

CHOY LEE FUT—The

By Wayne Carisi, with master Fu Hang Ng



Master Fu Hang Ng (above) assumes a single-leg lotus position. At right, master Ng, the great, great grandson of choy lee fut founder Chan Heung, performs a sow choi, or sweeping fist strike.

Choylee fut is one of the most popular and effective kung-fu styles in existence. It owes much of its genesis to the siu lam kung-fu system and has a colorful history which spans over 160 years. It is through the exploits of its creator that one can get a better understanding and appreciation for this highly regarded fighting system.

Aug. 12, 1997 marks the anniversary of the death of Chan Heung, the founding father of choy lee fut kung-fu. He was born July 10, 1806 and died Aug. 12, 1875 at the age of 69.

Chan Heung was born in King Mui Village in the Sun Wui district of Kwang Tung province. As a young child, he would often accompany Chan Yuen Wu, an elder clansman, on his travels from village to village performing feats of kung-fu for a living. Chan Yuen Wu was a practitioner of fut gar (Buddist) kung-fu. By the age of 15, under Chan Yuen Wu's tutelage, Chan Heung was able to defeat any challengers from nearby villages. Two years later, Chan Yuen Wu became seriously ill and could no longer teach his still-eager student.

The Learning Tree

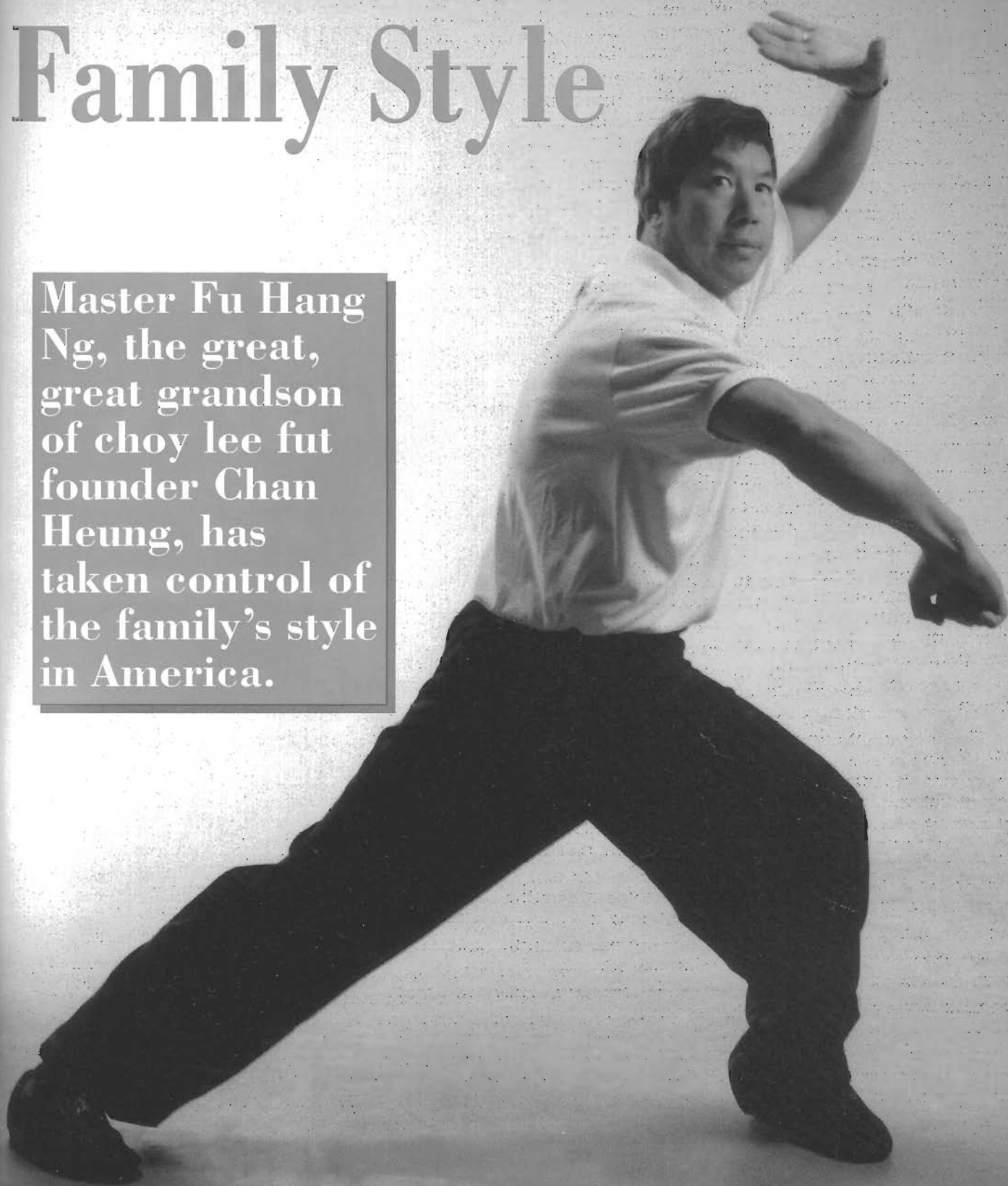
Determined to learn more kung-fu, Chan Heung set out to find another teacher. The diligent student soon found master Lee Yau Shan, who was a brilliant doctor of Chinese Medicine and a former monk. After four years of teaching Chan

