

THE DEVASTATING PALM TECHNIQUES OF THE SEVEN STAR MANTIS STYLE

By Lee Kam Wing and Derrick Wright
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THE 18 palm techniques of the Seven Star Mantis style are some of the most effective hand techniques in the Northern Shaolin Seven Star Praying Mantis system, but there are five palm techniques in particular that are simple, direct, and widely used throughout the style.

Many individuals get started in the martial arts through their experiences with Kung Fu movies. For some people living in the Midwestern United States, it is often very difficult to find an authentic traditional Chinese martial arts instructor. Martial arts movies created a pathway for those interested in Chinese culture and traditional Chinese martial arts. Hong Kong movie studios, like Shaw Brothers and Golden Harvest, helped launch and elevate the martial arts movie industry to its pinnacle in the 1970s. With their classical martial arts movies, they introduced the world to traditional Chinese Kung Fu. Some of the traditional Chinese Kung Fu styles seen in these movies are now the most commonly practiced and have numerous disciples. Bruce Lee's martial arts films, like *Big Boss*, *Way of the Dragon*, *Fist of Fury*, and *Enter the Dragon*, also helped foster interest in Chinese martial arts. These films, and Bruce Lee's career, also played an integral part in the modernization of Chinese martial arts, making styles like Wing Chun and Jeet Kune Do popular around the world. When Chinese immigrants arrived in the United States, they brought their history, culture, traditions, and their martial arts with them. Most of them settled on the East or West coast, which explains why a vast majority of Chinese martial arts schools are located in those areas.

Some Chinese martial art teachers were open and shared their culture and martial arts knowledge with the public. This created positive cultural exchanges, strong bonds, friendships and long-lasting relationships

Reverse palm (*faan ming jeung* 反面掌).



1. Grandmaster Lee and Master Raul Ortiz face off in the on guard position.



2. Master Ortiz executes a left punch.



3. Grandmaster Lee intercepts the attack with a right downward block.



4. Grandmaster Lee replaces the right downward block with a left downward block and executes a right reverse palm technique.

Grandmaster Lee Kam Wing demonstrates the reverse palm technique.



fifteen. He learned the whole Seven Star Mantis style from Master Chu Chi Man in ten years and promised his teacher that he would be dedicated and not teach any other martial art. With the encouragement of Master Chu, Lee Kam Wing opened his own school in 1972, and with honor and loyalty he has embraced the responsibility of promoting the style, which he has done for the last 45 years.

between the Chinese and American communities, and Chinese martial arts flourished as a result. However, some Chinese martial arts instructors remained inflexible, refusing to teach non-Chinese; if they did, they would teach a watered-down version of their style. These attitudes are very rare today, as the acceptance of other races, traditions and cultures has improved.

In the current age of information technology, it is rare for traditional Chinese martial art instructors to dedicate their whole lives to preserving and propagating their art. An exception is Grandmaster Lee Kam Wing (李景榮). One of the few seventh-generation successors of the Northern Shaolin Seven Star Mantis style (七星螳螂拳) still alive, he actively promotes traditional Chinese martial arts, and the Seven Star Mantis style. Lee Kam Wing was introduced to his teacher, Master Chu Chi Man (趙志民), by his uncle at the age of

In traditional Chinese martial arts history there is a vast amount of myth and legend intertwined with fact. These legends, fact or fiction, are part of the Chinese martial art tradition and are dutifully passed from teacher to student for preservation. Practitioners of the Northern Mantis styles still give credit to Wong Long (王朗) for creating mantis style in the mountains of Shandong Province in northern China during the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644 CE). The legend claims that after observing

Grandmaster Lee demonstrates the propping palm.



Propping palm (*deng jeung* 頂掌).



A. Grandmaster Lee and Master Brian Bateman face off in an on guard position.



B. Master Bateman executes a right punch.



C. Grandmaster Lee intercepts with a left grab and executes a right propping palm.

Slip rolling palm (wan tauh jeung 滾漏掌).



1. Grandmaster Lee and Master Derrick Wright face off in an on guard position.

2. Master Wright executes a right straight punch.

3. Grandmaster Lee intercepts with his left hand and executes the slip rolling palm technique with his right palm.

a praying mantis, he created new techniques, and combined them with 17 different techniques from various masters to create the Northern Praying Mantis style.

Northern Praying Mantis Kung Fu is most recognizable by the use of the intercepting hand movements which mimic the motions of a praying mantis claw. The mantis uses its front limbs to hunt for food, catching prey in its front claws. Several styles originate from the Northern Praying Mantis system: Eight Step (八步螳螂拳), Six Harmony (六合螳螂拳), Plum Blossom (梅花螳螂拳), Taiji (太極螳螂拳), the Seven Star Mantis style, and others. The popularity of the Seven Star Praying Mantis style was largely due to Master Luo Guangyu (罗光玉), who spread the art throughout Hong Kong and parts of southern China. The Seven Star Mantis system is considered by many mantis practitioners to be one of the oldest, and most popular, styles of the Northern Praying Mantis system.

