

Mantis Quarterly



Tanglang Quan, like all styles of Kung Fu, has a body of theoretical material that it uses to explain its fighting method. The Shier Zi Jue, or 12 Character Principles, are considered by many to be the foundational theory of Tanglang Quan.

The 12 Character Principles are 12 essentials of Mantis Boxing. Each of the 12 concepts is represented in shorthand as a single character. Practitioners can easily use the 12 characters as a mnemonic device to remember the principles. These characters are also often grouped together in twos or threes, making the recitation of them rhythmic and facilitating the memorization process.

For example, a commonly used 12 character formula in Hong Kong Tanglang is gou, lou, cai, gua, diao, jin, diao, da, zhan, nian, tie, kao. If you read them in groups of four, there is a rhythm and a near rhyme to the words. For the Chinese-speaking student, the characters are easily remembered and immediately understood tools for comprehending Tanglang Quan.

The 12 Character Principles outlined previously can be understood in a very basic sense as:

Gou, to hook

Gou is used to intercept an attacking limb with the last three fingers of the hand. It can be used to deflect, catch or simply monitor the actions of an opponent.

Lou, to clamp

Lou is a five-fingered closure on an opponent's arm to hold or seal off his arms to open him for attack.

Cai, to pluck

Cai is a sudden sharp jerk of a limb that can



羅公崩步拳之跨虎斜補捶攝於一九三六年秋

Master Luo Guangyu performs the second posture from the set Beng Bu Quan in 1936. The twelve keywords for his school of Tanglang reflected his changing emphasis in the art.

be used to trap, throw or cause damage to joints.

Gua, to hang

Gua is a motion that guides the opponent's limb upward. It can be used to open the opponent's lower areas for attack, to trap his arms in front of his face or to throw.

Diao Jin, to trick and to charge

Diao jin refers to the diao shou, or hook hand, being used to catch an opponent's limb and using the trap to charge forward into the opponent. Here, the keywords are used together in function, but they can also be used separately. ►

螳螂季刊

勾

gou

搜

lou

採

cai

掛

gua

刁

diao

進

jin

刁

diao

打

da

粘

zhan

黏

nian

貼

tie

靠

kao

Diao Da, to trick and to hit

Diao da refers to using the diao shou to catch and, instead of charging forward, taking the opportunity to strike.

Zhan Nian, to contact and to adhere

Zhan nian refers to attaching to the opponent's limb and remaining in contact with him, both to protect yourself and to find openings in the opponent's guard.

Tie Kao, to close and to lean

Tie is the act of slipping inside an opponent's guard. Once inside, kao is used. Kao refers to close range strikes or throws executed while leaning one's weight against the opponent.

It is easy to see that this formula, used by Luo Guangyu and Huang Hanxun of the Hong Kong branch of Tanglang, focuses on actions executed on an opponent's bridge arms. Intercepting, trapping, striking at various ranges and closing to finishing range are the theme of this particular set of keywords.

The ideas can be grouped differently, however, and other ideas can be drawn from them, thus functioning to spur the student's efforts to understand the system with greater depth.

The formula used by a particular branch may change over time or a new formula may be added for greater flexibility or to better express a particular instructor's emphasis. For example, Luo Guangyu used the formula outlined previously at times, but also used this formula: gou, lou, cai, gua, diao, jin, beng, da, zhan, nian, tie, kao. The difference between the two formulas lies in the use of beng da instead of diao da.