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Making his first appearance in *Inside Kung-Fu*, Wayne Carisi is a Southern California-based student of Fu Hang Ng. Master Fu Hang Ng, the great, great grandson of Chan Heung, can be reached at (213) 335-2394.

Family Style

Master Fu Hang Ng, the great, great grandson of choy lee fut founder Chan Heung, has taken control of the family's style in America.



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Heung, Lee Yau Shan broke the news to him that he had to go away and visit a friend. The truth was that he was a survivor of a destroyed monastery and was afraid his identity was going to be revealed. Seeing how diligent Chan Heung was as a student and how hungry he was to learn more, Lee suggested that he continue his studies with Lee's elder brother, a monk named Choy Fook, who was living in a Sui Lam Monastery on Mount Lau Fou in Lou Fou Shan.

Chan Heung, armed with a letter of recommendation from Lee Yau Shan, journeyed to the mountaintop. Upon finding monk Choy Fook, Chan handed him the letter. Choy Fook liked what he read so much he decided to accept Chan as his disciple, but only if Chan would commit to seven years of training and learning. Chan did not have to think twice about the offer and promptly kneeled before his new master.

The long, hard seven years molded Chan Heung into a complete martial artist. He had absorbed everything that monk Choy Fook knew and passed on to him. He soon bid his master farewell and left the Siu Lam Monastery for his home village. Once Chan Heung settled back home in King Mui Village, he immediately began to teach his fellow clansmen all that he had learned. It wasn't too long before he decided to create a style unique to his own vision and abilities.

A Superior System

After 20 years of refining his skills and combining what he had learned from all three of his teachers, Chan Heung had created a superior fighting system.

To honor his mentors, Choy Fook, Lee Yau Shan and Chan Yuen Wu, Chan Heung



Chan Kit Fong (third from right) and master Ho Ngau help Chan Heung celebrate his birthday. This photo was taken in Hong Kong in 1960.



Chan Kit Fong joins a group of choy lee fut practitioners from Singapore who came to Hong Kong to pay their respects to Chan Heung at a birthday celebration in 1969.



A birthday celebration for Chan Heung in 1973. Seated in the front row is Chan Kit Fong. Next to her is master Ho Ngau, famous for his wooden dummy techniques. Standing behind Fong is her son, master Fu Hang Ng. Standing on master Ngau's right is sifu Chan Yiu Wun, master Ng's uncle, who was famous for his nine dragon trident weapon.



Chan Kit Fong stands with master Woo Van Cheuk, choy lay fut grandmaster Doc-Fai Wong's teacher, during a celebration of Chan Heung's birthday in 1965.



