

“Alright. So we’re here to discuss the third form of Wing Chun, the Biu Chee form, which is the form that you’re introduced [to] at the green sash level. I have to say from a new red sash perspective, it seems like a fairly strange form—it seems quite different in some ways from Siu Nim Tau and Chum Kiu. Again, I thought we could just start with talking about in a general sense what’s unique about Biu Chee, what it contributes or adds, and then later on we can go into the three section by section kind of discussion.”

“Sure. So maybe I’ll just respond to your descriptive of ‘it seems strange,’ and I can answer the question by just asking one back at you, so strange compared to what?”

“Compared to...well there seems to be a lot of leaving centre, or with the elbow moves you’re torquing quite a bit—so yeah the elbow comes in which hadn’t been seen in the other two forms—there’s the opening part with the hand which I don’t know exactly how it’s done but you do...”

“Right.”

“I’m not sure exactly what that part’s about. So there’s just different kinds of moves it seems that are different from the other forms.” [1:29]

“Yeah, and because the nature of Biu Chee is basically when bad things happen to good Wing Chun people, there’s a series of movements and expressions and teachings in that form that help people when more or less they, say, have lost the occupation of centerline in an ideal way. So maybe they’re still occupying centerline but they don’t have balance or their horse is broken or I can list any of the other attributes or things within the system. So it’s basically when your ideal, conservative kung fu that you learn from Siu Nim Tau and Chum Kiu, and basically all of the techniques that flow with that—when you’ve lost that, when that’s been taken from you: so when you lose centerline, when you lose balance, if there’s multiple attackers. So the form, we call it the 9-1-1 form in the Wing Chun system, so emergency techniques. That’s sort of the idea that you want to think about. The movements are going to be different—as you noted it’s going to come off, a lot of the movements come off centerline or start from off centerline because we want to basically learn how to reclaim centerline. With timing, balance, structure—all of those important attributes and principles. Most of the moves are really ‘how do I get back to centerline, after I’ve lost it.’

“And then also a little bit of a different intention too if you’re dealing with multiple attackers. So there’s some basic things in that form more on an intentional level that’s different. I’ll give you one example: you’ve maybe heard the axiom “He moves first, I hit first.” That’s the conservative, safe, classical expression of Wing Chun—you don’t ever want to make the first move, you don’t want to give away what you’re up to, you want the other person to show their vulnerability, but you’ll actually respond quicker than them, and you’ll get your block or your hit. When you have maybe more than one person in an altercation, you don’t want to be waiting. If you see people moving towards you, or it’s an ugly scene—you start coming out and you make some commitments to some pretty intense strikes. So that first punch that comes out from the Biu Chee form—it doesn’t have the same look as the one that comes from Siu Nim Tau where, you know, you do this—it’s basically training you: anywhere your hand is, straight-line centerline—fire that punch and fire it hard.

“While I wouldn’t say that there isn’t the use of sensitivity in Biu Chee, I would say it’s maybe not as important at this point in time when maybe I’ve lost my balance, or there’s multiple attackers coming, or somebody has grabbed me, or jammed my arms too close to me—so all the things that I don’t like to have happen in my sort of idealized Wing Chun kung fu. So this is where you’re going to see these larger movements, intense movements, movements with a lot of *jing* at the end, like a lot of power, a lot of torque. And basically what you’re trying to do is reclaim centerline, or at the very least regain your balance and make space. That’s sort of the general purpose of that form. I don’t know if you have any other questions around that.”

“Yeah, so talking about the elbow rotation, it seems interesting there because [5:00] in Chum Kiu, especially in the first section, we do a 180 shift which is, in some way, the maximum you would ever need to do, yet the elbow it seems, it seems that you’re almost going past the 180, like your chest actually seems to be further than 180° almost.”

“I’m not sure what you mean by that. So when you’re doing Chum Kiu?”

“No, when you’re doing Biu Chee: with the elbow, it seems like you go further than the 180 that you do in Chum Kiu.”

