

Third in a 12-part series

Beginners Forms

Shuai Chiao:

The World's Oldest

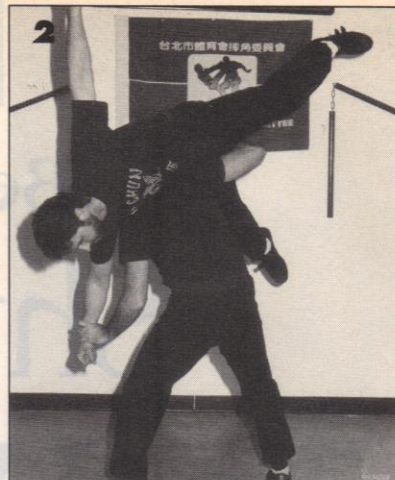
Martial Art

By Gene L. Chicoine

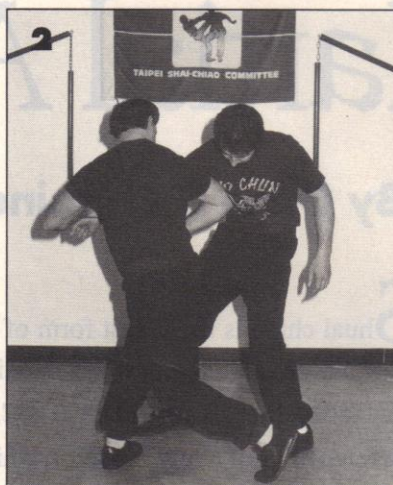
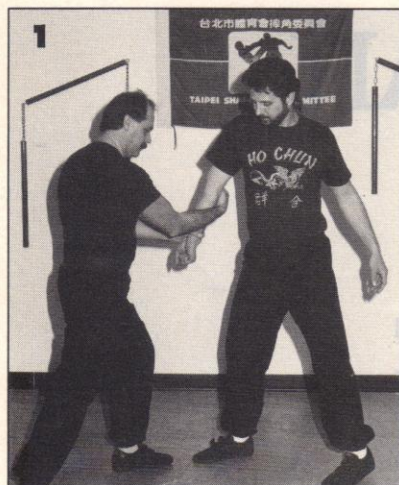
Shuai chiao is the oldest form of all the Chinese martial arts styles in existence today. It dates back to 2700 B.C. to the reign of the Yellow Emperor, which is hundreds of years before any other system. In fact, all the other major styles, of which there were ten—five internal and five external—can trace their beginning to shuai chiao.

Shuai chiao is primarily a combat-oriented system. It has been in continued use by the military and police forces in Taiwan and nothing has been proven more effective. A shuai chiao master must be well-versed in all phases of the martial arts, including punching, kicking, grabbing, throwing, and striking vital points. Later, tai chi chuan is added to the training.

Shuai Chiao



The defender blocks the attack (1) and strikes to the groin with the back of the hand. He then becomes the attacker by sliding (2) his right arm and lifting his opponent over his head.



The attacker locks his foe's elbow (1). Stealing step toward the attacker, he strikes him with an elbow smash (2). He finishes by shifting his weight to the other foot, leg blocks and sweeps with his right foot (3).

The most prominent systems utilized by shuai chiao practitioners are hsing-I, tai chi chuan, paqua and lo han. Grandmaster Chang Dung Sheng, before his death in 1986, stated that no man could become a champion by mastering only one style. Shuai chiao has no required distance to be effective. However, close contact with the opponent is preferred. Shuai chiao is considered the "hub" of the wheel which makes up all the other styles, called the "spokes". Tai chi chuan is referred to as the axle.

It has been proven that the techniques and concepts of shuai chiao are what gave rise to the development of tai chi chuan. Shuai chiao is superior in combat, because it controls the opponent by not giving him a chance to answer a technique. Shuai chiao is primarily concerned with its combat efficiency, while at the

same time incorporating the "yin and yang" concepts, which are the heart of any fighting style.

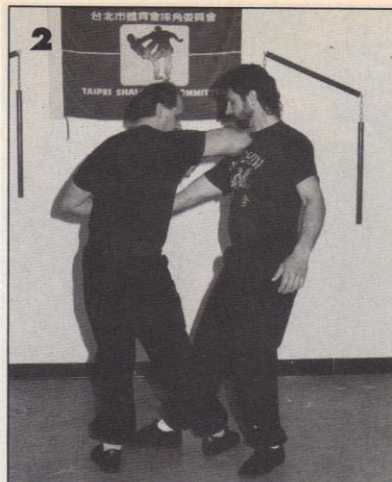
Aggressive attacks

Although shuai chiao is a superior defensive style, it relies far more on aggressive attacks. The photographs accompanying this article demonstrate some of shuai chiao's basic techniques. Since these are some of the first developed, they are shown in only three groups. These consist of "tripping" (leg control), "lower body control," and "upper body control". Understand that these techniques are some of the earliest-known techniques of modern shuai chiao.

