opponent's elbow, this technique would be an excellent arm lock or arm break. This technique would be one that would employ the inward contraction of the hand.

Another nice place to execute the cutting palm in the inward contraction mode is just under the opponent's nose (on the upper lip). This strike is executed with the palm facing down and the shearing force moving across the opponent's face and backward in order to throw his head back at an angle. This force is typically applied while you have hold of one of the opponent's arms. During this maneuver you could also simultaneously be sweeping or trapping one or both of the opponent's legs in the execution of a throw. The "phoenix spreads its wings" motion from the eight animals form employs this kind of cutting palm application



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Lifting Palm Change (fast set)

Chopping Palm Application #1



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Chopping Palm Application #2



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to either the area under the nose or the back of the opponent's neck in the execution of throws or take-downs.

Although the chopping palm exercise was performed with the striking palm facing upward, in application the side of the palm can be used with the *yang* palm (palm facing up) or the *yin* palm (palm facing down). Two consecutive chopping palms can be executed in combination with the palm changing **from yin** to *yang* between the strikes.

This palm can also be applied high or low. Previously we discussed some applications with the palm striking high to the face or neck, when the palm strikes low it is used to strike the liver,

floating ribs, or hip joints. Striking to the hip joints with the chopping palm while you have the opponent in a *k'ou pu* or *pai pu* leg lock is an excellent way to off-balance the opponent. This type of low palm can be seen in the "bear" posture of the eight animals. Because this palm can be executed high or low with the palm facing up or down, it can be used to all eight directions. On pages 116 and 117 we show two applications of the chopping palm.

Example 1:

1) The opponent begins to enter Park's defenses by executing a *fan chang* maneuver. See photos 1 and 2.

2) Park hooks the opponent's left arm and begins to slide his right hand up the opponent's left arm in the execution of a chopping palm. At the same time, Park begins to execute a pivot step to the opponent's left side. See photos 3 and 4.

3) Park continues to execute the pivot step to end up on the opponent's left flank as he executes a chopping palm application to the base of the opponent's skull. See photo 4 through 6.

Notice that since Park has used a pivot step to move out to the opponent's flank he is now in a good position to follow the chopping palm application with a variety of follow-up techniques to the opponent's back, side, and left arm.

Example 2:

This example is similar to the last, however, instead of executing such a large pivot step, Park executes a shallower pivot and applies the chopping palm to the opponent's ribs. See photos 1 through 6.

White Clouds Chasing the Stars Palm

Introduction: The previous four palm exercises in this set were single palm exercises (one active striking palm thrown at a time). For the next two palms we will be utilizing both palms simultaneously in the striking phase of the exercise. This next palm, which we will refer to from here on as "chasing the stars" for convenience, divides the body's energy and power down the center of the body. One hand strikes high and forward at a diagonal and the other hand strikes low and to the rear.

This palm is primarily designed to teach the student how to execute a powerful low strike in the rearward direction and a diagonal "clothesline" type of force in the forward direction. The double palm combination executed in this exercise helps the practitioner obtain a good feel for the balance of two equal and opposite forces being delivered in a balanced way around the axis of the body's center. As we discussed previously, all strikes should be executed with the "balancing of forces" principle in mind, however, in the previous exercises only one palm was thrown. The balancing of forces in the one palm exercises came from the

action of the shoulders and hips. In this exercise, both palms actually deliver power and thus the execution of this exercise gives the practitioner a chance to get a good feel for how the body's power is supposed to be balanced in all of the exercises. After gaining some experience with this exercise, the student should go back to the previous single palm exercises and try to execute them with the same feeling in the area of the hips and shoulders.

In executing this strike one hand is thrown forward and out at a diagonal while the other hand and the body weight move towards the rear. The effect this exercise has on the chest area is quite interesting. The shoulder on the side of the hand striking to the rear is thrown back and as the shoulder moves downward the ribs on that side compress. The other side of the body expands and opens up with the diagonal thrusting of the palm forward. Because the opposite palms are thrown in

opposite directions at the same time, i.e. one left, up, and out, and the other right, down, and back, there is a great deal of relative movement in the area of the ribs and chest and thus these areas are conditioned and developed, once again, in a slightly different manner.

Thus far in this chapter we have made frequent mention of the relatively high degree of suppleness and elasticity one should develop in the area of the rib cage, spine, hips, shoulders, and sternum. In this system of Pa Kua Chang, almost every upper body exercise the beginning student will practice is aimed at helping the body gain some degree of suppleness in these areas prior to the execution of the 48 month palm strikes.

The sequence of training begins with the three *fan chang* exercises (especially *t'ien fan Chang*) and the first two breathing exercises. These sets begin to loosen up the practitioner's upper body in the areas of the spine, ribs cage, and shoulders. The practice of the shaking palm, dragon back, and the single and double palm change exercises also loosen the hips, shoulders, and spine. The standard eight *ch'i kung* set, the "hiding flower under leaf exercise," which are all presented in this volume, are also exercises which continue to loosen the upper body and hips in a variety of ways, in Park's school, all of these exercises are usually practiced prior to the student learning the 48 month palms. Additionally, practicing each of the 48 month



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White Clouds Chasing the Stars Palm (slow set)

palm exercises at a slow pace with a concentration on the correct movement of the upper body will aid in loosening these areas.

If the student begins to execute the 48 month palm exercises with power prior to gaining a increased degree of suppleness in the upper body, the "whipping" power that is developed in these exercises will be weak. Having a stiff upper body and trying to produce power in these exercises would be analogous to having stiff sections in a whip that you were trying to crack. Some power will be produced, however it will not be full and crisp. The rule here is that the more suppleness and flexibility one can gain in the hips, shoulders, spine, rib junctures, and sternum, the more whipping power can be effectively produced.

In summary, the "chasing the stars" exercise teaches the student how to use the body, back, and shoulder in a relaxed natural manner in

executing a low strike behind the body. At the same time, the student is training how to execute a high diagonally moving clothesline type strike in the forward direction. The energy of this upward moving diagonal strike is very relaxed and is like snapping a towel. The feeling is the same as one gets when throwing a frizbee.

After focusing on the rearward moving power, thrown in combination with a forward moving force, the student will notice that when he or she returns to practicing any of the one sided striking exercises practiced previously which utilize the "wing-nut" type of power, the ability to generate equal and opposite force around the body's central axis will have improved. Intermediate level practitioners can also try to incorporate the dragon back mechanics into this palm strike.

1) Begin in a "horse" stance with the palms held in beside the ribs. See slow set photo 1.

2) Raise the right arm up to about head height and even with the right shoulder. The palm turns to face outward. The left hand comes up under the right elbow. See slow set photo 2.

3) Twist the body and pivot the feet to the left allowing the right hand to move along with the body. During this movement, the right hand turns to face the body and is held at face level directly in front of the face (aligned with the nose). During this movement the weight comes forward slightly. The distribution of weight is about 50/50. In this position, the hips are facing the same direction as the nose. See slow set photo number 3.

4) The left palm comes up under the right elbow and slides up along the right forearm as the right hand begins to move toward the rear. The execution of this movement is similar to the *fan chang* maneuver. As the *fan chung* begins, the practitioner will rotate the body around its central axis and move the weight rearward as both strikes are thrown simultaneously. The eyes follow the rearward moving strike. The hips and shoulders should twist to the right. The practitioner should emphasize the rearward movement of the right shoulder. As the right hand moves to the rear, the palm rotates to face backward. The wrist movement here is an inward rotation of the forearm combined with an extension of the hand at the very end of the movement. Looking at photo number 4 of the slow set we see that the palm of the right hand is facing directly rearward with the fingers facing downward at the end of this movement.

In this phase of the exercise, as the right hand moves back and down and the left hand moves forward and up, the practitioner should feel an opening the chest area. This movement is subtle. The chest should not stick out. Each palm should move with an equal and opposite force, however, the intention, the eyes, and the movement of the weight follow the rear palm. As stated previously, the left arm should be thrown diagonally upward with the same feeling as in throwing a frisbee. The arm should always remain relaxed. See slow set

photo 4.

In executing steps one through four, the movement is continuous and fluid. There are not stops or hesitations in this move. The movement of the right hand across in front of the face while the body is turning is a block which should be immediately followed by the strike. The entire movement is smooth and circular.

5) Twist the body to the right keeping the left hand up in front of the face. Bring the right hand in by the right ribs. See slow set photo 5.

6) Continue turning the body to the right and bring the left hand in front of the face with the hand aligned with the nose. Again, the weight is about 50/50 in this position. See slow set photo 6.

7) Execute the strike on the other side. See slow set photo 7.

Application in Fighting: The rearward moving hand in this exercise is primarily used as a high block with a subsequent strike to the groin, bladder, or stomach areas. The upper strike is used as a close-line type of strike across the opponents chest or throat. In many cases these two strikes are thrown in succession as a one-two combination as shown in the first example below.

Example 1:

1) The opponent tries to come inside Park's defenses by rolling his hand inside of Park's lead hand. See photos 1 and 2.

2) Park blocks across with his right hand, steps in toward the opponent with his right foot and then executes a pivot on his right foot. This is a risky move because the opponent can catch your ribs with his free hand when you are stepping in. If you execute this technique to the inside, as Park has done here, you need to be aware of that strike coming to your ribs and block it with your elbow. See photos 3 and 4.

3) As Park moves in, the opponent tries to strike with his right hand to Park's ribs. Park catches this strike with his elbow and immediately strikes to the opponent's bladder with his palm. Park's pivot has put him to the side of the opponent with his right side facing the opponent's left side. This move must be executed at the correct angle, otherwise you are in danger of exposing your back to the opponent. See photos 5 and 6.



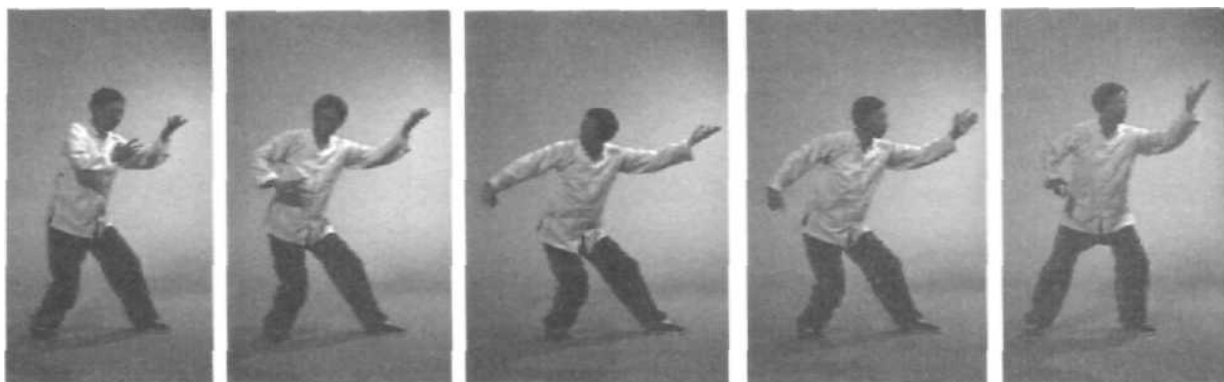
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White Cloud Chasing the Stars Palm (fast set)

White Cloud Chasing the Stars Palm Application 1



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White Cloud Chasing the Stars Palm Application 2



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4) As soon as Park's strike lands to the opponent's bladder region, Park steps in through the opponent's legs, taking away his root. The angle is such that it is easy to off balance the opponent with this step. As he steps through, Park executes the upward diagonal striking palm across the opponent's chest and throws him back. This palm could also have been thrown to the opponent's throat in order to cause more damage.

As mentioned above, this is a risky move when executed to the inside of the opponent. In order to pull it off correctly, one must execute the technique with proper timing and angle and be aware of the opponent's ability to strike your side as you move in. A less dangerous application of this nature can be executed to the opponent's outside. If the opponent were to lead with his left

hand as in executing a *fan chang* maneuver, the exact same application could be executed to the outside.

Example 2:

Here Park will use the slapping palm and the chasing the stars palm in combination.

1) In this example, the opponent attempts to kick Park in the groin. As the opponent kicks, Park pivots to get out of the way of the kick and executes a slapping palm strike to the opponent's knee at the same time. See photos 1 through 4.

2) After striking the opponent's leg with the slapping palm, Park immediately executes the chasing the stars palm to the opponent's groin as he continues to pivot to the opponent's side. See photos 5 and 6.

At this point it would be easy for Park to turn and step through the opponent's center while executing the upward diagonal strike component of the chasing stars palm as he did in the last example. This move will off balance the opponent and cause him to fall to the ground.

Sliding the Window Shutter to Look at the Moon Palm

Introduction: This palm, which we will refer to from here on as "sliding the shutter" for convenience, is a double palm strike to the side of the body with both palms striking on the same side of the body, one high and one low. The mechanics of this palm work to increase the practitioners ability to generate a centrifugal force around the central axis of the body with the energy like that of a tornado.

Previously all exercises which employed the mechanics of generating force around the body's central axis worked on the "wing-nut" principle. This means that as one shoulder and hip moved forward, the other moved rearward and the opposing forces were balanced around the center. In this palm strike, the energy of the body winds up around the center and unwinds around the center, but it is then all whipped over to one side of the body as both hands strike in the same direction. The circular path traveled by the hands during the wind up and the subsequent unwinding of the body in one direction will train the body to learn how to develop centrifugal "tornado" like power. The power radiates out from the center along a circular path.

This type of tornado power has many applications in using both hands to strike the opponent from a side angle. Learning how to generate power, strength, and connection in this manner also aids the student in his or her development in other aspects of Pa Kua movement and application. For instance, this type of winding and unwinding of the body around its central axis will develop the connections and power that the student will use in the execution of the single palm change motion. When employing the single palm change, the Pa Kua practitioner will not always use the maneuver as a direct attack or

strike, however, learning how to generate power in this palm striking exercise forges the alignments and connections that will be valuable in any offensive or defensive employment of the single palm change.

Performance of the Exercise:

- 1) Begin in a "horse" stance with the palms held in by the ribs. See slow set photo 1.
- 2) Bring the right palm up in front of the face with the palm facing outward. The left hand comes to a position under the right elbow. See photo 2.
- 3) Execute a *fan chang* maneuver by bringing the left hand up under the right forearm. At the same time, turn the body to the left. The hips and shoulders also turn to the left. See photo 3.
- 4) After the palms reach a position facing directly to the left, turn the hips and shoulders slightly back to the right with the palms remaining in the same position as in photo 3. This is the "wind up before the throw" portion of the exercise. Now begin to bring the hips and shoulders back to the left and start to turn the palms over. See photo 4.
- 5) Continue whipping the hips and shoulders to the left and turn the palms to face to the left. This is the "unwind" portion of this exercise. See photo 5.

During the wind up and unwind portion of this exercise, the winding and unwinding are relatively small movements. This exercise will train the practitioner to begin to develop the ability to use subtle movements to generate a great deal of power. The wind up and unwind are quick, small rotations of the torso around the center of the body.

- 6) Begin to execute a *fan chang* maneuver while swinging the body 180 degrees to the right. See photos 6 through 8.
- 7) Repeat the exercise on the right side. See photos 9 and 10.

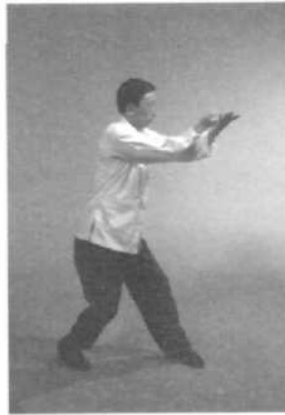
Application in Fighting: This palm is used to strike the opponent's face and chest, side of the body high and low, or the back and kidneys simultaneously. It also is effective in the execution of various throwing applications where the legs are trapped or swept at the same time the arm motions are being applied.



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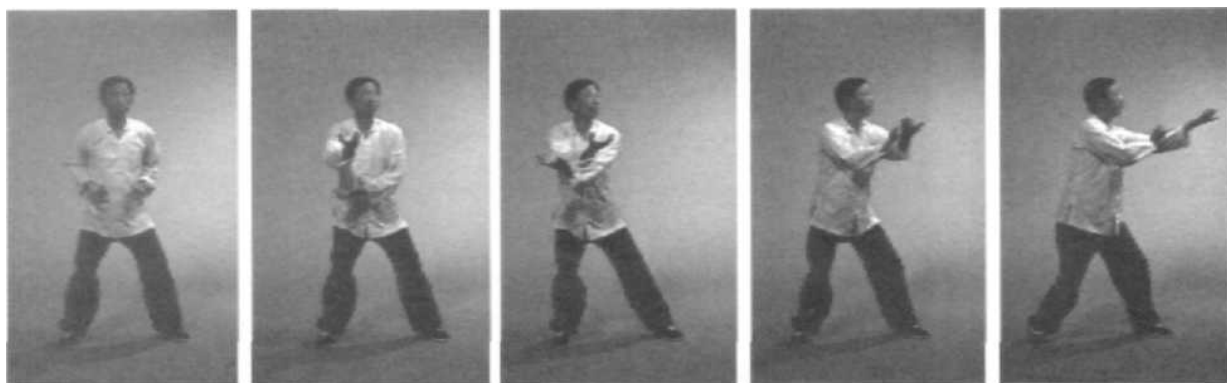


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Sliding the Window Shutter to look at the Moon Palm (slow set)



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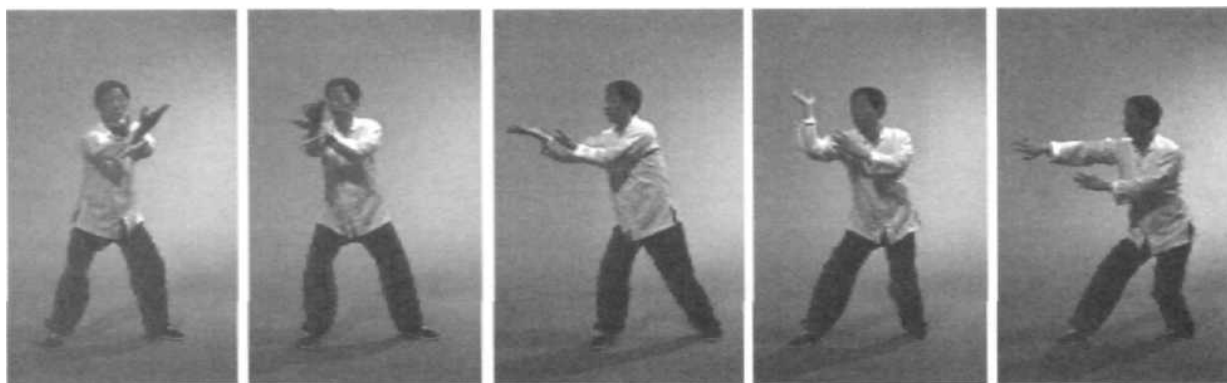
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White Cloud Chasing the Stars Palm (fast set)

As with all of these palm strikes, the applications of the strikes will vary depending on the distance and angle the practitioner is positioned relative to his or her opponent. For instance, in the application of the "sliding shutter" palms, if the practitioner is at a long range from the opponent, the strike is applied as a shock strike with the wrists articulating as they do in the throwing palm exercise. That is, the wrist will be loose and the hands will flex as the strike hits the opponent. However, if the practitioner is at close range, this motion may better be employed in the execution of a throwing technique. There are many various applications of all the palm strikes depending on the distance and angle one obtains.

On the next page Park demonstrates an application of the sliding shutter palm.

1) The opponent tries to get inside Park's defenses by executing a *fan chang* maneuver. See photos 1 and 2.

2) Park steps in and blocks the opponent's arm with his forearm. See photo 3.

3) Park begins to pivot around his right foot in order to move to his opponent's flank. See photos 4 and 5.

4) Park extends the pivot to get some distance between him and his opponent so that he can execute a shock strike to the opponent's kidneys. He begins to apply the sliding shutter strike. See photo 6.

5) Park applies the sliding shutter strike to the opponent's kidney area. See photo 7. From here Park is in a very good position to follow up with more strikes to the opponent's back and head.

As a variation to the entry Park has utilized in photos 1 through 4, if he had stepped in deeper and placed his right leg behind his opponent's left leg, he could have stayed in close to his opponent and executed a throw by simultaneously sweeping the opponent's leg and executing the sliding shutter technique across the opponent's neck and chest areas. Also, as another variation, Park could have executed the "chasing star" palm to the opponent's groin after he positioned himself as shown in photo 4.

As a possible follow-up to most applications of the sliding the window palm, the practitioner might choose to execute the upward directed strike of the chasing the stars palm. For instance,

if one were to use the sliding the shutter palm with a leg trap in order to off-balance the opponent, you could then follow-up with a clothesline type strike across the throat or face. Changing from one to the other is very powerful and efficient.

Follow-on 48 Month Palm Training

After the practitioner has gained a suitable amount of experience with the eight palm exercises as explained thus far in this chapter, he or she will then begin to combine the palm strikes with the "eight direction rooted stepping" drills which were presented in the first volume of this book. Through this practice the student will learn how to employ the palm strikes while moving.

It is important that any exercise which is practiced while standing in a static posture also be practiced while the practitioner is executing the footwork techniques of Pa Kua Chang. Once the student learns how to develop the proper mechanics of motion through static exercises, if he or she does not also learn how to properly utilize the mechanics and generate the power while moving, it will be difficult for them to use these strikes in a fighting situation.

After the student has practice each of the 48 month palm strikes in combination with basic straight line and pivoting footwork drills, he or she will then work to develop palm striking combinations. This can first be practiced in a standing posture and then later with the footwork.

In practicing 48 month palm striking combinations, the student learns which palms can effectively be used together. A rule of thumb Park tells his students when they begin to practice combinations is that the most effective striking sequences always change between *yin* palm and *yang* palm and vice-versa. For instance slapping palm followed by lifting palm is a good combination because slapping palm is *yin* and lifting palm is *yang*. In the same sense, the lower "chasing the stars" palm followed by the upper "chasing the stars" palm, as shown in the application example on page 122, is a good combination. Also a *yin* chopping palm applied to the temple which is immediately followed by a *yang* chopping palm to the neck is also a good

White Cloud Chasing the Stars Palm Application 1



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combination.

Palm striking combinations should follow the *lien huan* (continuously linked) principle which was discussed in Chapter 2. This means that in changing from one palm to another, the energy and movement is smooth and fluid, there is no break in the energy flow in changing from one to the other. If a student executes a combination of palm strikes and there is awkwardness, hesitation, or disharmony between the two strikes, Park says, "This is not *lien huan*."

Park says that learning the changing principle as it applies to the 48 month palm combinations is very important. Park's teacher taught him that just as there are rules to follow when connecting calligraphy strokes, there are rules to follow when connecting the palm strikes. He says that if the palm combinations do not connect fluidly, then the practitioner will be leaving himself open if he tries to apply that combination in a fighting situation. In other words, if a practitioner executes a palm strike in a fight and for some reason that strike does not hit its mark, is deflected, or does not do enough damage to finish the fight, the practitioner's body should have ingrained a habit of moving from that strike directly to another without hesitation and without a break in the energy of the motion.

in fighting you never want to put all your eggs in one basket and think that one strike is going to devastate the opponent. Also, when you strike the opponent, you never want to hesitate after the strike to "see what happened." Many beginners fall in to this trap when learning how to fight. They will throw a strike and then hesitate to see if it hit its mark. This is a big mistake. When you do this you are giving your opponent time to react or recover. This is why the repetitious practice of palm striking combinations and palm/elbow striking combinations is so important in training. These combinations must be habitual so that in a fighting situation the practitioner can fluidly change from one technique to the next in accordance with the opponents reactions and responses. This ability is also developed in the "research sparring" practice as discussed in Chapter 2.

The next stage of training the 48 month palms,

after the student has practiced the striking combinations with the "eight direction rooted stepping" footwork, is to learn the eight section 48 month palm circle walking form. This form takes all eight of the palms and puts them into circle walking changes. Here the student begins to learn how to combine the mechanics and power of the eight palms with the circular footwork and the rapid change of direction which is associated with combat oriented circle walk practice. An example of one of these changes, utilizing the "sliding the shutter" palm, is shown on pages 131 and 132.

