

“I read somewhere I think, it might have been in the manual or on the website, that one thing that Biu Chee lets you do—I think the expression, what it said was something like—it enables more personal expression of Wing Chun. So Chum Kiu very clearly helps you [30:00], at least in my own stage of development, there’s a huge focus for me on trying to coordinate hip with a strike or a block: hip and arm together. Biu Chee, you’re saying, is sort of an emergency thing that you pull out of your pocket when you need to. So how does it enable more personal expression of the whole Wing Chun system, then—how does it permeate the rest of your Wing Chun?”

“Well, I think it happens in two ways. Number one, once you start playing the form properly, when you start really cranking some energy, and you have lots of changes from one side to the other, with lots of long arm releases and movements, I mean it sort of frees a lot of the structuring that we were doing in the Siu Nim Tau and Chum Kiu part of your learning. You’re now letting things off the leash a little bit more. And you’re striking with a lot of *jing* and power. So I just think that on that energetic level, it starts shaking off some of the scales, so you can actually feel things a little bit more. The other thing I’ve noticed too is when you do some appropriate free style *chi sau*, so many of the moves from Biu Chee just come out of nowhere, because maybe part of my technique was collapsed, or this or that, and so then they come out naturally because I was training in the form. It happens even with the *mook jong* as well, and we’ll talk about that another time, with the wooden dummy: you think, ‘oh, where am I going to use this, I can’t even think of how I would use this’ and yet then a circumstance in *chi sau* happens, and it’s like ‘oh, oohh, oohh,’ it comes out naturally, because I’ve prepared for it to. So all of those pearls just keep popping up all the time. So I think those are the two ways, as it feeds your nervous system with more possibility, and then also the energetic intention is much, much more forceful, powerful in Biu Chee so it can be freeing as well.”

“Ok, starting getting rid of some of those training wheels or scaffolding.”

“Yeah, moving your energy. Like really starting to crank some energy now. You’ve spent a bunch of years building that internal structure to hold the, to handle the energy so that you don’t throw a punch...you don’t hyperextend your elbow or you don’t break your wrist. You’ve worked the wrist joints free with your *huen saus*, all those *huen saus* you’ve done, so your legs, the <kicking?>—all that’s now ready to run some real energy through there, so now start doing it. Because we don’t do a lot of full contact sparring, you do have to at least have some body memory of how to fully commit and hit in a fight. Because if you’ve just been playing patty cake with your *chi sau*, even if you have really good *chi sau*, and amazing footwork, and wonderful timing and sensitivity, if you don’t know how to hit when you have the opening, I mean it’s great as an art, but in a fight it’s just going to delay you maybe three seconds before the person does figure you out. What you’re trying to do in the Wing Chun, ideally, with the centerline—we’ve talked about this before—is make sure you don’t get hit so you can hit anytime you want. Ok, so you have to hit. And you have to find somewhere where you’re actually fully committing to the punches, the strikes, the kicks, the elbows, and Biu Chee is one of the forms you can do that without having to beat up somebody. The other one, we’ll do this, I’ll talk about it more, is when you do the *mook jong* technique in the air without the *mook jong*; you really start cranking full power when you do that.”

“I can see how the scaffolding progression works too insofar as with Chum Kiu you’re doing some

shifting motion, dynamic balance, and in Biu Chee it seems much more, as we've been talking about, explosive movements linked with shifting and dynamic balance, so Chum Kiu's a lot safer in that regard, you're not throwing a lot of energy. You are throwing a lot of energy, but you're also focusing on just being able to do the shift, for instance."

"It's still pretty contained too, you know you're typically within the shoulders or the one movement that we have, the side kick, but everything is moving the whole structure. Biu Chee is like structure's breaking but you're still firing."

"I've heard it's sort of the robot stance where everything's in front of you all of the time versus something more..."

"Now, it's more real. You know, I think, certainly for me, in my early years, when we train the system, and I understood the system, there's still that naive part that's like: 'oh, and a fight will look like what my training looks like.' It won't. It won't. It might start there for a minute, but you're going to do things you've never trained directly. Because your training has allowed you to, and has allowed that natural ability to come out based on the sensory queues from the other person. Pressure: they push you, move [35:00]—whatever it is. Your body's just going to do Wing Chun: reorient to centerline, saving time, energy, motion, etc. etc. etc., all of the, like it's just going to happen. And that particular movement, you may not have trained directly in a particular drill. So that's again the magic in the system, so to speak. I've said it several times: you train consciously, intentionally, through the front door, and the real Wing Chun sneaks in to your nervous system through the back door while you're not paying attention."

