

# Liu Ho Pa Fa Principles & Training Methods

by Grandmaster Wai Lun Choi



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

## History

Liu Ho Pa Fa--the Six Harmonies and Eight Methods--is an internal martial art developed by Chen Hay I, a noted mathematician and Taoist who lived in Shansi province in the 13th century during the Sung Dynasty. The first master, Lee Tung Feng, supposedly learned it when he was climbing a peak in the Hua Shan mountains there and discovered a cave which contained a skeleton and several manuscripts in Chen's handwriting. This was well after the founder's death and into the next dynasty. But Lee was so struck by the profundity of the writings that he became a posthumous disciple.

Perhaps, because the style was kept hidden, from Lee's time on the lineage is

clear as it passed from grandmaster to grandmaster. The chart below shows the transmission from the first generation down to Wu Yik Fan, then from Wu to Chan Yik Yan, and finally from Chan to Wai Luo Choi.

As a fighting art, Liu Ho Pa Fa is like an encyclopedia of some 700 techniques. Outwardly, it gathers together the major actions, footwork and principles of Tai Chi, Hsing I and Pa Kua, the more commonly known internal arts. Like them, its training and methods require the cultivation and utilization of the body's internal energy, or ch'i. In its training program, however, it is quite precise and detailed, both in its methods and its approach to development.

## Purposes & Background

My personal objective is to show out the real thing and the real training method. The

martial art is the important point right now. I want to pass my experience on. I want to insure that the proper method is available to the next generation, first, in order that the style can continue, and additionally so that those who may be interested will not have to suffer either from confusion or incorrect practice.

I learned this art from my teacher in Hong Kong and have 28 years of daily practice in performing, demonstrating and talking about the Liu Ho Pa Fa basic principles and methods. Before studying this, I learned Lama, Mae Cheong Law Horn, Northern Shaolin, Judo, Thai boxing, and more. I have studied herbal medicine and bone setting, as well as the other internal arts of Tai Chi, Hsing I and Pa Kua. I have much fighting experience, and in 1971, won the All-Southeast Asia full contact tournament in Singapore. The following year I came to this country.

## The System

To begin with, you must know the exact reason for the principles that underlie the training. You must understand each method,



# Liu Ha Pa Fa Dragon Form Utilizing the Principles of the Six Harmonies and Eight Methods



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9

4. Master Choi, pushing from the hip to the front foot, sits back on the back foot at the same time the arms open and the palms turn down. At this point there is 60 percent weight on the back foot.
5. Master Choi, then pushing from the hip to the back heel shifts his weight to the front foot bringing his hands to the side. Then bringing the back foot up to a cat stance.
6. Master Choi then starts again on the other side by stepping out with the front foot.
7. Same as picture #3 but the other side.
8. Same as picture #4 but the other side.
9. Master Choi moves the arms together by twisting the waist, the using the body he lifts upward with the front hand at the same time pushing downward with the left hand.



in your mind and in your body. It is crucial that you get the feeling in your body. In that manner, from that foundation, step by step, you are able to go forward. Any skill is learned the same way. You build on the ABCs and by stages go deeper and deeper.

This is what distinguishes the internal from the external styles. The external focuses on technique and speed and power. An internal style stresses mind, ch'i, breathing, balance, yin and yang, and all the feeling elements that transform an activity into an art. It is a feeling and a sensitivity almost like a radar that is the hallmark of an internal style.

Initially Liu Ho Pa Fa was called Water Boxing because the idea is that you must be like water, i.e. still and moving at the same time. We are not talking about a stagnant pond but about the ocean or a great river which is always still and moving at once. You must be soft the way water is, yet, your power must be like that of a wave--limitless, endless, never ceasing and never broken.

In later times, because the abstractness of the water image caused confusion, the name was changed to Liu Ho Pa Fa--Six Harmonies and Eight Methods--to express the idea behind the training and make the intention of the style clearer.

The system is comprised of several basic training forms: the Twelve Animal set, the main form, the Tiger vs. Dragon fighting form, the Swimming Dragon, the Mother and Sons Eight linked Palms form, and weapons.

The purpose of the animal forms is to train the inside and outside--the mind and ch'i inside, the coiling outside--but they can also be used for fighting. The main form is more advanced. It continues the work with the mind and chi, and with the coiling, and is used to develop smoothness, i.e. harmony of inside and outside. It can absolutely be used for fighting.

Starting with the Tiger vs. Dragon form, the focus is more on fighting situations. The first two forms have as their primary goal training the body and the breathing. Otherwise, minus that development, you would have only an external style. After you have mastered the main form, though, you are capable of moving to any advanced form.

### The Eight Methods

1. Chi. Concentrate the spirit to make the chi move. This is the chi kung method. Imagination is involved in making the spirit and chi circulation move like water in the ocean, be like a tidal wave. It is like a



Figure 10 Master Choi then pushing off the back foot begins to block upward with the righthand.



