

马贵八卦
MA GUI BA GUA



ANDREA FALK'S
TRAINING NOTES
FOR
MA GUI BAGUAZHANG



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INTRODUCTION

My training notes are mostly to help out people who already train the style of Ma Gui baguazhang. The descriptions are intended more to stir the memory than to teach from nothing. This manual might also give an idea of what goes on in the system to people from other styles. It is hard to express any style by words and photos, but I do enjoy books more than videos, for the time they give the reader to ponder.

I have kept the manual quite plainly descriptive. I intend only to help you remember the actual movements. You need to seek out the right ideas and feelings for yourself so that they become your own.

The photos are all of me, not because I find my postures particularly good, but just to make sure there are no copyright problems. I put in as many photos as I can of other people in the website, so go to www.maguibagua.ca to see the proper way of doing things.

In some cases of discrepancy with what is now being taught, I was taught differently, as is normal in traditional styles. Otherwise, all the mistakes are my own doing, and I apologize for them.

I want to thank Li Baohua for extending my training life by giving me the gift of Ma Gui bagua. Since 2004 I have done everything that I could to help spread this system, largely because between 2001-2003, when I was just starting it, I may have had to give up training due to injuries. You can imagine what that would mean to someone who has done martial arts since 1972. My website and manual treats the style in a very straightforward way, but this deceptive. As Li once said, “bagua is not a sport, it is your life”. Training baguazhang, and especially Ma Gui’s baguazhang, will help you to live long and live strong. The Chinese say, “If you don’t train deep skill, in old age you will have nothing”, but I like to think that “if you train deep skill, in old age you will have something wonderful”.

I hope that this manual helps you with your training.

Andrea Falk

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Québec, QC, Canada

Walk the circle one step at a time, in the footprints of the masters.

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Part One: Circle Walking

Part Two: Changes

Bear (to come), Dragon, Single-Hook, Lion, Eagle (to come), Crab (to come), Point to the Sky and Plunge to the Earth (to come), Yin-yang Fish (to come).

Part Three: Training Drills

Beng shou, Chuan zhang, Dai shou, Fanbei chui, Gai zhang, Kai zhang, Liao zhang, Pi zhang, Qie zhang, Ta zhang, Tan zhang, Tiao fa, Ya zhang, Ye zhang, Zhuang zhang.

Part Four: Routines

The 88 routine (others to come).

Part Five: Partner Training

(A taster: Chuanzhang, Danhuanzhang, Daishou, Huajin, Crossing Arms, Crossing Arms walking, Dragon walking, Wrist wringing, Anzhang, Yazhang, Coiling palm.

Part Six: Weapons (to come)

Part Seven: History (to come)

Part Eight: Organization and links

对练 PARTNER TRAINING

Partner training work helps the player to find how to apply the particular power of the techniques that he/she has trained independently. Partner work is done to check or verify power, not to find or develop the power. The drills are friendly, but not overly cooperative. Partner work is not sparring, though, so the drills are more cooperative than not. Sometimes considerable force needs to be used to check the powers and skills.

One should search out three partners: a partner much stronger than you, a partner much weaker than you, and a partner about your equal. Each can teach you something about your skills. Someone way beyond your skill/power level will give you a feel for what whole body power is. Someone at your own level gives you a chance to find the power yourself. Someone below your level enables you to feel what it is like to apply the power.

Remember that if you hurt your partner too much then they might not want to play with you again, but if you don't cause them difficulty (which may include some pain) then they don't learn much.

Partner training drills are repeated for a long time when done to fully find the power and help change the body. Do each drill for at least twenty minutes. In the partner drills it is important to use the whole body power developed in the bear walking, and not to get carried away with trying to 'get' your partner.

If something is 'going wrong' it is not your partner's fault, but how you are dealing with what he/she is doing. Find the answer to your problem within yourself.

The Ma Gui system places some emphasis on Yin Fu's spearing palm, but it also trains many other techniques and has other training methods.

Contents (a few of the partner training exercises in the system)

Chuanzhang partner training

Danhuanzhang (dragon single palm change) partner training

Daishou partner training

Huajin – Absorbing power partner training

Crossing Arms partner training, Crossing Arms walking partner training

Dragon walking, or chuanzhang partner walking training

Wrist wringing partner training

Anzhang (yazhang) – Pressing down partner training

Coiling palm partner training

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对练穿掌 Chuanzhang partner training

This trains the principle of connecting the spirit and intent, and the principle of crossing the arms to gain control. Since bagua uses stepping, one of the main defensive techniques is to step a bit aside and cross the attacking arm with your arm, setting up a press down or a drive in (much as you would do with a spear).

