

Wing Chun Forms

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Sil Lum Tao

Sil lum tao is the first form in wing chun. It means small idea or first thought. This form is generally considered the most important of the forms, particularly so with followers of Chu Shong Tin, who is known as 'the king of sil lum tao'. Training in sil lum tao establishes the fundamental qualities necessary to perform wing chun correctly. These are:

1. Thought force (nim lik)

Thought force is the power that can be produced when one is able to focus ones mind correctly. At a certain level of concentration, the mind can use the body structures in wing chun to create a dynamic, springy quality in movements that can withstand enormous pressure, and produce tremendous power. This can be as a single strike, or by rebounding the energy of a blow back at the opponent. Thought force also enables chi to flow throughout a practitioner's body. Nim lik does not necessarily require many years of training, however it does require effort and patience. Performing the sil lum tao form is a very useful practice towards achieving the state of mind necessary for one to achieve nim lik.

2. Structure (yee gee kim yang ma)

An important facet of the body structure employed in wing chun is *tei gong*. This is to do with drawing up from the anus area. Done correctly, the *tei gong* unifies the body and enables the muscles to relax to the degree necessary to facilitate nim lik. Structure in sil lum tao can also be found in the arm movements of wing chun. These movements have a geometrical correctness that makes use of the inherent qualities in certain shapes, particularly arcs and circles. It is important to consider the fundamental tools of wing chun, (tan sau, fook sau and bong sau), as dynamic movements rather than static shapes. For example the bong sau movement should be viewed as the path that the arm takes when moving from tan sau through to bong sau, or visa versa, rather than just the bong sau held still at the end of the movement.

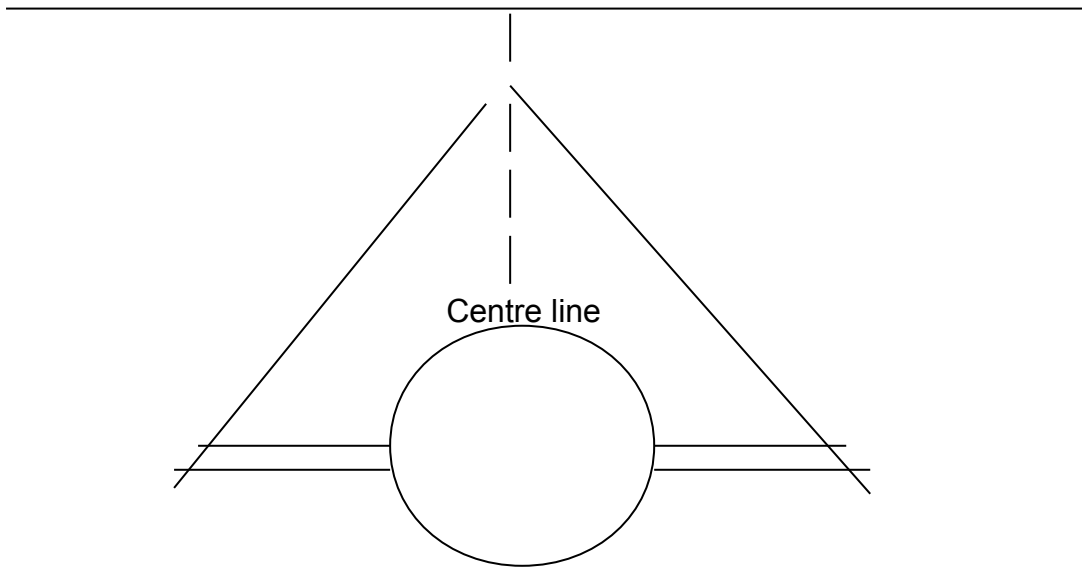
Chum Kiu

Chum kiu movements are more easily recognizable as fighting applications. In this, the 2nd form, the structural qualities developed through training sil lum tao are combined with stepping and pivoting, which of course, is necessary in real fighting. While in sil lum tao, the centre line is held on the practitioner's body as a line that bisects the body into two symmetrical halves, in chum kiu the body is sometimes turned, so that the centre line is simply the shortest

distance between the student and their opponent. The guard is raised to protect that line.

