

# INSIDE

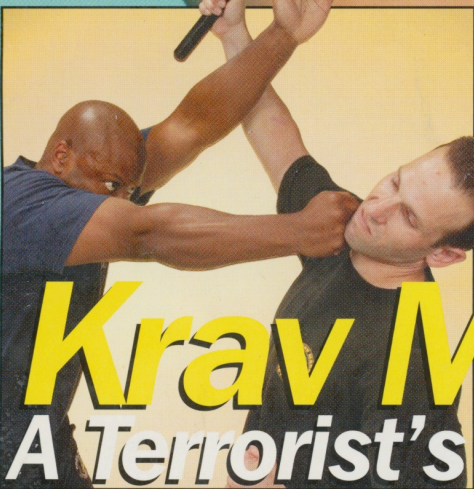
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# KUNG-FU



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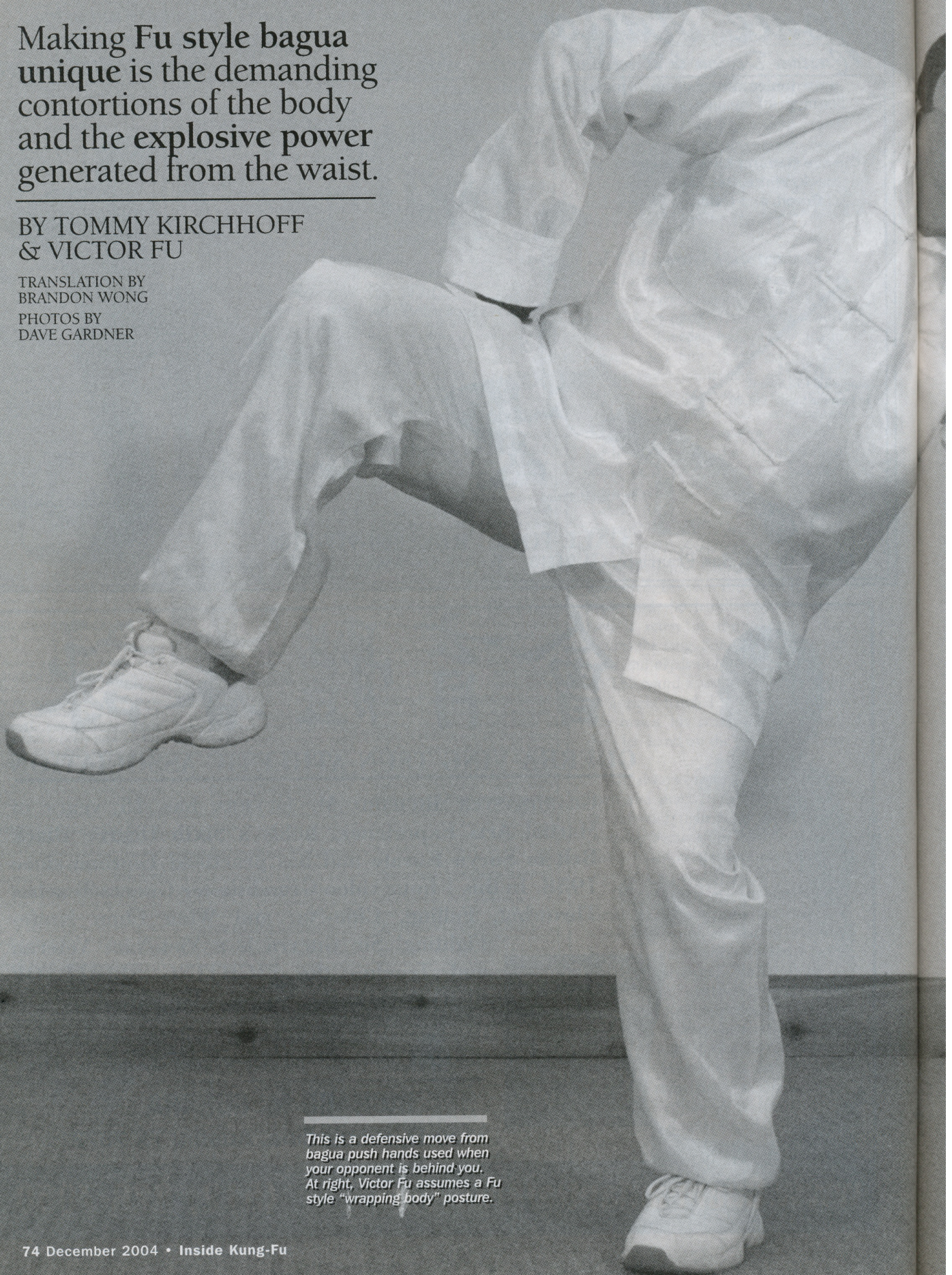