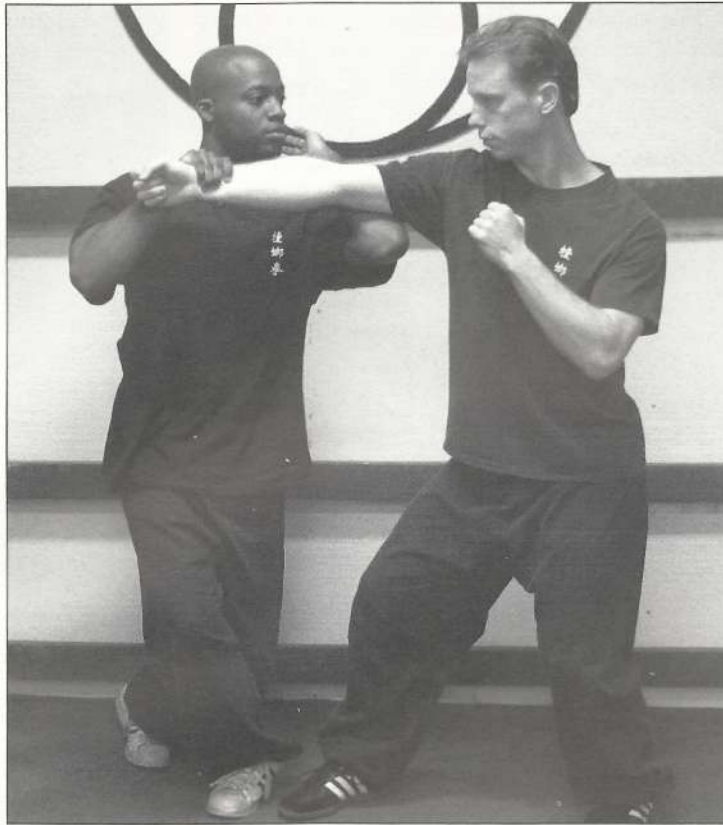
In the second formula, the ideas are being taken separately as principles for fighting. Beng, to crush, refers to powerful strikes that are meant to cause the opponent to collapse. Da refers to striking into an open space to hit the opponent, to fill a space where he might strike or to distract him. The intent of a teacher and where his emphasis lies guide his choice for the series of character principles he employs.

Another example of this type of development within a master's lifetime can be seen with respected sifu Lee Kam Wing. Early in his career, he held to the second of the character principle formulas outlined previously, but he added footwork principles he felt were essential for understanding Tanglang as he practiced it.

Qian shan, to jump and evade, became one pair of added principles, and the other was teng nuo, to soar and shift. These four powerful body movement skills gave his students unique insight into the nature of Tanglang as he envisioned it.

Today, Sifu Lee has expanded his approach to character principles even further, now using 31 characters that even more closely address his theories and concepts of Tanglang Quan. This clearly shows how teachers, both past and present, can and do alter theory to follow practice in Tanglang.

For the student of traditional Tanglang, learning the character principles will come only after extensive practice in the art. It is vital interaction with the teacher that guides the practice of the student and helps him to shape his Kung Fu, not a set of principles. When the student has practiced enough, the character principles can then be examined to enhance his understanding. When used in this way, the character principles of Tanglang are an invaluable resource into understanding the art. **MQ**



In this photo, the principle of tie (to close) is illustrated, as left slips past the guard of right while applying an elbow break.

Theory

Effective Use of the Elbow

The bent elbow of the arm is known as “guai zhou” in classical Praying Mantis terminology. It is an extremely powerful and versatile close-quarters weapon. The elbow dominates in close range combat; it can be used to strike, grapple and take down.

The Bazhou (Eight Elbows) form, documented in an 1842 manuscript by Grandmaster Liang Xuexiang (1810 -?), is undoubtedly one of the most important aspects of the Mantis system heritage. Bazhou is regarded highly among the lineages of Grandmaster Liang. The theme of this ancient form is the effective use of the eight sharp extremities of the body, which are known as the eight short or eight elbows in Grandmaster Liang’s terminology.

The eight short are the head, mouth, shoulders, ribs, elbows, buttocks, knees and neck (the chin is considered the neck’s “elbow”). This powerful form is both an anatomy of the bodily weapons and a manual of the effective usage of the human body in close-quarters combat. The

guai zhou is the predominant weapon in the form, and it has eight principle uses, hence the name Bazhou.