In this example Park is walking the circle in the counter-clockwise direction and then he transitions directly into a hiding flower under leaf posture (see photos 1 through 4). Unwinding from the hiding flower posture, Park then executes the sliding shutter strike (see photos 5 through 9). He then turns and executes the sliding shutter palm on the other side (see photos 10 through 15). From here he once again executes the hiding flower posture (photos 16 through 18) and then immediately transitions into the *t'ien fan Chang* maneuver (see photos 19 through 23) and begins walking the circle in the other direction.

After the student has gained experience practicing the 48 month palm circle walking form, he or she will also learn a variety of other static exercises, footwork drills, and circle walking forms which combine the 48 month palms with the supplemental palms, the elbow sets, the kicking sets, and circle walking combat forms. The order in which the student learns these drills and exercises depends on the students aptitude, progress, ability, and individual needs. Park will teach every student a little differently depending on what he feels that student needs to learn.

One of the exercises a student might be taught at this point in the training is the 48 month palm apparatus drills. As we mentioned in the last volume, all of the 48 month palms have separate apparatus which are struck while practicing the palm. However, Park does not teach this training to beginners for a couple of important reasons. One of the main reasons that Park starts all of his students "hitting air" in the palm exercises, instead of hitting a bag, is that in the execution of an internal strike, the practitioner needs to be able

to "throw" the intention out with the strike so that the *ch'i* will extend out beyond the palm. In practicing the palm exercises without hitting anything and extending the intention as if throwing something far away, the student learns how to properly use the mind and body together. If the student started hitting a bag before he or she learned how to properly coordinate the mind and body, the practitioner's intention would end at the surface of the bag and not extend into or through the bag.

Another reason, which has more to do with physical health than striking technique, is that practitioners who try striking bags before their body is externally and internally connected will run the risk of either damaging themselves or creating bad habits. Internal martial arts strikes are executed in a relaxed manner. The practitioner can remain relaxed and hit an object only if the body alignments and connections are such that the force of the strike comes from the ground. If the practitioner's connections and alignments are off, the force coming back into the practitioner's body as a result of the strike can easily damage the wrist, elbow, or shoulder.

In order to compensate for this force, beginners will tighten their muscles as if executing an external style strike. This will cause bad habits to form. Therefore, Park does not teach students apparatus training until their body alignments and connections have been properly executed in the "air striking" practice and their mind/body connection is correct in the way they use their intention when striking. Park can watch someone strike into the air and tell if they are "holding the *ch'i*" or "extending the *ch'i*". When they can extend the *ch'i* properly in the basic training exercise, and demonstrate proper body alignments, they are ready for apparatus training. Even after the student begins the apparatus training, there are certain rules to follow to ensure that the practitioner's training is safe. Each of the apparatus that is struck during the exercises has a certain amount of flexibility and "give." In Park's school students never strike heavy bags. All the apparatus is fairly light and/or has plenty of cushion. For instance, one of the exercises practiced with the slapping palm uses a one foot pile of newspaper on a wooden table. The table

should not be solid or too thick. The papers are not tightly bound, but loosely stacked. Hitting a one foot stack of papers has cushion enough that the practitioner is not at risk of being damaged by hitting something too hard.

An object that is too heavy or hard will not only give too much resistance to the strike, but the *ch'i* that exits the practitioner's palm will be blocked by a thick, heavy object. Park says that a heavy object has "dead" *ch'i*. If an object that is heavy is struck, the *ch'i* that leaves the practitioner palm can come back into the practitioner's body and cause problems. Park says the *ch'i* in the hand is "live *ch'i*." When it leaves the hand, it becomes "dead *ch'i*." The heavy object will turn the *ch'i* back and it will re-enter the hand as dead *ch'i*. This could cause some ill effects.

Some practitioners have the idea that if you are going to fight someone who weighs 200 pounds, you should practice by hitting a 200 pound bag. This is a very external "force against force" way of looking at fighting. In the internal martial arts you should never hit someone in a manner that you take the brunt of their weight. Before you apply a strike you always ensure that you have off-balanced the opponent or that you are hitting them at their weakest angle. If the strike is setup properly, you will never need to fight against the opponent's weight.

After the student in Park's school has learned all of the exercises, combinations, and forms as discussed above, he or she will then begin to learn how to execute the 48 month palms in conjunction with the pole training described in Chapter 3. In practicing these exercises and forms, the student will learn how to utilize the 48 month palm mechanics and power while executing very quick turning maneuvers, sharp changes of direction, and small circle or spiraling footwork.

Sliding the Window Shutter to Look at the Moon Circle Walking Form



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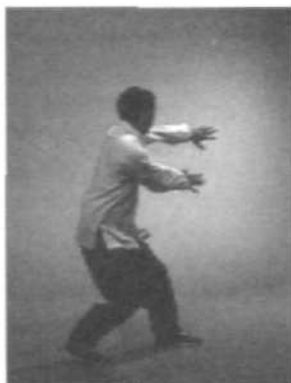
Sliding the Window Shutter to Look at the Moon Circle Walking Form (con't)



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The Supplemental Palms

In addition to the 48 month palm training set that has been discussed thus far in this chapter, there are various other "supplemental" palms that the student will practice in order to take the mechanics trained during the execution of the 48 month palms and vary the application, yet keep the mechanics of motion which has already been ingrained in the body through repetitious practice of the 48 month palms. By taking the core body mechanics that have been practiced in the execution of the 48 month palms and learning how those mechanics can be applied in a variety of different expressions of the arms and hands, the student begins to grasp the importance of having developed a solid foundation with the beginning exercises.

In this next section, we will present four of the supplementary palms. Because all readers should by now have gained some experience with the shaking palm and dragon back exercises which were presented in the last volume of this book, we will present four palm exercises which are based on the mechanics of those two exercises. The first two of these exercises, the "piercing palm" and the "swallow penetrates through the forest" palm, are based on the mechanics of the shaking palm exercise. The last two exercises "three basins settling to the ground" palm and "embracing the moon at the chest" palm are based on the mechanics of the dragon back exercise.

Park does not usually wait until the student has finished learning all of the 48 month palm exercises before he teaches these particular four supplemental palms. With most students, Park teaches these supplemental palms after the student has gained a firm experiential understanding of the shaking palm and dragon back palm. Sometimes Park teaches these particular supplemental palms to students before they learn the 48 month palm exercises if he feels that they need more work on the mechanics of the shaking palm and dragon back.

Piercing Palm

Introduction: The piercing palm (also known as the penetrating palm) is one of Pa Kua Chang's most famous techniques, especially in the Yin Fu lineage of Pa Kua. In the classic writing of Pa Kua handed down by its founder, Tung Hai-Ch'uan, it states:

*Even those with proficient skill fear the three penetrations,
Moving to the outside is not a waste of time.
He walks outside and I walk inside,
Its not difficult to attack with the extending hand.*

Applying three consecutive piercing palms is a common tactic in Pa Kua Chang. It is very difficult for an opponent to counter three consecutive piercing palm strikes which are applied in rapid succession at the appropriate angles and with the practitioner's body in the optimum position. Therefore, in the piercing palm exercise, we always practice three palms in succession.

The mechanics of the piercing palm are exactly the same as the shaking palm exercise. The coordinated movement of the hips and shoulders around the body's central axis provide both the speed and power necessary to correctly execute this exercise. If the body wobbles or sways, or the weight is shifted back and forth, the speed and fluidity of this exercise will be decreased. The body is aligned on the center and moves around the center for best results.

Performance of the Exercise:

- 1) Begin in a "horse" stance with the palms held in by the ribs. See slow set photo 1.
- 2) Bring the right hand directly in front of the face with the palm facing generally toward the left. Bring the left hand under the right elbow with the palm facing generally to the right. See photo 2.
- 3) Bring the left hand up under the right forearm by moving forward with the left hip and shoulder.



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Piercing Palm (slow set)

The hip and shoulder should move in a coordinated manner as described in the last volume when we presented the shaking palm exercise. As the left palm comes forward it should rub under the right forearm as it shoots directly forward in a stabbing motion. The fingers of the left hand point directly forward. At the last instant, as the fingers are about to reach their farthest extension, the wrist bends and the fingers turn to point slightly upward. This movement adds penetrating power to the strike and helps move the *ch'i* to the fingertips. See photos 3 and 4.

4) Execute the same maneuver, however, this time bring the right hand under the left forearm. Once again, this motion is driven by the hips and

shoulders. The right hips and shoulders are projected forward while the left hips and shoulders are pulled back with equal and opposite force. See photos 5 and 6.

5) Repeat the sequence in the left side one more time. See photos 7 and 8. You have now executed three consecutive piercing palms. These three strikes should be executed in rapid succession. Three strikes in rapid succession constitutes one execution of the exercise. On the next repetition the practitioner will start with the left hand forward and the right hand under the left elbow as shown in photo 8.

In executing the piercing palm three times in rapid succession, the student learns how to move



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Piercing Palm (fast set))

the hips and shoulders rapidly and crisply around the body's center line. Remember that the hips and shoulders should remain loose and supple as this movement is executed. If the body is stiff, the movements will be too slow.

Application: The three piercing palms thrown in rapid succession typify the "jab, bridge, finish" sequence which we discussed in Chapter 2. One might use the first pierce to gain a reaction from the opponent. This pierce is thrown straight out at the opponent's eye. If he blocks it, which we assume he will, then the next pierce is thrown to the opposite side of the opponent's blocking arm. If the opponent misses the block, then the strike extends right into the opponent's eye.

If the second piercing palm is blocked, the practitioner once again throws another to the opposite side of the opponent's blocking arm. However, in the execution of the second piercing palm, the practitioner has utilized his or her footwork to get in closer to the opponent and off to a optimum angle for attack. If the opponent misses the second strike, again he is gouged in the eyes.

If the opponent has blocked the first two piercing palms, the practitioner should have planned the sequence such that while the opponent was busy blocking the first two, the set up for the third to hit its mark has occurred. In order for this to happen, it is imperative that the practitioner has utilized the proper footwork in the execution of the first two strikes. Of course the proper footwork will be dictated by the opponent's responses to the first two strikes.

When the third strike is executed, it is either aimed at the opponent's eyes or throat for best results. Because the strike is a straight forward stabbing strike with the finger tips, the practitioner will want to hit an area of the opponent's body that is soft, like the throat or eyes.

After the piercing palm has hit the opponent's throat or eyes, it is a good idea to follow immediately with a slapping palm to the opponent's face or chest. The hand is not drawn back in the execution of the this slapping palm. As soon as the fingers jab the eyes or throat, the wrist of that hand is bent and the palm comes straight in to strike. As soon as the palm strikes,

the practitioner will want to follow that with an elbow strike to the same area the palm hit. This finger, palm, elbow combination is executed in very rapid succession. There is no hesitation between strikes.

When throwing the one-two-three combination, the retracted palm only comes back as far as the elbow of the extended hand. This helps the structural speed and also helps the piercing palm bridge onto a counterattack thrown by the opponent. Also, when throwing these strikes, the thumb does not stick up and the fingers are slightly bent. Having the fingers slightly bent will cause the fingers to fold inward instead of backward if the strike hits a bony area such as the cheek bone.

What we have described here thus far in this section is the technique known as the "upper piercing palm." There is also a "lower piercing palm." This palm is practiced in the exact same manner as the upper piercing palm. However, the rear hand rubs across the top of the forward arm in the execution of the strike, and the strike is aimed down at about waist height. The lower piercing palm is a good technique to use in blocking strikes which the opponent is attempting to deliver to your abdomen.

When striking with the lower piercing palm, one of the prime targets is the inguinal crease (inside of the leg where the upper leg meets the torso). This area is full of nerves and a piercing strike here is very painful. This strike also weakens the joint, momentarily allowing you to execute the "bear" movement from the eight animals form to the inner hip joint as you sweep the leg.

As the Pa Kua combinatorial analysis would dictate, all possible executions of every palm shape and striking direction should be explored in training. You will have noticed that thus far we have only discussed executing palm strikes with the fingertips while the palms are facing to the side (palm facing left or right), but do not think that the techniques end there. Striking with the fingertips while the palm is facing up and when the palm is facing downward are also techniques which are trained as piercing palm variations. If you examine the "dragon flying" and the "phoenix" postures of Park's eight animals (as shown in the

last volume of the book) you will see that these palm shapes are represented. Also, you will notice that the third elbow training set has a component where the palm is piercing in for a fingertip strike to the throat with the palm facing upwards.

Swallow Penetrates Through the Forest Palm

Introduction: The "swallow penetrates through the forest" palm is an exercise adapted from one of the eight animal circle walking postures. Like the last exercise, this one also employs the mechanics of the shaking palm, however, its hand and arm movements are much more complex.

The arm and palm movements executed in this exercise teach the student how to get power in the execution of circular motions. In the practice of this exercise both hands are constantly following circular and rotational patterns of movement. It is much harder to learn how to get power in these type of circular and rotational patterns as compared to linear methods of striking. Thus, this exercise is a valuable training tool.

As in many other of the palm striking exercises, the wrist action in this exercise is extremely important. Both hands are actively involved in this exercise and at the very end of the strike the flicking motion of the wrists provides the follow-through.

Performance of the Exercise:

In the slow set example of this exercise you will notice that Park is standing with his feet held together instead of in the horse stance posture. This is a variation of training which can be performed in order to provide a different type of stretching in the area of the hips. This kind of stance is only practiced on the slow set. You can also stand in the standard "horse riding" stance as in all of the other exercises. This variation is shown here in the slow set just as an example of how this particular exercise might be varied for a different effect. The exercise is performed as follows:

1) Begin by bringing the right hand up in front of the face with the palm facing up and the fingers facing to the right. The left hand comes up over the head with the palm facing upward. The left palm and left arm should be held out away from the head. The hips and shoulders are rotated to the left. See photo 1.

2) Allow the left hand to begin traveling out along a circular arc to the left as the right wrist straightens out and the fingers of the right hand point out away from the body. The hips and shoulders begin to rotate towards the right as the body moves around its central axis. See photo 2.

3) The left hand continues to arc out away from the body and the hand turns so that the palm is facing downward. The right palm also turns to face down and away from the body. See photo 3.

4) The left palm continues along the circular arc. When it gets to about the level of the shoulder, the fingers point downward and the palm begins a scooping motion. The right palm turns out away from the body. See photo 4.

5) The left palm continues along the circular arc now cutting in towards the body in a scooping action. As the left palm scoops across in front of the body, it comes down to about the level of the hips. At this point in the motion the hips and shoulders should be about square to the front. The right palm begins to turn to face upward. The eyes follow the left palm. See photo 5.

6) The left palm continues along its circular arc as it begins to come up the right side of the body. The palm is still performing the scooping motion. The right palm continues to turn upward. The hips and shoulders are continuing to turn to the right. See photo 6.

7) The left palm continues along its circular arc. However, now it begins to also move away from the body towards the front as it comes up the right side of the body (actually it is moving along the body's center line, however since the hips and shoulders are turned to the right, it looks as if the palm is moving up on the right). The right palm continues to turn upward. See photo 7.

8) The left palm continues its circle with the palm now facing upward and hooking back across the body. The fingers point to the left. The right palm is now facing upward and the arm is held up over the head, but not too close to the head. See photos



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Swallow Penetrates Through the Forest Palm (slow set)



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Swallow Penetrates Through the Forest Palm (fast set)

Swallow Penetrates Through the Forest Application



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Swallow Penetrates Through the Forest Application (con't)



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8 and 9.

In the execution of this movement the left palm has traced a very smooth circle and has moved in a continuous and fluid motion. Park likes to say that in this exercise the palm should be like a bird and the tip of the middle finger the bird's beak. He says when a bird flies it follows its beak, meaning that the tip of the middle finger leads the motion. When you practice this motion, be very relaxed so it feels as if the palm gains momentum during its downward falling arc which helps propel it upward along the upward moving arc and across the body to its final position. The turning of the hips and shoulders around the body's center provide most of the power in this motion. However, the momentum created in the arcing of the left palm also provides a spiraling force. The last bit of power is provided by the quick and crisp flicking of the left wrist as the fingers are turned to the left and the inside heel of the palm is projected forward. You can see the last action of the wrist if you compare the palm positions in photos 8 and 9.

The right hand power is also obtained in the aggressive flicking of the wrist and rotation of the forearm around its central axis. Although the right hand has hardly moved from its original position, the rotation of the palm and forearm and the quick snapping of the wrist as the palm

makes its final upward turn provides a great deal of power. The movement of this hand is usually applied in a blocking motion or in escaping from an opponent's grabbing of the right wrist. 9) Now you are ready to begin the next repetition of this exercise. The steps are the same, however, this time the right hand scoops down in a circular arc while the left hand remains up above the head. After you have practiced this exercise as outlined above, you can then combine two or more of these movements in rapid succession to work on speed.

Application: The "swallow penetrates through the forest" palm has many various applications. It can be used effectively as a jab, a block, a bridge, a strike, or a throw. As a jab/bridge combination the practitioner can throw two quick and consecutive "swallow penetrates through the forest" palms. As the opponent blocks the first, the second will get inside. Because of the complex nature of the motions involved, it is difficult for the opponent to keep up with what is happening when two of these palms are thrown in rapid succession. When striking with this palm, you can use the fingertips or the heel of the palm.

In the example shown on the previous page, Park demonstrates how one might get out of a wrist grab and follow up with a throw using this technique.

- 1) Park's opponent grabs his right wrist. See photos 1 and 2.
- 2) As soon as the opponent grabs, Park begins to execute the swallow penetrates through the forest movement. The right hand turns up as the left hand pierces. Park begins to step in towards the opponent. See photo 3.
- 3) Park continues stepping in towards the opponent while his right hand turns upwards and his left hand pierces inside the opponent's right arm and up behind his neck. As the hand is placed behind the opponent's neck, Park's left foot has stepped in behind the opponent's right foot. See photos 4 through 6.
- 4) Park now shifts his weight to his left leg and begins to execute a pivot step, pivoting around his right leg, as he pulls down on the opponent's neck in a circular arc. See photos 7 through 9.
- 5) At this point Park could continue with the momentum of this motion and throw the opponent. However, typical of Pa Kua Chang technique, Park decides to change directions. As the opponent's momentum brings his head toward the ground, Park brings up his knee to meet the opponent's head. See photos 10 through 12.

Three Basins Settling to the Ground Palm

Introduction: As stated previously, the last two palm exercises aided the practitioner's understanding and development of the mechanics of the shaking palm exercise. The next two exercises will add to the student's understanding of the dragon back exercise. In the dragon back exercise and the double palm change exercise which were described in the last volume of this book, the student learned to generate power in a forward directed double palm strike by executing a segmented whipping of the spine. The "three basins settling to the ground palm" adds to the double palm strike technique by teaching the student how to develop double palm striking power to the rear, the diagonal, and to the side.

This palm exercise is usually taught fairly early in the training program (shortly after the student has become comfortable with the dragon back exercise) as a shoulder loosening, flexibility, and

coordination exercise. The rotation of the shoulder joint forward and then backward in this exercise is very therapeutic and enhances the flow of *ch'i* to the arms. When this exercise is performed slowly, a great deal of *ch* 7 can be felt because of the "rest stretching" of the ligaments, tendons, and nerves on the ulnar side of the arm.

Performance of the Exercise:

- 1) Begin in a wide "horse" stance with the arms held extended out to the sides with the palms facing up. See slow set photo 1.
- 2) Begin to round the lower back so that the small of the back projects rearward and the sacrum tucks under. As the lower back rounds, also begin to round the upper back as the palms come downward and turn to face the rear. The wrist action cause the palms to "slap" at the very end of the strike.

The power for this strike comes from the psoas muscle and the intercostal muscles between the ribs in the front of the body. The contraction of the psoas muscle provides the power for the tucking under of the pelvis while the contraction of the intercostal muscles allows the chest to hollow and upper back to round. See slow set photos 2 through 4.

- 3) From the rounded back and buttocks position of the previous strike, you now open up the chest and project the hips forward as you bring both palms up diagonally and out to the sides. The motion of the arms is as if you are holding a frisbee in each hand and throwing the frisbees directly out to both sides. The arms perform a whipping motion and so the shoulders, elbows, and wrists must be very loose. At the end of the strike the wrists' movement allows the hands to extend outwards. See photos 5 and 6.

- 4) For the last strike of this sequence, the practitioner will perform a full dragon back motion. With the first roll of the spine, the hands are brought in slightly. See photo 7. As the second "cracking of the whip" roll of the spine occurs both hands are thrown out to the sides and the palms turn to face outward. See photos 8 and 9.

