

## **Mui Fa Kuen (Plum Flower Fist)**

Mui Fa is an extremely common theme in Chinese Martial Arts due to the popularity of the flower in the rest of Chinese culture. Many other styles of kung fu also have Mui Fa forms. It is said that the original Mui Fa Kuen was a Northern Shaolin set, believed to be founded by Hou Yuan Jia. As well as the Mui Fa fist form there is also many other sets including sword and spear sets, making Mui Fa to be a small system in itself.

This short and simple but very practical form is presented in four directions, like the petals of a plum blossom flower, teaching attacking and defending in each direction. The first Mui Fa set teaches basic footwork and stances as well as initial bridging and kicking techniques. Many fundamentals as well as some of Hung Gar's trade mark techniques are taught in this set.

## **Huo Yuan Jia**

Master Huo Yuan Jia was the founder of one of the more famous schools of Chinese Boxing Chin Woo and is believed to be the inventor of the Mui Fa Kuen System of Kung Fu.

Born in 1868 in Xianan Village in Jinghai County, the fourth of ten children. His father Huo En Di worked as a bodyguard guarding merchant caravans travelling to and fro from Manchuria.

It was the tradition of the Huo family to practise traditional Chinese boxing, however it was considered that Huo Yuan Jia was too weak to carry on this tradition and should pursue more scholarly interests. However Huo Yuan Jia is said to have hid and secretly observed his father teaching his family.

In 1980 a martial artist travelled from Henan Province to challenge the Huo family, Yuan Jia's elder brother was goaded into a fight and was beaten. Yuan Jia himself got up and defeated his brother's opponent.

After seeing this, Huo En Di now accepted his son as a student and taught him all that he knew. Yuan Jia made additions to his family system by including Qi Gong to increase the focus on internal well-being. Huo Yuan Jia's real fame came in 1901 when he accepted a challenge from a Russian wrestler who had insulted the Chinese people by calling them the (Sick man of Asia). Yuan Jia won this challenge and went on to win many others, too many to mention here in this very small account of this great Chinese National Hero.

During the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries, many foreigners were invading China and national pride was at an all time low. This was not due to the invasion alone but the outward insults against the Chinese people. China with a very sensitive pride and the 'Face' of the people in ruins, Yuan Jia set out to rebuild his beloved country.

Huo Yuan Jia decided to elevate the moral of his countrymen by teaching his family art, making it accessible to every man woman and child with the intension to encourage physical health and mental alertness.

These kung fu schools were set up under the Chin Woo Athletic Association and although the primary objective was to promote strength into the people of China, it

also served as a platform to promote all martial arts around the country and eventually Worldwide.

Huo Yuan Jia died on the 9<sup>th</sup> August 1910 at the age of 42. It is rumoured that the Japanese in revenge for a competition that they lost poisoned Huo Yuan Jia, but alas, nobody will ever know for sure. However, authors note it must be remembered that in 1989 the tomb of Huo Yuan Jia and his wife was relocated, and his pelvis bones were discovered to contain black spots, in which Tianjin Municipality Police Laboratory confirmed that it contained arsenic.