The effective use of guai zhou relies on good fundamentals, such as the Eight Postures and the 12 Character Principles. For example, once a Mantis stylist makes contact (zhan) and adheres (nian) to the opponent, he or she can lean in (tie/kao) with guai zhou either for a knockout or a takedown. Clearly understanding the basic principles is critical to being able to properly use guai zhou.

In addition, footwork is key in gaining and maintaining the close range and position essential to the effective use of guai zhou. Mantis students must drill these basic exercises and understand the fundamentals of the system before they will be able to fully utilize guai zhou.

The following example, drawn from the Xia Bazhou (Lower Routine of Eight Elbows form) of Chiu Chuk Kai Tai Chi Praying Mantis, illustrates one of the principle uses of guai zhou — the ►

About the Author

Sifu Robert Hui began his Kung Fu training in the Southern Dragon and Bak Mei styles in 1972 under the late Sifu Chow Fu. While studying in Vancouver, BC, Canada, in 1983, Sifu Hui met Galen Fok, who introduced him to the art of Tai Chi (Taiji) Praying Mantis. Sifu Hui then returned to Hong Kong to study under the late Grandmaster Chiu Chuk Kai from 1987 to 1991. Currently, he is researching and teaching Grandmaster Chiu’s art, Chiu Chuk Kai Tai Chi Praying Mantis, in Yellowknife, NWT, Canada. Contact Sifu Hui at sifu1@internorth.com.

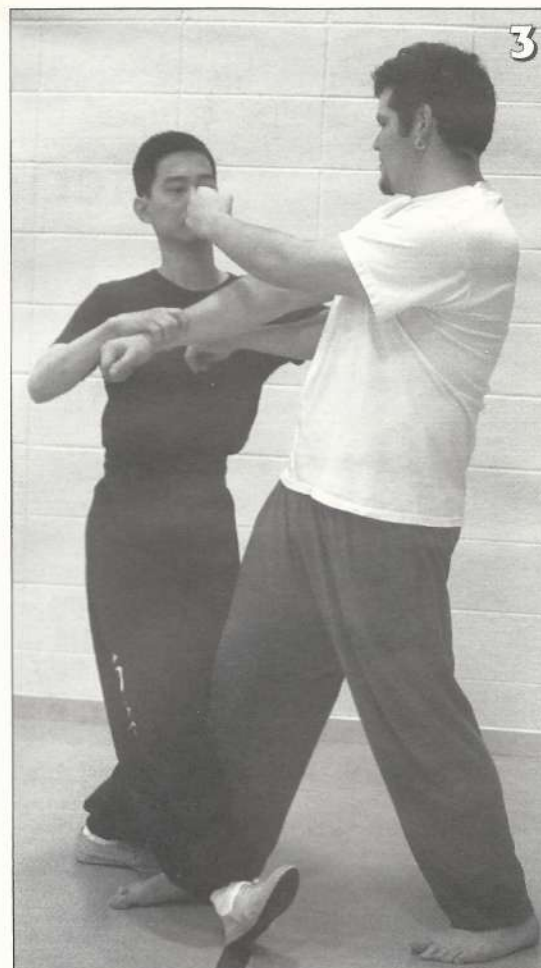
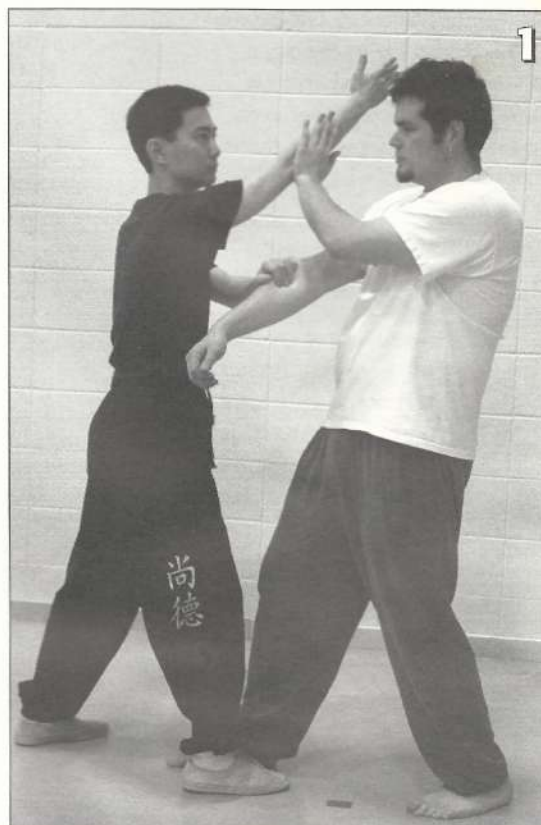
coiling elbow strike. The zuoyou panzhou (left and right coiling elbow strikes) technique can be used in combination with the Mantis torso method as a close-quarters striking combination.