Making Fu style bagua  
unique is the demanding  
contortions of the body  
and the explosive power  
generated from the waist.

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BY TOMMY KIRCHHOFF  
& VICTOR FU

TRANSLATION BY  
BRANDON WONG  
PHOTOS BY  
DAVE GARDNER



*This is a defensive move from bagua push hands used when your opponent is behind you. At right, Victor Fu assumes a Fu style "wrapping body" posture.*





# Evasive

## FU STYLE BAGUA ZHANG

In ancient China, small villages distant from the major cities received no police protection. Bandit mobs roamed free to plunder and loot the rural villages one after another. To protect themselves, villagers sometimes pooled their money and hired skilled martial arts sifu to train those residents who were willing to become militia.

Needing to create its own security, the tiny village of Ma Po in the Henan province hired the powerful Chen tai chi master, Chen Yen-Hsi (father of Chen Fake). After teaching in Ma Po for several years, Chen returned to his home. Ma Po village then hired the famous bagua master Chia Feng-Ming from Beijing.

Fu Zhensong started training with master Chen at the age of 16. After a few years with Chen and a few more with Chia (and endless repetitions of forms practice) Fu Zhensong became the most skilled practitioner in the village. At the age of 28, Fu single-handedly defended Ma Po village against over 100 bandits by killing or overpowering 20-to-40 of them, killing the leader, and driving off the rest.

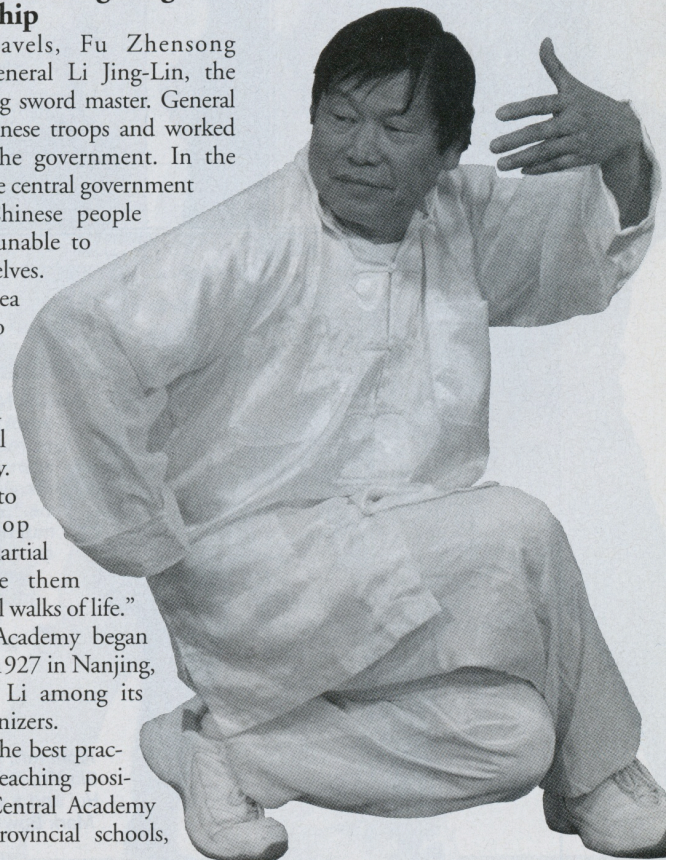
In his early 30s, Fu began traveling throughout Northern China, exchanging martial knowledge with many high-level masters and amalgamating all useful information into his own practice. There are countless documented stories of Fu defeating well-known martial artists and highly polished challengers. By the time Zhensong was 40, he had become famous in the North for his fighting prowess.