There are three branches of shuai chiao—Peking, Tienstin, and Bao Din, the latter being

the most well-known because of its larger movements, devastating power, and the speed of its techniques. There is an effective method used in controlling one's opponent called *ba* (the hold). This method allows the freedom to use hand techniques. Bao Din emphasizes the use of the technique. One particular technique in "hold" is called "szu" or tearing. This "tearing" technique was the source of grandmaster Chang's nickname, "The Fancy Butterfly." Bao Din is the style most predominantly used today, not only because of its effectiveness, but also because it was grandmaster Chang's favorite.

Shuai chiao has never been fully demonstrated in this country, simply because so few masters teach the art. Also, it takes many years of training not only to learn the throws, but also to incorporate the punishing hand techniques.



The defender blocks an attack (1) and then locks the attacking arm. He uses diagonal strikes to the shoulder as he steps in. He then folds his arm from the shoulder strike (2) and performs an elbow smash to the throat. Turning his back on the opponent, he executes a hip throw (3).



The defender again traps the attacking arm and executes a diagonal strike to the shoulder to upset balance (1). He follows with a groin kick (2). The defender drops his kicking leg inside the opponent's and sweeps (3).



This is a simple execution of a shuai chiao leg-seizing technique.

Spotless record

Shuai chiao's record in international competition is spotless, thanks to both grandmaster Chang and his extraordinary understanding of the style.

Grandmaster Chang won the Fifth National Kao Shu elimination tournament in Nanking in 1933. This no-holds-barred, all-out competition involved over 1,000 participants and included masters of every major style in China. In the battle for supremacy, Chang reigned supreme.

This national meet severely tested the ability, strength, and skill of each master and his respective style. The winner of this tournament was fully acknowledged to be the undisputed champion of all of China. Grandmaster Chang won it again in 1948. Such open, freestyle tournaments were never held again,

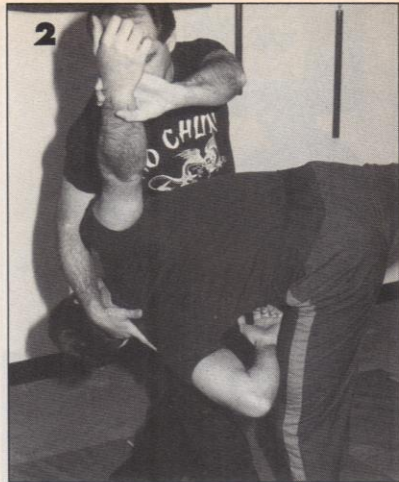
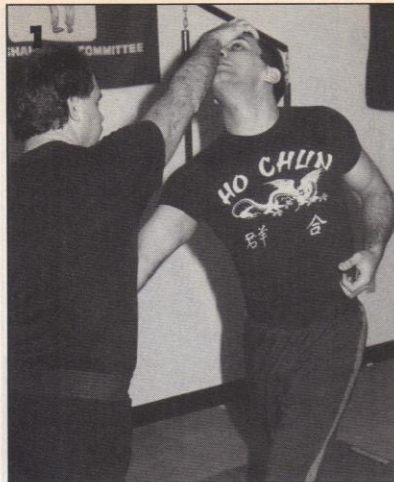
leaving grandmaster Chang as the last truly tested fighter open to challenge by anyone. Chang remained undefeated until his death in 1986.