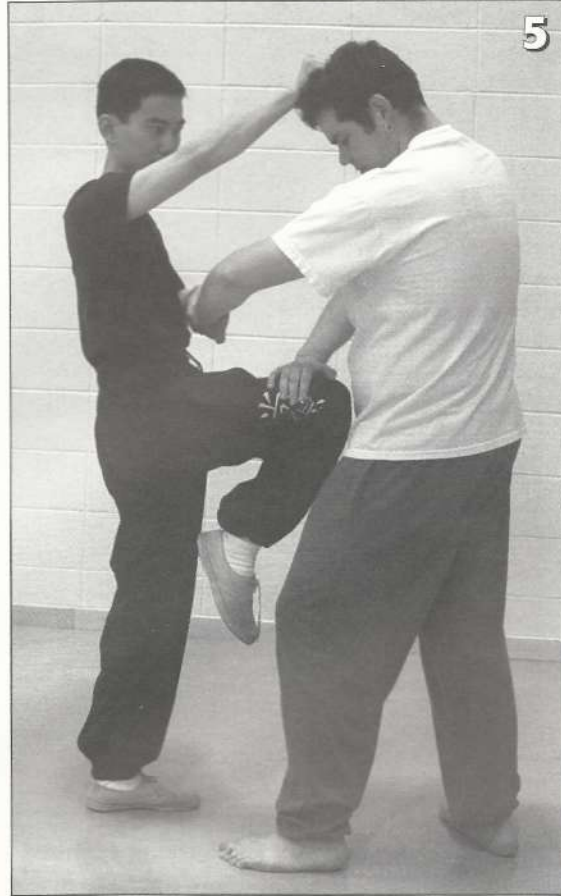
The Zuoyou Panzhou Technique

This set of photos shows the double coiling elbow strike maneuver from the Chiu Chuk Kai Tai Chi Praying Mantis version of the Lower Routine of Eight Elbows form. Here, this technique is used to achieve Xin Ren Zhua Fa (Immortal Pulls Hair), a head-grabbing move.