A Chan family portrait taken in Canton, China, in 1952. In the middle of the second row is Chan Yiu Chi and his wife. Seated in the first row from left is a 14-year-old master Fu Hang Ng. Far right in the last row is Chan Kit Fong. Second from the right in the first row is master Ng's cousin, grandmaster Chan Wan fa. His father, master Chan Wan Hon, can be found in the last row, third from the right.



Chan Kit Fong performs a sun kiu technique from a choy lee fut paqua form. This was taken in a Hong Kong park in 1974



Grandmaster Chan Yiu Chi (left) with his wife and four students at the Choy Lee Fut gymnasium. This photo was taken in 1943 in Canton, China. Above, a dapper young Fu Hang Ng poses for this photo in Hong Kong, circa 1972.

“Master Ng believes a student who does not master the three basic forms cannot properly perform the advanced boxing and weaponry sets of choy lee fut.”

used their “sir” names to bless his new fighting style. Instead of using Chan Yuen Wu’s name, he substituted fut (meaning Buddha) in honor of the fut gar system Chan Yuen Wu passed on to him. The name choy lee fut was born.

Choy lee fut has gained tremendous popularity both here and abroad since its founder died. In addition, practitioners of choy lee fut have a long track record for full-contact tournament supremacy.

There are several different sects of choy lee fut, which is sometimes why the name is spelled differently. You might see it written as choy li fut or choy lay fut. The Mandarin pronunciation and spelling is tsai li fo. Two other names are the Hung-Sing and Bok-Sing, which are known as the first schools started outside the Chan Family. Another name used is the Family Style choy lee fut. This style was handed down from father to son, grandfather to grandson and sometimes daughter or grand daughter. One hundred and thirty-eight forms are recorded in the Chan Family archives. There are 48 fist forms alone ranging from the basic ng lun ma to the advanced techniques of the choy lee fut wooden dummy.

Not all these forms were taught outside the Chan Family. For example, the four 18 lohan chi kung sets and the eight paqua forms were only recently taught to outsiders.

On the outskirts of Chinatown in Los Angeles lives one of the world’s top masters of the Chan Family style choy lee fut. His name is Fu Hang Ng and he is the fourth-generation direct family descendant to the founder Chan Heung. His name is different because his relation to Chan Heung is through his mother, Chan Kit Fong, who is also a fourth-generation descendant under her father, grandmaster Chan Yui Chi. Chan Yui Chi was Chan Heung’s grandson and became the third-generation grandmaster of choy lee fut. Chan Yui Chi’s father was Chan Koon Pak, Chan Heung’s son and the second grandmaster of choy lee fut.

Instilling Discipline

Grandmaster Chan Koon Pak mastered his

Master Fu Hang Ng demonstrates the ng lun ma or five wheel horse set hand techniques.



A ready stance.



Yeung-kiu or double mirror palm.



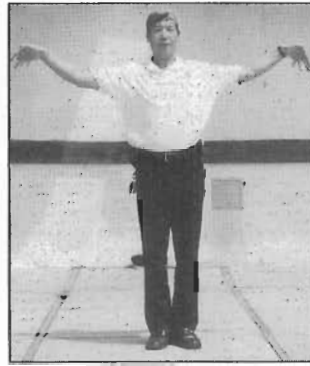
Poon-kiu or double clinging down block.



Gum-jin or golden scissors.



Sun-kiu or upward arrow fingers.



Chum-kiu or downward sword fingers.

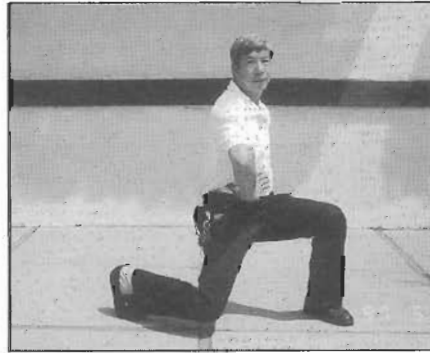


Quan-kiu or forearm block.

Master Fu Hang Ng performs the ng lun ma or five wheel horse set stances.