### The 1st Ultimate Fighting Championship

In his travels, Fu Zhensong befriended General Li Jing-Lin, the famous wudang sword master. General Li trained Chinese troops and worked closely with the government. In the early 1900s, the central government viewed the Chinese people as weak and unable to protect themselves.

Thus, the idea was born to create a government-sponsored Central Martial Arts Academy. The goal was to unify, develop and spread martial arts to make them "common in all walks of life." The Central Academy began in December, 1927 in Nanjing, with General Li among its main organizers.

To screen the best practitioners for teaching positions at the Central Academy and in the provincial schools,





# Evasive FU STYLE BAGUA ZHANG

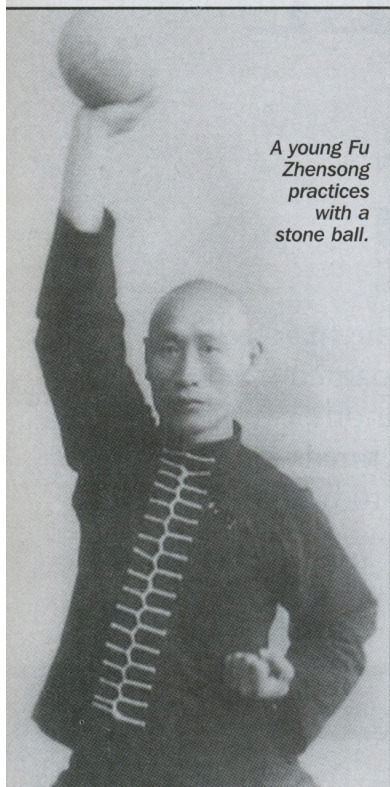
**“The fighting competitions had to be halted because two were killed and many other competitors maimed.”**

General Li, General Zhang Zi Jiang, and General Fung Zu Ziang held the first full-contact, national competition in 1928 in Nanjing. Hundreds of the best Chinese martial artists participated in san shou fighting, weapons and wrestling in a lei tai ring format.

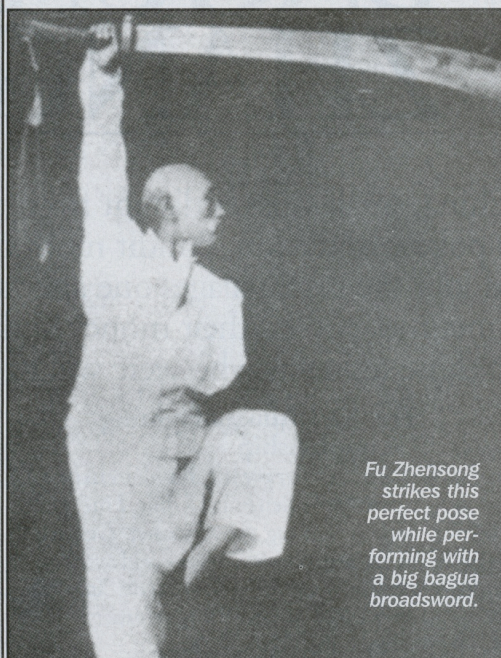
At age 47, Fu Zhen song went undefeated in the tournament. His toughest fight was against Wong Tak Yuan (nicknamed “Charging Fists”) who represented the Szechwan province. Wong, who could pulverize rocks and mark iron with his bare hands, had beaten more than 20 opponents in the tournament. After 90 rounds of hardened combat, Fu Zhen song finally defeated Wong.

This tournament is historically significant in China, but somewhat wicked to recall. After the first several days, the fighting competitions had to be halted because two were killed and many other competitors maimed. According to some records, the hsing-yi practitioners were considered the most brutal fighters, displaying little or no conscience when they fought. Many bagua zhang practitioners were considered just as skilled; however, they displayed more humanity when it came to all-out combat.