Period of learning

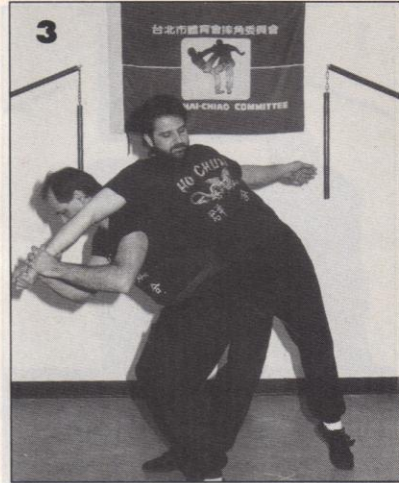
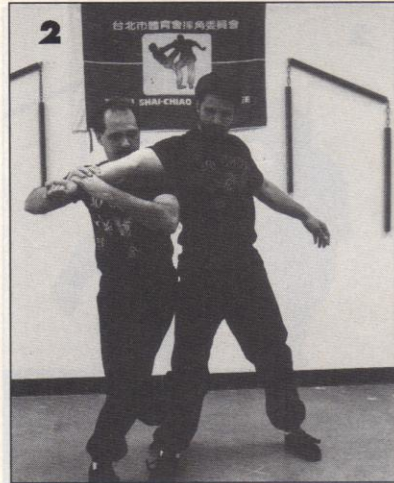
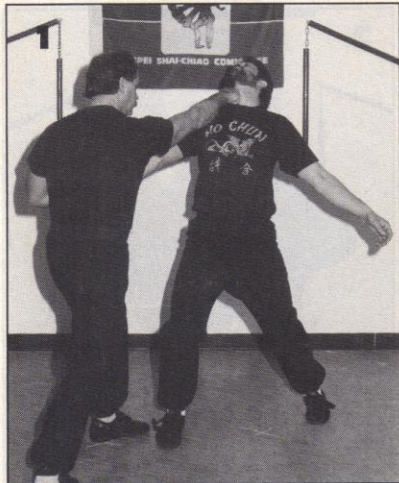
After winning the tournament in Hankang, Chang traveled throughout China, learning techniques from masters who excelled in one particular technique. Even though Chang could defeat these teachers, whose number totaled approximately 70, he trained with them just to learn their one particular technique. Just 26 of these techniques were passed on to me, and only a select few have been shown or taught to my students.

Shuai chiao was so unbeatable that it was cut from further competitions. This has led to its relative anonymity outside China and Tai-

Shuai Chiao



The defender traps the striking arm (1) and strikes to the attacker's forehead. The defender then slides (2) the attacking hand over the top of the head and in a twisting motion executes lower body control.



The defender once again attacks (1) the trapping arm and punches the attacker's throat. Using a spinning steal step, the defender pulls the attacking arm on top of his shoulder (2). The defender then turns his back on the attacker (3), pulls and breaks the arm and executes a shoulder throw.

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The International Shuai Chiao Association was founded by grandmaster Chang and is the sole governing body and the only legitimate organization qualified to teach and demonstrate shuai chiao. There are three main branches outside Taiwan: in New York (master Jeng Hsing Ping); Tallmadge, Ohio (master Gene Chicoine, president), which is the headquarters for the ISCA; and Austin, Texas (sifu Dave Pickens).

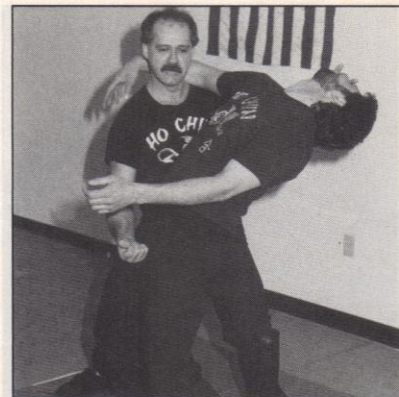
Because of the enormous amount of knowledge to be mastered, shuai chiao practitioners are sometimes critical of students in other styles, especially the internal arts. Shuai chiao practitioners are highly skilled in hsing-I and paqua thanks to additional knowledge provided by grandmaster Wong of Taipei, Taiwan.

Grandmaster Wong trained with Chang in the famous Hanking Academy. Grandmaster Wong, as was his father before, is the head of the hsing-

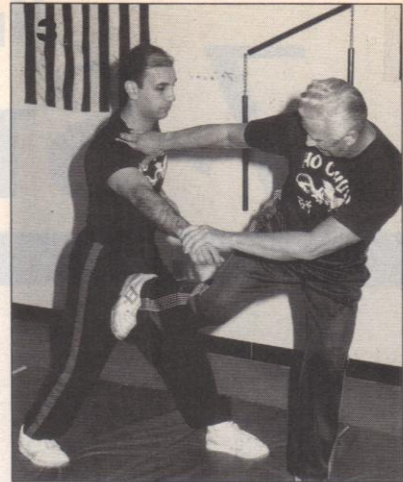
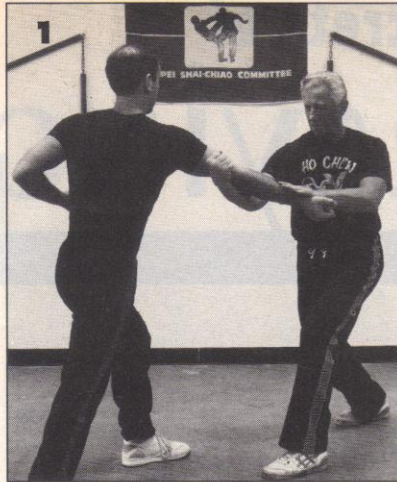
I and paqua systems in Taiwan and Mainland China.