Partners stand facing each other at a sparring distance. Then each steps into chuanzhang on the same side, attacking the partner's throat, so immediately connecting with the partner's arm. Do proper triangulation steps to develop clean footwork. Although it may seem simpler to just step in, later on you may want to step aside, so proper stepping will serve you well. Step calmly like a tiger – do not bob and weave. Pause slightly when in contact, then step back away, setting up the hand near the body, so that in your mind the technique is already done. Use your spirit to stay connected.



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Partner Work

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Think of the chuanzhang as a setup for a following technique (if the chuanzhang gets in you are setup for a zhuangzhang, for example). This will prevent you from getting too heavy or forward weighted with it. The arm is solid but relaxed, so that you can change to any technique from the chuanzhang.

Daishou can connect to the chuanzhang partner practice. If your partner comes in strongly, then continue the movement by pulling.

Rotating chuanzhang can connect to the chuanzhang practice. If your partner feels weak then move in and stab again.

You may also chuanzhang in the lion posture.



对练单换掌 Danhuanzhang (dragon single palm change) partner training

This is similar to the chuanzhang partner drill, but using a more lateral power. In fact, if your partner is coming in too strongly in the chuanzhang partner drill, you can dissipate his/her power by shifting subtly to the danhuanzhang.

1. Step more out to come more sideways towards your partner, sitting into a horse stance and turning your upper body towards him/her. Turn into the first movement of danhuanzhang (dragon single palm change) and step towards your partner to make contact with the upper forearms. The arms should not strike each other hard or bounce off each other. Apply heavy power from the body.
2. The same, but also connecting with the lower palms.



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对练带手 Daishou partner training

Daishou can connect from the chuanzhang partner practice. If your partner comes in strongly, then continue the movement by pulling. As a practice drill, you can take turns doing the drag, or both drag at the same time.

You may just do the grab and lightly tug to get the idea, or you may do a full daishou (as you can see from the dirt on my trousers).

Daishou coiling method: partners stand facing each other in mabu or turned mabu. Each circles and grabs partner's arm lightly. You don't need to do the daishou, just get used to coiling around the arm to get the grab.

Moving step daishou partner drill: the partners do the chuanzhang partner drill and add the daishou to it.

Daishou receiving method: Stay well set into your stance to not be pulled over. Keep upright and absorb into your legs, so that if you are pulled you do not snap your back or neck. In general, don't put too much force into resisting, as resistance is futile.

Power release for daishou: You may do a large pulling and turning motion, stepping if you wish. This gives a gentler throw, though the partner does go flying.

Or you may do a short sharp daishou, which applies considerable force to the partner and shocks the body. You need to practise shuanyao to be comfortable in applying this force to a partner.



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Partner Work

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对练吸化掌 Huajin - Absorbing Power partner training

This trains the principles of settling the body and advancing the body, the method of absorbing in the body core and hips, and the principle of controlling the opponent without grabbing them.

Partners stand facing each other in turned horse stance, with wrists or forearms connected. Push towards the face, or chuanzhang towards the eyes. Extend and release the shoulder. Defend by turning away and sitting back. Use the body to control, not the arms, turn the whole body to get the deflection. Set down into the stance, and push from the legs, but keep the power in the front leg. Keep the body vertical. Keep the non-connected hand at your elbow, ready for chuanzhang or defense.



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This practice may look similar to taijiquan's push hands in a photo, but you can see that it uses considerably more force when seen live. If the weaker partner can manage more than five repetitions then you are not using enough force.

This can also be done with the leading feet placed on the outside of each other. This trains the more specific bagua way of doing things more sideways than straight on.

The legs should get tired before the shoulders or arms. You should be pushing from the legs.



Partner Work

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Andrea Falk's Training Notes on Ma Gui Baguazhang

Crossing Arms partner training

This trains the application of koubu and baibu stepping, the application of the body technique, the method of coiling the hands. This develops the vital principle of 'crossing', the same as done with a spear. If you can get your arm crossed with the opponent, then you can control and get in. So do not do this drill to heavily, it is a way of defending and getting in. You can combine almost any technique with crossing.

