

# Tibetan White Crane Kung Fu

## An Introduction

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by Tom Haber, TWC Kung Fu Canada

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# Tibetan White Crane Kung Fu An Introduction

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## About TWC Kung Fu Canada

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TWC Kung Fu Canada has three locations across Western Canada including Courtenay, BC, Edmonton and Sherwood Park, AB. The group is led by Si-Fu Tom Haber. Si-Fu Tom (道睿, Dao Yui) is a 6th generation disciple of Pak Hok Pai founder and Grand Master Ng Siu Chung. Tom resides and teaches in Courtenay BC.

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### Brief History of Kung Fu and Tibetan White Crane (Pak Hok Pai)

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Kung Fu, or Gung Fu is a Chinese term often used by speakers of the English language to refer to Chinese Martial Arts. Its original meaning is somewhat different, referring to one's expertise in any skill, not necessarily martial. Originally, to practice kung fu did not just mean to practice Chinese Martial Arts. Instead, it referred to the process of one's training – the strengthening of the body and the mind, the learning and the perfection of one's skills – rather than to what was being trained.

Chinese Martial Arts sometimes referred to by the Mandarin Chinese term Wushu and popularly known as kung fu, consist of a number of fighting styles that have developed over the centuries. These fighting styles can be classified according to common themes that are identified as Pai which means "families", "sects" or "schools" of martial arts. Examples of themes are physical exercises that mimic the movements of specific animals, or a history and training method inspired by various Chinese philosophies, myths and legends. Some styles that focus on the harnessing energy (Chi) thru soft movements and breathwork (Nei Gung) and are labeled internal, while others that concentrate on focusing energy towards improving muscle and cardiovascular fitness and are labeled external (Wai Gung). Geographical association, as in Northern and Southern, is another popular method of categorization. Each fighting style offers a different approach to the common problems of self-defense, health, and self-cultivation (mind-body-spirit) from a Chinese perspective.

It is believed that the oriental martial arts of today have their roots in India from a system called Vajramukti, or "Thunder Fist." Vajramukti is more than 2,000 years old and branched out into various Indian martial arts including Simhanada, Kalaripayattu, and Nata.

According to certain legends, around 525 AD an Indian Buddhist monk named Bodhidharma traveled to China and preached at the Shaolin temple. On finding the monks weak and listless, Bodhidharma taught them the eighteen hands of Buddha (18 Lohon) – a special set of exercises and from this evolved the Chinese art of **Shaolin** Ch'uan Fa. These eighteen hands of Buddha were said to be derived from the eighteen techniques, which form the base of the northern style of Kalaripayattu.

**Tibetan White Crane (Pak Hok Pai)** is a complete martial art system that integrates internal and external methods with the "Si Ji Fa" (四擊法) or the Four Martial Arts Skills of Ti (踢) Kicking, Da (打) Striking, Shuai (摔) Grappling and Throwing, and Na (拿) Seizing and Controlling. The system also provides training in a variety of Chinese Weaponry including staff, various swords and pole arms. In Cantonese, the Tibetan White Crane system is called "Sai-Jung Lama Pak Hok Pai." This translates to: "Tibetan Buddhist Priest White Crane School."

Tibetan White Crane is a branch of the Lion's Roar! system of traditional kung fu originating from Vajramukti and over the years developed further within the Western region of China, an area previously referred to as "Tibet".

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In Tibet, Lion's Roar! is known as Simhanada and is one of the first styles to evolve from Vajramukti, the martial art that is recognized to be the precursor of the Asian ones of today. It is from the Hindu God Narasimha, from which Simhanada takes its name. Lion's Roar! Kung Fu was established by a Vajrayana Buddhist Priest back in the 1400's. Over the years, its development and refinement made it such an effective system that it later became the imperial style of China, i.e., the style of the Emperor and his body guards also known as Hap Gar, or Knight Style, an offshoot of the Lion's Roar! system and a close relation to Pak Hok Pai.



The Hindu God Narasimha depicted in Indo Tibetan Lion's Roar! Martial Arts (Simhanada Vajramukti)

According to tradition, White Crane Boxing originated from Tibet (Western China) during the Ming Dynasty. It was founded by a Lama monk named A Da Tuo (阿達陀) who was born about 1426 A.D. It was said that A Da Tuo's ancestors were nomads based in Yueshu country of Qinghai province (Tibetan Tribes and Kingdoms). These nomads were expert in horsemanship, seizing and wrestling techniques.