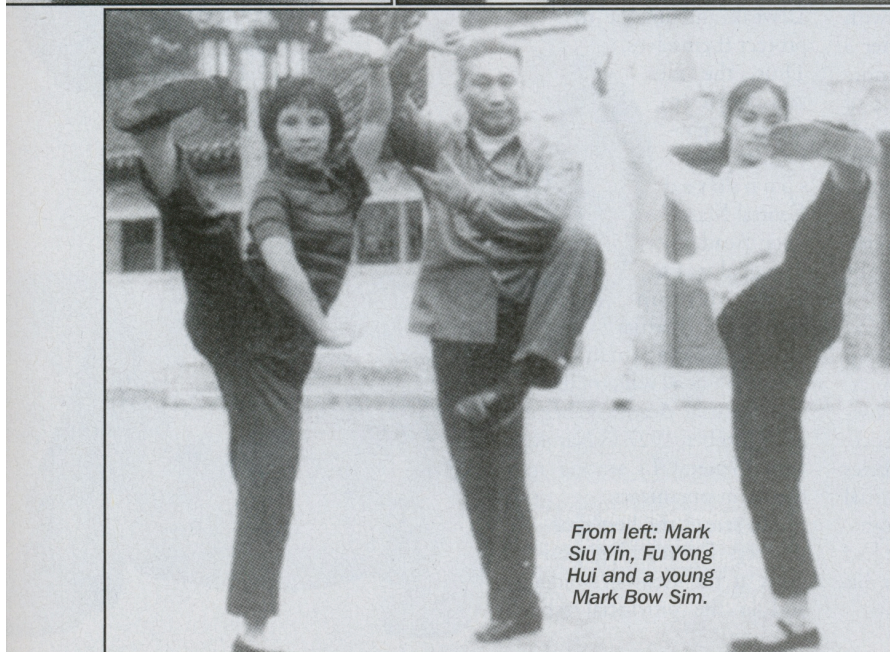
Because the fighting competitions were stopped, 12 high-level artists have been historically remembered as “the champions.” Among those were Fu Zhen song, Chu Gui Ting, Gu Ru Zhang (Ku Yu Cheung), and Han Huiqing.



*A young Fu Zhen song practices with a stone ball.*



*Fu Zhen song strikes this perfect pose while performing with a big bagua broadsword.*



*From left: Mark Siu Yin, Fu Yonghui and a young Mark Bow Sim.*

## The Great Masters

Fu was asked to be the head bagua zhang instructor at the Central Martial Arts Academy in Nanjing. There, he worked closely with some of the greatest martial artists of that era: Yang Cheng Fu, Sun Lu Tang, General Li and his advisor, Li Shu-Wen, and many others.

In 1929, the governor of Guangdong province invited some of the academy’s masters to come south to teach. General Li was instrumental in hand-picking the instructors. They were: Fu Zhen song; shaolin iron palm master, Gu Ru Zhang; six harmony master, Wan Lai Shen; tam tui master, Li Shan Wu; and cha chuan master, Wang Shao Zhao. These five traveled down across the Yang Tze River to teach the Northern styles in the South. This historic event became known as “The Five Tigers Going South,” hence the nickname “The Five Northern Tigers.”

Fu became the director of the Liang Kuang Kuo Shu Kuan (Two Kuang’s Martial Arts School) and an instructor at the Canton branch of the famous Jing Wu School. Fu’s 16-year old son, Fu Yonghui, assisted him with much of his teaching. Fu Yonghui followed in his father’s footsteps, growing up in a world surrounded by the highest-level masters and becoming a martial arts phenom at an early age.

Thus, Fu Yonghui learned the wudang sword from Li Jing-Lin; baji quan from Li Shu-Wen; Yang style taiji quan from Yang Chenfu; xingyi quan from Sun Lutang; and other styles from different masters. Fu Yonghui eventually became Fu Zhen song’s top disciple.

Like his father, Fu Yonghui devoted his life to martial arts research. After Fu



Zhensong died in 1953, Fu Yonghui was the standard bearer of the family art, systematized all existing sets and created new sets based on his solid understanding of martial arts theories and principles. He enhanced the Fu style internal arts by incorporating more waist power into the forms and raising the level of practice.