I would like to leave you with a bit of factual information. In the annals of Chinese martial arts history, no person or style went totally undefeated for well over 50 years—except grandmaster Chang and his shuai chiao system. Amid all the competing and conflicting claims of superiority made by later-day masters, no one except the disciples of grandmaster Chang can state that their teacher defeated the instructors from all other styles. It is said that grandmaster Chang took at least 60 percent of all the known Chinese martial arts with him. The remainder is to be passed on by his students and disciples.

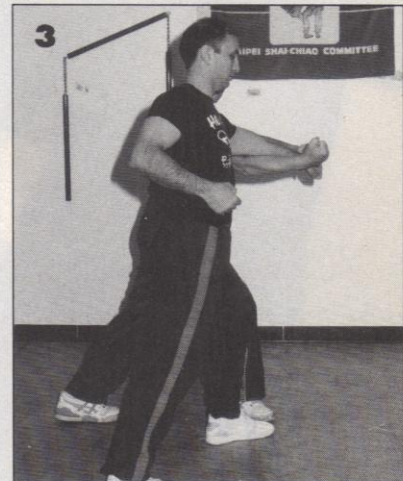
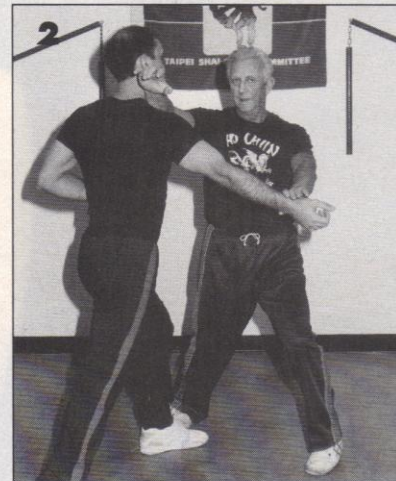
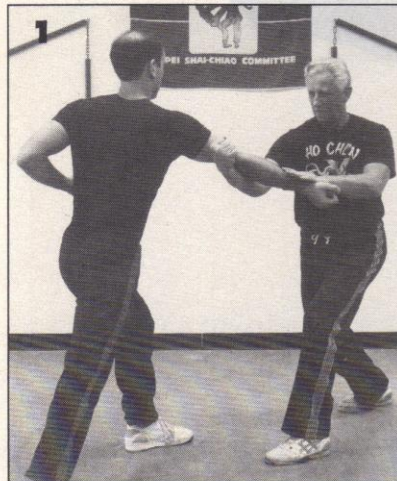
About the Author: Gene L. Chicoine is the recognized grandmaster of the International Shuai Chiao Association. He is a former contributing editor of Inside Kung-Fu.



This is a defense against a neck surrounding. The best move is an eyebrow sweep and strike to the groin.

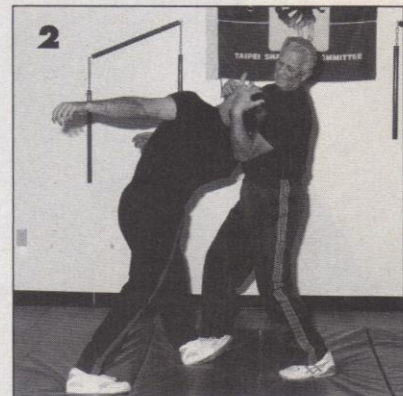
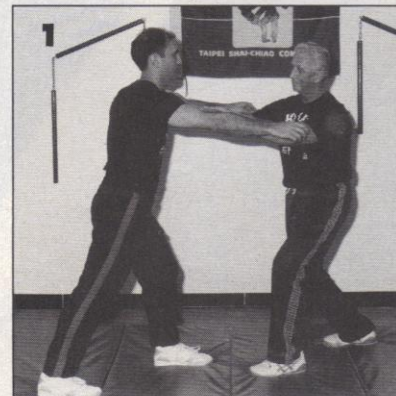


Start this defense by elbow locking the opponent's attacking arm (1). He then pulls the attacking arm (2), and thrusts with the heel to the pelvic area. The defender then spins (3) and thrusts with the rear heel to the same area. He also sets himself up for a throw, if necessary.



The defender begins by locking and breaking the right arm (1). Using a side steal step, the defender steps to the left and side chops the throat (2). The defender continues the cross-step move (3) and ends in a left forward stance, where he breaks the left arm.

“Shuai chiao was so unbeatable, it was cut from further competitions.”



This is a typical inside sweep block, used by many internal stylists (1). The defender then steps inside (2), grabs his opponent's head and in a sharp twisting motion, breaks his neck.

TAIPEI SHAI-CHIAO COMMITTEE