“Yeah, so what you’re doing—I’ll just talk about the elbows because there are quite a few elbow movements, the *kwai jians*, in the form. Coming back to your idealized Wing Chun, you don’t want to actually use an elbow unless absolutely necessary. Because I want to use my hands. I want to keep that space and having people certainly within striking range at that wrist-past-wrist range, that’s sort of the ideal Wing Chun fighting; like once I have wrist-past-wrist, I know I can continue to go in and hit them, but not be at risk for myself having people too close to me outside of my little sort of safety zone. If I need to use an elbow, that means that someone is very close to me now. So the wrist collapses which then presents the elbow. In the *kwai jian* movements, you’re basically simulating, well, what happens now if somebody’s actually collapsed your elbows, certainly past the line of your...sorry, collapsed your wrists I mean, certainly past the line of your elbows, and now they’re even going towards your body—then we need to actually learn how to then turn the elbows to reclaim centerline. Certainly, if someone’s pushing me or grabbing me, pushing my hands towards my chest, if they’re leaning forward, on the way for me trying to reclaim centerline with my elbow, I’m going to strike them in the head or the jaw, but my intention is not to launch an elbow attack at that person’s head and chase them, so to speak; I want to bring it back to the centerline, and then if you notice in many of the movements after the *kwai jian*, there’s a clearing *go bong sau* to then reclaim the idealized space in Wing Chun which is at wrist-past-wrist.

“So all those moves, again, are about reclaiming the centerline. If there’s a hit that happens along the way, so be it. But that’s not what we’re doing. Even when things are going bad in a Wing Chun situation, your focus is still oriented around the theories, the principles, and the attributes. So the elbows, as I said, if we get our forearms or wrists collapsed, they’re the vehicle that then helps us regain or reclaim the centerline. Does that answer your question?”

"I think so, yeah."

"Because to intentionally...like if someone approached me in an altercation, to then intentionally pull my wrist back and then to strike them with the elbow, I have to let them get very, very close to me. That's very risky. It's very risky for someone to actually tackle me, do a throw, a trip, a <grounded ?>—all of that. They can take me down pretty easy if I don't have my hands out forward defending; I don't want to let someone in that close. It's very risky. So that's why only when necessary. To reclaim the space."

"It seems a bit similar, maybe, in some ways, to, in Chum Kiu, where we sort of simulate getting pushed back onto the back leg before we launch a kick. We're putting something in in the form as if somebody's coming at us or somebody's changed our structure, our balance, or something like that."

"Yeah. You're going to start in these positions [that], as you said, look strange—I think was the word you used—compared to what you would normally see in the rest of the Wing Chun system. So, of course, that's going to be the case in many of the moves. And there's little teachings in there as well, like just having that straight punch. I mean, it doesn't say a lot, but the fact that we don't do it like we do in Siu Nim Tau, there's a teaching there that: fist, wherever it is, just goes to the centerline. You're just taking it. You're not, like, tentative, reaching; you're just taking it with your Wing Chun punch and really good intent."

"The other energetic...once you learn all the movements, just like any of the other forms, you learn the structure and the proper techniques first, and then you have to bring the intent in there. And with Biu Chee, you are cranking a lot of *jing*-energy. So it's not so subtle anymore and that's the—I'm going to just reference back to that first movement, talking about the *jut saus*, they're irregularly-looking *jut saus*. So what you're doing here is you're learning again to strengthen the *chum sau* part of the wrist-structure. [10:00] And so *this*, as I do the movements here. So that if all I have is, everything's pinned, and all I have is this little wrist joint to then get this wrist to then create more and more space, I might have to do it an inch at a time. Because I have to actually maybe just use a joint or two joints as opposed to having that whole integrated horse stance structure coming behind my hand techniques; it's not necessarily going to be available to me in an emergency situation—maybe I've lost my balance, or my structure's been jammed. So we're really strengthening the wrist joint, which is really where we release the *jing* in our strikes. So there's an energetic intention when you're throwing the techniques out, you're really releasing the energy. Full extension, full release."