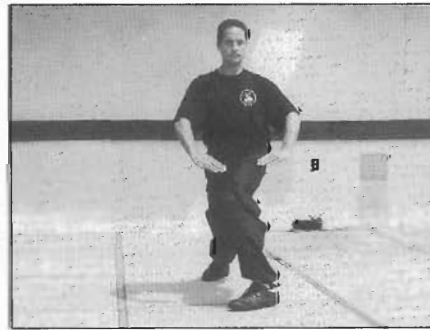
He opens by doing a diu ma or leaning cat stance.



He then moves to lok quel ma or kneeling stance.



This is followed by a lau-ma or twisting horse stance.



And finally, a double poon-kiu from the ding ji ma stance or double downward clinging block from a front bow stance.



From a ready stance (1), the student attacks (2) master Ng with a kwa-choi. Master Ng intercepts (3) the strike with a double right lop-kiu, then counters (4) the arm with a left chop-kiu. He finishes with a bow-jeung (5), which takes the enemy to the ground (6).



From a ready stance (1), a student attacks (2) master Ng with a cup-choi. Master Ng counters (3) with a gong-teung (upper block) and palm strike to the chin (4-6).

“After 20 years of refining his skills and combining what he had learned from his three teachers, Chan Heung had created a superior fighting system.”

father's style at a very young age. In his older years he became a stern disciplinarian. That same approach to learning was also instilled into his son, Chan Yui Chi.

Grandmaster Chan Yui Chi seldom turned his thoughts away from kung-fu. Even when sitting idle his feet could be seen practicing. This kind of incessant work made Chan Yui Chi an outstanding exponent of the speed, power and agility that characterize his fighting system.

According to master Fu Hang Ng, grandmaster Chan Yui Chi was responsible for organizing the entire system of choy lee fut. He recorded every form by carefully writing down their movements and its applications. These records remain safely guarded by Chan Family.

Grandmaster Chan Yui Chi was also a doctor of medicine just as his father and grandfather before him. Students who showed potential were also taught medicine. Extremely caring and generous as a doctor, he never refused to diagnose or treat patients even when they lacked the financial means to pay. Grandmaster Chan Yui Chi died in 1965, but his deeds are still fondly remembered.

In 1972, on the founding and official establishment of the Association in memory of Chan Heung, Chan Kit Fong, his great grand daughter, made public the monumental work of Chan Heung, which included the secret training that made choy lee fut such a devastating system. The world was introduced to the large repertoire of boxing forms, weaponry and dummy techniques. There are several different dummies within the system, such as the sandbag dummy, the balance dummy and dummies for practicing weapons and nerve-attacking techniques. Chan Kit Fong is a highly regarded and respected practitioner of choy lee fut and has been published in several magazines and books printed in Hong Kong. She resides in Los Angeles.

Master Fu Hang Ng was only six when he began training with his grandfather. Training began every morning at 6. When master Ng was old enough to work, he would train in the morning, work all day and then return to the



Pole against butterfly knives (1). A student attacks (2) with a sot (downward strike). Master Ng counters (3) with a dong (upward block) and jom (chop block) to his opponent's throat (4).

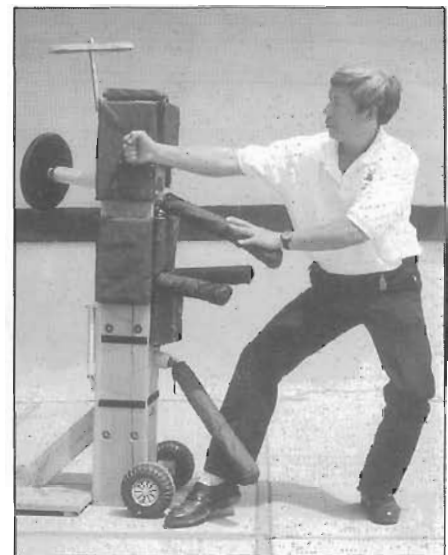
training hall at night to help his grandfather teach. This went on until grandmaster Chan Yui Chi died in 1965.

