

CHUM KIU

Wing Chun Gung Fu's Second Form

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There are three important forms in wing chun namely Sil Lim Tau, Chum Kiu and Bue Jee. They provide the core concepts and motions of the system. The Mok Jong Wooden Dummy form, the Bat Jaam Do double knife form, the Kwan pole form and all other drills depend on the foundations laid by the three forms. Each of the three forms has special skills to teach. When all three forms are properly learned after years of practice they become linked into one form. The linkage is provided by progressing from the stance stabilization of the sil lim tau, to the central body turning, circling and moving chum kiu and then finishing with the shooting and explosive bue gee at the end.

Circles and lines are there in all the forms. The first form appears to primarily have linear motions. Actually while the feet are stable, there are circles in each of the hand motions.

But the chum kiu has a special function in teaching efficient circling and turning of the entire body in a coordinated and unified manner. Without learning the chum kiu well, the practical use of the hand motions and progression to learning the "emergency" motions of bue gee will be hampered. With increasing mastery, all three forms are not only sequential but are also forged eventually into a complete functioning circle. Chum Kiu turning can neutralize the hand motions of the first form if used in a static stance. Bue Gee motions can help recover a line lost because of an opponents turn. Then, the simple direct, short and linear hand motions of the first form such as a pak sau when done with appropriate timing and power can effectively counter or intercept the advanced motions of the third form. Again, learning the first form well is the gateway to the second. The second Chum Kiu is the most important bridge between the first and the third.

Chum Kiu with its three parts has a very important role to play. It involves the mastery of the turning motion and then also stepping with the entire structure that was created by doing sil lim tau well. Without first building the structure in sil lim tao, moving around will result in the collapse of the structure.

One of the main meanings of chum kiu is "searching for the bridge." There are also secondary meanings including sinking the elbow. But the main meaning is of great significance. Searching implies motion: an important function of learning chum kiu. The bridge provides an important path to the opponent. Statically the bridge is the sleeve part of the forearm. Dynamically it means the contact point. If the bridge doesn't exist, you make one, hence you search for a bridge in existence or quickly create one. Whatever the contact point or bridge, chum kiu prepares one to seize the moment, in order to control the opponent "softly" without any unnecessary muscle tension.

The movement of the chum kiu begins with the turn i.e. chor ma, the turning stance.

The first third of the form is full of turns on the heel. Different schools appear to have different turns. Like many but not all of the teaching lines going back to Yip Man , the Ho Kam Ming- Augustine Fong system turns mainly on the heels keeping an average of 50/50 weight distribution. Turning on the heel keeps the center and the gravitational path and the vertical axis from being thrown out.

After the turning stance comes the rest of the footwork and stance work in the second and third sections of the form. The turning and the stepping assists in entering and closing, kicking and also maximizing control while doing so.. The correct stance and the axial-mother line turns of chum kiu, trains the unification of the joints and the efficient direction of energy and power. While wall bag and soft "iron" palm bag work helps strengthening tendon and other tissues it is the development of the chum kiu form and practicing its motions that provide the delivery of power. Both power and mobility come from doing the chum kiu turn properly. The bat jaam do knife form can enhance the footwork and kwan staff work can enhance power but without chum kiu's turns, power and mobility will have weak foundations.

Without good chum kiu a wing chun stylist will sometimes mistakenly think that he has to develop bigger muscles or add some extraneous footwork.

In wing chun as in good gung fu , repeated and correct practice is more important than just learning the sequence of the form. The principles come alive in the details. The huen sao circling hand motion of the first form will adjust to the turns of chum kiu thus giving additional huen sau options. The fun sao spreading motion of the first form will also develop a whole new set of options because of the chor ma. The simple controlling hand-fok sau-turning back to the center after fun sau will be more strong than the fok sau of the first form.

The single straight open palm-jing jeong will be energized by the turn. The double jing jeong will become explosive with a forward step. The form is filled with motion such as the following:

The front kick provides the foundation for other kicks including the sidekick.

Two handed motions like the jip sau which will lead to double pak sau. The double bong sau conceptually serves to balance energy on both right and left when in motion and teaches mastery of changes by the shift to double tan sau. The turning lan sau can be merciless.

The form is a compacted book of turns and motion which opens up a whole new world of techniques and options.

The proper performance of the chum kiu also coordinates both breathing and eye power.

Untrained breathing when turning and moving can become choppy. Chum kiu smoothens out breathing when turning, stepping and moving. It also develops eye power. The development of proper focus and penetrating eye power is one of the gifts of the system.

Chum kiu eye power trains for clarity of vision and focus in the midst of motion .

The skill enhancement marches side by side with the martial artist's growth in chum kiu.

The kicks, the steps, chi sau, lop sau, double motions such as pak da, san sau, man sau, slow sparring and two person timing work are all informed by chum kiu. At the same time, the internal principles of sinking, softness and quietness while moving with proper joint alignment provides the stealthy explosiveness of wing chun. Softness and structural alignment complement each other. Without alignment directing energy will be made difficult.

Without softness obtaining information, adjusting and being explosive at the right moment will not be easy. Chum Kiu is a true bridge to self defense and mature wing chun gung fu.

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