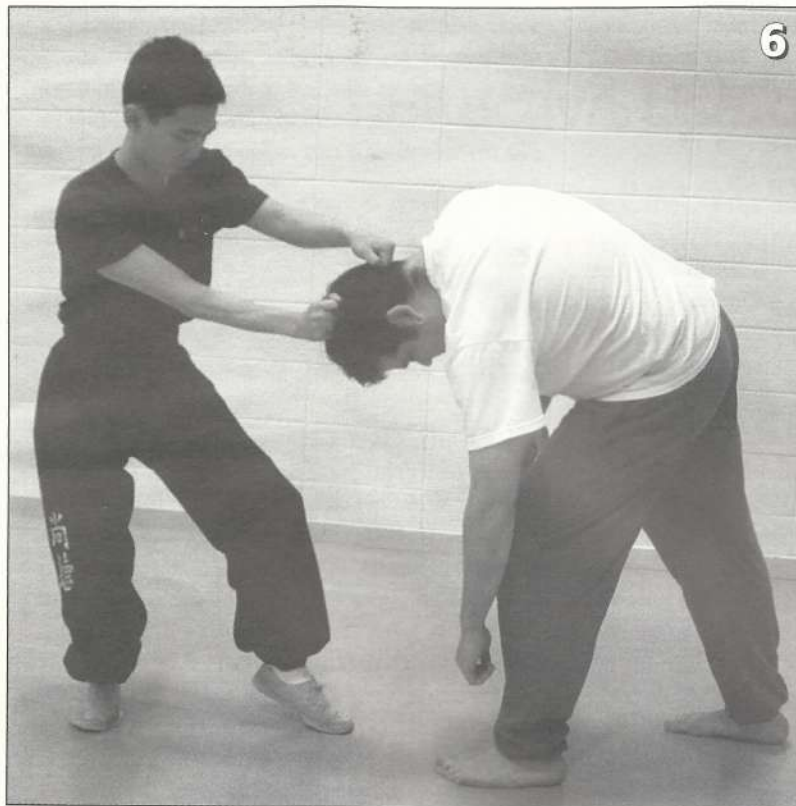
In addition to the essential footwork, the torso method, specifically its turning and shifting, is present in this combination. The two strikes to the rib cage belong to the Eight Permitted Strikes. The knee to the groin and the strike to the back of the head are two of the Eight Forbidden Strikes. The lu shou (grabbing hand) is a crucial element in this technique, as it lends the essential trap for the entering strike of the combination. **MQ**

1. Black takes the initiative and strikes with yang jeung (upward facing palm). Gray checks it with a parry.
2. Black uses lu shou (grabbing hand) with a left elbow smash in a right Taiji stance. Note the position of the grabbing hand and the footwork.
3. Gray absorbs the blow and counters with a punch to Black's face.





4. Black quickly grabs Gray's countering punch with his left hand and attacks with a right elbow smash in a left Taiji stance. Black has turned and shifted twice with this technique, which could also be used as a takedown.
5. Gray manages to block the right knee strike, but does not have enough time to check the hair grab because Black restrained his left hand.



6. Black pins Gray's head down with the momentum from shifting back to a tiger-riding stance and performs a finishing strike to the back of the head (one of the Eight Forbidden Strikes).
7. Close-up of the hand position of the strike.

No Rival Under Heaven

About the Author

Kevin Brazier has been a practicing martial artist since 1982. He moved to Taiwan in 1989 to continue his study of Praying Mantis under the tutelage of Shr Zhengzhong. He currently operates a Praying Mantis school in Tainan City and is head instructor of Tainan Boys' First High School Martial Arts Club.

Hard collapsing solid smashing is a purely unyielding hand method.

It is like the charging attack of battle.

To charge forward one must possess courage, for without courage victory is not easily attained.

Those who train in the martial arts must also have a sense of wisdom, kindness and courage, as well as a sharp mind.

It is said that you must know yourself in order to know the enemy, then out of one hundred battles will come one hundred victories.

—Wei Hsiao Tang, from his book
Ba Bu Tang Lang Chuen

This attitude of supreme confidence permeates ancient Mantis Boxing manuscripts. In the past, the writings of masters were intended to be a source of both technical insight and inspiration. In this way, instruction in Mantis Boxing was a path of acquiring technical knowledge, developing physical skill and learning a spirited martial courage. The writings of the masters were intended to communicate to their martial descendants the essentials for the most comprehensive interpretation of their art. It is with this in mind that we consider the following:

When using fanche your opponent has no place to hide.

When using mantis your opponent has no way to defend.

Adapt oneself to the changing circumstances when using them.

The entire body is used for hitting.

This is the profoundness of short strikes,

The highest extreme of technique.

—Fu Ju Manuscript, Wang Yifu

Master Wang published a manuscript in 1936 titled *Short Strikes of Eighteen Luohan*. Here referenced as the Fu Ju Manuscript, the document has been attributed by many to Fu Ju, the abbot of the Shaolin monastery during the early Song Dynasty. The document itself is believed by many to be the product of a meeting of masters at Shaolin, during which they combined their knowledge.