In Park's school, the "three basins settling to the ground" palm is also practiced with one palm at a time. Practicing with one palm allows the



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Three Basins Settling to the Ground Palm (slow set)



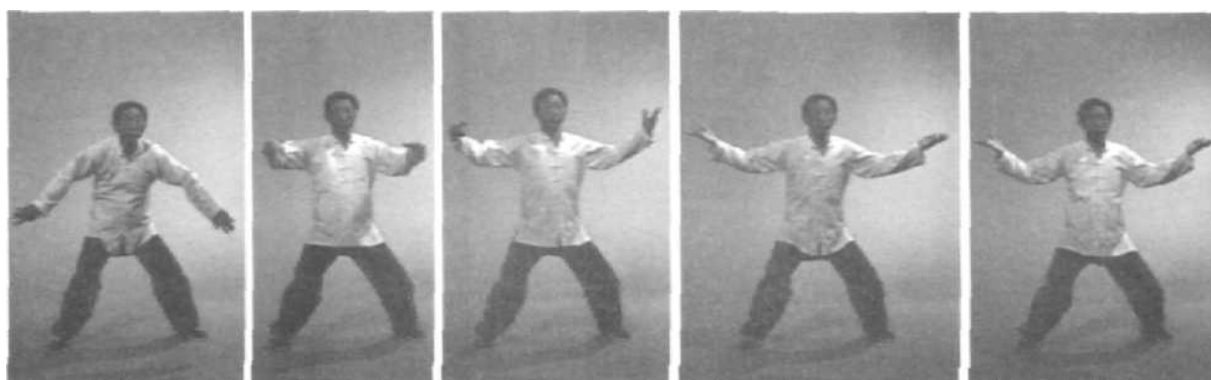
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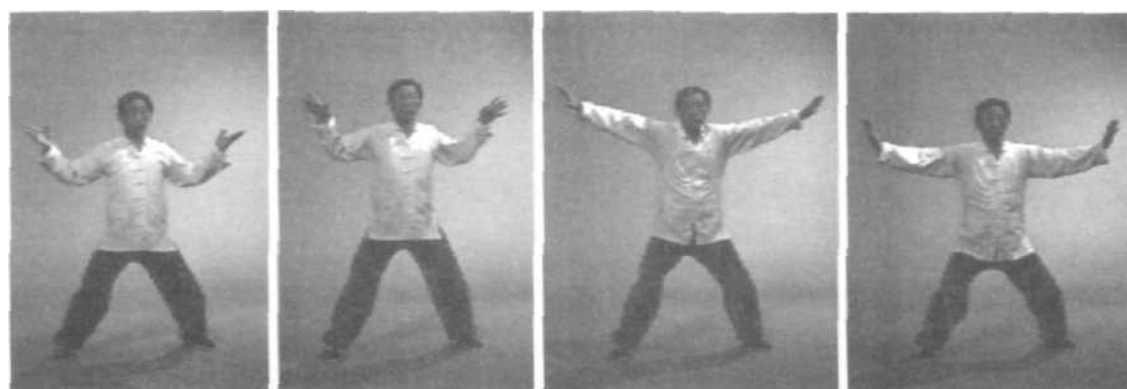
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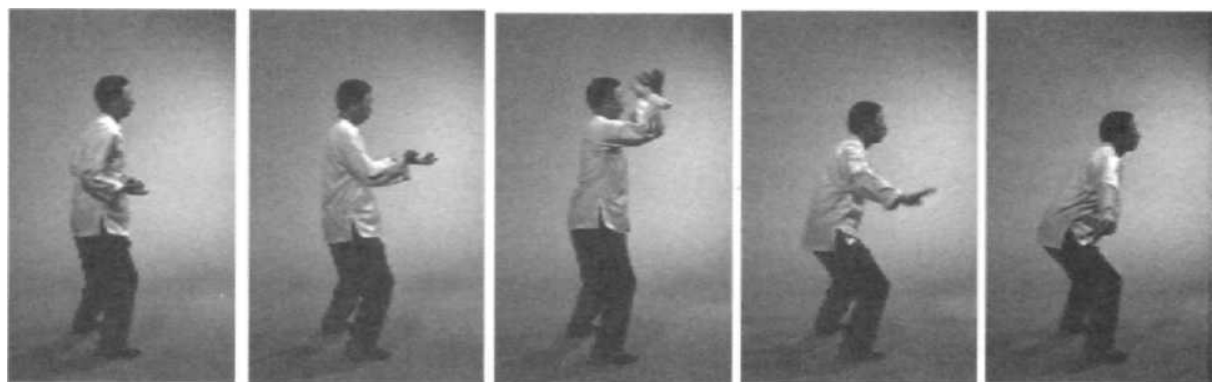
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Three Basins Settling to the Ground Palm (fast set - front view)



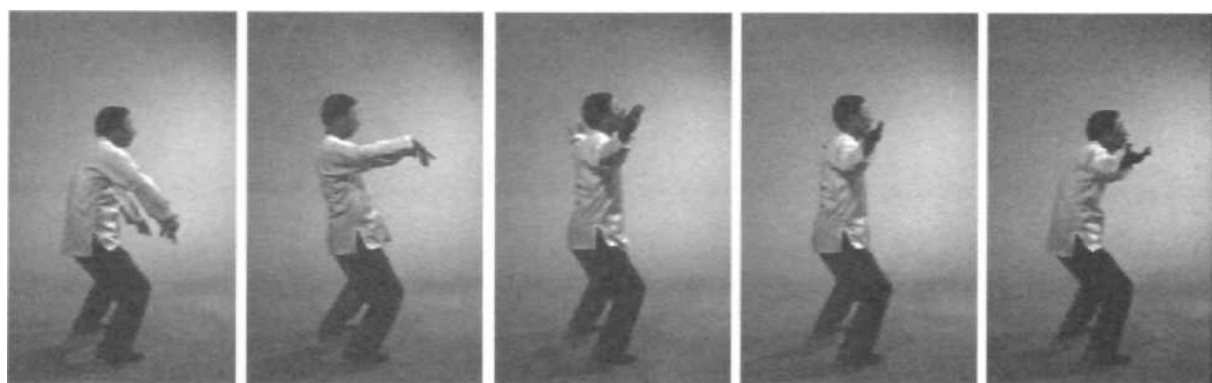
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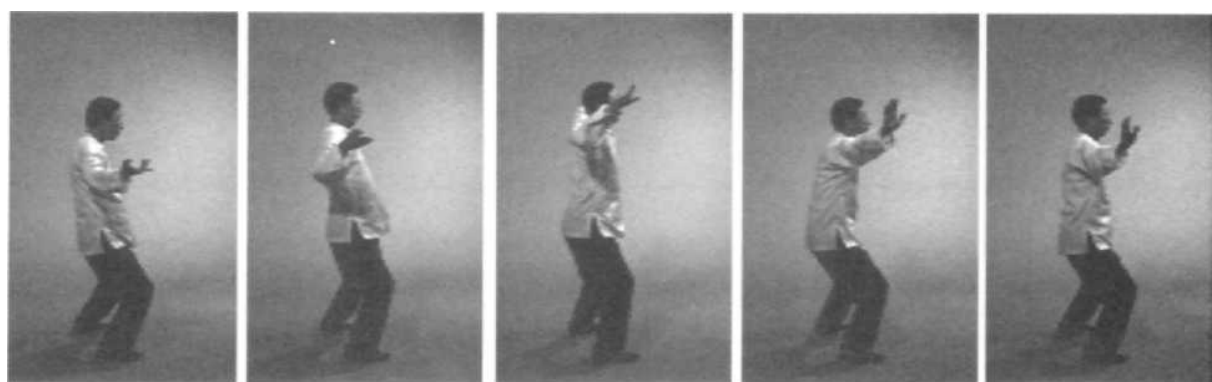
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Three Basins Settling to the Ground Palm (fast set - side view)



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Swallow Penetrates Through the Forest Application (con't)

student to learn how to combine the dragon back motion with the shaking palm mechanics of turning the hips and shoulders around the body's central axis. This one sided execution of this exercise is also the more practical in terms of application.

Application: The double palms version of this exercise is more an exercise used to develop certain body strengths and connections than an exercise which is tied to any particular martial application. However, the single palm version of this exercise has quite a number of practical uses.

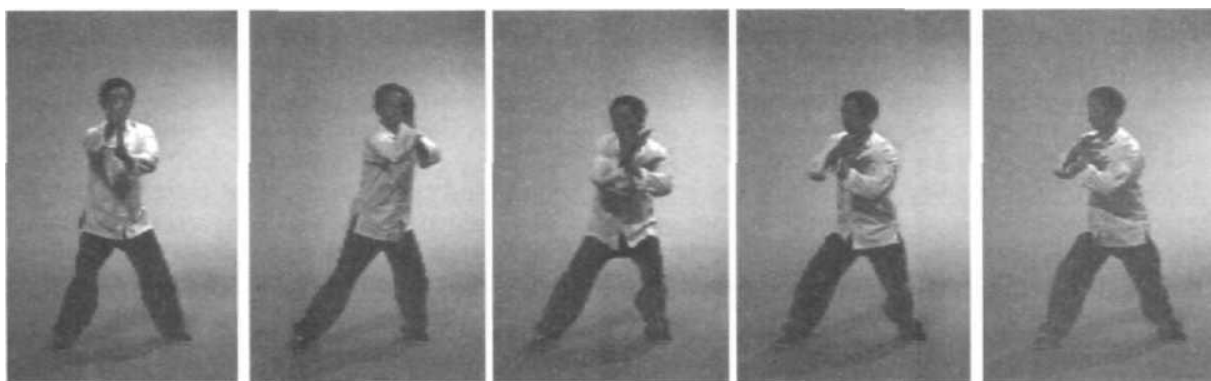
When executing the downward strike to the rear, this palm is applied exactly like the rearward striking palm of "chasing stars" palm. Similarly, the upward diagonal striking phase of this exercise is applied like the upward strike of the "chasing stars" palm. These two palms can be applied as a combination of either low/high or high/low. The third strike of this sequence can be used whenever the practitioner needs to strike directly to the side of his body.

Embracing the Moon at the Chest Palm

Introduction: This is another strike which trains the use of the dragon back mechanics. This strike is a double handed strike where one hand is used to support the other almost like a Tai Chi "press." This exercise teaches the student how to use the dragon back mechanics of the spine with a "store and release" technique of the arms. The motion of the back and the arms in combination with a supple wrist action provides a great deal of power with relatively little motion, thus making this a very good "inside" fighting technique.

Performance of the Exercise:

- 1) Bring the right hand up in front of the face and the left hand up under the right elbow. See photo 1.
- 2) Begin to curve the right hand inward (palm facing towards you) as you bring the left hand up along the right forearm with the left palm facing the right forearm. See photo 2.
- 3) Turn the body 45 degrees to the right as you bring the left palm up to press against the right palm. At this point the elbows are bent and the arms relaxed. See photo 3.
- 4) Execute the dragon back technique with the spine. As the power comes up the back allow it to whip out the arms. The arms press outward and



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Embracing the Moon at the Chest Palm (fast set)

at the last moment the right wrist snaps forward as the left hand supports it from behind. See photo 5.

The motion of this exercise is almost as if you are squeezing a big rubber ball between your arms and chest and trying to press it inwards into a elongated sphere against its wanting to spring back out into a round shape. As the dragon back whips out the arms, you visualize that you cannot hold the force of the ball back any longer and the ball springs back to its original round shape.

There are a couple of slight variations to this palm exercise. The first is to press the left palm against the right forearm when executing the strike. Instead of flexing the wrist to get power, the forearm rotates crisply as the strike is applied. This type of movement is applied against the opponent's joints. Another variation is to have both palms facing outward away from the body. This variation is usually practiced and executed in combination with the first exercise. In other words, the practitioner will strike with the back of the wrist and then immediately turn the forward palm over and strike with the palm while the rear palm remains in support.

Application: This palm strike is usually applied to the areas of the floating ribs, liver, spleen, or kidneys. The strike provides a sharp shocking effect to these vital areas of the body. Additionally, this strike may be applied from a very low posture to the opponent's hip joints while the forward foot is hooked around the opponent's front foot in order to offset the opponent's balance. The one two combination described above where the first strike is applied by the wrist and the second strike with the palm in quick succession is also quite useful. Usually the first strike is applied to the opponent's floating rib and the second strike applied to the liver or spleen areas.

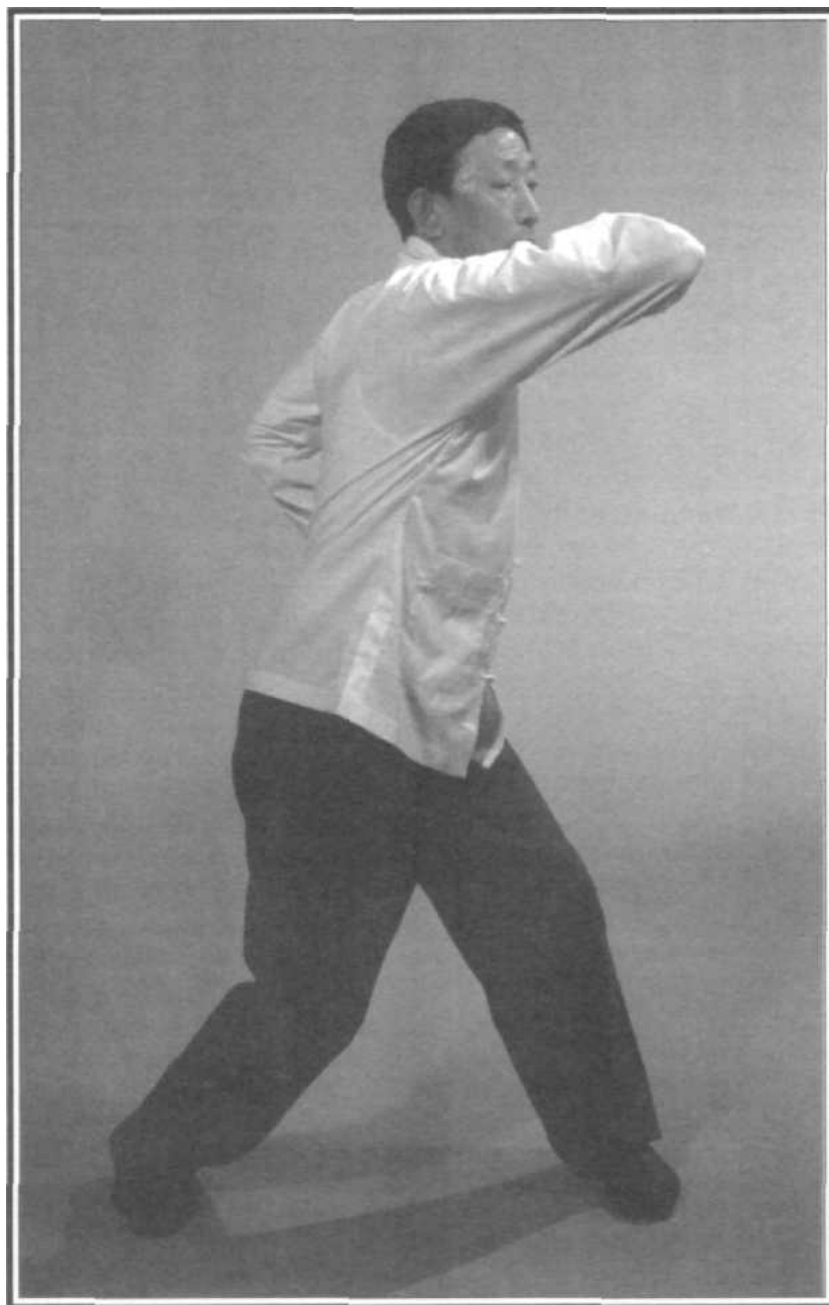
body properly, learn efficient body mechanics, and train various secondary muscles groups in the area of the torso and back so that all of the body's muscles work together in an integrated fashion. In practicing thousands of repetitions of the shaking palm, dragon back, forty eight month palms, and the supplemental palms the student will be able to naturally develop all of the necessary components of subtle striking power. Not only do these exercise teach the student how to strike in all directions in a variety of different ways, but in practicing the entire set, the student's body is conditioned fully.

After the student has practiced all of the palm exercises as they are outlined in the two volumes of this book, he or she should then begin to practice the same exercises, yet decrease the amount of movement. In other words, make the movements more subtle by not drawing the hands back so far between repetitions. When working to develop this "short" power, the suppleness of the joints and the flicking or snapping of the wrist becomes very important. As mentioned previously, the joint articulation not only helps to optimize the mechanics of the motion, it also increases the flow of energy to the palms.

After you have put in a sufficient amount of time in the practice of these exercises, you should then begin to incorporate these movements in with the single palm change variations which are presented in Chapter 4.

Chapter 6

Pa Kua Chang Elbow Training



Chapter 6

Pa Kua Chang Elbow Training

The Pa Kua Chang practitioner is an expert in the use of the elbows. Elbows are used in all aspects of offensive and defensive action. They are used for striking, locking, trapping, sticking, redirecting, and "listening." In this sense, the "elbow" does not just include the pointy protuberance of bone at the junction of the radius, ulna, and humerus. Here the "elbow" will also include parts of the forearm and upper arm. When using the elbows in striking, the Pa Kua practitioner will target many areas of the opponent's body.

The main target areas used when applying the elbows are the vital points and areas around the opponent's joints. Elbows can be effectively applied to the opponent's wrists, the back of his hands, his elbows, shoulders, hips, knees, ankles, and head. Of course, the opponent's torso, front and back, especially the areas of the spine and sternum, are also nice targets for the elbow. Elbow strikes are effectively used in combination with palms strikes, punches, and other elbow strikes. The manner in which the elbows are used in fighting will always depend on the distance the practitioner is from the opponent, and the angles of efficient application.

In Park's school the use of the elbows is trained in several progressive stages. First the student will learn several basic elbow blocking, or clearing, maneuvers which are practiced as static exercises. These drills teach the student how to effectively use the forearms in blocking, adhering, and redirecting. In these exercises emphasis is placed on the use of forearm rotation and the proper

timing of that rotation. As in all exercises, the student will first practice slow and exact, then gradually increases the speed, then adds power, then combines speed and power, and then executes the strikes in combination with footwork.

After the student learns the basic blocking exercises, he or she will then combine these exercises with the "shaking" palm exercise which was presented in the first volume of this book. There are various combinations of basic blocks used in conjunction with the shaking palm that the student will learn and then practice. Again, the practice is first executed slow and exact, then with speed, then with power, then with power and speed, and then with footwork. These simple combinations introduce the student to the first level of "speed combination" exercises.

Next the student will learn and practice a set of eight different elbow and palm striking combinations. Some of the exercises in this set are a combination of various elbow striking patterns while others combine elbow strikes with palm strikes. Each of the eight exercises combines anywhere from two to four strikes and/or blocking maneuvers. Once the student has practiced these exercises, he or she will then learn to be taught a linear set which utilizes the elbows, and then an eight section circle walking form which integrates the elbow striking exercises. Here the student learns how to incorporate the use of the elbows with the continuous circular patterns and twisting, rotating, and turning motions of Pa Kua Chang.

Another stage of training the student in Park's

school will enter after he or she has completed the basic elbow set, the eight elbow combination set, the forty eight month palms, and the supplemental palms is the practice of "speed combinations." When students begin this training, Park will assign each student a two, three, or four combination sequence of palms, fists, and/or elbows to practice. Each student is given his or her own sequence "by prescription." Park assigns the sequence based on the techniques and combinations which best suit each individual student's size, build, character, temperament, and ability.

Along with the first speed combination, the student is assigned "homework." This homework consists of practicing the combination hundreds of times until it becomes second nature, and exploring all of its possibilities. Say the student was given a one-two combination with the left followed by a one-two combination with the right. The student would practice that combination until he or she could perform it smoothly, rapidly, and with power. Then the student would begin exploring variations of that combination based on different attack/defense,

left/right, short range/long range, high/low, inside/outside variables (as explained on pages 41 through 43 of the first volume of this book).

After the student studies and researches the speed combinations as static drills, he or she will then combine the combinations with various footwork methods and then research how these sequences might best be applied. Park will then check the student's progress in applying these combinations and based on that progress, the student will be assigned a new set of combinations.

In this chapter we will present some of the basic elbow blocking combinations, explain how the basic elbow strikes can be combined with the shaking palm, and then present each of the eight elbow exercises. Used in combination with the palm exercises which were presented in the last chapter, the circle walking footwork which was presented in Chapter 3, and the Single Palm change maneuvers presented in Chapter 4, the student will have a very extensive arsenal of offensive and defensive movements to study and combine in various ways.

The Basic Elbow Exercises

The basic elbow exercises of Park's system are designed to teach the student how to begin to learn simple high/low, left/right blocking patterns using the forearms and then combine those patterns with the shaking palm strike. These exercises introduce the importance of using a rotational motion of the arm around the arm's central axis in deflecting an opponent's strike, adhering to their force, and redirecting that force. In all of these exercises, the power is provided by the turning of the body around its central axis (as in the shaking palm exercise), and the "skill" of the movement is in the rotation of the forearms in redirecting the opponent's force.

If the practitioner blocks an opponent's strike with his or her forearms and times the rotational motion of the forearm properly so that the opponent's force is intercepted and redirected by

this rotational energy, the block will be effective without being percussive or invasive. Additionally, the practitioner will be able to "stick" to the opponent's arm and redirect the force without the use of muscular strength. The skill is in the timing of the motion and the angle of the redirecting force.

At the very beginning level, there are two basic exercises which are practiced and then several variations are added. The two basic blocking exercises are designed to teach the student to be able to block strikes coming in towards the face and chest from high and low, left and right, and from various diagonals. These exercises are very simple, but they will form the foundation for more subtle and precise movements and applications which are taught in the later stages of training. In practicing these simple blocking

motions the student focuses on the timing of the body rotation with the rotation of the forearms and changing of the palms.

Exercise 1:

This exercise is designed to teach the student how to block with the forearm in a simple horizontal, inside and outside, blocking pattern. One important detail in regards to alignment; when you are executing any of these blocking motions, keep the forearm angled no less than 135 degrees from the upper arm. If the angle decreases, you will lose your naturally aligned strength. You can easily test this. Extend your arm out so that the upper arm is parallel to the ground and the forearm is angled between 135 and 165 degrees from the upper arm. Have a partner push on your hand. Feel the strength and connection. Now bring your forearm up to a 90 degree angle from your upper arm (elbow bent at a 90 degree angle). Have your partner push your hand toward your face. You will find that in order to resist, you have to use muscle force, whereas before you could use naturally aligned strength. You always want to maintain that naturally aligned strength throughout these exercises.

The exercise is as follows:

- 1) Begin in the "horse riding" stance as shown in photo 1-1 below.
- 2) Bring the right hand up in front of the face and

the left hand under the right elbow as shown in photo 1-2 below.

- 3) Turn the body to the left around its central axis (hips and shoulders moving together). As the body moves, the forearm rotates and the palm changes to face the body. The elbow, forearm, and hand remain aligned along the center of the body. The bottom palm also rotates to turn upward. See photo 1-3.

- 4) Turn the body back to the right keeping the hips and shoulders aligned. As the body turns, the forearm rotates once again and the palm changes to face away from the body. The hand remains in front of the face. See photo 1-4.

From this position you can continue this identical motion back and forth in continuous repetitions with the right hand, or you can alternate the hands after each repetition. That is, you can block with the right hand to the inside, then right hand to the outside, followed by a block with the left hand to the inside and the left hand to the outside. It is best to start out practicing continuous repetitions on one side at a time, until you get the timing and motion feeling natural, before you try to practice the alternating sides variation of this exercise.

Once you have practiced this exercise sufficiently in a slow and exact manner, you will then gradually increase the speed while trying to remain relaxed and smooth, you will then try to execute the movement "with power." The power



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1-2



1-3



1-4

Basic Blocking Exercise # 1



2-1



2-2



2-3



2-4

Basic Blocking Exercise #2



V1-1



V1-2



V1-3



V1-4

Basic Blocking Exercise #2

here is in a quick crisp rotation of the hips and shoulder around the body's central axis, combined with a quick and crisp rotation of the forearm. Do not try and place too much of the "power" in the side-to-side motion. The emphasis and "snap" of power is in the rotational motion of the forearm. Also, do not let the arm move too far to the outside when blocking. The side-to-side motions should be relatively small.

Exercise 2:

The second exercise is performed exactly like the first, except the blocking motions are now

along a diagonal instead of horizontal. If you look at the photographs for exercise #1, you will notice that Park's elbow moves along a horizontal plane (parallel to the ground) while his forearm remains vertical (perpendicular to the ground). In the second exercise the forearm is angled (see photo 2-3 on the top of the page) and the motion follows a 45 degree diagonal as the right forearm first blocks down and to the left (photo 2-3) and then up and to the right (photo 2-4). This exercise is usually only practiced on one side at a time. The two sided (alternating sides) version of this exercise is practiced in conjunction with the shaking palm



V2-1



V2-2



V2-3

Basic Blocking Exercise #2

strike (see photos on page 156).

Variation #1:

The first variation of the basic exercises is an exercise which combines the horizontal block of the first exercise with the angular block of the second exercise. In this blocking variation, the student will first block inward, however, the hand remains in place while the elbow moves in and across the body. This motion requires an increased degree of flexibility in the area of the shoulder, elbow, and forearm (see photo VI -3 on the previous page).

After the inside block is executed, you execute the same upward outside block which was executed in the last exercise (see photo VI-4). Ideally, you will want to keep the tip of your middle finger fixed in space as you block back and forth across the body. In keeping the tip of the middle finger fixed in space and directly in front of your face, you will always be covered, and you will learn how to effectively block with your forearms and elbows while executing very small lateral motions.

Variation #2:

The next exercise is a variation of the first blocking drill. In this variation you will only execute the inside blocking portion of the first exercise. In other words, you will bring the right hand up (see photo V2-2) and across to the front in the execution of an inside blocking motion (see

photo V2-3) and then bring the left hand up and across the front in the same manner. You will continue this right-left alternating pattern in a crisp and rapid manner. This exercise helps you to learn how to gain speed in motion while maintaining proper mechanics and accuracy.

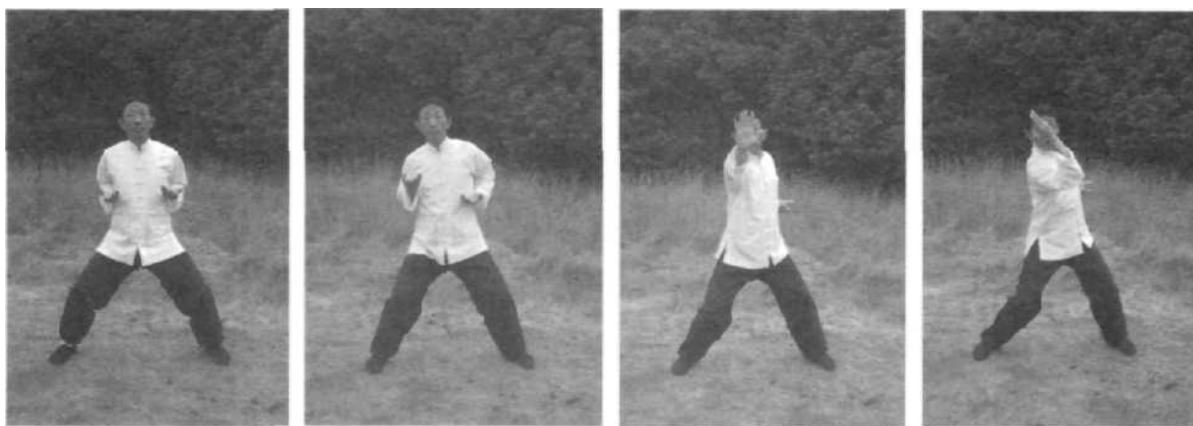
While all of these blocking drills might seem relatively simple, practicing these exercises will form a foundation for all of the exercises which follow. Therefore, a serious study of these simple exercises will be to the student's advantage later on.