Map of the geographical extension of the Ming Dynasty in China, 1400 AD

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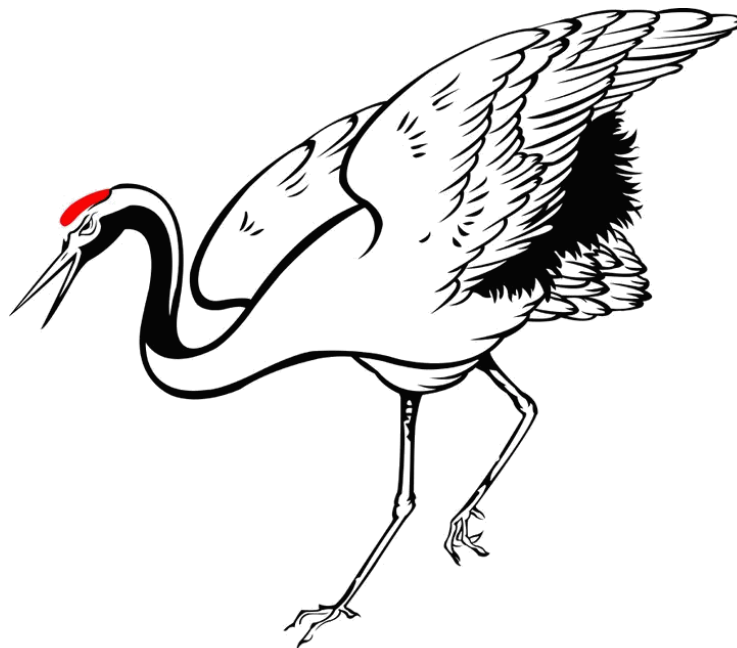


A Da Tuo became well versed in martial arts; these nomadic tribes later migrated to Tibet, where A Da Tuo took up wrestling. A Da Tuo became an ordained monk and was the disciple of Gong Gut. At that time, A Da Tuo studied a martial art called "Dinah" from an old man from Tala.

Legend has it that A Da Tuo retreated to a mountain to meditate and study Buddhism. While resting one day in the woods he saw a white crane and a black ape fight. Amazed from the agile footwork of the ape and elegant fighting skills of the crane he developed a unique boxing style based on these animals, it was initially called "Lion's Roar!", a precept based on Buddhist tradition describing sounds "that shake the earth are like lion's roar" in order to signify the supremacy of his creations. A Da Tuo created the eight fists, steps, fingers, slaps, grips and kicks.

From its beginning, Lion's Roar! incorporated external and internal methods, long and short-range techniques, kick-boxing, Mongolian wrestling, and Indo-Chinese-Tibetan medical and philosophical theories.

Other modern systems that descended from the Lion's Roar kung fu system include: the Lama System, Lama Pai, Hop Gar, the Secret Sect style, and others.





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### Pak Hok Pai Lineage

Lama **A Da Tuo** was a master of many Martial arts, and he had established Lion's Roar! fighting system during the 1400's and had taught many students.

Several generations of those students had passed and most notably for Pak Hok Pai is **Duo Luo Ji Dan**. Duo Luo Ji Dan improved the system and renamed it White Crane Sect. From Duo Luo Ji Dan the system was passed down to Sheng Long.

**Sheng Long** (升隆長老) was a Tibetan monk and is considered as the progenitor of our modern style. In the 1860's Sheng Long, accompanied by his four disciples namely Da Zhi, Da Hui, Da Yuan and Da Jue, journeyed to Guangdong province and stayed at Qing Yun Temple. While in Qing Yun Temple he taught White Crane boxing to Wang Yin Lin (founder of the Hap Gar style), Chen Yin, Zhou Xiang Yuan, and Zhu Zi Yao (Chu Chi Yiu). Much later, Sheng Long moved to Bao Xiang Temple in Nanhai, where he accepted his last indoor disciple, 28-year-old Huang Lin Kai (Wong Lam Hoi).

**Wong Lam Hoi** and **Zhu Zi Yao** were both teachers of **Ng Siu Chung** who is the Grand Master of our Pak Hok Pai. Wong Lam Hoi also taught several other students. Among them were Ng Siu Tsan, Wu Jian Hua, Lu Shan Min and Zhong Can Rong (founder of the Lama style).

**Ng Siu Chung** (吳肇鍾) changed the name of the style to Pak Hok Pai (白鶴派) during the 1950's. In his early years, Ng Siu Chung practiced Hung Gar however, upon seeing White Crane, he sought to study White Crane Boxing under Wong Lam Hoi and later under Zhu Zi Yao. Ng was appointed by Wong Lam Hoi as heading the White Crane Boxing Clan by giving in his care the Zhang Men Ren (leadership of the clan) symbol which was the "Jin Ru Lai Fou" (a statue of the Buddha). Under his leadership, Ng Siu Chung had promoted the White Crane boxing system to become one of the biggest boxing clans in Hong Kong.