"So the, uh, sorry they were called *jut saus*?..."

"Yeah."

"...that's something that you're starting to, you're looking to build into strikes in general, then, to get *jing*."

“Yeah, absolutely.”

“I had a question because, on our website, we mention that Biu Chee, a name for it—I don’t know if it’s a translation—is ‘thrusting fingers’. I wonder if you could speak to why it’s called that.”

“Yeah, you know I want to stay true to my experiences, and I’ve seen many different interpretations around the ‘thrusting fingers,’ so—which is the *biu sau* technique. Ok, so the *biu sau* technique comes from here, as I’m demonstrating, you know when we do the elbows and then I’m shooting forward. But personally I’m shooting the wrist forward, but it looks like my fingers are shooting forward but actually I’m turning my fingers just off, off to the side, towards the centre. And I’m really presenting the wrist to clear and take the centerline with this joint. If I just do this, it’s not going to take it—I’m shooting the fingers, so I can give you a demonstration. I know the people listening to this won’t, but just so you get this. So if you have the centerline, got me jammed here, ok, now notice how I’m aiming the fingers towards the centerline? So when I do that I’m going to actually have structure when I try and do this. If I don’t aim the fingers and I just try and take the centerline with my wrist, not going to happen. You can feel that, like, I’m trying. But now...ok, just by aiming the fingers, there’s a structure there, I’ll take it. You can stop me!”

“No I can’t!”

“Right, then I go back to here. And I hope you feel that I am trying to go through your face.”

“Yeah, and with this one you’re not even trying nearly as hard.”

“Ok, so these are the little tricks and understandings of the form. Right, so you have to have this intention, like you’re snapping that wrist joint—the *chum sau* structure of the wrist.”

“Which is what you’re doing with the *jut saus*.”

“This is why you’re strengthening that with those three movements of *jut saus*.”

“Ok, something else I noticed about Biu Chee that seems different—I mean you mentioned the opening punch—but it seems like we’ve moved...a lot of the moves seem to involve *go bong*s, like we’ve moved from, there was a lot of *jeungs*, palm strikes, before, and punches, through Siu Nim Tau and Chum Kiu, now suddenly we’re doing a lot of *go bong*s. Do you have any thoughts on why that is?”

“Well I mean *go bong* and *biu saus* are pretty close in terms of techniques. They have a little, they have a different intention, but the structure is very much the same. The intention is different. So you know some people will call them *go bong saus*, some people will call them *biu saus* in the Biu Chee form, so, right, it all depends. But again, what you’re trying to do is, I’m trying to clear and hand replace, just directly go straight to the centerline with that, again I’ll call it the *chum sau* structure, of either your *biu sau* or your *go bong sau*.”

“And how’s the intention different between the two?”

“Well, again, I’ll do a demonstration, if you just get close. So if just do a regular *bong sau*, and now you’ve stopped me and now I’m going to continue to do a palm strike to your face and you just insert your wrist to do *go bong sau*. So you’re just moving me off centerline. The *biu sau* intention is...I’m taking that with the structure, as opposed to just redirecting you off, like I’m going [15:00] straight through and fully committing. Whereas the *go bong sau* wouldn’t necessarily fully extend like a strike would. It would just sort of stick out.”

“Ok. So a bit of a defensive/offensive...”

“Yeah, so that’s where the intention is different. *Biu sau* is you’re totally clearing that line because you trained to fully clear because you don’t know how much of that line you’re going to get. So again I can only tell you...it’s too bad we don’t have this on video, but again, if you’ve collapsed this, right, now you have really like strong arms here, and even with me aiming this, ok I got this much space, but in my intention, I’m doing this all the time: I’m sending my intent way past where what might actually happen here, but it then lets me get some space. Whereas if I just train to do this, and then there’s real energy there, I’m not even going to get that inch. But if...ok, so this is how much I could get, I couldn’t clear it, but this is more than enough to come back, right. So full range of motion and extension. You train that, means you’ll get closer to it than if you just take the surface area of the person’s body that you’re trying to engage with.”