The Seven Star Mantis style shares many principles and techniques with its sister styles such as the 12-key word formula, 12 soft principles, and 8 hard techniques. Its name is derived from the Big Dipper which includes the seven stars of Ursa Major. Four of the stars represent the head of the dipper while the remaining three represent the handle. The seven stars are equivalent to the seven parts of the human body – head, shoulder, elbow, hand, wrist, knee and foot – working in unison to attack and

defend. As the practitioner learns to link each of these seven body parts together in their movements, they become powerful. The seven-star mantis stance is a significant posture in the Seven Star Mantis style. The style is excellent for close-quarter combat because it contains principles of soft and hard, the fighting concept of fake and real hand, and the constant advance-and-withdraw maneuvering.



Grandmaster Lee demonstrates the millstone palm techniques.

4. Millstone palm (moh puhn jeung 磨盤掌).



A. Grandmaster Lee and Master Raul face off in the on guard position.

B. Master Raul executes a right straight punch.

c. Grandmaster Lee intercepts with a right palm, checks with a left palm, and executes the millstone palm with his right palm to the right side of his opponent's neck.

The Seven Star Mantis style is a complete martial art style that includes 92 hand, weapon, and partner routines, 19 stances, 30 fist techniques, 18 palm techniques, 16 kicking techniques, 9 elbow and knee techniques, as well as fingering and clawing techniques. It encompasses a vast amount of information and takes most practitioners ten years or more of constant training to learn the core of the style; most will only scratch the surface.

The Seven Star Mantis style consists of 18 different palm techniques (where the hand is not closed into a fist). The practitioner uses palm strikes in different methods to strike with various parts of the open hand depending on the target. Some advantages of using a palm technique rather than a fist is the greater speed in hitting the target, greater versatility (various parts of the hand can be used to attack), and the ability to quickly grab and initiate a trip, throw, takedown or joint manipulation. Palm techniques are also great because they can attack larger surface areas of the opponent's body.

Grandmaster Lee demonstrates the slip rolling palm technique.



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"With illustrator Patrick Lugo's colorful, energetic paintings, author John Fusco has brought to life an inspiring tale. To paraphrase the teachings of one of the monks in the book, Fusco's story has good Kung Fu."
—Peter Laird, co-creator "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles"

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Chipping palm (Pit Jeung 撇掌) Application.



1. Grandmaster Lee and Master Wright face off in an on guard position.



2. Master Wright executes a right straight punch.

3. Grandmaster Lee intercepts with a left downward block.



4. Grandmaster Lee executes the chipping palm technique to the left side of his opponent's neck.

Although Seven Star Mantis style has 18 palm techniques, the focus here will be on a select five. They are the reverse palm (*faan minh jeung* 反面掌), propping palm (*deng jeung* 頂掌), millstone palm (*moh pahn jeung* 磨盤掌), slip rolling palm (*gwan lauh jeung* 滾漏掌), and chipping palm (*Pit jeung* 撇掌).

The Seven Star Mantis style is one of the original mixed martial arts styles. By practicing and mastering 17 of the most effective martial arts techniques of the time, and combining them with the techniques he created from observing the praying mantis, Wong Long had to be one of the most inventive and influential martial artists of his generation. The burden now rests on the shoulders of his successors to ensure that the style continues to evolve and be relevant for future traditional Chinese martial arts generations. This can be accomplished through constant practice, creative thinking and an evolutionary approach to traditional Chinese martial arts. ☺

Sifu Derrick Wright has been practicing martial arts for more than 28 years and teaching for approximately 20 years. He is a closed-door disciple of Grandmaster Lee Kam Wing and an eighth-generation successor of the Seven Star Mantis style. Sifu Wright earned the rank of 8th Dan from Grandmaster Lee Kam Wing in Los Angeles on September 2, 2017, which was presented to him at his 20 Year Anniversary. Many of his students, family, friends, and colleagues attended to celebrate 20 years teaching and propagating the Seven Star Mantis style. Sifu Wright is a Chairman of the World of Seven Star Mantis Style Federation, Vice Chairman of the Southern, and Northern Martial Art Association, Overseas Founding Member of the Global Martial Artists Association, and the Chairman of the Board and founding board member of the Traditional Chinese Martial Arts Federation. He travels often to Hong Kong to learn from Grandmaster Lee Kam Wing and often host, and co-sponsors his Sifu in the United States to conduct martial art workshops and seminars. Sifu Derrick Wright is a graduate student at the Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work pursuing a graduate degree in Social Work with a concentration in social change and innovation and a focus on veterans and military families. He offers small group classes and private lessons to teens and adults. He is also available for workshops, seminars, as well as corporate health and wellness classes. For further information he can be contacted by email at wrightskungfu@gmail.com. Sifu Derrick Wright would like to show appreciation and gratitude to Grandmaster Lee Kam Wing, Masters Raul Ortiz & Brian Bateman, and Sifu Solomon Smith for their assistance with the article.