Grandmaster Ng taught many outstanding students in his life. Among them were Kwong Bon Fu, Luk Chi Fu, Chan Hak Fu, Ng Ying Kam, Au Wing Ning, Wu Ying Jian, Tang Chek Ming, Li Jian Qin and others, who would later open their own boxing school and became famous in their own rights and spread the system to the rest of the world. Our line of Pak Hok Pai can be drawn to **Ho Dong Bin**, who was taught by **Ngai Yuk Tong** through **Kwong Bon Fu**.

A Da Tuo



Duo Luo Ji Dan



Sheng Long



Wong Lam Hoi



Ng Siu Chung



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### Principles of Tibetan White Crane Kung Fu

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There are four specific principles that comprise the philosophy that governs Tibetan White Crane Kung Fu, whether it involves practice, performance or fighting in general. They are:

**Chan (殘)** – “Chan” is a non-submissive, relentless mental attitude. The point is either one commits completely, maintaining the idea of never retreating, or one simply doesn't engage at all. Chan is to be ruthless in action when attacking in a combative situation. Blocking also requires explanation with this principle. Importantly, in Tibetan White Crane, blocks are thought of as attacks. If you try to block it is too late. Better to attack, and by concentrating on actively attacking, the principle of Chan is maintained.

**Sim-** The objective here is to be evasive whenever applicable by "going around" the opponent and his strikes through the use of body movement. This principle is applied to the concept of the center line. When being evasive, you "go around" the opponent but maintain your focus on the opponent's center, while his attacks move off your center line. The second principle, Sim, is the main defensive concept in the system.

**Chuen** - Chuen is the principle of penetration of defense and requires thoughtful attack and timing. This principle puts emphasis on penetrating the adversary's defenses. The White Crane stylist should take advantage of any “weakness” that is gained from the unfocused attention of the opponent's defense during his movements and then initiate a strike from an unexpected direction to an unexpected target. By punching "all the way through" the opponent at these “cracks” in defense, and always ending each strike with a new one, each strike could theoretically be lethal as you have taken advantage of the opponent's weakest points of defense.

**Jit-** To “intercept”, this is the hardest concept to understand and achieve. Generally, the White Crane stylist prefers to maintain a distance and strike from where he cannot be harmed. However, when an opponent forces himself upon the White Crane stylist, there are two methods of interception, hard and soft. In each case, hands and feet may be used to obstruct or intercept the opponent. Hard interception involves a strike (block) that breaks the adversary's defenses after he launches an attack. Contact is hard and forceful. A soft interception applies diverting pressure in the same direction of the attack before the strength of the opponent has been fully exerted. For example, when an opponent rushes forward, diversion and grabs can be utilized and the opponent's power may be easily avoided, when he retreats or is “off” (cracks appear) the White Crane stylist follows through and attacks the opponent. The intent of this last principle is to stop one's opponent by always being one move ahead of him. Together with continuous movement, the practitioner will anticipate and strike before the opponent's actions are fully formed and thus "keep one move ahead". The point is to prevent your opponent's attacks from being effective against you and to end each interception with a strike until your opponent is defeated.

A key point behind these fighting principles is that, although there are many varied sets and advanced forms, the entire white crane system involves the combination of the four philosophic fighting principles and the style's six basic powerful movements as shown in the system's first form Luk Lik Kuen (six power fists form). The White Crane stylist delivers impact through the fist, with power generated from the waist, with movement of the feet, at all times using the eyes/mind to focus the effort.

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### Pak Hok Pai Forms

From A Da Tuo, there were the Lion's Roar! "basics": eight fists, eight steps, eight finger strikes, eight palm strikes, eight grasps, eight kicks and Lo-Han 18 illustrations.

From these basic elements, Master Duo Luo Ji Dan developed "Ni Lek Hands", "Tou Lo Hands", "The six leading principles", "ten handsets" and "Four principle hands" (the last two became "Flying Crane Hands"). Sheng Long developed "comet hands" and from Sheng long came many masters including Hap Gar master Wang Yin Lin and Ng Siu Chung's teachers.

Our Grand Master Ng Siu Chung was able to bring the system together into a standard training method including a set of basics and forms that could be taught more effectively. This is a big reason for his success and why he is considered the founder of our white crane. The tables below list the Pak Hok Pai forms taught at TWC Kung Fu Canada as was passed down from Si Gung Ho Don Bin.