It is said that from great teachers come great students. While the Fu style internal arts aren't exceptionally well known in the West, the list of second- and third-generation students who studied under Fu Zhensong and Fu Yonghui, respectively, is very impressive. Lin Chao Zhen and Liang Qiang-Ya were both students of Fu Zhensong. Fu Yonghui was awarded "Most Outstanding Martial Arts Instructor" in the Guangdong province by the Chinese government in the 1980s. For ten years, Fu Yonghui trained Bow Sim Mark, who has since become world-renowned and in 2000 was named by *Inside Kung-Fu* magazine as one of the "One Hundred Most Influential Martial Artists of the Millennium."

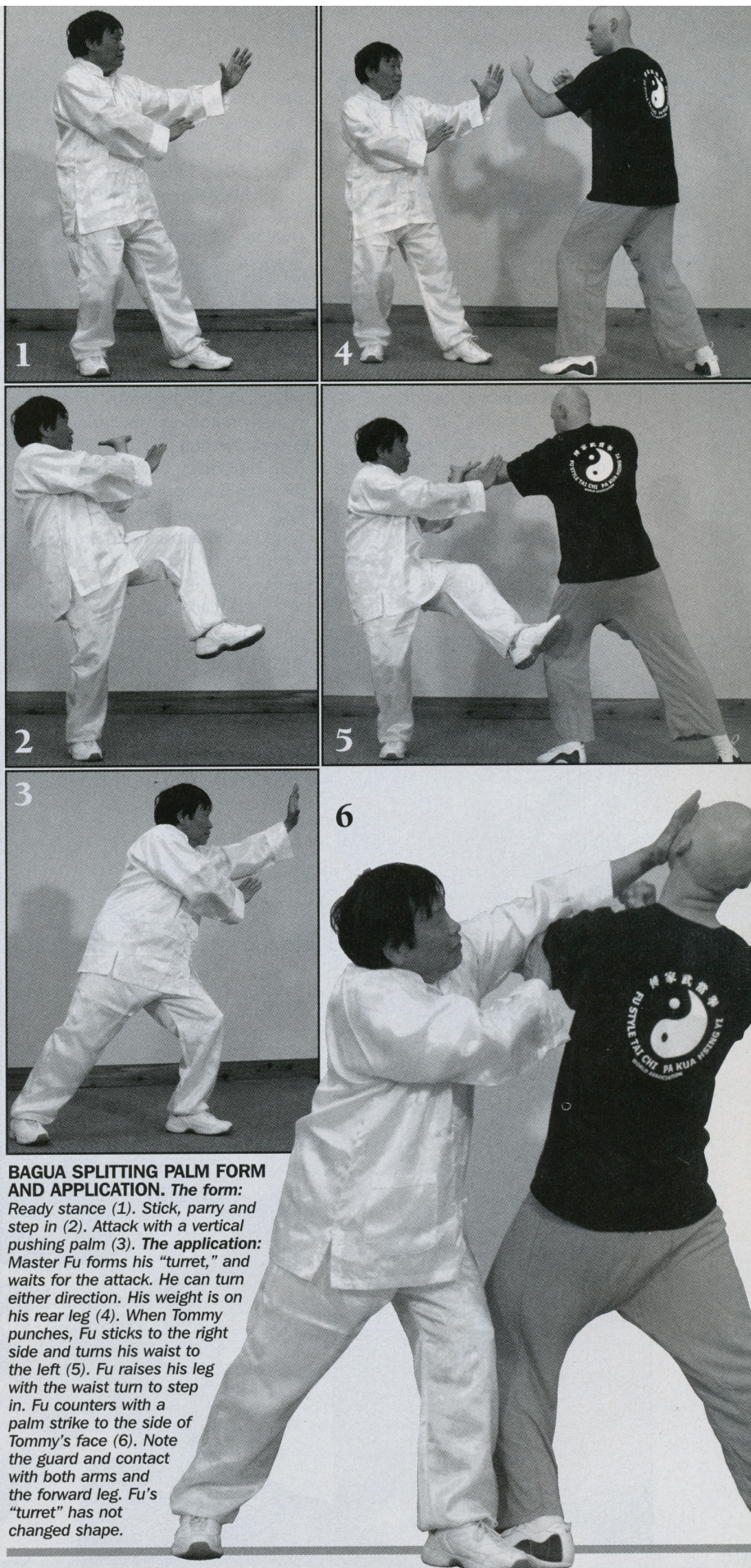
Sifu Mark has trained a number of high-profile masters, such as her two children, Chi Ching Yen and Donnie Yen, Shannon "Kawika" Phelps and Nick Gracenin. Phelps and Gracenin have also trained many award-winning students.

