



SHIFU BEN HILL BEY

LIFELONG PRACTITIONER • SCHOLAR • PRESERVER OF THE INTERNAL MARTIAL ARTS

A Martial Arts Biography of Lineage, Teaching, Research and Cultural Preservation

More than half a century devoted to the living traditions of Chinese internal martial arts.

EARLY FOUNDATION (1969 - 1978)

Shifu Ben Hill Bey is a lifelong practitioner, scholar, and preserver of the internal martial arts of China. His journey spans over half a century, tracing a living line of teachers that connects the classical fighting systems of Northern China to their modern American expression. Known for his technical clarity and uncompromising authenticity, he stands among the rare generation of masters who bridge the old temple disciplines with the scientific and spiritual understanding of the present age.

Born in New York City, Ben Hill Bey began his martial study in 1969 at the age of five under the system of Shotokan Karate. The rigid precision of Shotokan forged the discipline and mechanical structure that would later support his deeper internal training.

By nine, he encountered Monkey Style Kung Fu (猴拳 Hou Quan), whose playful agility and low-ground evasion taught him the first lessons in fluid adaptation - the ability to change instantly within chaos.

During his teenage years, he devoted himself to the Northern systems. Under Shifu Tony Chu, he studied Northern Praying Mantis, developing the lightning rhythm and tactile reflexes characteristic of that art. Simultaneously, under Grandmaster Leung Shum, he entered the Eagle Claw family, mastering Chin Na (擒拿) - the sophisticated joint-locking and seizing skills that would later inform his internal applications. By the end of this period, his foundation combined structure, agility, and close-range control - the technical trinity upon which his later mastery would rest.

APPRENTICESHIP UNDER GRANDMASTER KENNY GONG (1980 - 1996)

In 1980, Shifu Ben Hill Bey began what would become a seventeen-year apprenticeship with Grandmaster Kenny Gong, the legendary New York master of Jiang Rong Qiao Style Ba Gua Zhang and Xing-Yi Chuan.

For the first two years, he trained five days a week in Ba Gua while continuing Eagle Claw practice on weekends. By age twenty, he dedicated himself completely to the internal systems.

Under Kenny Gong, he absorbed the integrated curriculum of Ba Gua Zhang and Xing-Yi Chuan, learning the five-element fists (Wu Xing Quan), twelve animal forms, and the transitional bridges that unify linear and circular power. This cross-disciplinary education - unique to Gong's school - gave him insight into the internal logic that binds the three great internal arts: Xing-Yi, Ba Gua, and Tai Chi.

Through rigorous daily practice and closed-door instruction, he achieved lineage successor status within Gong's Jiang Rong Qiao System, continuing the living transmission of one of China's most influential internal martial schools.

EXPANSION OF LINEAGE AND RESEARCH (1992 - 1997)

In 1992, Shifu Ben Hill Bey met Master Chen Xiao Ping, inheritor of the Cao Branch of Yin Fu Style Ba Gua Zhang, and trained intensively under him for five years. This period deepened his understanding of precision stepping, body turning, and the linear-to-spiral conversion unique to the Yin School.

Between 1995 and 1997, he pursued advanced study with Grandmasters Shi Pei Qi and Ha Jin Bao, successors of the Men Bao Zhen transmission. Their instruction refined his command of striking structure, palm methods, and internal breath power (Nei Jin).

He also trained with Lou De Xu (Eric Lou) in Gao Style Ba Gua Zhang, and with Master Lin Chao Zhen in Fu Style Ba Gua Zhang, later serving as the New York representative for Master Johnny Kwan Ming Lee, a senior Fu Style authority.

TEACHING, PRESERVATION, AND INSTITUTIONAL WORK (1992 - PRESENT)

Recognizing the need to preserve authentic internal arts in the West, Sifu Ben Hill Bey began teaching professionally in 1992. He developed the martial-arts curriculum for the Beacon Centers of New York Pilot Program, introducing structured physical culture and ethical education to public-school students.

In 1993, he expanded his instruction to the YMCA and DAYA Center, training hundreds of students in foundational Ba Gua Zhang.

By 1994, his teaching reputation led to certification by Xia Ba Hua, President of the Beijing San Shou Association, as a San Shou Judge and Referee. That same year, he founded the Ba Gua Zhang Research & Boxing Association International, an organization dedicated to research, documentation, and preservation of internal martial traditions.

From 1995 through 1997, his students competed successfully in major tournaments including The Summer Bash and The Wong Fei Hung National Championships, excelling in open-hand, weapons, and free-fighting divisions.

In 1997, he hosted the historic U.S. workshop of Grandmaster Shi Pei Qi, a milestone event that connected American practitioners directly with China's foremost Yin System lineage holder.

Between 1997 and 1999, he taught at Morehouse College, conducting public, youth, and women's self-defense classes. His ability to translate classical doctrine into accessible instruction attracted practitioners from diverse backgrounds, uniting traditional ethics with modern awareness.

From 1999 to 2005, he served as Head Judge of the Internal Division (Tai Chi, Xing-Yi, Ba Gua) at the Wong Fei Hung National Tournament, setting national standards for internal competition.

He later established programs at Syracuse University, the Westcott Center, and Southwest Community Center, where he taught self-defense, Qi Gong, and internal martial studies.

His workshops and seminars have reached audiences across the United States - from Phoenix and Atlanta to Saratoga Springs, Rochester, and Jersey City - spreading authentic internal art through disciplined scholarship and living example.

ALL BAGUA CHAMPIONSHIPS - 2001-2003

Sifu Ben Hill Bey considers the All Bagua Championships his greatest accomplishment.

From 2001 through 2003, he was the first person in the United States to run an all-Bagua tournament, creating a championship devoted entirely to Ba Gua Zhang.

PUBLICATIONS AND CULTURAL CONTRIBUTION

In 2010, Sifu Ben Hill Bey published his first book, *Ba Gua Zhang: A Historical Analysis*, which has been recognized as one of the clearest English-language examinations of Ba Gua's origins, philosophy, and combat method. The book bridges ancient textual study with modern pedagogy and remains a foundational resource for practitioners worldwide.

He later co-founded the Ba Gua Xing-Yi Chuan Association, serving as East Coast Director, promoting the teachings of his Sifu, Grandmaster Kenny Gong, and ensuring the continuity of the internal arts through documented lineage and technical integrity.

LEGACY

Across fifty-two years of uninterrupted study, teaching, and research, Shifu Ben Hill Bey has become a custodian of internal martial culture - a link between the masters of the Republican-era Chinese schools and the evolving generation of Western practitioners. His knowledge of Ba Gua Zhang, Xing-Yi Chuan, Eagle Claw, and Qi Gong represents a synthesis of art, science, and spiritual discipline.

He continues to write, teach, and lecture internationally, working on his second major volume on internal martial systems, preserving a tradition measured not by trophies or titles, but by transmission, principle, and lived integrity.