#	Hand Form	English Pronunciation	Translated Meaning
1	六力拳	Luk Lik Kuen	The Six Power Fists
2	順步六力拳	Sun Bo Luk Lik Kuen	The Six Power Fists (with Steps)
3	踢腿六力拳	Tek Tui Luk Lik Kuen	The Six Power Fists (with Kicks)
4	上出入步	Chut Yup Bo (Part 1)	Reciprocating Steps (in and out steps) Part 1
5	下出入步	Chut Yup Bo (Part 2)	Reciprocating Steps (in and out steps) Part 2
6	鐵鍊拳	Tit Lin Kuen	Iron Chain Fists (Iron Forging Fists)
7	小五形拳	Siu Ng Ying Kuen	Minor Fists of Five Beasts (Lesser 5 Animals)
8	天罡拳	Tin Gong Kuen	Little Heavenly Dipper (Little Diamond Fist)
9	地煞拳	Dei Sat Kuen	Fists of the Baleful Star (Ground Demon Fists)
10	金剛拳	Gum Gong Kuen	The Four Diamond King's Fists (Diamond Fist)
11	擒拿手	Kam La Sau	Fists with Grasping Hands
12	四大金剛拳	Sei Dai Gum Gong Kuen	Greater Four Diamond King's Fists
13	羅漢拳	Lohan Kuen	Lohan Fist
14	羅漢出洞	Lohan Chut Dung	Lohan (Disciple of Buddha) Exits the Cave
15	羅漢廿四解	Lohan Ershisi	Lohan Twenty-Four Hands
16	醉羅漢	Jui Lohan	Drunken Lohan (Drunken Disciple of Buddha)
17	十套正反手	Sap Tou Zeng Fan Sau	Ten Sets of Positive and Anti-Hand
18	高樁醉八仙拳	Go Chong Jui Bat Sin Kuen	The Eight Drunken Genii's Fists



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#	Broad Sword	English Pronunciation	Translated Meaning
1	白虎刀	Bak Fu Darn Do	The White Tiger's Single Broad Sword
2	蝴蝶雙刀	Wu Dip Sheung Darn Do	The Butterfly's Double Broad Sword

#	Straight Sword	English Pronunciation	Translated Meaning
1	盤馬劍	Poon Ma Gim	Winding Horse Sword
2	羅漢劍	Lohan Gim	The Sword of a Lohan
3	飛鶴劍	Fei Hok Gim	The Sword of a Flying Crane
4	斬妖劍	Zam Jiu Gim	Demon Sword

#	Staff	English Pronunciation	Translated Meaning
1	盤龍棍	Poon Lung Kwan	Coiling Dragon Staff
2	鄒家八卦棍	Chu Ka Bat Kwa Kwan	Chu's Staff of the Eight Diagrams
3	五郎三十六棍	Ng Long Kwan	Five Brother Thirty-six Stick
4	金剛棒	Gum Gong Kwan	Diamond Staff
5	行者棒	Hang Ze Kwan	Line by Staff

## Chi Kung - Pure Soft Training

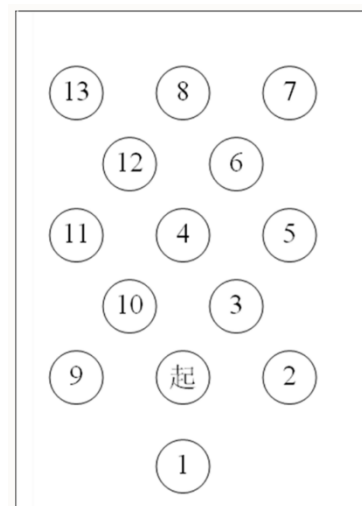
Chi Kung (Qi Gong) is a practice of aligning body and mind for health and martial arts training. With roots in Chinese medicine, philosophy and martial arts, Chi Kung is traditionally viewed as a practice to cultivate and balance Qi (Chi) or what has been translated as "life energy".

Our school practices three Chi-Kung sets: White Tiger Breath (Bak Fu Gong), White Crane Breath (Pak Hok Gong) and Needle in Cotton Set (Min Lay Chum).

The Needle in Cotton Set, Min Lay Chum, is the most advanced set of the Tibetan White Crane System. The Cotton Needle form is a soft/internal set performed on 14 raised platforms. The platforms are at 30-degree angles from each other.

The form is separated into 7 lines or sections of movement. The first 6 sections comprise the core form while the last may be considered its own set and is sometimes performed separately from the first six.

Needle in Cotton contains combat techniques, but is very beneficial for health and well-being as its motions and breath-work have a healing



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effect on the body when performed correctly. It is meditative in practice and develops agility, coordination and precision of aim and body position.

Cotton Needle is meant to be practiced as “peace through movement.” The movements are slow, relaxed and in tune with the breath-work. There is a continuous shifting of the body, forward and backward, with the weight transferred smoothly in a 90% / 10% distribution. At all times the body is relaxed and breathing is soft, smooth and coordinated with the movement. Generally, motions reaching out are in sync with breathing out. The slower the practitioner breathes, the slower the movements and the greater the benefit. The entire form can take up to 30 minutes to complete.

Min Lay Chum is a treasure of Pak Hok Pai system and is an advanced technique of Tibetan Lama Chi Kung that will carry the practitioner into a healthy and long life.