Fu Yonghui had four sons and four daughters. His third son, Victor Sheng-long Fu, has assumed control of the family's martial legacy. Victor Fu, like his father, also began learning martial arts at age four. With the Fu Family System fully developed, Victor Fu became phenomenally skilled at a very young age under his father's tutelage. At age 13, Victor won first place in the Guangdong Provincial Tournament. Victor Fu currently resides in Vancouver, British Columbia, and is among a handful of Fu style grandmasters in North America.

### The Circle of Eight Trigrams

The Fu style internal arts are comprised mainly of tai chi chuan, bagua zhang, hsing-yi chuan and liang-yi chuan. One has only to lightly research the art of bagua zhang before coming across the name Fu Zhensong or Fu style bagua. In the Fu style family, bagua is considered the highest level of the four. Bagua zhang derives from the theory of the *I-Ching*, and translates as "eight trigram palm."

The principle fighting strategy of bagua zhang is to attack the enemy from the back. What makes Fu style



### BAGUA SPLITTING PALM FORM AND APPLICATION.

**The form:** Ready stance (1). Stick, parry and step in (2). Attack with a vertical pushing palm (3). **The application:** Master Fu forms his "turret," and waits for the attack. He can turn either direction. His weight is on his rear leg (4). When Tommy punches, Fu sticks to the right side and turns his waist to the left (5). Fu raises his leg with the waist turn to step in. Fu counters with a palm strike to the side of Tommy's face (6). Note the guard and contact with both arms and the forward leg. Fu's "turret" has not changed shape.



# Evasive

## FU STYLE

### BAGUA ZHANG

unique from other styles of bagua is the demanding contortions of the body and the explosive power generated from the waist. Fu style places a great deal of emphasis on waist turning, much like Chubby Checker's "The Twist." Waist turning is used for everything from stepping, to changing direction, guarding, attacking and slipping out of traps. Fu style bagua zhang requires more bending, lifting, and twisting of the upper body, as well as a lot more spinning than other styles. This is why some people refer to Fu style as "cyclonic" bagua zhang.

Fu style bagua contains four hand

forms (yang palm, yin palm, and Fu Zhensong's signature forms: dragon palm, and dragon palm push hands) and several weapon forms (broad sword, straight sword, staff, and spear). Yang palm is very athletic and involves a kicking step when walking the circle. Yin palm is softer in appearance and utilizes an advanced form of the "mud-walking step." Dragon palm, the highest-level form in the Fu style system, contains the most-advanced bagua techniques, circle walking, and linear walking in all directions. When performed properly, the practitioner is said to resemble that of a dragon attacking in all directions. Dragon palm utilizes many kinds of strikes, and in some sections of the form, the practitioner will spin four full rotations in one direction only to follow with a dizzying four rotations in the other direction. Dragon palm push hands is a two-person form