This meeting has been referenced by others in their research. For example, modern martial arts historian De Qian quotes from the temple's own records:

It is recorded in the annals of the Shaolin temple that the priest Fu Ju invited eighteen masters to the

Shaolin temple to practice and teach martial arts for three years. The best was picked from each and collected in the manuscript of Shaolin pugilism.

—Shaolin Wushu Jing Hua, Di Quan

Although the actual authorship and date of the manuscript has been in dispute among scholars for decades, the manuscript itself continues to be cited for its technical accuracy. It is clear, therefore, that the masters of the past placed great emphasis on fanche and lulu as being essential for fully comprehending Mantis Boxing.

This emphasis has continued to more modern times among master boxers. For example, Hong Kong Mantis Boxing Master Huang Hanxun stated the following:

Since ancient times it has been that to have Mantis you can't be without fanche.

And later in his writings:

Fanche lulu fist uses hard force to defeat hard force and is a purely unyielding technique. Two hands make a fist to smash toward the front and return continuously without break. When this fist goes, that one returns, and when this fist rises, that one descends. It must smash the incoming hand. It is like the wheels of a cart whose motion is a nonstop turning ...

The single hand is lulu. It comes from above and kills in descent, then whips up from below, revolving round and round without end ...

If you are skilled in the application [of fanche lulu], then there will be no strength that can't be destroyed and no enemy that can't be defeated ...

Clearly, Huang Hanxun saw fanche and lulu as powerful weapons in the Mantis Boxer's arsenal. With his description, taken with Wang Yifu's contrast of the nature of Tanglang shou, or Mantis hands, and fanche, one arrives at the image of a fighter who can close rapidly and powerfully with the fanche, breaking through an opponent's defenses to crowd and overwhelm with Mantis hands in close range. Fanche is the powerful, direct, nearly unstoppable force that makes way for Tanglang shou.

That opinion is also shared by the great Mantis Boxing Master Li Kunshan. In one of his books, there is a chapter called Hard Collapsing Solid Smashing Fist, in which he writes:

*Fanche of the central road,
Its beginning and ending can't be clearly defined,
It doesn't rely on blocking,
It doesn't rely on joint manipulations,
It doesn't rely on pasting and leaning,
It doesn't rely on counter strikes,
It has no concern for doors,
If there is a door go straight in,
If there is no door break through the wall,
A purely hard technique devoid of softness.*

The doors and walls are the guard and defensive motions of the opponent. Master Li considers them no obstacle for a powerfully executed fanche. For Master Li, fanche is to be executed outright, without resorting to other techniques to support it. His clear description of the direct nature of fanche combined with Wang Yifu's admonition to "adapt oneself to the changing circumstances when using them [fanche and tanglang]" paints a picture of fanche as being far more dependent upon tactical circumstance and timing than other considerations.

For Master Li, it is the picture of a strike delivered at the right moment, so "its beginning and ending can't be clearly defined." It catches the opponent's timing, position and psyche with an overwhelming offense. This contrasts clearly with the right moment for the much closer-range Tanglang shou techniques that take into account factors and utilize supporting skills that are irrelevant to fanche.

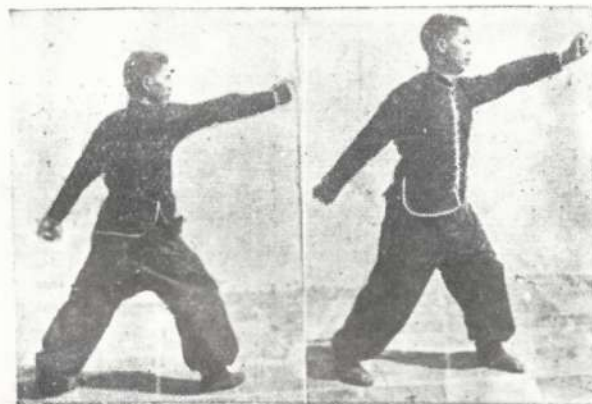
So it is clear that fanche lulu was, to our martial ancestors, an essential and powerful weapon in the Mantis Boxer's arsenal. It remains for the student and instructor to look again at this weapon, unlock its secrets and come to know what these masters knew and wished to pass on to future generations. It is such secrets that inspired the historians of Shaolin to write:

Wang Lang's Mantis is without rival. MQ

說明：循上式，向東方倒退，兩拳仍如進前之番車法，兩拳伸直自上劈落，左右交替，不斷劈殺，步則一步一



第四十式：撤式大番車



(圖乙)

(圖甲)

步隨手而退，手步俱作連續性之退，如「過渡式」甲，乙，再單劈一捶便成如「定式」。

功用：大番車不但為猛烈之攻擊法，且為迎架四面環攻之要法，幸毋疏忽之為要。

四〇

Master Huang Hanxun performs the fanche technique in his book on the Da Jiashi Quan.

Praying Mantis Boxing in Germany

Germany has had organized public instruction in Mantis Boxing for over two decades. In the beginning, Germany's Tanglang consisted exclusively of Hong Kong style Mantis Boxing. That organization continues to preserve the teachings of that school, but has also become a springboard for exploring other branches of Tanglang. The result

is that today, in addition to a continued strong Hong Kong Tanglang presence in Germany, there are also Qixing and Meihua branches from both mainland China and Korea.

Beginnings

In 1983 Shifu Kai Uwe Pel first introduced traditional Seven Star Praying Mantis Kung Fu ►

About the Author
Shifu Jochen Wolfgramm began his martial arts experiences as a child with the obligatory Judo class. Although he was involved in modern fencing for some time, he had a strong desire to study Chinese martial arts. In 1989, he began his study of Seven Star Mantis under a German, and in 1997, he was accepted as student of Shifu Lee Kam Wing of Hong Kong. He briefly studied Pak Mee, Pak Hok and Taiji Meihua Tang Lang, but now he concentrates on Chat Sing Tanglang. Shifu Wolfgramm teaches at his Chinese martial arts school, Bai Lung, in Osnabrueck, Germany.

to Germany. Shifu Pel learned Mantis Boxing in Hong Kong from Shifu Lee Kam Wing and earned his teaching certificate in 1983.

Shifu Pel popularized Tanglang in Germany, resulting in many people studying with him and inspiring others to train directly with Shifu Lee Kam Wing. Shifu Pel himself later left Shifu Lee Kam Wing's organization to become a disciple of Shifu Koh Kim Kok of Singapore.

Today, Shifu Pel continues to promote Mantis Boxing as an instructor in the Qing Woo Men organization in Shanghai.

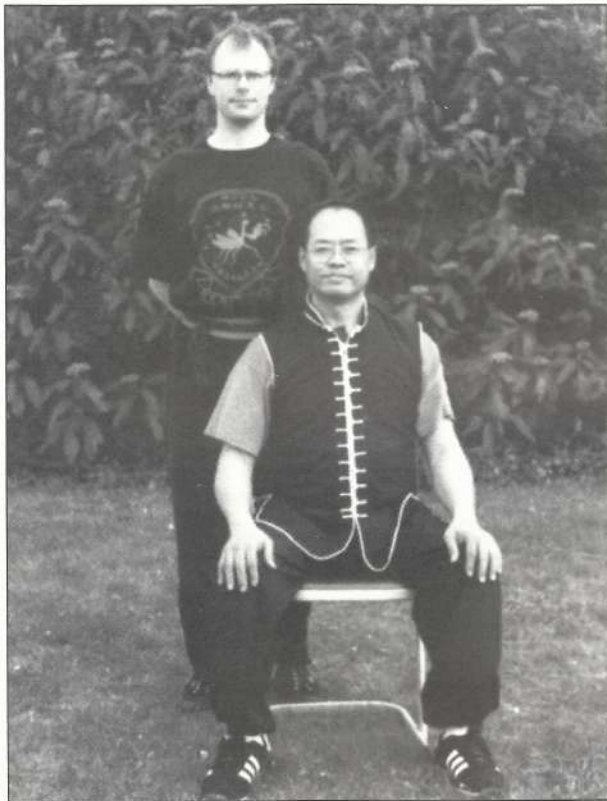
Seven Star in Germany

Shifus Brunke Bast and Joerg Quade were among those who studied directly with Shifu Lee Kam Wing in the wake of Shifu Pel's promotion of Tanglang in Germany. Shifu Lee's organization was again both a resource for training for some and a springboard for others to