1. Sit in mabu facing each other with the arms connected. Circle the arms, keeping them connected and straight. Change arms and direction at will, there is no fixed pattern. Keep the power mid-weight, not too heavy (this is not yazhang partner training). Switch sides every 1 or 2 circles, going in the same direction. Change directions occasionally. Press slightly into your partner rather than circling in empty vertical circles. If you are following, make sure you are following, not just going along. Do not go too fast. To take the lead, bring the other arm in at a natural place and continue to circle as you gradually switch arms.



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2. Add stepping with the circling as you become more comfortable. Use koubu and baibu to position yourself. If you step well, when you cross arms you are already in a good position for a zhuangzhang with the body.

对练龙形 Dragon walking, or chuanzhang walking partner training

This trains controlling the partner and getting used to walking while spotting another person.

1. Not touching. Both partners take the dragon form with the arms towards each other but not touching. Walk around the circle.
2. Touching. Both partners take the dragon form with the forearms touching and walk around the circle. Change sides by doing a chuanzhang as you koubu. This drill may also be considered to be chuangzhang walking.



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Do not walk too fast. Your goal is to be comfortable. If your partner walks too quickly for your comfort, do not speed up – take the circle out wider so that they have to chase after you.

Do not adjust the height of your arm to the height of your partner. Again, the goal is to be comfortable. If you are taller, use your height advantage – keep your arm up. This makes the shorter person nervous about you dropping down. If you are shorter, use your scooping up advantage – keep your arm at your own shoulder height. This makes the taller person nervous about you coming in low.

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Wrist Wringing partner training

This trains the principles of going with the direction of a grab to change, and of going above the head to protect yourself against a joint controlling grab. This drill should be usually practised continuously for at least 20 minutes so that the wrists visibly swell up. Wrist wringing develops the qi in the wrist area of the person being grabbed. It develops the sensitivity of the person grabbing, as they learn to differentiate between grabbing skin, tendons, bones, blood vessels, etc. It is more effective to grab bones or tendons than to simply wrap around the whole wrist, especially if the partner has a thick wrist. Do allow some sliding, though, or the drill cannot be completed.

1. Single grab. Partners stand facing each other in mabu. One partner takes the wrist of the other and turns and lifts it like playing with a sabre. In one direction you are trying to lift your partner's elbow, in the other direction you are trying to twist into the shoulder. The grabbed partner protects the wrist by acting like a sabre. That is, protect the wrist by doing a chuanzhang. Extend the arm, rotating it into the direction of the grab, and move your power up and towards your partner. Do not 'go into' your arms, but stay in your body, or you will be pulled around easily.
2. Double grab. The same, but grabbing with both hands. This is much stronger, so be careful not to put full power into the grab and twist. The grabbed partner still needs to be able to rotate the arm.
3. Double grab with stepping. One partner takes the other's wrist in two hands and steps across with a koubu then rolls to circle the arm fully around, like playing with a sabre. The grabbed partner goes along sideways with the circling to keep the arm safe, extending and putting energy into the grabbing partner. The grabbing partner rolls under the arms to complete the circle, continuing in the same direction.

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对练压掌 Ya zhang partner training

This is yazhang, applied to a partner. The power in your body is a yazhang, and when applied, the power is anzhang.

This trains the principles of whole body strength settling down and scooping up, the method of training the deep skill of whole body strength, the method of sticking with whole body strength.

1. Players stand in turned mabu or mabu with the same side forward, palm to palm. They take turns doing yazhang on each other, putting enough force to make the partner need to find the right lines of power and direction.



Partner
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Do not put too much power into your yazhang. If you lock it out your partner cannot lift your arm. Put enough power to make him/her work very hard. Remember that your partner can also lock you down if you go too hard.

Don't fight too hard, use enough power to help your partner find the right line for this specific technique. If you really couldn't lift someone you would change your technique – do a shoulder strike for example. When you lift your partner's arm keep as close to a vertical circle as you can. You cannot possibly lift something up far away from your body. Use your legs, but do not fool around in them 'searching for power'.

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Notes:

对练缠丝掌 Coiling palm partner training

Method of coiling with the hands, method of connecting and changing with the feet, moving in space and changing position. This is similar to the crossing arms drill, but with the arms less straight.

1. Sit in mabu facing each other with the arms connected. Circle the arms, keeping them connected. Change arms and direction at will, there is no fixed pattern. Keep the power mid-weight, not too heavy. Coil the arms around each other. Add light qinna, or joint locks on the fingers and wrists, to get comfortable with changing grips while moving.

2. When you are comfortable with this drill, then step with the circling, similar to the crossing arms partner walking drill.



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