Figure 11 Master Choi then pushes off the left foot dropping 60 percent of his weight to the back foot at the same time twisting his waist. Using the body, his left hand is now pushing upward at the same time his right hand pushes downward.

contained fury. It is there, but, you don't show the fury.

2. Bone. Holding the power in the bone. The meaning is to make all the joints connected. There can be no empty or loose place. This method enables you to make the outside soft, the inside solid.

3. Image. The idea here is change the face, copy the inside. Anything in the universe that moves you can copy. You see the image and take the spirit in order to radiate, the meaning. When we see animals fighting we copy their meaning and spirit.

4. Follow. There are two ideas here: circle and through. This involves the spirit and ch'i. The spirit must circle, go out in all directions, and the chi must circulate, in other words, go through. "Follow" means you know the opponent and know yourself, you design and react. You must use the basic principle of yin and yang to develop ch' and power, mind and power, with no breaking. The spirit is like a radar, but the power must be straight. The joints bend, but the mind must be straight and unhesitating. You cannot focus, you just react. This is for developing sensitivity and the flexible instinctive power that enables you to react.

5. Lift. This refers to the crown point of the head. The meaning is to wake up, be alert. It makes the chi and circulation faster. But, it is not focused on. It is comparable to running the orbit in the ch'i kung exercise.

6. Return. This means practice yin and yang, in and out. In is a chi and mind exercise; out is a coiling exercise.

7. CHECK. Calm and Humble. The idea is to concentrate on clearing up your mind, and make the breathing smooth and deep. If you control the breathing, you can remain calm. When you are calm, then the body is able to remain relaxed. When your body is relaxed then you can move. The movement I refer to is the movement of the Chi through the body. When the Chi can move smoothly through the body to make a complete cycle, you are able to breathe deeply, giving your body more oxygen. (Oxygen means energy). this gives you power like a wave, leaving you more flexible and able to react.

8. CONCEAL Fake and Hide. This means you must have the idea in your mind without letting your opponent know what your intentions are. For example, you must signal to the east and hit to the west. Point to the south and hit to the north. Up is unreal and down is real.





Fig. 12



Fig. 13



Fig. 14



Fig. 15



Fig. 16



Fig. 17

## INSIDE SIX HARMONIES

### 1. Body and Heart Together

The basic principle of Lu Ha Ba Fa is to copy the natural image of something. For example, copy the image of animals or things, when animals are fighting, you must see their meaning, speed and power. You must imitate the feeling and take that feeling into your body. The mind and heart is not referring to the physical heart but to the confidence. The heart means confidence. We must build up the confidence.

### 2. Mind and Heart Together

When you get the image and you can imitate the feeling in your body you must build up the feeling by practicing. By practicing you build confidence.

### 3. Mind and Chi together.

Once you practice enough to get confidence then you can move without hesitation. The body and breathing (chi) will move naturally and automatically to the mind.

### 4. Chi and Spirit.

The spirit is a high level of alertness. When you are alert at this high level, then the Chi automatically goes to the whole body at a higher level with the spirit.

### 5. Spirit and Movement.

In martial arts, the spirit uses the eye, ear, and sensitivity. When you fight your opponent you see, hear or feel. If you have

the benefits of all the first four harmonies together, your spirit will receive a signal and send a message to the mind which will instantly react and power will automatically follow.

### 6. Movement and Empty.

When you have the benefits of the first five harmonies, then you will know how to react. You won't need to focus on technique or anything else, just react. Like the cossack says, "No technique, no focus in the mind." The real meaning or technique is to move without thinking. Like a fish in a wave or a flag in the air.

## OUTSIDE SIX HARMONIES

### 1. Body and Joints Together

The three joints of the body are the spine, the back and the neck. Body and joints together means move from the spine to the back then to the neck.

### 2. Hands and Joints Together

The three hand joints move from the shoulder to the elbow to the wrist.

### 3. Foot and Joints Together

The three foot joints move from the hip to the knee to the ankle.

### 4. Hand and Foot

### 5. Elbow and Knee

### 6. Shoulder and Hip

All the main joints must start together and stop together in harmony.

## THE OUTSIDE EIGHT METHODS MEANS EIGHT DIRECTORIES

### Five Hearts Together

The five hearts are the centers of the two feet (the center point of the arch), the center of the two palms and the center of the top of the head (Top Dan Tien). You must have the feeling of the five points working together then you will feel strong.



Fig. 18

12. Master Choi & Larry stand in a ready stance.

13. Larry throws a left punch, Master Choi springs from the hip to the back foot and jams his arms in to block the punch.

14. Master Choi then pushes from the hip to the front foot sitting back at the same time. He pulls Larry's left arm bothering his balance.

15. Master Choi then steps back pulling Larry's arm then locks the elbow with the right hand.

16. Larry breaks the lock by bending the elbow. Master Choi reacts by rolling his arm over Larry's, keeping control.

17. Larry then throws a right punch, Master Choi brings the body upward to block the punch.

18. Master Choi then pulls Larry's right arm down and using the body brings the left hand up to lock the elbow.