explore different branches of Tanglang.

Shifu Bast remained with Shifu Lee's organization and continues to promote Hong Kong Qixing Tanglang. Today, the Lee Kam Wing organization continues to grow in Germany, and Shifu Bast has been joined by shifus Marc Huebscher, Nicolai Schild and Jochen Wolfgramm.

Shifu Jochen Wolfgramm and his teacher, Shifu Lee Kam Wing.



Shifu Quade went on to become a student of mainland Qixing Tanglang as a disciple of Shifu Zhong Lian Bao of Yantai and now serves as the head of Shifu Zhong's organization in Germany. He is assisted by Shifu Thomas Holtman in teaching and promoting Yantai's Qixing Tanglang.

Taiji Meihua in Germany

Taiji Meihua Tanglang is represented in Germany by Korea's Mantis Boxing Association and by mainland Taiji Meihua Tanglang organizations.

Shifu Gerhard Milbrat began his studies in Taiji Meihua Tanglang under the lineage of Korea's Gok Ga Chin and Choy Chae Gyn. He has also studied mainland Taiji Meihua with Sun Shi Gang and Qu Ji Jun. Today, Shifu Milbrat and Shifu Choy teach Taiji Meihua Tanglang in the towns of Lüdinghausen and Münster, respectively.

Mainland Taiji Meihua Tanglang is also represented by the organization of Shifu Zhang Wan Fu. Over the years, shifus Milbrat, Heiko Klisch, Tim Otte and Arne Grandt have all studied Taiji Meihua Tanglang with Shifu Zhang.

Shifu Klisch began his Tanglang studies with Hong Kong Qixing Tanglang as a student of Shifu Kai Uwe Pel from 1979 to 1988. In 1989, Shifu Klisch began training in Taiji Meihua Tanglang with Shifu Zhang Wan Fu and now teaches this style of Tanglang at the Wu Dao school in Hamburg.

Shifu Ott began studying with Shifu Klisch in 1988 and later studied Taiji Meihua Tanglang directly with Shifu Zhang. Shifu Ott now teaches Tanglang in Hamburg.

Shifu Grandt began his studies in Taiji Meihua with Shifu Zhang. In 2002, he was awarded his instructor's rating in Taiji Meihua Tanglang in Qingdao, Shandong Province, China. He teaches at his Wan Fu Academy in Koln.

Conclusion

The Tanglang community in Germany is vital and dedicated to the art, and it possesses a rich mixture of Tanglang families and styles. **MQ**

MantisQuarterly

Steve Cottrell
 Publisher/Executive Editor
 publisher@mantisquarterly.com

April Eubanks
 Editor/Designer
 editor@mantisquarterly.com

Jon Anderson Becky Lawrence
 Copyeditors

Mantis Quarterly is published
 by Authentic Kung Fu Inc., Fort Worth,
 Texas, USA. Copyright 2004.

All rights reserved by Authentic Kung
 Fu Inc. No part of this publication
 may be reproduced in part or
 whole without written permission
 from the publisher.

Subscriptions

For Subscription information,
 call (toll free) 866-328-2347,
 send an e-mail to
 subscriptions@mantisquarterly.com
 or visit our web site at
 www.mantisquarterly.com.

Submissions

For information about
 submitting articles and art,
 call 817-244-2347,
 send an e-mail to
 submissions@mantisquarterly.com
 or visit our web site at
 www.mantisquarterly.com.