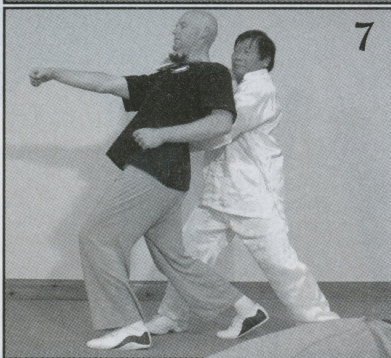
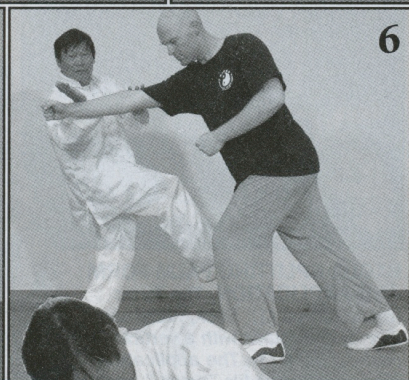
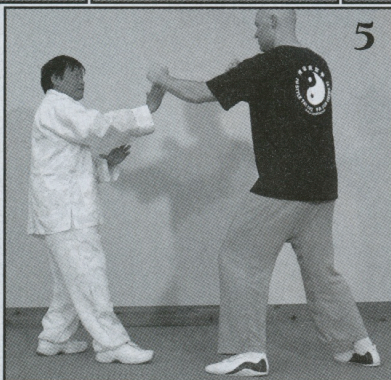
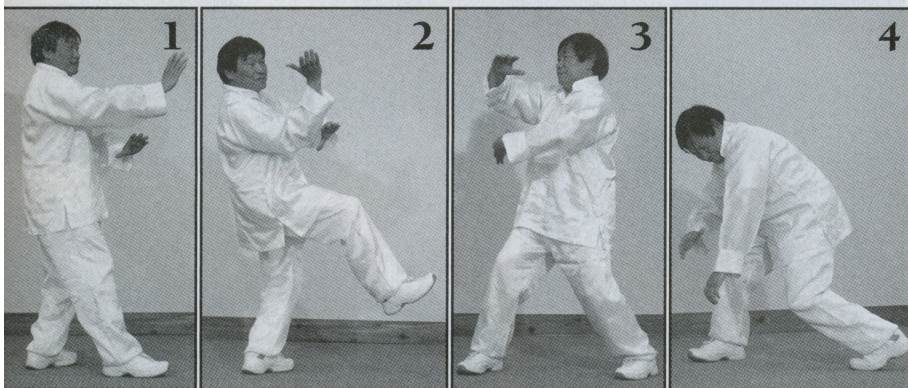
with a sequence of 22 movements (11 on each side), requiring one person to act as the attacker and the other as the defender. They then switch roles and repeat the sequence.

According to a well-known saying in Chinese martial arts, "Si liang bo qian jin." This means to change the direction of 1,000 pounds of force with four ounces of force. In Fu style bagua, the practitioner often creates a relaxed, revolving "gun turret" with one arm long and one arm short. The extended arm is used to enter the inside of the opponent's stance, while the other arm is for covering/guarding. When the bagua practitioner uses his turret to make contact with the side of his opponent's force, he can redirect that force easily by sharply turning his waist. When Victor Fu demonstrates this side-contact swipe, he says "go away," meaning the opponent temporarily loses the use of his attacking arm.

Once the opponent's attack "goes away," he is vulnerable to any number of strikes, such as the pushing palm (strike with the heel of the palm); the slapping palm (much like it sounds, only the thumb points down and it hits a lot harder); and the piercing palm (like the business end of a spear). Of course, like all complete martial arts systems, kicks, jointlocks, chokeholds, throws and takedowns are utilized in Fu style bagua zhang.

### The Fourth Generation

Fu Zhensong, Fu Wing Fay and Victor Fu represent three generations of the highest-level internal arts. Like many family styles, a high priority is to pass them on to the next generation. Victor Fu is currently looking for the fourth-generation Fu style master, someone with whom he can teach and entrust his family's art. Because he has two daughters who are not interested in the martial arts, maybe the next master could be you. ☯



**SPLITTING PALM FROM ANOTHER SIDE, FORM & APPLICATION.** *The form:* A ready stance (1) is followed by a stick, parry and step in (2). Now move behind and seize the opponent (3). Control the head and neck and take down the opponent (4). Master Fu forms his "turret" and waits for the attack (5). When Tommy punches, Fu sticks to the left side of it, turns his waist to the right and steps in (6). Fu's second step is lightning fast, which gets him behind Tommy. Fu locks Tommy's lower back with his forearm and pulls him backward from the front of the neck (7). Controlling Tommy's neck, Fu executes a takedown (8).