

2019 Summer

# Xin Qi Shen

# T.Y. Pang



I was not a formal student of Master Pang (Pang Tse Yao) but I gained and learned an incredible amount from him. I owe my Bagua to his instructions and teachings.



I studied the Bagua Eight Mother Forms and Inner Palms from him for about a year and a half. To this day, his and Victor Fu's Bagua Zhang are still the best I've seen and my goal as a practitioner. His Taiji was very good but his Bagua was awesome. He moved like a dragon or a snake, incredibly smooth, strong and fast.

When Robert Smith's book on Bagua first came out it attracted all our attention since no one had heard anything of Bagua up to that point. We knew only that it was the mysterious sister art to Taiji and Xing Yi. Shortly after buying the book I brought it in for Master Tchowng to see. As he looked at the book he'd say: "Oh, my friend," pointing to Wang Xujin. He'd also point to others in the book saying friend, teacher, or "His kung fu very good." He then started showing and teaching me Bagua changes before the others showed up for class. This is where I learned the Sun basic changes as well as Wang Xujin's Eight Mother Changes.

Some time after this, there was an article in Black Belt Magazine on Bagua being taught in Hawaii by a Master T.Y. Pang. (I still have this article) The article made me want to learn more and it energized my practice.

About a year later it so happened that Master Pang had moved to Orcas Island WA and was beginning to teach classes once a week in Seattle. Before his classes started he did a demonstration/performance at the ACT by the Seattle Center. The audience was a

who's who of Seattle martial art instructors. Chuck, Dave, and I got seats in the front row.

The demonstration was awesome. He moved like a dragon when doing the Bagua. When he demonstrated the Xing Yi animals he'd transform into the animal. His snake was super creepy and his monkey looked dangerous. Some of the forms really freaked me out with his focus and intention. Being seated in the front row was too close.

His classes would be held at the Nikkiten School of Gymnastics by Greenlake. This was also where Dave taught at the time. We all signed up. Chuck and I for his Bagua class while Dave signed up for his Taiji class as well.

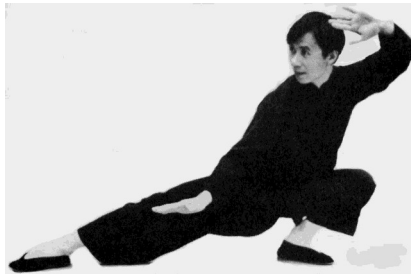
In the first class I was to find out that Pang's personality was very different from the other instructors I've had. The class was quite large with some of them having moved to the NW from Hawaii to keep studying with him. He explained his history and a little about the art. Then he said something quite interesting.

*"Subjectively, I'm not as good as I can be since I teach and don't have much time for my own practice. But objectively speaking I am the best in the United States."*

I thought he was joking with that statement so I laughed. I was the only one laughing! Next thing I knew those around me distanced themselves away from me. Pang really believed what he said. He also said, at another time, that his forms were as good as his teachers. Whereas my other teachers said they strived to be as good as their teachers.



Pang's teaching method was quite different also. Each session/class he'd guide us through the inner palms and then through all the eight changes. He didn't teach one, then go on to the next like I was use to. After the first class we didn't know any of the changes. However, I knew most of the inner palms from Tchoung's lessons. After class I asked one of the long term students from Hawaii if he would show me the first change; he couldn't. All he said was just to follow the class.



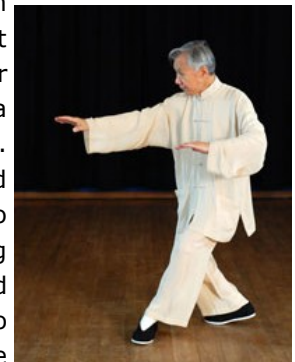
Basically I was able to get a 5 minute detailed correction from him each session on the changes. All the other students would just stand around and wait for the class to start instead of warming up. Eventually his showing me extra attention didn't sit well with some of his other students. Especially the ones that had been with him for a while.

Pang also didn't welcome questions. He took them as a question to his authority I think. He called the various changes number one, number two, and so on. I asked him what the names of the changes were and his comment was that we didn't have to know them, just do them. I learned to listen carefully to what he said since he'd slip up once in a while and call them by their appropriate names.

Pang didn't seem to have any respect for the other teachers in Seattle, even though he hadn't met many of them. He also thought his Yang Taiji was the best and we all should study with him. I preferred Tchoung's Taiji, not so much Pang's. As my classmate's resentment set in, after about a year, he stopped correcting me and started talking about that fat guy teaching Taiji in China town, making people believe he had qi. Word leaked to him that I was a long term student of Tchoung. He would say a few insulting things about Tchoung and then look at me. In my head I knew he hadn't met Tchoung and Tchoung's Taiji was definitely better in my opinion.

After the first class Dave, Chuck, and I went to a local Winchell's to talk about the class. It was decided that each of us would only focus on learning one of the forms. I would learn #1 the Single Palm Change, Dave #2 the Flowing Palm, and Chuck #3 the Double Palm Change.

Eventually someone told him that I was an Aikido black belt and taught at the UW. For some reasons he had a particular dislike of Aikido. During one class he started lecturing on how bad Aikido was while continually looking at me. He came over and grabbed my wrist and said to try a wrist lock on him. The minute he touched me I got the distinct feeling he was about to hurt me. This never had happened before or since. I felt this buildup of energy, strength, and intent. I knew better that to give it any energy so I sloppily pretended to do nikyo. He pushed me away saying I didn't know what I was doing and told another student, a big tall guy, to twist his arm.



After the next class we went to Winchell's and each of us would demonstrate what we remembered and teach the others. So, after the second class we roughly knew the first three changes. Third week we did the same with the next changes so we could practice.

Regardless of style, art, or class, it was a usual habit for me to warm up and practice before the session started. Before our Bagua session Pang taught the Yang Taiji class. When I'd arrive early I'd go off into a corner, thinking I wasn't seen, and then practice. As Pang was teaching I noticed he'd look my way once in a while. After his class he'd come over, tell me to do the move again, and then make me do it over and over insisting on technical perfection. At that time I thought he was just picking on me since I laughed at him. Later on I came to believe he saw I had potential.



*NOTE: This taught me that if you want corrections from an instructor practice poorly in front of them! Though this wasn't my plan with Pang.*

The second the guy grabbed his arm and Pang sent him flying into a row of folding chairs, tripping on a low table. Without an, "are you ok?" Pang said for him to try again. This time he sent the guy through another row of folding chairs and into the wall.

From here on I felt that it wasn't good for me to be in this class so at the end of the term I stopped coming. A few months later I had decided to return but as I tried to sign up I was told I had to also take his Taiji class if I wanted to join. I didn't.