In 1970, master Ng was invited by his uncle, master Chan Yui Wun, to help him teach in Hong Kong. Master Ng accepted the offer and remained there for several years. In 1976, master Ng decided to move to America and settled in Los Angeles, where he vowed life would be different. He was going to leave his kung-fu in Hong Kong and concentrate on making a living. For 16 years master Ng, the great, great grandson of Chan Heung, kept his hands closed.

Change in the Wind

But everything changed in 1992, when choy lee fut practitioner, master Fred Spencer, who already had 17 years of choy lee fut under his belt, discovered master Ng through master Ng's cousins in Australia. Wanting to learn more about the family style of choy lee fut, master Spencer journeyed from Fresno, Calif., to Los Angeles many times before convincing master Ng to again open his hands.

Master Fu Hang Ng now instructs a select group of students in the Los Angeles area and continues to teach with the same integrity with which his grandfather taught him. Master Ng knows it is impossible for anyone to learn and remember all the forms choy lee fut has to offer. Instead, he teaches his students to specialize and choose forms that are suitable for each student's body structure, age



Master Ng works a so gua-da choi or leg sweep-backfist strike on the portable wooden dummy.

and temperament.

Master Ng does, however, insist all his students master the three basic forms is ng lun ma (five wheel horse set); ng lung chui (five wheel fist set); and siu mui fa kuen (small plum blossom hand form). Master Ng believes a student who does not master these three forms cannot properly perform the advanced boxing and weaponry sets of choy lee fut. The beginner who shuns diligent practice and doesn't master the basic forms will find his

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Choy Lee Fut

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Some of master Ng's many Los Angeles, Calif.-based family. In the first row from right: Chan Kit Fong and Mrs. Ng. In the second row from right: sifu Roman Ruiz, Wayne Carisi, Tony Salangon and Albert Ng. In the third row from right: Danny Vasquez, K.C. Man, Rick Crawford and David Ng.

footwork floundering and unsteady in the advanced sets of choy lee fut.

The ng lun ma (five wheel horse) form, the first form a student learns in choy lee fut, and is probably one of the hardest first forms to perform and complete. In fact, this form is so physically and mentally demanding that it winds up being a test to see if the student has the right temperament to learn the vast system ahead of him.

The Seven Stances

The ng lun ma form contains seven high and low stances. These stances are found in both northern and southern styles. But the beginning student is encouraged to perform all the stances low and slow to develop power in the legs and proper structure of the stances. The seven stances are: the sei ping ma (square horse stance); the right and left ding ji ma (wedge stance); the right and left diu ma (cat stance); the right and left tau ma (push plucking stance); the right and left lok quei ma (kneeling horse stance); the nau ma (twist horse); and the quai ma (entrapping stance). The stances are combined with agile footwork, body twisting and turning movements, and hand techniques.

The footwork contains tai chi leung yee (two-pattern internal/external, yin and yang concepts), salm choy (three genius internal and external sky, earth, man), sze cheung (four phenomenon), and paqua (eight diagram stepping).

The hand techniques of ng lun ma are: ding yeut (palms pressing the moon); double chuim kiu (sword fingers pointed down); the gum jin (golden scissors); poon kiu (arm clinging); the fu jao (tiger claw); yeung kiu (mirror hand); cheun jeung (single corkscrew palm strike); and the don lon (horizontal open hand strike).

Master Ng encourages his students to spend at least one-half hour performing the ng lun ma form. As a student progresses he should pay strict attention to his breathing. When a choy lee fut student sinks down into a stance he should exhale and when rising he should inhale. This is followed by exhaling before moving in the next stance and inhaling again once in the next stance.

Once a student begins to advance he should practice doing the stances from a higher posture. He'll notice the footwork becomes livelier and quicker. This is known as the lively horse. It is at this time the student strives for continuity and smoothness by moving from one stance to another.

The combination of stances, footwork and hand techniques of ng lun ma will not only help a student perform sophisticated movements with great variations, but it also serves as a basic chi kung form for the choy lee fut practitioner. 🌀