“Something else I noticed about Biu Chee is it seems—I mean, there’s sort of throughout Chum Kiu and Siu Nim Tau as well, but we talk a lot about straight-line—but it seems especially, or at least it occurred more to me, in Biu Chee, there’s a circular kind of motion.”

“Well, certainly, there’s a lot of *huen sau* legwork, so circle stepping, happening. So, again, it’s sort of like—or *huen ma* I should say, *huen ma* stepping—and it’s the same thing, I mean, for our hands we have *huen sau*, even though we still want to abide by the straight-line theory, but sometimes I have to use a very small circle to come back. So it’s the smallest circle possible to help me get back to straight-line, centerline. So same thing with your *huen ma* stepping: sometimes I didn’t see someone come or they came from an awkward angle and I got caught late so now I have to really step off that line and possibly come around them. So that’s what the circle step is. I’ll train a really big circle step—*huen ma*—it doesn’t mean I’ll use it all the time: I will use exactly as much as I need to just cut the corner around

that person's advancing leg and then retake it from behind. But I'll train a big one, so full range of motion again, so you have the ability to do it that big or something much smaller as required."

"So the circle seems to be, in *huen sau*, *huen ma*, moving around something to get back to going to straight-line."

"It's like a compass needle, coming back to centerline."

"Because there's also the sort of circular movement—I don't know if there's a term for the, at the end, when you do the bowing down and then your arms thrust up and go around, there seems to be this circular kind of thing to the *jong saus*."

"Yeah, that's again more of a full range of motion to help clear something out of the way. So I fully will bend over and, right, explode up and out, so I have full energetic release. But if I just train to do this, to come back to a *jong sau*, which is where I really want, I mean, this is not going to do it, if someone has me in a headlock—and this is where you would use that movement—my horse is broken, someone's maybe got me in a headlock, and I have to bring my hands up—boom—clear...now, again, just like the example I used before, I may not clear or need to clear this big, but I'm going to send energy out this big. And if, when I do that, I get just a little space here, then I'm going to flip this into a *lan sau* and then attack. Because that technique that I just demonstrated with my body, I mean that just seemed to be the natural flow, that when this came up, there's an opening available then I follow the opening. So same Wing Chun principles. So, I need to train for the full release of energy and then we come back to centerline into the *jong sau*."

"Yeah, I mean if people don't understand that the teachings are how to use the forms properly, then it will look very strange, very bizarre. We train a lot without a lot of stepping other than the *huen mas*. Well, we're training you basically, well what happens if you can't move. What if you're pinned against the wall. And you don't have your hips available. And then you got to, like, bring the arms up and make some room, and then find it."

"I was thinking earlier, when you were talking about the *jut saus*, again, of the demonstration that you like doing, where you have somebody pin all of your joints to the wall, and you're still able to create enough room to shake free."

"It may take three, four, five, ten [20:00] shakes, but I'll just keep filling the space because even with everything pinned I'll still have forward *chung chi*. And as soon as space is made, then the arms and limbs will fill it, and then the sensitivity comes back, and then you'll start doing your striking. So really think of the form as just really quick ways to come back to something you're very comfortable and familiar with, which is that wrist-past-wrist idealized Wing Chun, where you have *doi yeng*, facing your opponent."

“You’ll notice in the *kwai jian* series, with the elbows, we break *doi yeng* intentionally. We’re not trying to shift and then keep the shoulders square, we’re coming right over, and breaking *doi yeng* because if someone pushes me off balance, I’ve got to let that energy go and turn, and now I want to use the side structure, which goes into the shoulders, so I want to use that structure because I don’t have any here trying to be *doi yeng* like this. But there is some here. Just like when we do our side attacks: the structure comes all the way down here into the floor, so your centerline at the side now is at your shoulder instead of in front, if you can’t face them.”