Diagram (a)

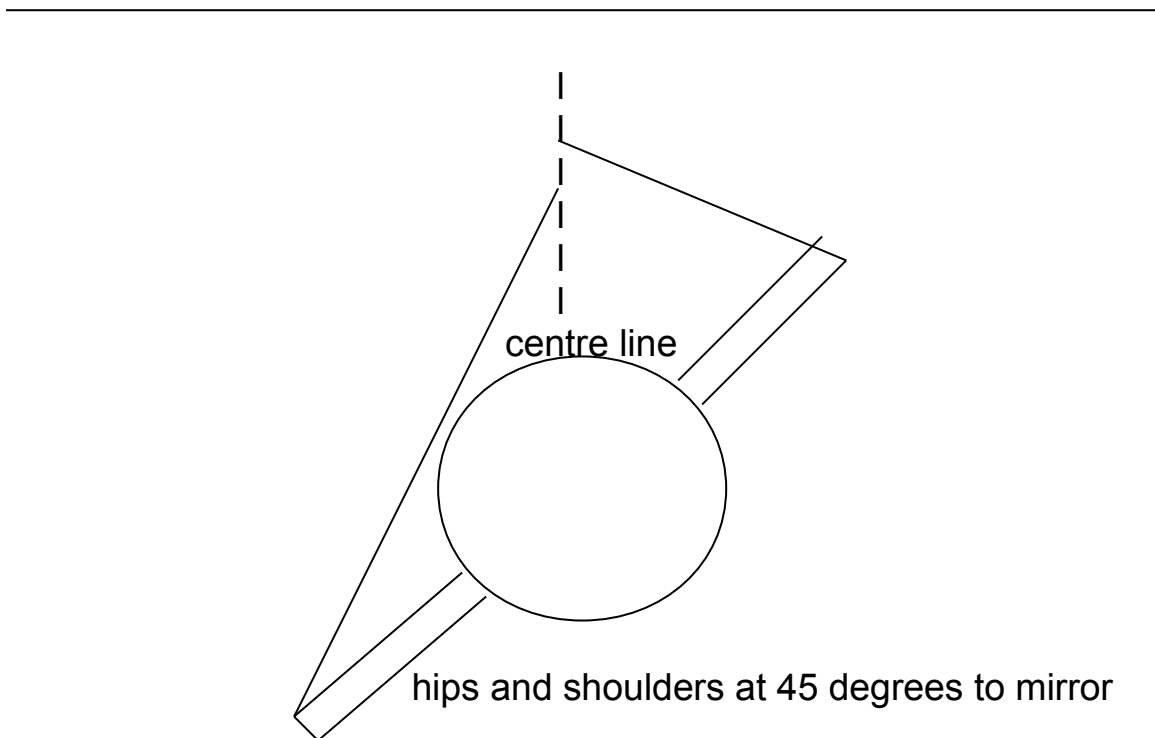
mirror



Sil lum tao guard, (top view).

Diagram (b)

mirror



Chum kiu guard, (top view).

In sil lum tao, the student delivers force from their centre of mass. In chum kiu the student learns to move that same point, in order to increase power and achieve mobility.

As well, there are certain arm movements in chum kiu that do not appear in sil lum tao. Some of these involve the arm being moved from a 90-degree angle at the elbow rather than the more extended, *optimum angle* that is more predominant in sil lum tao.

Chum kiu also introduces the wing chun kicks, including what is often called the chum kiu kick, where the pivot rotates in the opposite direction to the first kick in this form.

The hook punch/uppercut is also brought in, however that action is largely the bong sau to tan sau movement from sil lum tao applied with a pivot.

Bil Gee

Just as chum kiu builds upon the skills developed in sil lum tao, bil gee adds to the abilities acquired in the two previous forms. Accordingly, as the chum kiu form adds more vectors of force to the movements of sil tao, bil gee allows for extra force vectors in addition to those available in chum kiu. In some ways the movements are more natural as they involve twisting at the waist and bending, which an untrained person will generally do to increase power.

The rotation in bil gee is intrinsic in the releasing of energy. This type of force is found in nature in spiral structures such as whirlpools or tornadoes, (twisters). However, without first developing the structural qualities of wing chun through sil lum tao, and then learning to move that structure as a cohesive unit in chum kiu, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to apply the movements of bil gee correctly.

Another important objective of practicing bil gee is to learn to perform the movements with speed. This aspect is not emphasized in the other forms. Obviously correctness should be emphasized initially, but once the movements have been practiced to a degree where they are instinctive to the student, then speed should be added.

Mook Jong

The movements in the mook jong form can all be found in the three empty hand forms; sil lum tao, chum kiu and bil gee. The wooden dummy itself should be considered as training equipment and the mook jong form provides a template in which to practice fighting moves.

The moves are not necessarily sequential and should not be thought of as combinations in the way that a boxer may practice a set of punches. However moving from one position to another in the most economical and direct way, is important, and will be enhanced through practicing this form.

Having a solid object to strike provides an opportunity to cultivate power. The way that the wooden dummy is built is quite ingenious, as the springiness of the construction, and the way the arms project from the trunk, form a structure that responds to force in a way very similar to the human body. Owning a wooden dummy is like having a training partner that is willing to stand there all day long as one practices wing chun.