Basic Blocking Combined with Shaking Palm

Once the student has spent some time practicing the basic blocking drills, these movements are combined with the shaking palm exercise which was presented in the first volume of this book.

Exercise #1:

In this exercise, the shaking palm is combined with the inward elbow block of the basic blocking variation # 1. As always, the student first practices this motion slow and exact. The sequence is shown in the photographs at the top of the next page. In photos 1 through 3, Park is shown executing the shaking palm movement as it was detailed in the previous volume of this book. After the strike of the shaking palm reaches its peak



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Basic Blocking Combined with Shaking Palm #1

power, you will want to let the inward elbow blocking motion naturally follow the recoil of the arm (see photo 4 at the top of the page). The movement from start to finish should look as though it is one continuous motion. As soon as the wrist has "snapped" and the whipping power of the shaking palm has been applied, you will immediately and crisply rotate your forearm so that the palm turns to face upward and you will bring your elbow in towards your centerline.

Once you have completed the exercise on one side (as shown above) you will then execute the same sequence with the other hand. The practice of this exercise is very fluid as the practitioner alternates throwing the shaking palm from one side to the next. This exercise provides a good foundation for the two handed exercise which follows and for elbow exercise #8.

Exercise #2:

In this exercise, the student will take the movements which were practiced in the previous exercise and involve both hands in the blocking and striking maneuvers. This exercise combines several of the previous blocking exercises with the shaking palm exercise.

The exercise is executed as follows:

1) From the horse stance, you will bring the hands out in front of the body. The right hand is in front of the face and the left hand is under the right

elbow (see photos 1 and 2 on the next page).

2) The right arm moves across the front of the body to block. This movement is executed like the horizontal block which was practiced in the first basic blocking exercise. The forearm rotates and the palm turns toward your face. The hips and shoulders rotate around the body's center and move to the left. The left hand stays by the right elbow. Both palms are facing upward (see photo 3).

3) You will now throw the shaking palm with the left hand while blocking high and at a diagonal with the right hand. The right hand block is thrown like the block you practiced in the second basic blocking exercise (see photo 4).

4) As soon as the left palm is thrown, the forearm rotates crisply and the elbow is brought in towards the centerline of the body. This movement is exactly like the movement practiced in the last exercise. The right hand comes down by the left elbow. Both palms are facing upward (see photos 5 and 6).

5) Now you are ready to throw the strike on the other side. Throw a right shaking palm while blocking upward and at a diagonal with the left hand (see photos 7 and 8).

The exercise is now repeated from side-to-side. You should practice until you can execute this exercise with continuity, speed, and power. You will notice that this exercise combines the movements of several of the previous exercises.



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Basic Blocking Combined with Shaking Palm #2

Experience has shown that students who have not practiced the previous exercises for a sufficient length of time will have problems learning how to execute this exercise properly. Practice of this particular exercise will then lead the student into the practice of Park's straight line Pa Kua Chang combat sets.

We will not present the straight line combat sets in this book. However, if you have practiced the "eight direction rooted stepping" footwork and combined it with the shaking palm as we presented in the previous volume of this book, you should be able to easily express this blocking and shaking palm movement in combination with the jump step. The majority of Park's straight line combat sets are simple exercises which combine the palm, elbow, kicking, and footwork exercises which have all been presented in this

book.

After you have gained a sufficient amount of experience in the practice of these blocking elbows, you may want to try a partner exercise which helps you to understand how these blocks are used in combination with the eight direction rooted stepping footwork. The drill is to place one arm behind your back and have a partner attack you. He can attack high and low, left and right, continuously and you have to defend all of his attacks using only one arm in combinations with footwork. If you know how to use your footwork in combination with the blocking exercises shown in this section, you can be successful in blocking all of your opponent's attacks. The key is in the footwork.

The Eight Elbow Combinations Drills

Now that you have gained a basic foundation in the use of the elbows in blocking, we will move to the use of the elbows in striking. This elbow set is designed to teach the student how to use power in striking with the elbows in various directions and to begin to learn how to combine elbow strikes with palm strikes, fist strikes, and elbow blocks. While practicing these exercises (first slowly, then with increased speed, then with power, then with speed and power, then with footwork) you will notice that, although the elbow striking mechanics are the same as executed in the various forty-eight month palms, there will be a slight difference in the movement and connections of the torso. This is because the power is ending at the elbow and not moving all the way out to the hand. Therefore your "chain of motion" is shorter and more compact.

The elbow exercises will also increase the flexibility in the area your latissimus dorsi muscles and the mid-back region. If this area is tight on your body, do not practice the elbow exercises with power until you have loosened this area. Practice of the chopping palm exercise which was presented in the last chapter, and the "basic eight" *ch'i kung* numbers 4 through 6, will help to loosen this area of your back and prepare you for practicing the elbow exercises.

Because the power of an elbow strike cannot rely on an articulation of the elbow and wrist, as a palm strike can, your shoulder will have to be very loose in order for the power to be full. Therefore, when throwing elbow strikes, always remember to keep your shoulders relaxed. Tension in the shoulders will severely limit the amount of power you will be able to generate in the elbow strike.

One other important point to keep in mind when practicing all of the elbow exercises is that you do not want to "wind up" in order to produce power. When you are throwing combinations, the "wind up" wastes valuable time. Rely on the power from your legs and torso to express itself crisply and sharply in the throwing of the elbow.

We will now present the Eight Elbow Combination exercises:

Elbow Exercise 1:

This first exercise is designed to teach the student how to execute an upward striking elbow followed by a horizontal elbow strike. The power in the legs and torso for the upward strike is similar to that of the "lifting palm" described in the last chapter. However, because of the way the elbow is bent, a greater degree of flexibility in the area of the ribs and back is required to perform the elbow strike. In executing the horizontal strike, mechanics similar to that of the "cutting palm" are utilized. The exercise is performed as follows:

- 1) Begin in a horse stance with the hands held beside the ribs, palms facing upward, as shown in photo 1-1.
- 2) Bring the right elbow straight upward. In executing this movement the hips and shoulders are slightly turned to the left. The right side of the torso is expanded (expand the ribs) as the left side is sunken downward (ribs compress). The right hand forms a fist with the pinky side of the fist facing upward. See photo 1-2.
- 3) From the exact position shown in photo 1-2, twist the hips and shoulders to the left as the fist rotates inward so that the pinky side of the fist is facing towards the left. Throw the right elbow horizontally across the body to the left. It is very important that you do not "wind up" when executing this second elbow strike. The tendency for beginners is to pull the elbow to the right before throwing it across the body to the left. This little wind up wastes time. You should go straight up with the first elbow and then immediately go straight across the body. See photos 1-3 and 1-4.
- 4) Now twist the hips and shoulders back to the right and throw the upwards striking elbow with the left elbow, then continue the exercise on the left side as shown in photos 1-5 through 1-7.

In application, the upwards striking elbow can be used as a strike just under the opponent's



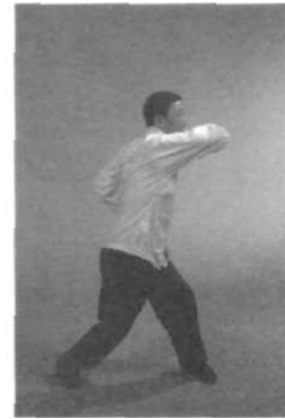
1-1



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sternum. In joint locking and breaking applications it can be used to lock or break the opponent's elbow. The horizontal strike has many various applications. It can follow the upward sternum strike by striking the chest, shoulder, or sternum a second time. It can be used in striking the opponent's shoulder to the inside or outside. It can also be used to lock or break the opponent's elbow. This elbow can also strike the areas of the opponent's head and face.

As stated above, the combination of these two elbows can be used if you get inside your opponent's defenses and can execute the upward strike to the area just under the opponent's sternum as you jump step in through the opponent's center. With this strike the opponent will be

thrown backwards as your strike lands in this vulnerable area and your body moves through his center. As his body moves backwards, you execute another jump step and throw the horizontal elbow to his sternum or just inside the shoulder at the point where the shoulder meets the chest.

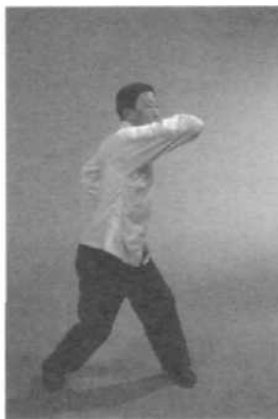
Another useful application of this elbow combination occurs when you use the upward moving elbow to block inside an opponent's punch. You slip the punch and deflect the punch by bringing the elbow up inside the opponent's punching arm. Your arm will serve to deflect the opponent and guard your face and head at the same time. Once you have slipped inside the opponent's punch with the upward moving elbow, you can then throw the horizontal elbow to the



2-1



2- 2



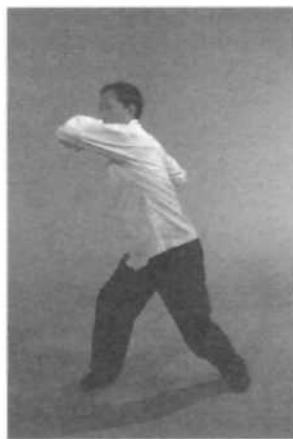
2- 3



2-4



2-5



2- 6



2-7

opponent's head.

When practicing this exercise with stepping movements, you can practice executing the jump step with the first elbow and then another jump step with the second elbow, or you can execute a jump step with the first elbow and then a pivot step with the second elbow.

Elbow Exercise 2:

The second elbow exercise builds on the first exercise by adding a downward striking elbow to the one-two combination of the first exercise. This exercise is performed as follows:

1) Execute the same steps as the previous exercise

as shown in photos 2-1 through 2-3.

2) Following the horizontal elbow strike, you will immediately rotate the hips and shoulders back to the right and use that momentum to throw a downward striking elbow. The mechanics of this elbow in the area of the torso are similar to that of the slapping palm. As the elbow is thrown, the fist rotates so that the back of the fist is facing away from you. The bend in the elbow is no less than 135 degrees. A common mistake is to have the elbow be bent at a 90 degree angle when throwing this downward strike.

3) After executing the one-two-three combination on the right side, continue the exercise by executing the sequence on the left.

In application, the third elbow is used to strike



3-1



3- 2



3- 3



3-4



3-5



3- 6



3-7



3-8



3-9

vital areas on the opponent's legs and arms when he kicks or punches. In many instances, when Park is applying this elbow to an opponent's ankle or wrist, he will catch the opponent's ankle or wrist with his other hand moving upward under the ankle or wrist in order to produce a "sandwiching" effect.

This third elbow strike can also be a nice follow-up to the combination discussed previously where the first upward moving elbow slips inside an opponent's attack and the second horizontal elbow strikes his head. After the second elbow has connected with the opponent's head, the third strike can come down and smash the opponent's collar bone.

Elbow Strike 3:

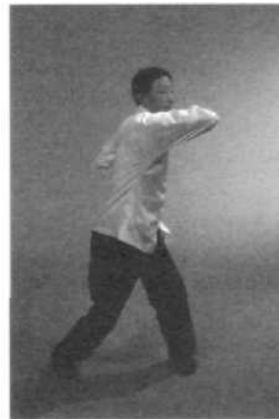
The third elbow combination of this series is similar to the first. However, instead of throwing the upward elbow followed by the horizontal elbow, this exercise will begin the sequence with the horizontal elbow



4-1



4-2



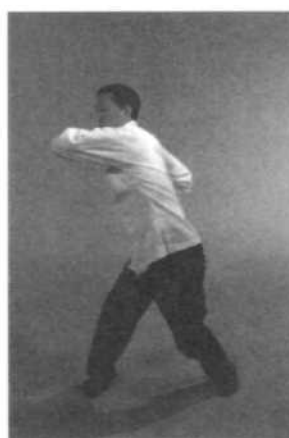
4-3



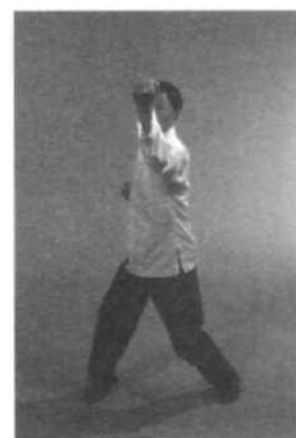
4-4



4-5



4-6



4-7

After the horizontal elbow is thrown, the downward striking elbow is executed as in the last exercise. In this exercise, as a tag to the end of the downward elbow strike, you will spear forward with the fingers in an upwardly spearing strike, then curl the fingers and pull back in towards your body. These last few moves are executed as if you are spearing the opponent in the throat and then curling your fingers to hook under the opponent's jaw bone and pull him towards you. The exercise is executed as follows:

- 1) Begin in the horse stance with the hands beside the ribs and the palms facing upwards as shown in photo 3-1.
- 2) Turn the hips and shoulders around the body's centerline and bring the right elbow up and across the body in an arcing motion (as opposed to the

right angle of the upward and horizontal strikes of the previous two exercises). See photo 3-2.

- 3) Now execute the downward elbow strike as it was performed in the last exercise. See photo 3-3.

- 4) Immediately after executing the downward elbow strike, straighten the fingers and spear the hand strike forward at an upward angle of about 45 degrees. The power here is similar to that of the lifting palm which was presented in the last chapter of this book. See photo 3-4.

- 5) Immediately after the spearing motion has occurred, curl the fingers as you pull the arm back down towards the body, ending with the elbow pointed downward and the arm bent at a 135 degree angle. See photo 3-5.

- 6) Repeat the sequence on the other side. See photos 3-6 through 3-9.

In order to train your body to perform efficient and effective combinations, you should work to make the execution of either a spearing strike with the fingers, an upward lifting palm strike, or an uppercutting fist strike, a natural follow-up to the downward striking elbow. The execution of a shaking palm would also work well in combination with the downward striking elbow.

Exercise 4:

Exercise number four begins with a vertical elbow strike followed by a horizontal elbow strike, just as in exercises one and two. After the horizontal strike is thrown, you will immediately throw a backfist. The exercise is performed as follows: 1) Start from the horse stance. Throw the upward elbow and then follow that by the horizontal striking elbow just as you did in exercises one and two. See photos 4-1 through 4-3. 2) Immediately following the horizontal strike, turn the hips and shoulders back towards the front and execute a forward striking backfist. When throwing the backfist, allow the whipping of the body to cause the forearm to whip around as if your forearm is a rope and your fist is a rock on the end of that rope. As your forearm whips forward, allow the wrist to be very loose and "snap" at the very end of the forearm's arcing motion. Strike with the first two knuckles of the hand. By striking with the first two knuckles in a crisp snapping motion (using the "wrist power" which was discussed in the last chapter) you will be able to strike very accurately to the opponent's vital points.

The horizontal elbow followed immediately by a backfist is a common technique in Park's Pa Kua. As we discussed in the "Distance and Degree" section of Chapter 2 of this book, the backfist will hit the opponent up the chain of his joints. In other words, if the elbow hits the wrist or ankle, the backfist will hit the knee or elbow, if the elbow hits the elbow or knee, the backfist will hit the shoulder or hip, if the elbow hits the shoulder, sternum, or hip, the backfist will hit the body or head. Throwing the backfist after a horizontal or diagonal elbow strike should become a habit.

During the execution of the first four elbow exercises, you have learned an upward striking

elbow, a horizontal striking elbow, and a downward striking elbow. You have learned how to practice these elbows in combination with one another and you have learned how to add a spearing strike and a backfist to these combinations. Learning the spearing strike, which could have also been a lifting palm or uppercutting fist, as a follow-up to the downward striking elbow, and the backfist as a follow-up to the horizontal striking elbow, teaches you how to begin to build efficient follow-up combinations to these common elbow applications. All of these combinations should now be practiced with footwork.

The next four elbow striking sets will start to combine various elbow strikes with palm strikes. You will also learn how to use your elbows in four new ways. In exercise five you will learn how to strike with the elbow towards the rear. This kind of application is most commonly used as a blocking motion to protect your ribs when your opponent is attempting to strike or kick you there. However, at very close quarters, it can also be applied as a strike to the opponent's body. This rearward striking elbow follows the horizontal elbow which you learned in exercise number three. This horizontal striking elbow tends to open up the area of the ribs on the striking side and thus in elbow number five, you will learn how to immediately protect that area after you have opened it up in the execution of a horizontal striking elbow.

In exercise six, you will learn how to employ the elbow in striking downward at a diagonal and you will learn how to follow this strike naturally with a horizontal strike with the elbow to the outside of your body. The first horizontal strike you learned was across the body and the forearm led the strike. The horizontal strike in exercise six will be a horizontal strike to the outside with the upper arm leading. The horizontal elbow strike in exercise six is followed by the "white clouds chasing the stars" palm.

In exercise number seven you will learn how to employ the elbow to the upward moving diagonal. This upward diagonal elbow is preceded by the shaking palm blocking combination which was presented in the first section of this chapter and it is followed by a chopping strike with the hand.



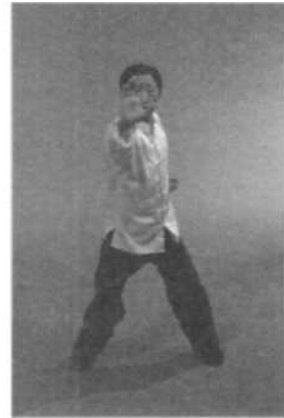
5-1



5-2



5-3



5-4



5-5



5-6



5-7

The upward moving diagonal elbow is mostly used as a blocking motion against an opponent's axe kick or downward chopping strike. It is also an outstanding defense against a head-butt. Exercise eight takes elements that have already been practiced and puts them together in a speed sequence to help the practitioner work on fast and efficient motion.

As you can see, in executing the set of eight elbow exercises, the student learns how to employ the elbow in nine directions (up, down, left, right, diagonally up to the left and right, diagonally down to the left and right, and to the rear). He or she also learns how these elbows can be efficiently combined with each other and with various finger, palm, and fist strikes. We will now continue with the exercises.

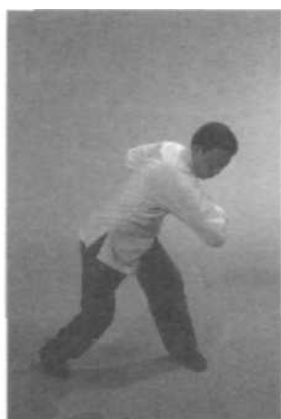
Exercise 5:

Elbow exercise five combines the shaking palm strike with the horizontal striking elbow you practiced in exercise three and a rearward striking elbow. The exercise is executed as follows:

- 1) Begin in the horse stance and then execute The horizontal striking elbow which you learned in exercise number three as shown in photos 5-1 and 5-2.
- 2) As you can see in photo 5-2, the horizontal elbow will open up your ribs on the side of the striking elbow and leave them susceptible to a strike there if your elbow strike does not hit its mark. In order to cover yourself, this exercise teaches you to cover your ribs with a rearward moving elbow. As the elbow is brought back, the



6-1



6-2



6-3



6-4



6-5



6-6



6-7



6-8

hips and shoulders are turned around the body's center. See photo 5-3.

3) After the rearward moving elbow is thrown, you will then execute a shaking palm strike to the front. The shaking palm was presented in the previous volume of this book. See photo 5-4.

4) After you have thrown the shaking palm, you will then execute the same sequence on the other side. See photos 5-5 through 5-7.

Exercise 6:

In exercise six you will learn how to throw an elbow strike in a downward diagonal direction. This strike is then followed by a horizontally moving elbow to the outside of the body. The downward diagonal striking elbow is a very good strike to use on the opponent's hand if he has

grabbed your wrist. It can also be used as an elbow lock or break, as a strike to the opponent's foot or knee if he kicks you, as a strike to the opponent's hip joint, or as a strike to the opponent's shoulder joint. If striking to the back of the opponent's shoulder joint on the downward diagonal, the horizontal elbow strike which follows in this exercise is a very good follow-up when aimed at the opponent's head or spine. If the diagonal strike is directed at the inside of the opponent's shoulder joint, the horizontal strike can then be aimed at the opponent's head or sternum. In this exercise the horizontal strike is then followed by the "white clouds chasing the stars" palm which was presented in the last chapter. The sixth exercise is executed as follows: 1) From the horse stance turn the hips and shoulders around the body's center and throw a



7-1



7-2



7-3



7-4



7-5



7-6



7-7



7-8



7-9

downwardly directed elbow which comes across the body and down at a 45 degree angle. See photos 6-1 and 6-2.

5) Turn the hips and shoulders back around the body's center in the other direction and throw the right elbow directly out to the right side. Your shoulder must remain very relaxed during the execution of this movement if you are going to develop the right kind of power in this strike. See photo 6-3.

6) Now unfold the right arm and turn the palm to face upward with the fingers facing forward (there is not a photo of this move on this side, see photo 6-7 for an illustration of this move on the other side). Bring the left hand forward and up and the right hand down and to the rear in the execution of the "white cloud chasing the stars" palm as presented in the last chapter of this book.

7) Now fold the left elbow and turn the hips and shoulder back to face the front as the elbow folds. Next twist the hips and shoulders to the right and throw a left elbow down at a diagonal. See photo 6-5. Continue with the sequence on this side as shown in photos 6-6 through 6-8.



8-1



8- 2



8- 3



8-4



8-5



8- 6



8- 7



8-8



8.9

Exercise 7:

Exercise seven begins with the execution of the first elbow block with the shaking palm which was presented in the first section of this book and then employs an upwardly diagonal blocking elbow followed by a chopping motion with the hand. This exercise is executed as follows:

- 1) From the horse stance, execute the shaking palm followed by the inward elbow block which was described in the first section of this chapter. See photos 7-1 through 7-3.
- 2) From the inward blocking elbow, keep the elbow bent and bring it upward at a 45 degree angle. Bring the left hand up to the right fist for support. This elbow is a blocking "wedge" which is used to block an axe kick, a downward chopping strike, or a head-butt. See photo 7-4.
- 3) Now follow the upward diagonal elbow block with a side hand chop with the right hand. See photo 7-5.
- 4) Continue by executing the exercise on the opposite side. See photos 7-6 through 7-9.

Exercise 8:

Exercise eight is a combination of elements you have practiced in the previous seven exercises. It is used primarily to teach a very fast and efficient palm-elbow combination. When this exercise is practiced, the student can learn how to generate a great deal of speed in striking. The speed trained in this exercise helps the student transition into the follow-on "speed combination" training. The exercise is executed as follows:

- 1) From the horse stance, execute the shaking palm followed by the inward elbow block as was practiced in exercise seven. See photos 8-1 through 8-3.
- 2) Now execute the rearward striking elbow which was practiced in exercise five. The flow from the inward blocking elbow of photo 8-3 to the rearward striking elbow of photo 8-4 should be continuous, smooth, and without hesitation. It should appear to be one fluid motion.
- 3) Now throw a horizontal cross-body elbow as was practiced in exercises three and five. See photo 8-5.
- 4) Continue the exercise on the other side. See photos 8-6 through 8-9.