"It's fascinating because the forms, so we do a bunch of other stuff besides the forms, but the forms are the same movements over and over again, but somehow as you're saying you're learning the same movements over and over again but yet you're learning something different, because when you're in a fight situation you're not going to do the form. You've learnt something else through doing the same thing over and over again."

"The forms—obviously they'll show you the techniques. But what are techniques? Techniques are middle of the bell curve of idealized structure for you to deal with someone's energy coming at you at a certain line or plane at a certain angle. So whatever I call *bong sau* is, ok there's a middle of a bell curve of ideal structure in this particular technique. Doesn't mean I'm going to have a perfect *bong sau*, it just means I need to have enough structure to not get hit, to occupy centerline, so I can hit anytime I want. It just has to be good enough. So your training keeps helping you push yourself to that ideal place. And it becomes more and more dynamic, especially when you get into high-level *chi sau* where it's free style. But it's not like anarchy either, like there's still a really intentional skillset going on there. So you have to keep expanding, expanding, expanding."

"That seems to tie into what we were talking earlier with the *biu sau* that you learn the idealized form in the form, that's an intention, it has to do with your intention, but it might not be, it doesn't have to be what actually manifests. It's just that's your intention to throw the, or where you're throwing the energy

out from the last part of Biu Chee. Your intention is that energetic...throw.”

“And I’m going to use structure, whatever structure I can manifest from that very awkward position, so I’m going to train that but it’s not going to look...it might just be one arm, because the other one’s pressed against the, whatever, you know, the wall, and here you are, and it’s just like <whoosh>...I’m glad that was empty, ish. It’s just water. A little accident here, in the middle of our audio. So much chi flying around. Ok.”

“A little cup was the victim.”

“So, again, we use the forms, we don’t let the forms use us. That’s why you have to understand the system, you have to understand the *faat do*. Like how to engage with the training in a way that’s going to bring you to this place I’m telling you about. Because I can show you all the forms, you can practice them a million times, but if you’re not doing it with a certain intention or a mindfulness about what you’re trying to focus on, why you’re doing the form, you might as well be learning ballroom dancing: I mean, you’ll learn some moves but it’s not going to translate into anything useful in the martial realm. So that’s the difference. The beauty and the system and the way it’s laid out is it just sets up your nervous system’s ability to synthesize and integrate all of these exercises, drills, forms, to get something much more than the sum of the parts. Exponentially more.”

“I guess we’ve already been sort of touching on this, but we sort of explicitly in the past two forms, talked about chi. So I was wondering if you wanted to speak more directly to the theme of sort of the energetic flavour of Biu Chee.”

“It’s explosive. So here’s really where we’re first introducing *jing*. The *ging lik*, I think, is the other terminology used in our manual. That’s the explosive release of power. And so by really working that last wrist joint, or focusing in to the elbows if the elbows are doing it—so you’ve spent these years cultivating your chi, learning how to move it around through your other two forms and practices, the infrastructure’s there for you to now—again, I’ll use another metaphor—your *jing* is like that last little snap [40:00] in the whip. So you let it flow and there’s a little release-relax there. So just practicing that motion of the *jut saus* is really creating a strong infrastructure to snap out some *jing*, that little whipping energy at the end. Whether it’s here, or here, or here, or a kick, anything, so you’re now using, you’re feeling your body as like an articulated whip. I can make all the funny Bruce Lee sound effects like that <whip sound>. It has that kind of flavour to it. It’s not loosey-goosey whip; it’s structured, but it does follow a chain of energy.

“So you can imagine what kind of energy you’re going to be moving through your body and then releasing. A very powerful practice. If you want to move some energy in your body, regardless if it’s martial or not, do your Biu Chee with really serious intention, three, four, or five times. You’ll definitely notice something happening inside you.”

“I don’t know if we want to touch on the, because we’ve been talking about chi and *jing*, if we want to

touch on, we haven't explicitly talked about the internal three elements which starts with the heart-mind, flows into intent, and then into chi and then *jing*."

"This really goes to deeper parts of one's self. And no one really knows for sure what they're going to do in a real fight situation. Unless of course they've been in a lot of fights. Then, they'll probably have a good idea of what their patterns are, typically how they respond, but for people who haven't, or maybe it's been a very long time, you can't say for sure what's going to show up in your stress response, because we typically, what we're training is to have a very engaged, intentional, focused response that has a lot of capability, a lot of bandwidth to deal with lots of different circumstances: physically, emotionally, and psychologically. The training, in theory, is going to be stretching that bandwidth by continuously bringing people to their edges. And edges, so that the edges create a much larger container where people can be responsive versus inappropriately reactive. I am going to come back to your question: I'm just linking it all together.