Conclusion

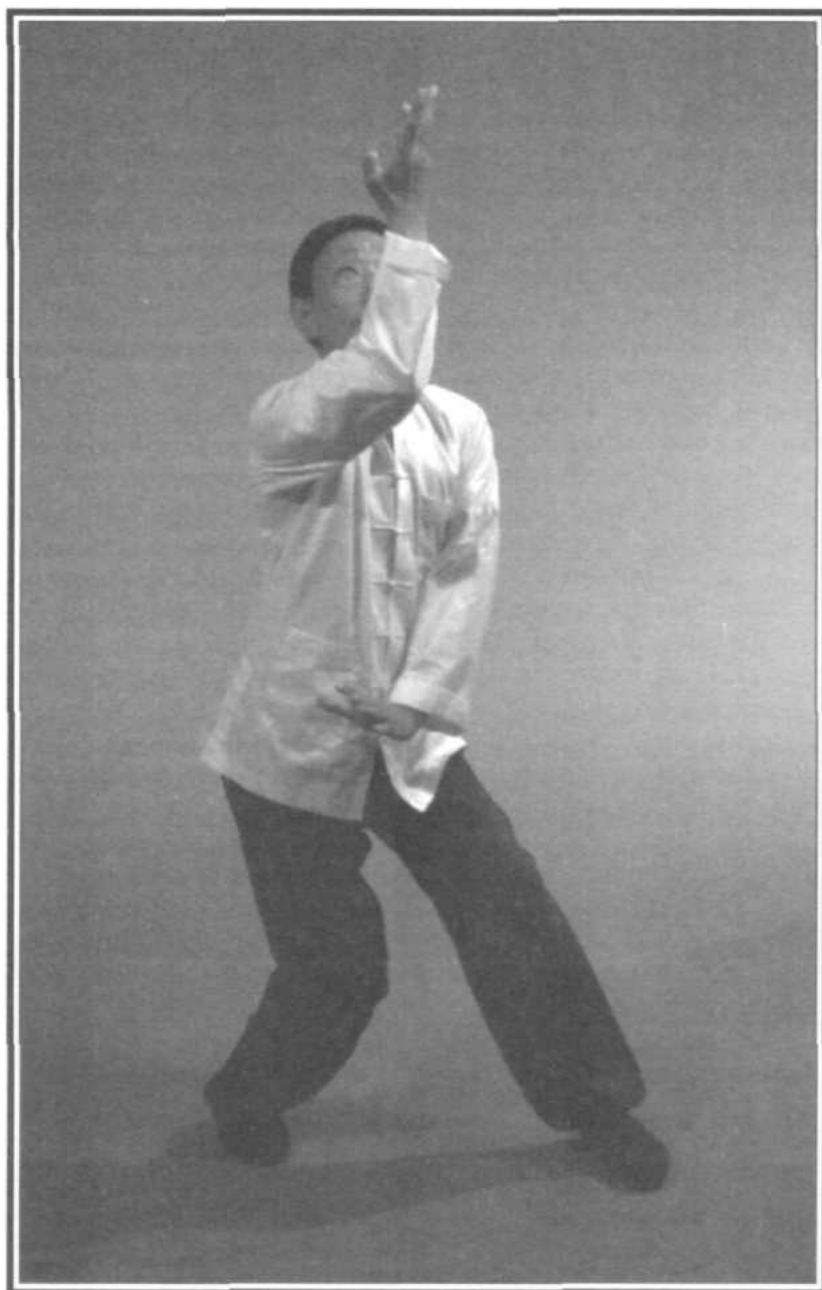
In practicing all of the basic elbow blocking drills and the eight elbow striking sets, the student in Park's school gains a fundamental knowledge of generating power in an elbow strike and using the elbow in fighting. Of course, as always, the sequence of training these elbow drills is to first practice them as outlined in this chapter slowly, then gradually add speed, then add power, then execute with speed and power, and then with the eight direction rooted stepping. After that sequence of training has been accomplished, the student then learns the eight elbows straight lines sets and circle walking set. After the student gains some experience utilizing these elbows in the circle walking format by practicing the eight elbows circle walking form, he or she then adds the elbow strikes into other circle walking sets in combinations with the forty eight month palms, supplemental palms, and the single and double

palm changes.

In researching the use of the elbow in fighting, the student will always remember the principles of "distance and degree." All elbow applications have a specific time and place to be employed for maximum efficiency and power. Examining the usage of the elbow strike to various parts of the opponent's body and in combination with the forty eight month palms, supplemental palms, single palm change, and circle walking, *k'ou pu* and *pai pu*, and eight direction rooted stepping footwork is a study which requires much research and exploration.

Chapter 7

Pa Kua Chang Ch'i Kung



Chapter 6

Pa Kua Chang Elbow Training

In the last volume of this book we presented a few of Park Bok Nam's ideas about *ch'i kung* and described some very basic breathing exercises, movement exercises, and meditations. In this volume we will not discuss the breathing methods further because, as we said in the last volume, Park likes to reserve the teaching of breathing methods to individual students because he believes that the breathing methods beyond those described in the first volume should be given by "prescription" only. In this volume we will work primarily with a *ch'i kung* exercise set which is designed to strengthen the internal organs, loosen the joints and muscles, and harmonize the body, breathe, and mind. We will also talk a bit more about meditation. Before we begin to talk about the actual exercises and techniques, we will have some discussion about *ch'i kung* in general.

What is *Ch'i Kung*?

Because almost every traditional medical, martial, religious, physical, and, in many cases, scholarly disciplines in China have a tradition of *ch'i kung* (氣功) practice, it is very difficult to strictly define the "hows and whys" of *ch'i kung* without putting it in the context of the discipline in which it is practiced. Each discipline, and each of the various schools within those disciplines, practice *ch'i kung* with different goals in mind and thus each has a different criteria and method for practice. There are literally hundreds of *ch'i kung* methods in China, each traditional method having its own fairly unique systematic approach

to practice. Additionally, terms such as *nei kung* (內功) and *nei tan* (內丹) are also used frequently to describe exercises and methods which some might also call *ch'i kung* and vice-versa. Thus *ch'i kung* methods can really only be defined within the discipline they are to be practiced and in the context of each individual's personal practice.

While most martial arts schools will have their own definitions for terms such as *ch'i kung* and *nei kung* and will probably have separate training methods which they place under these categories of practice, each school's definition tends to be slightly different. While some schools might call one thing *ch'i kung*, another school might call that same thing *nei kung*. Also, some schools will call all of their internal practices *ch'i kung* while others will call all of their internal practices *nei kung*.

Some people will say that "traditionally" all internal practices were called *nei kung* and that *ch'i kung* is a fairly modern term. However, there are others who will say the exact opposite. In this chapter we will not argue semantics, nor will we provide our own view about how the terms *ch'i kung* and *nei kung* are defined or how their methods might differ. For the purpose of this book, it will suffice to say that, in most cases, the practices which are grouped under these terms are so similar that the terms can be used synonymously. In this book, we will group all "internal" practices involving the coordination of breath, mind, and body under the "umbrella" of the term *ch'i kung*.

"Kung" literally means "effort" or "work," "merit"

or "achievement," and "usefulness" or "effectiveness." If we choose our definition of *ch'i kung* to be "*ch'i* work" or "*ch'i* achievement," we can see that almost every form of physical, mental, or breath exercise could possibly fall into this category since everything we do involves the use of our *ch'i*. In this book we will focus on a small slice of the *ch'i kung* spectrum of exercises and techniques in that we will only be discussing methods which are typically taught as Pa Kua Chang *ch'i kung* training. However, even these methods will vary from school to school because many instructors have added *ch'i kung* training to their Pa Kua programs which they have borrowed from other martial arts styles and other internal disciplines (religious, medical, etc.)

Since Pa Kua Chang is an internal martial art, some of the goals of *ch'i kung* practice as it relates to Pa Kua development would be a balanced, full, smooth, strong, distribution of energy in the body, a harmonization of the mind, breath, and body motion, and a refinement of all internal processes. The results of the practice should be a strong, internally healthy body, efficient and effective use of the body in martial arts application, the ability to issue a great deal of martial power through very subtle body motions, and a heightened state of awareness and sensitivity to one's internal body and external environment. Pa Kua *ch'i kung* methods are designed with these goals in mind.

Mutual Dependence

One important concept to understand before discussing *ch'i kung* practice is the idea of mutual dependence of the various systems of the body and the relationship between the systems of the body and the world outside the individual body. The traditional Chinese model of the universe, both inside and outside the body, is based on a concept of energetic relationships and an energetic continuum. All things in the universe, and in the human body, interact and mutually support one another. Any one thing only has existence and meaning within the context of the whole. Nothing exists in isolation.

It is important to know that all internal systems of the body have interdependencies and overlapping functionalities. There is an internal system of checks and balances, modeled by the

five element theory in Chinese medicine, which serves to keep the body in balance and healthy. In practicing *ch'i kung*, this system of checks and balances must be respected. If there is a deficiency or excess in any one part of the body, the rest of the body will be affected. The problem with practicing *ch'i kung* when one part of the body is out of balance is that the *ch'i kung* practice, if it is not appropriate for that particular condition, could throw the body even farther out of balance. This is why individuals who are engaging in the practice of *ch'i kung* should be monitored frequently by a knowledgeable *ch'i kung* teacher and why Park will only teach many of his *ch'i kung* methods by "prescription."

The relationship between the internal body and the external environment is also an important consideration in *ch'i kung* practice. Park tells his students to practice in a quiet place which is shielded from the wind and cold. In fact, when Park's teacher was meditating and practicing his breathing exercises, he posted Park as a guard at the door to keep people from disturbing him. A quiet atmosphere is important in the practice of *ch'i kung*, especially once the student's *ch'i* circulation becomes strong.

There are also certain times of the day which are optimum for practice, concerns about the quality of the air in the practice area, and certain directions one should face during practice. Environmental factors and personal habits (poor diet, over working, too much drinking, smoking, too much sex, etc.) all effect the body and the *ch'i*. Anyone who is engaged in *ch'i kung* training should be under the guidance of a skilled instructor who knows how to prescribe a *ch'i kung* method which is appropriate for that person's individual constitution and environment. Factors such as current physical condition (internal and external), constitution, occupation, character, age, sex, life-style, experience level, physical and mental aptitude, and diet should be taken into consideration when designing an individual *ch'i kung* program.

An individual who smokes, drinks excessively, uses drugs, is sexually overactive, has a poor diet, or leads a stressful life-style, and thinks he or she is going to "balance" those unhealthy habits by practicing *ch'i kung* can easily hurt themselves

more than help themselves. First, the bad habits should be eliminated and then the body brought gently back to a healthy state through the practice of simple methods under the guidance of an experienced teacher. Only then should the student go forward with the earnest study and practice of *ch'i kung*.

The Goals of *Ch'i Kung* Practice

As stated previously, the specific goals of *ch'i kung* practice will vary from one discipline to the next, however, in general, the martial arts practitioner will first want to promote overall health and well-being by seeking a balanced distribution of energy in the body and improving the body's efficiency in terms of energy movement and usage. This will include methods aimed at integrating and harmonizing the mind, body, and breath utilizing a safe, gentle, and well-balanced approach. Balance, efficiency, and naturalness are the key elements to building a body which is strong internally. If the body's internal systems are not balanced in terms of energy production, distribution, and consumption, then the body is not working optimally and any attempt at utilizing internal energy in a martial arts or healing practice will only cause further imbalance and can eventually damage the internal systems. Only when the body is working in a balanced, efficient, natural manner should the *ch'i kung* practitioner worry about "energy cultivation," "energy refinement," building a stronger energy reserve, or using internal strength in martial arts. If a dam has a leak, you don't fill the reservoir with water until the dam is fixed. It seems like common sense, however there are many practitioners who practice "power" *ch'i kung* methods before their body is fully balanced and operating efficiently. The power is transmitted through a system which is not internally connected and internally balanced and thus this weak structure is shocked and damaged. It would be like overloading an electrical circuit - the body will eventually "blow a fuse."

Power *ch'i kung* methods should only be practiced after the student has had a great deal of experience with much gentler, energy balancing, *ch'i kung* methods. This is one reason that Park has all of his students practice every exercise "slow

and exact" before they try to add power to the movement. The body must be internally connected and internally balanced before power training can be initiated. Training for power without slowly building up through a systematic series of exercises would be analogous to running a marathon without ever having practiced any type of jogging or running exercise prior to the 26 mile run. The body can be severely damaged. Unfortunately, the damage which is done by the practice of inappropriate *ch'i kung* does not usually manifest right away. Energetic changes in the body are subtle and gradual. Unless the practitioner is under the guidance of an experienced teacher or skilled Chinese medical doctor, the signs of dysfunction can go unnoticed until they are blatant enough to be physiologically confirmed. At this point, the damage is done and will take a long time to correct.

Park Bok Nam had a student in Korea who learned a number of *ch'i kung* exercises from Park and then got a job working on a merchant ship. The man practiced on his own while he was at sea for a year or so and, not heeding the warnings and advice of his teacher, he over-trained. Too much of a good thing can cause problems because the body lacks balance. As a result of his over-training the exercises without having a teacher's supervision, the man developed problems. He experienced dizziness, headaches, buzzing noises in his ears, and loss of balance. When he returned home, he came back to Park and described the problems. Park was able to help the man back to health, but it took a great deal of time and effort to do so. Internal damage is not easy to fix.

While the practitioner is involved in *ch'i kung* training, he or she should be closely monitored by a knowledgeable instructor to insure that there are no "hitches" in the process. If the student is not participating in a complete method of *ch'i kung* under the guidance of a knowledgeable teacher and is not monitored through the process, or does not know the next step in the training process which is supposed to occur after obtaining results from any given method of practice, problems can also begin to arise. Because of the mutual influences any significant energetic movement or opening in the body has on the

rest of the physical body, mind, spirit, and emotions, there must be a systematic method in any *ch'i kung* training which takes results obtained at each stage of practice and either completes, balances, varies or continues the process when each milestone is reached. If an energy gate, point, or center is opened as a result of training and the practitioner does not know how or when the training needs to progress to the next stage, at best they will stagnate in their training, at worst they will create a disharmonious condition in their body.

When a significant energy event (energy movement, opening, or release) occurs in the body and the student is not taught how to advance from that experience, problems can arise. Unfortunately, these types of energy events may feel very nice to the practitioner because there can be an associated "endorphin rush" when the energy is released. Students who cling to this experience and do not look past it to the next level of experience will stagnate in their training and can sometimes create a *shen* disturbance condition by fixating on trying to repeat that one experience in every training session.

"Power" *ch'i gong* methods are definitely a part of the martial arts. If the practitioner wishes to use internal strength and energy to harm an opponent in combat, the practice of methods designed to teach the student how to use internal energy and internal strength in striking an opponent are necessary. The forty-eight month palm exercises comprise part of the power training methods utilized in Park's system to teach the student how to issue internal power in combat. Additionally, Park will also teach some of the power methods, such as the shaking palm exercise, to those who are only interested in *ch'i kung* for health purposes because these methods aid in the opening up of the energy channels in the body and help to develop the *tan t'ien*. But, as stated above, the student should not jump right into practicing these methods. There should be a gradual, systematic, developmental process taught by an instructor who knows how to cater to each student's individual needs. Power *ch'i kung* methods are not practiced until a strong foundation is built. Secondly, once the student

begins training these methods, it is vital that he or she continue to practice *ch'i kung* methods which are designed to balance and rebuild the body's energy.

Many martial artists and Chinese medicine doctors "burn themselves out" because they do not balance their practice between energy usage and energy rebuilding and balancing. A good internal martial arts teacher with a complete method will know how to balance a student's practice between energy usage and energy rebuilding (*yin* and *yang* training methods). In Park's training program, all of the power training methods are balanced by receptive, energy building training methods.

In *ch'i kung* practice, as it relates to the martial arts, there should be a systematic process of training which begins with a program of balancing the body's energy, structure, and movement, and then continues with exercises designed to build internal strength while maintaining that balance. Once these two goals are accomplished, the practitioner can then start to learn how to use that energy for martial purposes and power. However, once the student begins this power training it is vital that he or she continue to balance the training with rebuilding and cultivation methods. The number one priority is to maintain a strong, healthy, balanced internal system, not to see how much "power" one can obtain.

The *Ch'i Kung* Training Process

If we trace the lineage of most of the *ch'i kung* methods which are practiced today, we will probably find that they were initially practiced and taught in the monastic environment of the Buddhist and Taoist temples in China. In order to better understand the optimum conditions and methods for *ch'i kung* practice it would behoove us to look at how *ch'i kung* might have been practiced at its place of origin. We all know from watching movies and reading books about monastic life that the first lesson any young monk is taught is patience. Patience in practice is essential. Never be in too much of a hurry. High quality, long lasting results will not come overnight. If results are forced to occur before their time, before the body is ready, there will

inevitably be problems. Those that read about Park's training with his teacher in the first volume of this book know that his teacher certainly tested his patience.

We can imagine that the novice Buddhist or Taoist monk would be taught a very complete system of *ch'i kung* training in a well designed program which systematically developed the body, mind, and spirit of the individual and that the external environment was one which optimally facilitated this process. *Ch'i Kung* practiced in the environment of a monastic life-style, combined with the proper diet, meditation, and herbal supplements, provided the individual with a complete and balanced development. Once the student had practiced simple methods which were aimed at developing mental and physical relaxation, a clear mind, and proper postural alignments, more advanced methods were taught. The more specific the *ch'i kung* practice became, the more carefully guarded the life-style, diet, herbal supplements, etc. The methods that were taught were prescribed individually. Each student had a mentor who groomed and handled that student's development according to that individual's particular needs. This is how solid, long lasting results are obtained.

It may seem a bit romantic, especially in the context of our focus on Pa Kua practice in the modern world, to wonder about the training of monks in temples in China since the only well known Pa Kua practitioner who probably spent time learning in a temple was Tung Hai Ch'uan. The rest were primarily martial artists and most did not mix martial arts with religion. However, as one can see if they examine the biographies of the first few generations of Pa Kua instructors, most of them began their training of martial arts with one teacher in a small village in the countryside. Thus, while the environment was not as sterile as the temple's, it was certainly conducive to proper martial arts and *ch'i kung* training, and the systems were taught methodically and completely. Both Park Bok Nam and his teacher Lu Shui-T'ien were taught in this manner.

While the practice of *ch'i kung* and internal martial arts methods all day in a monastic environment or in a remote village somewhere

in the countryside would be the ideal, it is not a practical option for most of us. However, the lessons we can learn from those who have preceded us in this practice are viable today. Find a skilled teacher with a complete method who knows how to develop each student on an individual basis, maintain a life-style and environment conducive to internal training and development, and don't be in too great of a hurry to progress.

We will now take a look at the most important components of internal martial arts *ch'i kung* practice and how they might be trained in Pa Kua.

The Mind in *Ch'i Kung* Practice

Attainment of consistent mind/body harmony is one of the major goals of martial arts *ch'i kung*. The internal martial arts classics say that "the mind (意 - / or intention) leads the *ch'i* (氣) and the *ch'i* leads the strength (力 - //)." This principle tells us that without the correct mental intention, the *ch'i* and strength will not be fully available. When discussing this principle with his students, Park Bok Nam gives a few simple examples to illustrate this point. Park says that if someone was engaged in an intense conversation with another person and unbeknownst to him a third person came up and put a five pound weight in his hand, he would probably drop the weight because his mind was not sending energy to his hand. Because his mental focus was on the person he was engaging in conversation, there was no intention in his hand, thus there was no *ch'i* and no strength. However, if that same person were to see another person ready to place five pounds in his hand, that five pounds would be easy to hold up because the mind has sent energy to the hand.

Another example that Park uses to illustrate the importance of the mind/body connection is to say that if someone had a perfectly healthy arm and put that arm in a sling for two weeks, when he tried to use that arm again, it would be stiff and would not function well at first. This is because the arm was not being used and thus the mind did not send much energy to the arm for that two week period. When a part of the body is inactive, energy and blood do circulate to that

area, however, because it is not being used, the mind only sends a minimal amount of blood and energy. The point is that if the mental awareness and intention do not reach all areas of the body, the energy movement throughout the body will not be optimal.

In the practice of internal martial arts, we not only want an optimal flow of energy to all parts of the body for the purpose of maintaining our health, we also want to develop an ability to move energy out to our extremities instantaneously for use in fighting. This requires that the neurological and energetic connections be more highly developed and refined than normal and thus the mind/body connections which work in relation with these martial movements need to be developed to an even greater degree.

There are generally three areas of concern when discussing the mind as it relates to *ch'i kung* or internal martial arts practice. These are: the overall mental state, mental awareness, and mental intention. The mental state should be one of calmness and well-being. The mental awareness should be one of keen observation and sensitivity inside and around the body without the mind becoming pensive. The mental intention should be focused, yet simple. During *ch'i kung* the mind should remain as calm and inactive as possible while remaining focused and aware. Next, we will discuss these three aspects of mental involvement in *ch'i kung* in more detail.

Cultivating a Feeling of Well-Being

The overall mental state during *ch'i kung* practice should be one of inner peacefulness, joy, and happiness. A sense of ease and happiness will go a long way in helping to promote the balanced flow of energy in the body. A general feeling of happiness and well-being also helps the body conserve energy. Feelings of sadness, grief, worry, stress, anxiety, and anger consume energy. Of course, in internal arts practice, everything needs to be in a balanced state and thus even overjoy and over-happiness can consume too much energy. So the feeling of happiness one cultivates during practice is a gentle, steady feeling of joy and calmness. This is why many systems of *ch'i kung* start practice with what has become popularly known as the "inner smile" exercise.

Other systems have similar visualization exercises to promote the feeling of internal well-being at the beginning of each *ch'i kung* session.

In Park Bok Nam's system, students practice one of several different variations of what Park calls the "happiness" meditation prior to *ch'i kung* exercise. This is the second set of meditations that the student will learn after having spent a sufficient amount of time with the focusing (numbers) meditations which was outlined in the last volume. Two versions of the "happiness" meditation are explained on the next page.

Along with a sense of happiness, the mind should be as still as possible during practice. The innate wisdom the body has in regards to its own health and well-being is its own best healer and strength builder. A mind which is too active can easily interfere with the natural healing process in a number of different ways. General mental chatter and noise can be an enormous energy drain on the body. Combine mental chatter with worry, stress, or anxiety and the mental energy drain becomes far worse. Of all the internal body systems, the brain wastes the most energy. If the mind is calm and quiet, energy conservation and rebuilding will reach its optimum.

One need only stay awake all night to know exactly how an active mind drains the body's energy. Even if you lay down in a bed and rest the body, if you do not sleep (rest the mind), the body's energy will feel drained the next day. However, if the stories that are told about meditation masters are true, deep meditation is even better at recharging the body's energy than a full night's sleep. Everyone has heard the stories about meditation masters who can meditate for a short period of time and feel as though they have had a full night's sleep. In Park Bok Nam's system of Pa Kua, students are taught a graduated method of meditation which leads to what Park refers to as "empty mind" meditation.

Park himself first experienced the "empty mind" state after a one year long training retreat in the mountains of Korea. Upon reaching this state Park said that he felt as if he had only been meditating a few minutes, however, it had actually been several hours. He says that the feeling one has after this kind of meditation is one of lightness and the body feels as if it has had

The "Happiness" Meditation

There are two versions of the "happiness" meditation that Park will usually teach to beginning students. This meditation is taught after the student has gained some experience with the "numbers" meditation that was offered in the first volume of this book. The reason for this is that it is imperative that the student gain experience with concentration before trying any other kind of meditation. If the student's concentration is not good, his or her mind will easily wander when performing any other type of meditation.

After the student has learned to focus his or her concentration by gaining experience with the "numbers" meditation, Park will then teach the "happiness" meditation. Below we describe two different versions of this meditation.

"Happiness" Meditation #1

In the first version of the "happiness" meditation, the student begins by imagining a very clear blue sky and large green field stretch out in front of where they are sitting or standing. The image should not include anything but the green field and the blue sky. This is because we want to keep the mental picture as simple as possible. If the student imagines a blue sky with clouds and birds and a green field with plants, shrubs, trees, pathways, and flowers, the image becomes much too complex. You want the image to be as simple as possible.

After the student has a mental image of the blue sky and green field, he or she will then begin the meditation by visualizing a seed in the ground in the middle of the field. The focus is placed on that seed as the seed begins to grow into a flower. The flower should be the student's favorite flower and of the student's favorite color. But we are getting ahead of ourselves. First, the student will clearly visualize the seed sprouting, the stem

growing upward, the leaves slowly growing, the flower bud forming, and then the flower slowly blooming. The student should allow this sequence to occur very slowly. Do not rush through this visualization. The meditation ends just as the flower reaches full bloom. The student will not continue meditating past this point.

The purpose of this meditation is to allow the mind to focus on one simple thing that is progressively growing and makes the practitioner feel happy seeing it come to fruition. However, because some individuals do not get too excited about flowers, Park provides a "happiness" meditation alternative.

"Happiness" Meditation #2

The second "happiness" meditation is similar in nature to the first, however, more people can usually gain the feeling of inner joy working with this one than with the flower meditation.

In this meditation the student begins by imagining he or she is sitting by the ocean side. The student visualizes a clear blue sky and a deep blue ocean. Do not add anything else to the image. Again, we are trying to keep it simple. As the student looks out onto the ocean, he or she sees a boat on the horizon. The student imagines that this boat is carrying his or her favorite person and that this person is coming to visit.

For the length of this meditation the student simply watches the boat get closer and closer as it sails across the sea. When the boat arrives on shore, the person the student has been waiting for exits the craft and the student embraces that person. Just as the embrace occurs, the meditation ends.

The duration of both of these meditations can vary depending on how slow the flower grows or the boat travels.

a full night's rest. If the mind can be trained to become totally quiet, the natural energy rebuilding and healing process will be optimum.

If the mind is calm and quiet, the body will rebuild and heal itself in the most efficient and effective way possible. This occurs not only because the mind's interference in the body's natural healing process is minimized, but also because the body is conserving a great deal of energy when the mind is calm. However, obtaining a quiet mind and internally calm body is not easy. It takes more patience and perseverance than most practitioners are willing to commit.

In our modern society, where the majority of educated people work on computers and talk on phones all day, the greatest source of energy usage is the brain. At the end of the day an office worker will feel just as physically drained of energy as a construction worker because of the amount of energy the mind can consume. Although the muscles of the office worker will not be sore, the body will feel just as tired. In order to rebuild the spent energy and maintain a healthy body the office worker needs to move the body and relax the mind. This is why *ch'i kung*, or internal martial arts practice, is ideal for our modern day world. Unfortunately, many who turn to these disciplines for help never learn how to fully relax the mind. Relaxing the mind and learning how to create an internal feeling of well-being and happiness should be the first priority in *ch'i kung* practice. Without the ability to cultivate an internally calm and peaceful environment, the practitioner will have difficulty reaching deeper levels of attainment in practice.

It is always helpful to precede any *ch'i kung* practice, circle walking or otherwise, with a simple "happiness" meditation of some kind. Cultivating a feeling of well-being, calming the mind, and forgetting about the outside world will aid in conserving energy, rebuilding health, increasing mental focus, and uniting the mind and body.

Mental Intention

After the practitioner can obtain a feeling of internal well-being and calm the mind, he or she learns to focus the mind. This was the main purpose of the "numbers meditation" which was

taught in the first volume of the book.

The mental focus, or intention, during *ch'i kung* practice should be as simple as possible. If the mental focus is not simple, the mind is too active and thus it is using too much energy. The best kind of mental visualization to use in the beginning levels of *ch'i kung* practice which involves physical motion is a simple image which brings the mind to the hands. The practitioner can imagine the hands are moving through water, lifting something heavy, pushing something, pulling something, holding something, etc., anything which brings a sensation of the hands moving against some sort of slight resistance. These images are good to use during an exercise set such as the "basic *ch'i* circulation exercise" which was described in the first volume.

If the mind feels as though the hands are meeting some resistance, the mind will send energy to the hands. If energy is sent from the torso to the hands, without the mind interfering with the movement of energy between the torso and the hands, it is circulating naturally and efficiently through the body. Park says that during *ch'i kung* exercise the student should use 10% physical strength and 90% internal strength (intention/*ch'i*). He contrasts this with exercises that are found in Shaolin *ch'i kung* where the practitioner will create tension in the body and use quite a bit more physical strength. The 10% physical strength helps put the mind in the motion. If the hands and arms are completely limp with no (0%) physical strength, then the intention will not be correct. The posturing and intention of the body is similar to that of a cat getting ready to pounce. It is relaxed, but there is still mind and energy in the posture and motion.

At the beginning levels of practice the hands and body should be engaged in simple movements so that it will be easier for the mind and body to connect. If the movements are too complex in the beginning, the mind will be unable to maintain complete intention and awareness. This is why Park starts all beginning students with the "basic *ch'i* circulation exercise" which was shown in the first volume.

Usually, beginning level *ch'i kung* movements involve simple motions which help facilitate a full and balanced energy flow in the whole body,

starting with the conception (*jen mai* - 任脈) and governing (*tu mai* - 督脈) meridians. If the motion of the body is simple and the alignments are correct, the practitioner can easily and naturally encourage a strong, balanced, connected flow of energy in the *jen* and *tu* meridians without the use of strong intention. The mind need only be focused on the hands.

If the mind is trying to guide the energy through the *jen* and *tu* meridians, or any other meridians for that matter, from the torso to the hands along some special path or energy route, two problems can occur. Number one is that the mind is too active. In *ch'i kung* practice simplicity is the key element. You want to minimize mental activity. If the mind is trying to guide the *ch'i* all over the body, it is too active and thus it is wasting too much energy and full body awareness cannot be maintained. The second problem is in trying to force the *ch'i* through pathways it may not be ready to go through.

A *ch'i kung* or internal martial arts practitioner should never try to force energy to move in the body by utilizing strong mental intention. Progress in *ch'i kung* practice should be gentle and gradual. If you think about your hands, the *ch'i* will move to your hands. If it is moving to your hands, it is moving from the torso, where it is cultivated and stored, to your hands in the manner which is most appropriate for your individual body at that given time. Do not interfere with the natural process by trying to guide the *ch'i* where it does not want to go.

In the practice of *ch'i kung*, if the physical movements and body posturing are correctly designed to gently coax the energy to move in a balanced manner through all of the body's energy meridians and collaterals, then one need only think about the hands and feet during practice in order to have the proper mental intention. While sitting or standing still and trying to guide energy all around your body with your mind can be somewhat effective, it is inefficient and can lead to problems. As we will discuss later in the "body motion in *ch'i kung* practice" section of this chapter, if the body is not involved in *ch'i kung* practice, the practice is not complete. If the mind is overinvolved in the practice, the results will not be as deep and complications can easily arise.

There are a number of problems which can arise from *ch'i kung* exercises which rely too much on mental visualization. Aside from the problems of forcing *ch'i* where it is not ready to go and overuse of the brain's energy as discussed above, specific visualizations can also lead to problems. Visualizations which run energy along certain energy meridians can easily lead to energy getting "stuck" in the body if the mind cannot maintain full concentration while it is leading the energy. Once a sufficient amount of *ch'i* is flowing in body due to the guidance of a specific mental visualization, if the mind becomes distracted, the *ch'i* will rise to the head. This condition is known as "rising *ch'i*" and can be quite uncomfortable and may lead to migraine headaches, dizziness, and loss of balance.

Other visualizations which call for focusing on any particular internal organ or energy center can cause problems if sending energy to those areas is not appropriate for the individual's physical condition. These type of exercises should be prescribed like drugs. The same is true of color visualizations and sound meditations. For example, if a particular individual has liver trouble or his character is such that he easily loses his temper, that person should not meditate on the color red at all. He will only make matters worse. The use of imagery, visualization, and strong intention in the practice of *ch'i kung* or internal martial arts practice is useful, valid, and appropriate when practiced correctly. Like anything else, when needed, this practice should proceed gradually from very simple to more complex. The more complex should only be practiced when the body and mind are ready and are usually practiced only for specific results unique to an individual's progress. For instance, a visualization technique may be practiced to help correct a specific physical problem, energy blockage, or energetic imbalance. However, once those specific results are obtained, the practitioner always returns to the simple. The rule of thumb regarding the mind's involvement in *ch'i kung* is: simplicity is best.

Mental Awareness

Internal and external awareness are key elements in martial arts training. In order to

expertly execute the subtle techniques of the internal martial arts in a combat situation the practitioner needs to have cultivated a keen awareness of his own body, its movement, its energy, and its relationship to the body, movement, and energy of an opponent. Sensitivity, awareness, and "listening" energy (聽勁- *t'ing ching*) are cultivated by forging a strong mind/body connection during martial exercise, forms training, and *ch'i kung* practice.

Mental intention and mental awareness work together to provide a full mind/body integration. The use of intention can be compared to an outgoing radar signal and awareness can be compared to processing the return signal. The mental energy is sent out to all parts of the body, and then the mind "listens" to what "signals" are sent back. The eventual goal of practice is to have intention and awareness in all parts of the body at all times.

When a new student first learns any martial arts exercise or form, the mental awareness will be focused on the gross physical motions of the exercise or form. The mind and body are busy working out the physical alignments, coordination, timing, and balance necessary to execute the motions correctly. Once the student has a basic physical understanding of the motions, the awareness should turn to the physical subtleties of the movement. The internal connections, alignments, and mechanics are cultivated until these components become natural and efficient.

Once the physical motions, proper alignments, internal connections and efficient, natural body mechanics are in place, the student's awareness can then turn towards the energetic movement inside and around the body. A simple visualization, which is designed to move energy to distal points, can be added to the exercise and the mind can become aware of how the energy is moving. Is there a feeling of warmth, buzzing, tingling, heaviness, pulsing, ticking, etc.? Does the energy feel as if it is collecting, dispersing, moving upward, moving downward, moving right to left, inside to out, etc.? Once the practitioner becomes conscious of the "*ch'i* feeling" and *ch'i* movement in the body, he or she tries to cultivate that feeling and then become

aware of new feelings and new sensations. The more often a feeling is cultivated, the easier it will manifest and the stronger it will become.

After students in Park's school finish *ch'i kung* practice, he will typically ask them what kind of feelings they encountered during that session. He wants to know what the student is feeling in order to monitor the students progress and he wants the student to be able to think about what they are feeling. He explains that students should not always get the exact same feeling each time. If they do, they need to make adjustments. Sometimes Park will tell the student to make small adjustments in the exercise, such as minor changes in the articulation of the joints. Other times Park will modify the exercise to a greater degree or change the student's exercise set all together if he feels the student is ready for something new.

As we explained in the last volume, typical sensations students will feel are numbing, buzzing, tingling, heaviness, fullness, and/or warmth. In the last book we also described the three *ch'i* circulation types which Park uses to define *ch'i* movement in the body. These are: skin *ch'i*, nerve *ch'i*, and bone *ch'i*. In relating these types of *ch'i* circulation with the *ch'i* feeling that individuals typically encounter during practice, Park explains that the tingling sensations usually indicate that the skin *ch'i* is the strongest, the numbing or ticking feeling indicate that the student is aware of the nerve *ch'i*. The warm or heavy feeling indicate an awareness of the bone *ch'i*. During practice it is not uncommon that a student experience a combination of these feelings.

Once certain feelings and sensations are cultivated, Park will change the training so that the student will experience new feelings. For example, when a student has worked with a beginning level exercise which is designed to bring a full feeling of *ch'i* to the hands, the exercise can then be changed or modified such that the intention and movement involves the hands and forearms simultaneously so that a full *ch'i* feeling the entire length of the arms can be obtained. Once the student has experienced various sensations of *ch'i* flowing and moving throughout the body, he or she will then be led to cultivate

an experiential understanding of the *ch'i* outside and around their body, then subsequently they will work to understand the relationship of their *ch'i* to that of other individuals around them.

After the student experiences the movements and exercises on all of the various levels mentioned above, he or she can then begin to expand the awareness in partner drills. The student gains an awareness of the spacial relationships, timing, rhythms, and movements of his or her body in relation to someone else. The body and mind become sensitive to a partner's movements and the student learns how to move efficiently and effectively in relation to the opponent while moving in accordance with all of the principles of the internal martial arts.

In order to bring any movement through the levels of awareness as described above, the student must have enough patience to repeat each movement, or sequence of movements, hundreds of times. Each repetition should be performed with full mental intention and awareness. If the repetitions are performed robotically, with no mind/body interaction, the movements will be "empty." Unfortunately many students do not take an exercise or sequence of movements past the first stage. Once they "learn" the moves physically, they become bored and want to learn something new. In *ch'i kung* practice, the same exercise or movement sequences need to be practiced hundreds of times before the student can gain full awareness and understanding of the movements.

What the practitioner is seeking in the repetitive practice of *ch'i kung* movements is a continuous, smooth, and fluid flow of energy in the body. If the intention (mind) is not focused on the movement, the energy will not be smooth. Park Bok Nam likens the wandering or distraction of the mind during practice to a air bubble in a water hose. When the mind is focused, the body alignments correct, and the movements fluid, the energy will flow smoothly and continuously. If the mind wanders for an instant or is distracted, the flow of energy will have a slight sputter like an air bubble getting into a water hose and disrupting the flow.

While the mind needs to be active and involved in every body motion, the mind should never

become pensive. As mentioned previously, the mind should be as still and quiet as possible. The practitioner should always maintain the status of a quiet observer. If something happens, acknowledge it and then let it pass. Using mental intention and keen awareness one can work to deepen an experience or strengthen a sensation, however, it is important that the feeling or experience be "watched" and nurtured, not pondered. The mind needs to be thinking in "real time," which means it is always in the present. If it is reflecting on the past instant, it is not focused on what is happening now and that "air bubble" will occur. Be aware of what is happening in and around the body in the present instant. Do not dwell on any particular experience. Each experience is simply a stepping stone to the next experience. Each instant leads to the next.

Whenever the student practices there should be sense of wonder and an open mind, but with a dose of reality and practicality as applies to martial arts. What ever feelings and sensations the student might obtain in practice, he or she should realize that there is always something more. Always use common sense in practice. If you feel a new sensation, do not get too excited about it. Acknowledge it and then continue "listening" for new, or deeper, sensations.

When students relate new experiences with *ch'i kung* practice to Park, he will always acknowledge the experience and then point out to the student that there is something beyond that experience. He never wants students to overvalue any given experience. He says in the thirty-five years he has been practicing he has continually discovered new things. He says that each time he thought he was at a "high level," more practice and experience made him realize later that there is always more to learn and discover no matter what "level" you are at. This is the beauty of the internal arts. The practitioner never stops learning and discovering.

The message we are trying to relate is that when practicing *ch'i kung*, do not limit yourself to knowledge gained from one or two profound experiences. Today the internal martial arts are being saturated with "new age" metaphysics and "healing" techniques which are being built on the limited experiences of individuals who have

touched upon some self-proclaimed "cosmic" experience. Don't base your reality on a few limited experiences or overvalue a single experience. There is always something more. It is best to view all experiences as rungs on a ladder. Unfortunately, many times when speaking of mind/body awareness, some instructors and students like to leave the real, practical world of the martial and healing arts and begin to fantasize about phenomenal *ch'i* powers and abilities and the attainment of "spiritual enlightenment" through martial arts practice. While it is certainly possible to cultivate intuitive understanding and open up higher levels of awareness and consciousness through the practice of internal martial arts and *ch'i kung*, the nature of the martial arts vehicle is such that the body /mind awareness should be integrated fully before the body/mind/ spirit connection can be cultivated. Students who expect profound spiritual experiences to occur before the body is coordinated, connected and harmonized with the mind are jumping way ahead of themselves. Whenever asked about spiritual experiences in the martial arts, Park's response is, "I do not mix martial arts and religion."

Body Motion in *Ch'i Kung* Practice

Although there are many *ch'i kung* exercises which are practiced while the practitioner is sitting or standing, the distribution of *ch'i* throughout the body is achieved in the most efficient, most effective, and most complete manner when the body is in motion. Relaxed, natural, efficient motion of the physical body inherently promotes the movement of energy in the body. This is a natural principle of all life - "life is movement."

If the movements, or series of movements, in an exercise set are performed such that there is a relative central equilibrium, the body is aligned efficiently, and the motions move left, right, up, down, forward and backward in a balanced fashion, then the movement of energy in the body will move towards a balanced state if the mind does not interfere with that natural balance. As mentioned in the previous section of this chapter, the body has an innate knowledge of how to heal and balance itself if the mind does not try to

overcomplicate the process. If the movements of an exercise set are designed to gently coax the balanced distribution of energy in the body with the help of simple mental visualization, the body will seek a naturally balanced, strong internal state.

The *Yellow Emperor's Classic on Internal Medicine* (*Huang Ti Nei Ching*), one of the oldest Chinese medical texts, embraces the principle, "life is movement." While it is certainly possible to move energy in the body by using the mind alone, gentle mental intention combined with physical movement is much more efficient and is better for the body as a whole. If the movements are accomplished through a balanced, systematic process, starting with simple movements and gradually increasing the complexity of the movements, the process will be safe and the results long lasting. In order to reach optimum health, muscles, tendons, ligaments, joints, internal organs, and energy meridians all need to move through their full range of natural motion everyday. If the body does not move, things will stagnate, tighten, and bind up, and eventually problems will arise.

The art of Pa Kua Chang is based on the theory of change. Nothing stands still. Therefore, the majority of all *ch'i kung* performed in Pa Kua Chang involves moving the body, not standing or sitting statically. Park Bok Nam says that in order to have a balanced practice, the practice must adhere to natural principles. He states that everything in nature adheres to the trinity of Chinese philosophy, namely *yin/yang* theory, five element theory, and the *Yi Jing* theory (theory of change). In nature, *yin* and *yang* are represented by the sun and moon, the earth contains the five elements, and the theory of change is demonstrated in the continuous rotation of the sun and moon around the earth. If there was no sun and moon (*yin* and *yang*), there would be no earth and thus there would be no five element cycles. If the sun and moon did not rotate around the earth, life could not be supported on the earth and thus there would be no five elements. In order for there to be a balance in nature, all three principles must be represented. Since Pa Kua adheres to natural principles, these components must be present in all aspects of training.

Therefore, in order for the practice to be complete, the practice should include the idea of continuous change through body movement.

As we discussed in the last volume, Park Bok Nam's theory of energy development and cultivation includes three different "types" of *ch'i* in the body. The first is what Park calls "skin *ch'i*." This is the *ch'i* that moves through the body's energy meridians, channels, and associated collaterals. When the practitioner practices *ch'i kung* and feels a tingling sensation they are experiencing awareness of the "skin *ch'i*." This kind of *ch'i* can be cultivated through both static and moving exercise.

The second kind of *ch'i* Park calls "nerve *ch'i*." This is the energy associated with the nervous system and is experienced when the student feels a numbing, ticking, or electric shocking. This energy is best trained through articulation of the joints through their full range of motion while maintaining proper body alignments and mental intention. Without body movement, this kind of *ch'i* will not be developed fully. This *ch'i* is usually experienced at first as a shock in the area of the joints or a slight numbing sensation in the extremities. Slightly adjusting the articulation of the joints during practice will help the practitioner experience this kind of energy.

The third type of *ch'i* in Park's model is "bone *ch'i*." This is the energy which courses through the bones. This type of energy is usually the most difficult to cultivate because in order for it to develop their needs to be a good balance and cultivation of the other two types of *ch'i* (skin and nerve). Again, for the fullest development of this energy, movement is necessary, especially rotational movement and articulations of the joints. The practitioner will usually first experience awareness of this energy as a dull ache inside the bones as if something inside the center of the bones is trying to expand outward. Heaviness of the limbs and hot sensations are also related to this kind of energy.

The point here in referring to these three "types" of *ch'i* in the body is that in order to progress beyond the awareness and cultivation of "skin *ch'i*," the practitioner needs to move the body. Static sitting or standing *ch'i kung* will only

aid development to a certain point. In order to balance the practice the body must move so that the ligaments and tendons around the organs and joints will remain loose and supple.

Some schools of Pa Kua will start beginning students practicing various components of *ch'i kung* separately and thus static posture holding, sitting or standing meditation, and sitting or standing breathing exercise may be included in the curriculum. However, later in the development process, all of these components are brought together and practiced in conjunction with progressively more difficult physical body movements and circle walking footwork.

Body Alignments and Efficient Motion

When learning a set of physical movements, the first two points of focus are the correct, natural body alignments and the use of naturally efficient motion. In terms of energy conservation and movement, the body works best when all motion is natural and efficient, the body is relaxed, and the mind is connected with the motion. Body alignments which take advantage of the body's natural strengths will help to conserve energy and also serve to distribute energy throughout the body in the most efficient, balanced, and wholistic manner.

Whenever any student asks Park details about alignment and posture, his first statement is, "Whatever feels natural and comfortable." He goes on to explain that every student has a different body and so you cannot be too detailed about the angle and degree of every body motion because what works for one person will not necessarily work for another. Park's method is to work with each student so that they find what is right for them. But always, the number one rule of thumb is "natural and comfortable."

When learning proper body alignments, the student should first be taught how to align his or her body with the force of gravity and then be taught how to take advantage of "ground strength" and naturally strong body positioning. By "naturally strong" we are referring to alignments which take advantage of the body's natural positions of power (those that don't rely on the use of muscle strength), such as the *peng* (ward-off) strength which is emphasized in Tai Chi

Ch'uan. These alignments work to teach the practitioner how to align the body structure such that the postures are strong and connected to the ground.

Learning to utilize alignments and ground strength, the practitioner will not have to rely on muscle strength in executing the postures or movements of the practice and the body can remain relaxed, but strong at the same time. In Pa Kua Chang, the positions of the "eight mother palms" (Park's eight animal postures) are usually used to train the student's postural alignments. There are no "standard" eight mother palms. All systems of Pa Kua have slightly different versions of these body postures. In Park's system these postures are trained both in standing exercises and the circle walking form as presented in the last volume.

In the beginning levels of posture and alignment training, the students may spend time holding standing postures in order to become familiar with the proper alignments. It is much easier to learn how to align the body correctly when standing still. However, if students do not eventually transition from static posture holding to moving exercise, it will be difficult for them to learn how to maintain the proper postural alignments in the context of martial arts movement. Additionally, practicing only static posture holding will do nothing for flexibility, suppleness, and range of motion.

Many students who have trained proper alignments in static posture holding have a difficult time maintaining those alignments once they start moving their body and/or their feet. In Park's school the typical sequence of training includes the student first learning eight static upper body positions (the eight animal palms), then learning how to maintain those postural alignments while executing an eight animal standing form. Next the student learns to walk the circle, executing a simple directional change between postures, and finally learning how to maintain efficient and effective postural alignments while executing progressively more difficult directional changes on the circle.

Learning how to habitually maintain proper structure and alignment while executing progressively more complex body motions helps

the practitioner develop whole body strength, coordination, flexibility, balance, agility, mobility, internal connection and internal energy. If all of this can be executed with a relaxed body and body/mind harmony, the practitioner is well on his or her way to developing high level martial arts skill. If the practitioner does not learn how to properly align the body while executing martial arts or *ch'i kung* movement, the movement, and the distribution of energy in the body will be inefficient, and thus the practitioner will not gain the full benefits of the practice. Thus body alignment, efficient motion and correct use of strength should be addressed first in the learning process.

Body Movements in *Ch'i Kung*

In the West, when we think of exercise, we usually think about working our muscles, increasing our heart rate, and challenging our lung capacity. However, in order to get the most out of a set of *ch'i kung* exercises, the set should consist of a series of exercises which has at its base the movement of all the joints of the body through their natural range of motion and the subtle movement of the body's internal organs. These components are far more important to the development of internal health than gaining muscle strength. The internal organs and the joints of the body are the two primary areas of concern when practicing body motion in *ch'i kung* training. If the joints are loose and supple and the internal organs are free to move inside the torso as they were designed to move, the internal energy development and distribution in the body can reach optimum levels. The "standard eight *ch'i kung*" set presented later in this chapter focuses on these aspects of practice.

The Internal Organs

While it is necessary to regularly move all areas of the body through a full range of motion to maintain optimum health, there are two areas of primary importance when practicing *ch'i kung*. These are, the joints of the body and the internal organs. The internal organs are responsible for the production, storage, and distribution of energy in the body. If the internal organs are not free to move as they were designed to move, they

will not function properly.

Each of the internal organs are designed to move inside the body cavity in a specific manner. If they do not move as they should, the ligamental attachments which hold the organs in place begin to tighten and the organ will either not be able to move freely or will become stuck in an awkward position. Many internal disorders such as kidney stones, bladder infections, poor digestion, shortness of breath, and high blood pressure can be caused by the internal organs not being able to move properly inside the body. Proper motion can be easily facilitated through a systematic program of exercise.

There are specific arm, leg, and body motions which facilitate the movement, massage, or "exercise" of the internal organs of the body. For example, when the arms spread out directly to the sides and the practitioner inhales deeply, the lungs are able to stretch and move properly and thus the heart also has room to move. Similarly, when one hand is raised and the ribs on one side are opened, the lung on that side moves outward and the heart has room to swing slightly over to that side. Alternating left and right raising and lowering of the arms enables the heart to move back and forth in a slight swinging type of movement and this helps the heart's function. When one or both hands are raised above the head, the ligamental attachments of the liver and/or spleen are allowed to stretch and move. Additionally, raising the arms above the head and lowering them back down aids the function of the lymph system. This system does not have its own "pump" as the blood and air systems of the body do and so it relies on body motion to move the fluid. Twisting motions of the torso side to side also aids in exercising the liver and spleen. When the lower back is rounded and then straightened or bowed, the kidneys become mobile within their sphere of movement.

All complete sets of *ch'i kung* moving exercise should address motions which allow all of the internal organs to move within their sphere of motion inside the torso. This way energy movement to and from the organs will be optimum and the organs and their ligamental attachments will be exercised so that they will remain flexible, supple, and able to continually

operate to the extent of their full range of motion. If any part of the body, inside or out, ever gets stuck and cannot move as it is designed to move, problems will arise. This is why it is so important that a *ch'i kung* exercise program include body movements which work to move and manipulate all joints, ligaments, tendons, and internal organs.

The Joints

Energy production in the body occurs in the torso. The lungs process the air into usable energy, the stomach and digestive system process the food and drink, and the kidneys are responsible for the innate or "prenatal" energy we received from our parents. Once the internal organs have produced and stored internal energy, in order for it to be distributed to the rest of the body, it must travel from the torso out to the extremities in a full, unrestricted, and balanced manner. This is how one maintains optimum health.

Once energy leaves the torso, the most complex areas it must navigate in order for it to reach the distal points are the joints of the body. The joints of the body are complex junctures of muscle, ligament, tendon, flesh, cartilage, nerves, and bone. If the movement of the joints is tight or restricted, it will be difficult for energy to pass through these areas in an efficient manner. If the movement of all the joints, which includes the spine, neck, shoulders, sternum/rib junctures, elbows, fingers, wrists, hips, knees, ankles, and toes, are loose and supple, energy in the body will flow more efficiently. The characteristic turning, twisting, and rotating movements of Pa Kua Chang are ideal for opening up and loosening the body's joints.

In Pa Kua Chang combat application the loose, supple movement of the body's joints are relied upon to produce whole body power, especially the "whipping power," and to facilitate the use of the body's major joints as both attack and defense weapons. If the joints are not loose and supple beyond normal ranges of suppleness and flexibility, the practitioner will be stiff and slow, will not be able to use all of these weapons efficiently in fighting, and will not be able to generate the kind of internal power used in Pa Kua application.

Smooth and Continuous Movement

In the majority of *ch'i kung* exercise, where the goal of the practice is to rebuild or cultivate energy in the body, the practitioner will want to make all movements slow, smooth, fluid, connected, balanced, and continuous. Ideally this will be accomplished both physically and mentally. In Chinese they refer to this idea as "silk pulling energy." The image here is one of pulling silk out of a cocoon. If the pulling motion is not smooth and continuous, the silk strand will break. If the pulling motion is stopped or there is hesitation once the movement begins, restarting the motion will also break the silk thread. Therefore, once the motion starts, it needs to be smooth and continuous.

The silk pulling image can be easily related to the idea of energy flow in the body. Once energy starts moving in the body, smooth, continuous, connected motion will facilitate a continuous movement of the energy throughout the body. If there is a pause, an awkwardness, or a hesitation in the movement, the smooth energy flow will be disturbed. If we compared energy flow in the body to water running through a hose, such a disturbance could be seen as an air bubble getting into the line. As discussed previously, lack of proper mental focus also produces this "air bubble."

While it is true that the correct movement of the body facilitates a smooth, continuous, connected, and balanced flow of energy in the body, the mind also has an important role to play in maintaining optimal energy movement. As we discussed previously in this chapter, the intention must be focused and in harmony with all movement for the movement to be complete. If the mind does not lead the motion, the energy will not follow the motion. If the mind is distracted during practice, that "air bubble" in the hose will appear. Mind and body need to be integrated in all *ch'i kung* practice.

The slow, deliberate motions as described above are mainly used to cultivate and balance energy in the body. This practice is needed no matter how advanced the practitioner becomes. However, there are many "power" *ch'i kung* methods, such as the power palm exercises of Park's system, which serve to teach the

practitioner how to move energy in the body rapidly and project that energy outside of the body for use in martial application. As Park Bok Nam states, "sometimes you need to keep the *ch'i*, other times you need to throw the *ch'i*." However, as we stated in the first segment of this chapter, learning how to build and cultivate *ch'i* is a necessary prelude to learning how to project the *ch'i* out of the body. If it is not cultivated first, there is nothing to project. If it is projected outside of the body too much, then the reserve will be depleted. So there always needs to be a balance in practice between energy usage and energy rebuilding.

Breathing in *Ch'i Kung* Practice

The body processes several raw materials in the production of energy. One of those raw materials is air (life force energy). Air is probably the most important energy source the human body has at its disposal, but because the breathing process is "automatic," most people don't pay much attention to it. From the Chinese perspective, food and drink are the "energy of the Earth" and air is the "energy of Heaven." While it is important to balance the energy intake between that of Heaven and Earth, we also know that a body can live for weeks without food and days without water. However, the body can only go a few minutes without air. Thus the energy gathered into the lungs from the air is extremely important. The more efficient and effective that process is, the more energy the body will have.

In regards to breathing, there are two main goals in *ch'i kung* practice. The first is to gradually and gently increase the lung capacity and the efficiency of the lung's operation. The second is to retrain the body to harmonize the breath with the body's physical motion. In the first volume of this book we presented a few breathing exercises which help the practitioner learn to increase the body's breathing efficiency and capacity. In this volume we will focus more on the principle of coordinating the breath with movement.

Breathing naturally and efficiently with the breath working in complete coordination with the body motion will greatly increase the body's

endurance, strength, and vitality. If the breath is held, or the physical body motions are working against the natural expansion and contraction of the chest cavity, then the breathing will not be optimal. Also, if the practitioner does not execute daily exercises which are designed to gently stretch the lungs, the lung tissue and the intercostal muscles between the ribs can become tight and thus normal breathing will become restricted.

Considering the above mentioned goals, there are two rules of thumb. The first is that during practice the inhale should be executed in coordination with physical body motions which naturally facilitate an expansion in the chest cavity. For example, if the arms are moving up over the head, or are extended out to the sides of the body, the physical movement is encouraging an expansion in the chest and thus this is when the inhale should be executed. If the arms are moving in towards the center of the body or down by the sides, this is encouraging a compression of the chest cavity and thus the exhale should be executed.

If the practitioner learns how to completely coordinate the breath with the movements of the body, the breathing will naturally become more efficient. With a focus on this principle during the execution slow movements in ch'i kung practice, the practitioner will be able to train the body to breathe properly at all times. If the practitioner can learn how to breathe naturally in this manner in everyday life, he or she will notice that they have more endurance and energy. If the training is correct, this extra endurance and energy will naturally carry over in to the combat environment. However, this principle must first be trained during ch'i kung exercise. If the practitioner cannot properly coordinate the mind, body movement, and breath during the calm and quiet atmosphere of ch'i kung exercise, they can not hope to have it happen during the stress of a fight.

The second rule of thumb in regards to breathing and ch'i kung exercise is the execution of a full inhale and complete exhale. The inhale should be full enough to challenge the breathing capacity of the lungs and stretch the lung tissues and supporting muscles in the area of the rib cage.

However, the inhale should not be strained or forced. If the practitioner begins to run out of breath, feel dizzy, turn red, feel strained, or feel pains in the chest, the inhale was too big. The stretching of the lungs should be very gentle, not forced. The increase of lung capacity should be gradually improved over a period of time. Unfortunately, many practitioners, especially those engaged in potentially dangerous exercises such as "iron shirt" training, overdue this aspect of ch'i kung breathing and cause themselves problems. Dizziness, headaches, and high blood pressure are minimal side effects from forceful breathing practice. In extreme cases practitioners have been known to severely damage the lungs, heart, and diaphragm by being too forceful in executing their inhale. In ch'i kung, all results are obtained gently and gradually.

Another breathing related problem arises in individuals who focus too much on tan t'ien breathing without learning how to also properly exercise the upper torso during the inhale and exhale. Those practitioners who only focus on breathing into the lower abdomen typically have restricted movement in their lungs and rib cage due to not sufficiently exercising this area. While learning abdominal breathing is definitely a part of ch'i kung practice, the student should not focus solely on that aspect of breathing. All energy which comes into the body from the air must first pass through the lungs. If the lungs and upper chest are restricted in motion, the energy that reaches the lower abdomen and tan t'ien will not be optimal. One need only watch a baby breathe to see how to breathe most efficiently. A baby's entire torso will expand during the inhale, not the chest alone, nor the abdomen alone. In Park's system, the "filling breath" exercise presented in the first volume is practiced by students of all levels in order to keep the chest loose and lungs working to full capacity.

While it is important to train the lungs to gradually learn how to accept more air during the execution of the natural inhale, a fully executed exhalation is equally as important. The inhale can be seen as the vehicle for gathering the energy of Heaven into the body and the exhale as serving to rid the body of toxins. If the exhale is not complete, this process will not be efficient and

these toxins can collect in the lungs and be stored in the body. If the exhalation is shallow, then some of the toxins which the body needed to rid itself of will stay in the body. As with the inhale, the exhale should be full, but not forced. The body should always remain natural and comfortable during both inhalation and exhalation.

In order to increase the amount of air the lungs

can take in with any natural breath, it is important that the practitioner of *ch'i kung* execute daily exercises which serve to stretch the lungs and diaphragm, and open up the rib cage. Not all exercises need to be focused on this, however, while executing a set of *ch'i kung* exercises, there should be some exercises in the set which serve this purpose. The practitioner is teaching the body how to use the lungs to their full capacity and thus breathing becomes more efficient.

The Supplemental Palms

The Pa Kua *ch'i kung* exercises we will show in this volume form a set of eight exercises which Park refers to as the "standard eight *ch'i kung*" set. These exercises are very typical of Pa Kua style *ch'i kung* in that they utilize the characteristic twisting and turning body motions for which Pa Kua has become known. In addition to loosening up all areas of the body through an opening up of all the joints, this exercise set also aids the function of the internal organs by allowing them to move within their sphere of motion inside the body. Each exercise stretches or massages the organs and their associated ligamental attachments in different ways. Park says that as the body moves and the organs are massaged and manipulated, the organ *ch'i* is strengthened.

Typically, Pa Kua *ch'i kung* exercises which are separate from the circle walking forms are going to involved motions which enable the entire body to twist and turn through a full range of motion. This twisting and turning motion is characteristic of both the health and martial arts movements of Pa Kua Chang. However, the beginning student will not start out his or her *ch'i kung* practice by learning the difficult twisting motions of Pa Kua. The beginner needs to obtain experience with *ch'i kung* exercise and awareness of the movement of energy in the body by beginning their practice with much simpler movements and exercises. This is why we only presented the "basic *ch'i* circulation" exercise in the first volume of this book. The student trying to execute the exercises in the "standard eight" set without having first

worked with more rudimentary exercises may find it difficult to develop the *ch'i* feeling.

The exercises shown here will not be practiced by beginners simply because it is difficult to obtain a feeling for the movement of energy while executing these complex turning and twisting motions of the body if the student has no experience with feeling *ch'i* or if the body is tight. We show these exercises here so that the reader can get a feel for the characteristic Pa Kua flavor in *ch'i kung* exercise.

This particular set of exercises is also designed as a primer for the 48 month palm practice. If you have read the chapter on palm training in this book, you will notice that many of the movements in this *ch'i kung* set resemble the movements of the 48 month palms. By first gaining experience in the execution of this *ch'i kung* set before practicing the 48 month palms, the student is able to develop structural alignments and connections, *ch'i* awareness, and increased flexibility before trying to put power into these motions in the 48 month palm practice. It is a good idea to practice this set for six to eight months before attempting to practice the 48 month palm set.

The "standard eight *ch'i kung*" exercise set actually consists of ten exercises, however, the first two are considered "warm-ups." The only reason these exercises are considered warm-ups is probably for the simple reason that whoever invented this exercise set felt that all Pa Kua sets

should have eight exercise, not seven, nine, or ten. So instead of calling it the "standard ten" *ch'i kung* set, we call it the "standard eight" with two warm-ups. Pa Kua practitioners are picky that way when it comes to the number "eight."

The ten exercises are practiced in a continuous sequence with no stopping in-between the exercises. The two warm-up exercises and the first of the eight exercises in this set were presented in the last volume. The straight *fan chang* and circle *fan chang* exercises are the two warm-ups and the *t'ien fan chang* exercise is the first of this set. The two warm-ups are practiced in order to help "wake-up" the body and loosen up the spine. The *t'ien fan chang* exercise works specifically to increase the flexibility of the spine and neck, and aids the function of the lungs because the rib cage and chest are allowed to expand during the execution of the movement.

Because the three *fan chang* exercises were presented in the first volume, we will not show them again here, we will go right in to the second exercise of the set which is called "sliding the window shutter to look at the moon." Because this is the second exercise of the set, we will begin numbering the photos with the preface of "2" instead of "1."

Sliding the Window Shutter to Look at the Moon

This exercise is almost identical to the 48 month palm exercise of the same name which was presented in the palm training chapter of this volume, however, here it is combined with the shaking palm movements to form a two-part exercise. Park says that the function of this exercise is to "wake up the *tan t'ien*." Therefore, the mental focus while executing this exercise should be on the deep *tan t'ien* breathing and the movement of energy from the *tan t'ien* to the palms. Park says that the breathing, posture, movement, and the mind should all be coordinated in order to help open up the *tan t'ien* and prepare the body's energy for the remaining exercises. Additionally, this exercise helps loosen up the hips and shoulders. This exercise is executed as follows:

From the last movement of the *T'ien Fan Chang* exercise (see photo 2-1), execute a *fan chang* maneuver with the left palm coming underneath the right palm. As the body comes around to the front, step out into a "horse riding" stance. See photo 2-2.

1) Now execute a slow shaking palm maneuver as presented in the last volume of this book. The left hip and shoulder come back and then they are both extended forward with the strike. Keep in mind that all movements in this sequence are performed slowly with the intention focused on the leading palm. As the palm is extended and turns over, imagine the *ch'i* moving out to the palm, but do not extend your imagination beyond the center of the palm. In this exercise you want to "keep the *ch'i*," not extend it away from your body. Just as in the shaking palm exercise, the inhale is performed as the arm is drawn back and the exhale is performed as the arm moves forward to strike. Throughout this exercise the breathing should remain smooth, fluid, and full. See photos 2-3 and 2-4.

3) Execute another straight *fan chang* maneuver in order to perform a shaking palm movement on the right side. See photos 2-5 through 2-7. This completes the first half of this exercise. You have now executed a slow, fluid, smooth shaking palm on both the left and right sides. Now you will transition into the other half of this exercise.

4) You will now begin the "sliding shutter" part of the exercise. Execute a *fan chang* and turn the body to the left. The lead hand stays up at about eye height. With this move, begin to inhale. See photos 2-8 and 2-9.

5) Slightly rotate the body (hips and shoulders) back to the right keeping the palms in the same position as in photo 2-9. Then begin to turn the hips and shoulders back to the left and start to turn the palms to face the left side of your body as it is now positioned (they will be facing to the rear of your original starting position). Begin to exhale as the body and palms turn to strike. Continue with this motion and execute the double palm strike. See photo 2-10 and 2-11.

6) Execute a *fan chang* with the right palm coming underneath the left. As the palms change turn the body 180 degrees to the other side. The feet both pivot 90 degree in this turn. With this motion



2-1



2-2



2-3



2-4



2-5



2-6



2-7



2-8



2-9



2-10



2-11



2-12

Sliding the Shutter to Look at the Moon Exercise



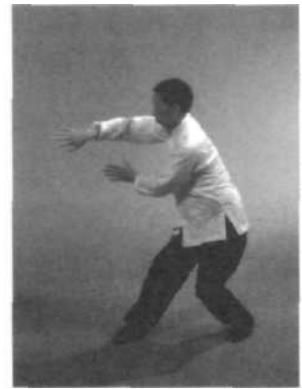
2-13



2-14



2-15



2-16

Sliding the Shutter to Look at the Moon Exercise (con't)

begin to inhale. See photos 2-12 through 2-14. 7) Execute a "sliding shutter" palm strike on this side in a slow and smooth manner. See photos 2-15 and 2-16.

You have now completed the second part of this exercise and are ready to begin the next repetition. The next repetition begins again with the shaking palm sequence. From the position shown in photo 2-16, you simply execute a *fan chang* with the left palm coming underneath the right arm and turn your body back to face the front as shown in photo 2-2. From this position you are ready to start again.

Double Palm Change

The "double palm change" exercise is executed in three parts. The first part is performed exactly like the dragon back exercise which was presented in the last volume of this book. The next two parts are performed exactly like the double palm change exercise which was also presented in the last volume.

While the last exercise worked to "wake up the *tan t'ien*" through the deep abdominal breathing, slow motions, and mental intention focused on the palms, this next exercise works to move the *ch'i* from the *tan t'ien* to the palms by allowing the rippling of the spine to help move the *ch'i*. The meridians which run along the spine and the

front of the body are two of the major *ch'i* pathways. By loosening the spine and encouraging the *ch'i* to move through the wave like motions of this exercise, the practitioner's energy flow along the spine and out to the palms is enhanced.

This exercise also aids the function and energy of the kidneys and the liver. The articulation of the lower back during the dragon back movement, allowing both the front and back of the lower torso to "open and close," allows the kidneys and liver to be massaged and manipulated as they move inside the body. The ligamental attachments which hold these organs in place are also stretched and this flexibility and motion insures that the fluids which are stored and transported by these organs does not become stagnant.

The "double palm change" exercise is executed as follows:

- 1) From the position shown in photo 2-16, begin to inhale and execute a *fan chang* and turn the body back to face forward in a "horse" stance. The two palms are held up at eye level with both palms facing upward. See photos 3-1 and 3-2.
- 2) Now execute the dragon back maneuver as described in the first volume of this book. In this exercise the dragon back motion is executed slowly with an emphasis on really stretching out the spine as it ripples in the dragon back "wave." Exhale with the striking phase of the dragon back. See photos 3-3 and 3-4.
- 3) Execute a *fan chang* with the left palm coming



3-1



3-2



3-3



3-4



3-5



3-6



3-7



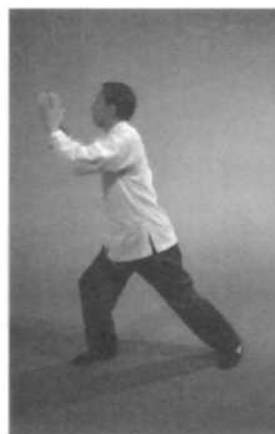
3-8



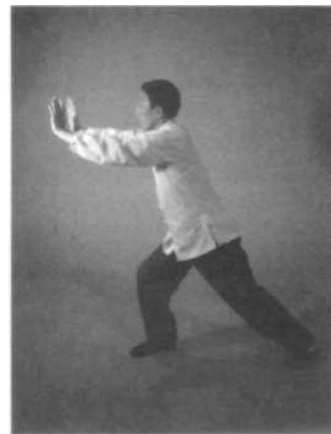
3-9



3-10



3-11



3-12

The Double Palm Change Exercise



2-13



2-14



2-15



2-16

The Double Palm Change Exercise (con't)

under the right arm. Turn the body to the left as the *fan chang* is executed. Bring the palms up in front of the face with both palms facing upward and held at eye level. Now execute the double palm strike as it was described in the first volume of this book. See photos 3-5 through 3-7.

4) Execute a *fan chang* with the right palm coming under the left arm. Turn the body to the right as the *fan chang* is executed. Bring the palms up in front of the face with both palms facing upward and held at eye level. Now, once again, execute the double palm strike as it was described in the first volume of this book. See photos 3-8 through 3-12.

5) Now you will execute a *fan chang* and come back to the forward position. When repeating the exercise you will start the next repetition here by executing the dragon back movement to the forward direction as shown in photos 3-14 through 3-16. The position shown in photo 3-16 is where you will finish just before transitioning to the fourth exercise in this set.

The next three exercises, "unicorn turns its body," "serving tea cups," and "serving tea cups with throwing palm" are sometimes referred to in general as "serving tea cups exercises" in the Pa Kua parlance. This name has its origins in an old story which is frequently told about Pa Kua Chang's founder, Tung Hai Ch'uan. The story says that Tung was working as a servant in the Emperor's

palace and on one occasion the Emperor was hosting a great party on the palatial grounds. The grounds were so crowded with people that moving around in the crowd was a difficult task. However, while Tung was serving tea to the guest he moved himself in and out of the crowd of people with relative ease and served the tea cups to guests without spilling a drop. It is said that the Emperor was surprised at Tung's great agility and questioned him about it. The story says that it was then that Tung first revealed his art of Pa Kua Chang.

Aside from the above mentioned story, these exercises are also referred to as "serving tea cups" exercises because the practitioner's intention while executing the exercises is one of holding tea cups in the hands and concentrating on not "spilling the tea." Although the arms and body are continually twisting throughout the execution of these exercises, the palms will always face upward. The image of holding tea cups and not spilling the tea helps the practitioner retain an intense focus (intention) on the hands and thus "keep the *ch'i*" in the hands throughout the exercise.

Unicorn Turns its Body

The next exercise is called "Unicorn Turns its Body." This exercise is designed to stretch and loosen the hips, spine and neck joints and allow movement in the areas of the liver and spleen.



4-1



4-2



4-3



4-4



4-5



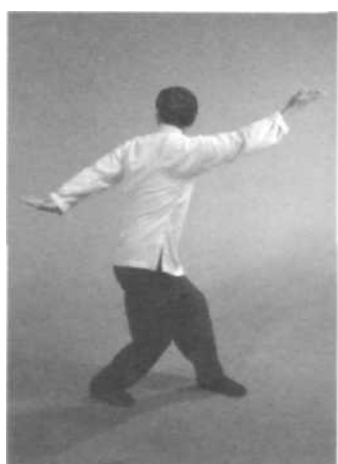
4-6



4-7



4-8



4-9



4-10



4-11

The Unicorn Turns its Body Exercise

The twisting motion of the body is what provides the opportunity for the liver and spleen to move. The exercise is performed as follows:

1) From the position shown in photo 3-16, allow the hands to come down to the sides with the palms up. This exercise begins with the feet parallel in a "horse riding stance." The arms are rounded and the hands are held such that the fingers are facing in towards the hips. The palms are facing upwards as if the practitioner is holding something in his or her hands. Park Bok Nam likes to tell students that throughout this exercise one can imagine that one hand is the sun, the other hand is the moon, and the body is the earth. While executing the movements of this exercise the sun and the moon will always stay on opposite sides of the earth as they revolve around the earth. See photo 4-1.

2) From the beginning posture, you will toe in with the left foot and shift the weight back on the left leg. The left hand begins to move away from the body towards the front with the fingers facing forward as the right hand begins to move behind the body with the fingers facing rearward. Both palms remain facing upward. The intention is focused on both palms (keeping the tea from spilling out of the cups). The eyes are watching the forward moving hand. The inhale begins as you start to execute this first movement. See photo 4-2.

3) The left hand continues moving forward, the right hand continues moving rearward. The eyes continue to follow the forward moving hand. Both palms are still facing upward and the intention is focused on the palms. Continue to inhale. See photo 4-3.

4) The left hand continues moving forward, the right hand continues moving rearward. The head turns so that the eyes look at the back palm. This facilitates a maximum twisting of the spine and neck. The hips are twisted as far as possible to the right. All of the weight is on the left leg. Both palms are still facing upward. The right arm is stretched to the rear and the left hand is stretched forward. This facilitates a shearing action in the middle torso which helps stretch the ligamental attachments in the area of the liver and spleen. The inhale is completed as the maximum stretch

and twist is executed. See photo 4-4.

5) Now start to exhale and unwind the body. The right hand moves forward with the fingers facing the hip. The left hand starts to move rearward with the fingers beginning to curl in towards the hip. The weight begins to gradually shift to the right leg. The eyes watch the left palm. The palms are still facing upward with the intention focused on the palms. See photo 4-5.

6) Return to the beginning posture with the arms rounded, palms facing upwards and the fingers pointing at the hips. See photo 4-6. The exhale is completed and you are ready to repeat the exercise on the other side as shown in photos 4-7 through 4-11.

Serving Tea Cups

The next exercise is one of many variations of the "Serving Tea Cups" exercise. This exercise serves to loosen the spine, neck, hips, shoulders, wrists, and elbows and gently moves the liver, spleen, heart and lungs. Energetically this exercise helps to give the practitioner an awareness of spiraling energy in the body and, due to the movement of the joints, will facilitate development of the "nerve *chi*." The exercise is executed as follows:

1) This exercise begins with the feet parallel in a "horse riding stance." The arms are rounded and the hands are held such that the fingers are facing in towards the hips. The palms are facing upwards as if the practitioner is holding something in his or her hands. See photo 5-1.

2) The left hand turns so that the fingers are facing away from the front of the body and the hand moves forward so that the fingers are eye height and the palm is facing upward. The right hand stays by the hip, but turns so that the fingers are facing forward. The left elbow is pointed down, the right elbow pointed straight back. The eyes watch the left hand and the intention is focused on the left palm. Begin to inhale. See photo 5-2

3) The left palm rotates, fingers turning towards the left, the palm remains facing upwards. The eyes continue to watch the left hand, the intention is focused on the left palm as if holding



5-1



5-2



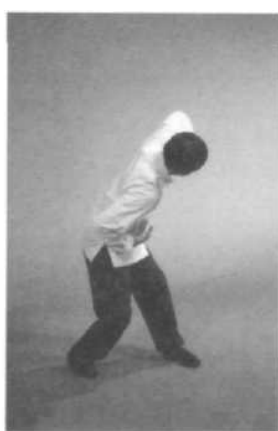
5-3



5-4



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5-8



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5-11



5-12

The Serving Tea Cup Exercise (con't)



5-13



5-14



5-15



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5-22



5-23

The Serving Tea Cup Exercise (con't)

something in the hand. See photo 5-3.

4) Continue to rotate the fingers as above. As the palm rotates, toe-in with the right foot and begin to shift the body weight to the right. The body begins twisting to the left. The palm comes up over the head, palm always facing upward. The eyes continue to watch the palm. This not only helps focus the intention on the palm, but works to stretch the neck. Continue inhaling. See photo 5-4.

5) Continue to rotate the palm in the same direction as above. The body continues twisting to the left. The palm has now rotated through 450 degrees (360 + 90). The palm has continually remained facing upwards. The eyes have continually watched the left hand and thus the neck is rotating through its range of motion. The elbow, shoulder, and wrist are now being stretched through their full range of movement. Continue inhaling. Postures 2-4 and 2-5 also help to open up the lungs to facilitate the full inhale. See photo 5-5.

6) The left hand continues turning until the fingers are facing to the rear. The left hand moves down under the left armpit as it begins to move backward. The eyes continue to watch the left hand. Continue inhaling. See photo 5-6.

7) The left hand continues to move towards the rear and the right hand begins to move forward. The eyes continue to watch the left hand. Both palms continually face upwards as if holding tea cups. See photo 5-7.

8) The left hand continues moving towards the rear while the right hand moves forwards. The left arm stretches back and the right arm stretches forward as in the "Unicorn Turns its Body" exercise shown previously. All of the weight is on the right leg and the body is twisted to the maximum. The eyes still look at the left hand to facilitate the maximum twist of the neck and spine. The twisting of the body helps to loosen the ligamental attachments in the liver and spleen region and thus energy naturally flows to these organs. The practitioner reaches the full extent of the inhale when executing this posture. See photo 5-8.

9) The practitioner now starts to exhale and unwind the body. The right hand moves rearward with the fingers facing the hip. The left hand

starts to move forward with the fingers beginning to curl in towards the hip. The weight begins to gradually shift to the left leg. The eyes watch the left palm. The palms are still facing upward with the intention focused on the palms. See photo 5-9.

10) Return to the beginning posture with the arms rounded, palms facing upwards and the fingers pointing at the hips. The exhale is completed. See photo 5-10.

11) The left hand turns so that the fingers point away from the front of the body and the hand moves forward so that the fingers are eye height and the palm is facing upward. The right hand stays by the hip, but turns so that the fingers are facing forward. The left elbow is pointed down, the right elbow pointed straight back. The eyes watch the left hand and the intention is focused on the left palm. Begin to inhale. See photo 5-11.

12) Bring the right hand forward and execute a changing palm maneuver. The right hand comes up along the forward of the left hand with the palm facing upward. See photo 5-12.

13) The right palm extends upwards to eye height. The eyes begin to watch the right palm and you begin to execute the same movements on the right side. See photos 5-13 through 5-23.

Serving Tea Cups with Throwing Palm

The "serving tea cups with throwing palm" exercise is performed exactly like the previous exercise, however, a throwing palm is added to the end of the exercise on each side. The throwing palm is performed exactly as it was described in the palm training chapter of this book. As in the throwing palm exercise described in the palm training chapter, the purpose of this exercise is to bring *ch'i* and blood to the hands with the whipping action of the relaxed arm. The throwing palm portion of this exercise is the only part of this entire set which is performed at a fast pace. The exercise is performed as follows:

1) This exercise begins directly from the last

execution of the previous exercise. The first several moves are a repetition of the serving tea cup exercise. See photo 6-1. 2) The left palm rotates, fingers turning towards the left, the palm remains facing upwards. The eyes continue to watch the left hand, the intention focused on the left palm as if holding something in the hand. See photo 6-2.

4) Continue to rotate the fingers as above. As the palm rotates, toe-in with the right foot and begin to shift the body weight to the right. The body begins twisting to the left. The palm comes up over the head, palm always facing upward. The eyes continue to watch the palm. This not only helps focus the intention on the palm, but works to stretch the neck, open the chest and stretch the lower back. Continue inhaling. See photo 6-3.

5) Continue to rotate the palm in the same direction as above. The body continues twisting to the left. The palm has now rotated through 450 degrees ($360 + 90$). The palm has continually remained facing upwards. The eyes have continually watched the left hand and thus the neck is rotating through its range of motion. The elbow, shoulder, and wrist are now being stretched through their full range of movement. Continue inhaling. Postures 6-3 and 6-4 also help to open up the lungs to facilitate the full inhale. See photo 6-4.

6) The left hand continues turning until the fingers are facing to the rear. The left hand moves down under the left armpit as it begins to move backward. The eyes continue to watch the left hand. Continue inhaling. See photo 6-5.

7) The left hand continues to move towards the rear and the right hand begins to move forward. The eyes continue to watch the left hand. Both palms continually face upwards as if holding tea cups. See photo 6-6.

8) The left hand continues moving towards the rear while the right hand moves forwards. The left arm stretches back and the right arm stretches forward as in the "Unicorn Turns its Body" exercise shown previously. All of the weight is on the right leg and the body is twisted to the maximum. The eyes still look at the left hand to facilitate the maximum twist of the neck and spine. The twisting of the body helps to loosen the

ligamental attachments in the liver and spleen region and thus energy naturally flows to these organs. You reach the full extent of the inhale when executing this posture. See photo 6-7.

9) Now start to exhale and unwind the body. The right hand moves rearward with the fingers facing the hip. The left hand starts to move forward with the fingers beginning to curl in towards the hip. The weight begins to gradually shift to the left leg. The eyes watch the left palm. The palms are still facing upward with the intention focused on the palms. See photo 6-8.

10) Return to the beginning posture with the arms rounded, palms facing upwards and the fingers pointing at the hips. The exhale is completed. See photo 6-9.

11) The left hand turns so that the fingers point away from the front of the body and the hand moves forward so that the fingers are eye height and the palm is facing upward. The right hand stays by the hip, but turns so that the fingers are facing forward. The left elbow is pointed down, the right elbow pointed straight back. The eyes watch the left hand and the intention is focused on the left palm. The left palm lifts straight up with the palm facing upward. Begin to inhale. See photo 6-10.

12) Now twist the torso to the left and allow this motion to rotate the left palm to the downward facing position. Relax the area around the left rib cage and allow these muscles to expand with the lifting of the arm. Twist the hips as far as you comfortably can. Inhale as the hand is raised. Allow the right hand to fall back down by the ribs with the palm facing up. Ensure that the shoulder remains relaxed. If you would like to facilitate a greater stretch in the area of the ribs, you can twist your right hand until the thumb is facing downward. See photo 6-12.

13) While maintaining a completely relaxed shoulder, arm, and hand, twist the torso back to the left while bending straight over from the waist. Audibly exhale through the nose with this motion as you did in the throwing palm exercise described in the palm training chapter of this volume. Allow the hand to be thrown between your legs with the bending of the waist and twisting of the body. Allow the wrist to be very loose and snap at the last moment as if you are trying to flick



6-1



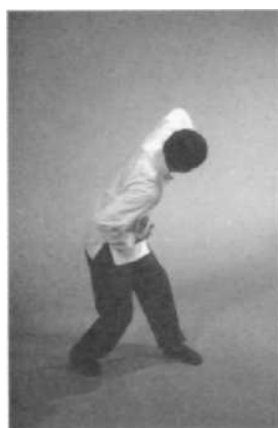
6-2



6-3



6-4



6-5



6-6



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6-11



6-12

The Serving Tea Cup with Throwing Palm Exercise



5-13



5-14



5-15



5-16



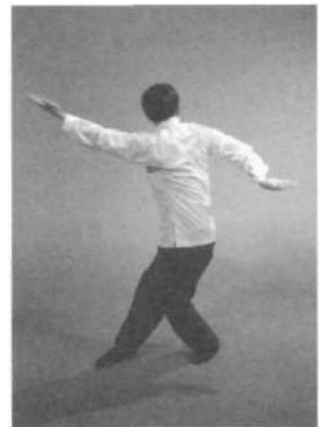
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5-22



5-23



5-24

The Serving Tea Cup Exercise (con't)



6-25



6-26



6-27

The Double Palm Change Exercise (con't)

water off of your hand. To review the details of this movement refer to the throwing palm section of the palm training chapter. See photo 6-13.

5) From the downward hanging position, begin to raise up and bring the left arm up with the palm facing up. As the left palm comes up, bring the right arm underneath the left. Both palms are facing upwards. See photo 6-14.

6) Continue bringing the palms upward, the right palm reaching upward to begin repeating this exercise on the other side. See photo 6-15.

7) You are now ready to execute this exercise on the other side. Repeat the steps on the other side as shown in photos 6-16 through 6-27.

When you are ready to begin the next exercise, you will start to transition smoothly into the exercise from the position shown in photo 6-25.

Yin and Yang Opposing Palms Exercise

The remaining two exercises in this set add a new dimension to this group of exercises. Thus far, all of the exercises, with the exception of the throwing palm movement in the last exercise, have been performed at a slow, continuous, fluid pace. This manner of movement, combined with full breathing and mental intention, has served to gradually increase a full, smooth, and balanced *ch'i* flow in the body. The movements of the

exercises have stretched and dilated the energy meridians and loosened the joints and these movements, combined with the mental intention and breathing, have facilitated an increased flow of energy from the *tan t'ien* to all areas of the body.

At the end of the last exercise, we let gravity and centrifugal force work to our advantage and increased the flow of blood and *ch'i* to the hands through those energy pathways that had been opened up during the previous exercises. Now, in the next two exercises, we will continue to stretch the body and loosen the joints while also adding an element to the exercise which helps promote a powerful flow of energy from the *tan t'ien* to the palms.

This technique occurs right at the end of the motions of these two exercises. As you are exhaling and are about to complete the last small movement of the exercise, you forcefully expel the last small bit of air from the lungs with an audible short burst of air through the nose. The force behind the exhale comes from the lower abdomen expanding in a quick, crisp pulse. If you were to press your fingers into the abdomen of someone who was executing this technique, you would feel your hand being sharply pushed away as the practitioner's abdomen expanded in a quick burst. You can try this yourself by placing your hands on your abdomen and then quickly expelling the air out of your lungs with an audible snorting sound coming out of the nose.



7-1



7-2



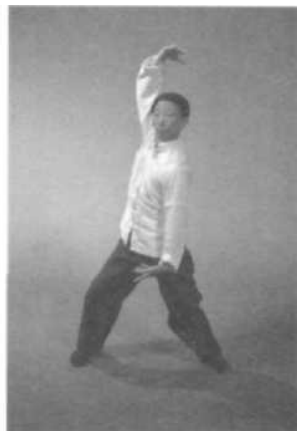
7-3



7-4



7-5



7-6



7-7



7-8



7-9



7-10

Yin and Yang Opposite Palm Exercise

The technique explained above helps to promote the rapid movement of *ch'i* from the *tan t'ien* to the hands. The pulsing of the *tan t'ien* sends the energy out in a burst and the energy follows the intention to the hands. Additionally, the burst of expelled air, which is timed to occur at the very end of a long smooth exhale, helps to clear the lungs of any extra toxins which may not be expelled during a normal breath or even a long full breath. The short burst of expelled air acts to "flush out the lungs," so to speak.

Along with the burst of expelled air described above, the practitioner will sharply and crisply execute the last small bit of physical movement. The entire sequence of the exercise during the inhale and most of the exhale is performed at a slow steady pace, then, as the practitioner is reaching the last few inches of the motion, the movement becomes sharp, quick, and crisp and is combined with the short blast of audible exhale. This short crisp movement combined with the pumping of *ch'i* through the body is the first exercise the student in Park's system will practice in order to begin to understand "shock power" or what the Chinese call *fa ching* (發勁). Of course these quick motions are hard to describe in words and impossible to see in photographs. If you want to get a better idea of how this is performed, please refer to the companion video.

The seventh exercise, "yin and yang opposing palms," is a great exercise for opening up the rib cage and stretching the intercostal muscles. As we discussed in the chapter on palm training, the importance of having very supple and loose muscles around the rib cage, sternum and spine is important to being able to generate powerful strikes. Additionally, this exercise works to loosen the mid back region and bends the spine in a sideways bow.

Gaining an increased degree of suppleness and flexibility around the spine is essential for maintaining optimum health and being able to generate internal power. Thus far in this exercise set we have executed many exercises which twist the spine in various ways, a couple exercises which arch the spine backwards, and one exercise which ripples the spine in a segmented fashion.

These last two exercises work the spine in two

different ways.

Along with twisting, the spine can also bow. In bowing, the spine can move in four directions, it can bow forward or backward, and it can also bow side to side. This exercise works to bow the spine side to side. The exercise is executed as follows:

- 1) Begin this exercise from the last downward throwing motion of the throwing palm from the last exercise. See photo 7-1.
- 2) Begin inhaling and turn the right palm upward. Allow the left palm to come down in front of your chest with the palm facing your chest. See photo 7-2.
- 3) Begin to raise the body upward and allow the right palm to follow an arcing pattern out away from your body. As the right hand is rising, the palm turns to face the body. The left palm drops down to the level of your navel with the palm facing upward. See photo 7-4.
- 4) The body continues to raise to a standing straight position while the right hand continues moving to a position about neck height with the palm facing down. The left and right palms are now facing each other with the right palm directly over the left as if you are holding a big ball. See photo 7-5.
- 5) Now the palms begin to separate as you start to exhale. The left palm moves directly downward with the palm still facing upward. The right palm moves upward with the palm facing downward. Both palms are moving along the centerline of the body. See photo 7-5.
- 6) Now as you are getting towards the end of your exhale and the right and left palms are nearing the full extent of their movement, exhale sharply and audibly through the nose as if snorting and sharply press the right palm upward and the left palm downward in a quick extending stretch. With this motion allow the right ribs to open up fully. Do not allow the right shoulder to ride upwards, keep the shoulder muscles relaxed. The left side ribs collapse as the left shoulder sinks downward. See photo 7-6.
- 7) Begin to inhale and bring the left palm straight up the centerline of the body with the palm facing upward. At the same time the right palm moves out away from the body in an arcing motion with the palm turning to face the body. See photo 7-7.

- 8) As the palms pass one another at about the upper chest region, the left palm turns over as the right palm continues down in an arcing motion along the centerline of the body. See photo 7-8.
- 9) After the palms reach the position where they are facing one another with the right palm at the level of the navel and the left palm at the level of the neck, high and low "holding ball" position, begin to execute the exercise on the other side. See photo 7-9 and 7-10.

Scooping the Moon From the Sea Bottom

The eighth exercise, "scooping the moon from the sea bottom," shares its name with an exercise we presented in the last volume of this book. The difference here is that the "scooping" is performed with two hands to the front instead of one hand to the side. The exercise is designed to manipulate the lungs and kidneys and work the spine in the forward bowing direction. The exercise is performed as follows:

- 1) From the last position of the previous exercise (shown in photo 7-10), begin to inhale, bend over at the hips and bring both hands to an embracing position in front of the body. See photos 8-1 and 8-2. The full extent of the inhale should be reached when you get to the position shown in photo 8-2.
- 2) As the body bends down farther, begin to exhale and bring both hands down near the ground as if scooping under a big ball. The arms remain in a rounded position. See photo 8-3.
- 3) Now begin to inhale and bring the arms straight up along the body as if lifting something. The palms remain facing upward and the hands are just a few inches from the chest as they raise upward. See photos 8-4 and 8-5.
- 4) Continue bringing the palms up until they reach a point at about shoulder level. The palms are still facing upward. In this position you will probably feel stretching in the twisting of your wrists to keep the palms facing directly upward. It is important that you bring the hands up this high in order to facilitate a full breath into the lungs. While executing this motion, keep the shoulders

relaxed. See photo 8-6.

- 5) After you have completely inhaled in the last position, begin to exhale and turn the palms to face you as your arms move out away from your body at about shoulder height. See photo 8-7.

6) Just before the arms reach their full extension, exhale crisply and audibly and round the entire back by quickly projecting the shoulders forward while tucking the pelvis under and projecting the small and middle parts of the back rearward. See photo 8-8.

Begin the next repetition by inhaling and lowering the body as shown in photo 8-2.

Closing

All *ch'i kung* exercise should include a closing sequence which settles the body's energy back to the *tan t'ien*, calms the mind, and relaxes the body. The following closing sequence is one that is used for all of the *ch'i kung* exercises in Park's system of Pa Kua, including the *ch'i kung* circle walking practice. It is performed as follows:

- 1) After finishing the final exercise as described above, stand straight up and allow the hands to fall down by the sides. See photo C-1.
- 2) Begin to inhale and bring both hands up the center line of the body with the palms facing upward. When the hands reach about shoulder height, the palms should still be facing upward. The palms should also be held so that the pinky fingers are about 4 or 5 inches from the chest. Do not hold the hands close to the chest. In this position you may feel a stretching in the forearms and wrist as you maintain the palm up position. It is important that you maintain this palm up position all the way up to the posture shown in photo C-4 as this allows the ribs to open and the lungs to expand completely with the inhale. See photos C-2 through C-4.
- 3) When the palms have reached the position shown in photo C-4, begin to exhale and rotate the palms outward while still keeping them facing upward. See photos C-5 through C-7.
- 4) Continue exhaling as you move the palms straight out to the sides of the body by extending the arms. See photos C-8 and C-9.

When you reach the posture depicted in photo



8-1



8-2



8-3



8-4



8-5



8-6



8-7



8-8

C-9 you should reach the end of the exhale. Relax the shoulders and begin to breath naturally. Hold this posture for a slow count of 30. Insure that the palms remain facing upward. Concentrate on the palms while holding this posture.

5) After holding the posture shown in photo C-9 for a count of 30, begin to inhale and slowly bring the arms up over the head so that the palms face each other. Allow the arms to rise until the palms reach about shoulder width. See photos C-10 through C-13.

6) After you reach the posture shown in C-13, exhale and allow the shoulders to completely relax while you continue to hold your hands up over your head. Begin to breath naturally and hold this posture for a slow count of 30. While

you are holding this posture insure the shoulders remain relaxed and the mind is focused on the palms. See photo C-14.

7) Slowly begin to drop the hands down the centerline of the body with the palms facing downward until the hands are once again relaxed by the sides. As the hands slowly move down the front of the body bring your focus to the *tan t'ien* and sink the energy in your body downwards. See photos C-15 through C-20.

When you reach the position shown in photo C-20, close your eyes if they are not already closed and allow your entire body to relax and imagine that your hands are heavy and all of your joints are enlongating as they relax. Focus your attention on your palms and become aware of what you are



C-1



C-2



C-3



C-4



C-5



C-6



C-7



C-8



C-9



C-10



C-11



C-12

The Serving Tea Cup Exercise (con't)



C-13



C-14



C-15



C-16



C-17



C-18



C-19



C-20

feeling there. After standing silently in this position for as long as you feel comfortable, slowly open the eyes and conclude the practice, but remain relaxed and do not pick up any heavy objects for 20 to 30 minutes. *Ch'i kung* practice should always be scheduled as the last part of your workout and after the practice has concluded you should not perform any strenuous physical exercise or labor.

Conclusion

The "standard eight" *ch'i kung* set serves many purposes in developing the practitioner's body and mind. If this set is practiced correctly, with a focus on loosening the joints and coordinating the breath and the body motions, the practitioner

will be able to prepare his or her body for all of the Pa Kua Chang training which is presented in this book. With diligent practice of this exercise set, the student will notice that the power palms, the single palm change variations, the elbow strikes, and the advance circle walking exercises will all become easier to perform. Additionally, if the student concentrates on "keeping the *ch'i* feeling" during the practice of this set the awareness of *ch'i* in the body will greatly increase.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

We hope that you have enjoyed this book and that you have learned something about the art of Pa Kua Chang by reading this book and practicing the material. Taking the building blocks we have presented here and in the first volume of this book, you now have enough Pa Kua Chang material to build many various forms and applications on your own. After you have practice the solo exercises for a sufficient amount of time and begin to combine them with the circle walking footwork and single palm change variations, we think that you will be surprised at the natural movements which come out of your body without you having to think about them. When you can do this, then you are really beginning to understand Pa Kua Chang!

Although the components taught in this book may seem quite simple, the material which is presented in this book can really lead you into some very complex and interesting Pa Kua Chang movements. Be creative in your combinations of the fundamentals which are presented here. Begin walking the circle, *k'ou pu* to change directions and then execute a low "scooping moon from sea bottom" flowing right into "hiding flower under leaf," unwind from there and move directly into the "swallow penetrates through the forest," execute a *k'ou pu* and then move smoothly into the "sliding the window shutter to look at the moon" palm. From there you can throw and shaking palm while executing and jump step forward, turn back towards the center of the circle and walk in the other direction. You've just

created the first section of a new form.

In studying and practicing the art of Pa Kua Chang, you should eventually be able to spontaneously perform the movements in the execution of both forms and fighting applications. You should try to eventually free yourself from choreographed form sequences and be able to express your art in the moment. You should be able to begin practicing a "form" and improvisationally express an entire sequence without having a preconceived notion in mind. When you reach this point in your practice, you can really begin to research the art and reach deep levels of understanding in the practice for both health maintenance and fighting.

Enjoy your practice! If you have any questions pertaining to the material in this book, please feel free to call High View Publications at (408) 622-0789. If you would like to seek instruction with Park Bok Nam at one of his schools, please call (804) 794-8384.