"Because we're talking about intention, and heart and mind, which is: what am I doing. And in this expression of the art, when it's go time, you have to have trained yourself somewhere somehow to fully commit. To fully commit. Because if you don't have that in you already, it's not going to show up magically. What you're going to get is some highly-charged fight, flight, or freeze response. Those are meant to obviously keep us safe, and the fight response—we want to use the adrenaline and cortisol and norepinephrine that is going to get jacked up into our nervous system, if a situation comes. But I don't want to be overwhelmed by it either. So you're training, when you're training seriously and on the edge and there's a little bit of, you know, I don't want to say fear there, but there's a little bit of 'ok, like I'm on the edge here with my partner and we're really stretching that out,' you're already sort of microdosing yourself with a little bit of the stress hormones, but in a good way. Instead of giving you a big and crazy dose of it and then you go into extreme reactive fight, flight, or freeze, and then you can't be responsive in any of those situations. You can be reactive, but you can't be responsive. And what we're trying to do in, to bringing Wing Chun into a martial application is to have you actually being responsive. Yeah, I want you to have good habits that will come out, but reactive means you get into tension, and you're fighting with aggression and no sense of what you're doing, like you're just flailing in and out of control, in a rage, or whatever, trying to deal with the real or imagined physical-emotional threat, which is what typically triggers us into stress response.

"So we want to have something more than just that coming out. I certainly don't want to go into flight mode because [45:00], so let me clear about that: so if in a situation, I could have ran, absolutely, give me that boost of adrenaline and get my legs in gear. So if you can, I'm absolutely saying get out if you can. I'm now saying, now you can't get out. But your nervous system can still go into flight mode. And what that means is you're going to sort of cower, just protect yourself, and not engage intentionally with the situation. You're going to be panicking and trying to protect yourself but you're not going to be reactive. And then the freeze response is like a deer caught in the headlight. The body for many people in traumatic events actually does paralyze. It's not a metaphor of frozen: it is—they are frozen and then they will, obviously they can't defend themselves with any kind of responsivity.

"So how do you train that mind with that intention? Well, train seriously, train with intention, you probably hear me, when I do teach, I'm always telling people, 'head up,' 'put your eyesight on the back of the other person's skull that you're training with, at least set your scope mark on the back of their head when you're going to release energy,' 'bring your eyes, bring that spirit forward' in a way that's going to feel a little awkward but comfortable because you're training with a partner who you know. So I

want you to sit with that awkwardness of basically looking through somebody or looking them in the eye the whole time, which is usually uncomfortable. I want you to train that here in a way that it's not going to crush you. So that when something happens for real, you're going to have these forward-eyes. That's a very powerful psychological tool in a physical altercation. It could even minimize it or prevent it from happening. Now I'm not talking about eyes bugging out of your head and a big scowl on your face, that's an aggressive, and that can trigger more aggression; I'm just talking about like you are there, you are fully present, and you're just seeing through that person. Like they're just an object in your way. Just as a matter of fact, not with disdain in your eyes. Because you've just trained that. You're setting your scope of where you want your energy to go and if you've already done that on the other person's body, that has an impact through the mammal parts of the neural...it does do something to somebody.

"So this is how you train it. And then when things get even more dynamic, at the senior levels, and advanced levels of training *chi sau* or doing *my san jong* drills, like you go in and you blatantly attack and you, right, but with skill, and they can stand and defend and change and they're both here, we don't look here anymore at the hands or the centerline. We already got that programmed. Now we're just, I'm aiming my energy and the hands are just going to deliver it. So this is how you train that. So how do you train that into *Biu Chee*?

"Well, once you're looking at your elbows, make sure it's the right line, and this and that, it's like, ok, once you have that, then where do you want the energy to go? Train that. This is how you can bring that forward and linking it with, the heart and the mind is like, 'ok, do I have the intention to fully bring my self into this?' So you may have to do some things, physically, emotionally, or psychologically in your life to clear out the blockages around that. Your training can help you but it will also maybe point out where, 'oh, I actually always defer to people' or 'I don't speak up for myself' or 'I'm always people-pleaser' or 'I don't want to rock the boat'...you're going to come face-to-face with those blocks. You can do that in training in class. You can work those edges.

"So you can now bring it, and now you link that with your *yi*, which is now I'm going to aim it, I'm going to bring the heart and the mind, I'm fully here: now I'm aiming that. On the other side of you. There's my *yi*. And, then, the last part, we want to connect the *jing*. And that's just another level of release.

"...Or you can just do the form. Just do the movements. So again I keep referring back to how do you [50:00] train the system properly. With the right intention instead of just numbing out, or do what the instructor is like, like what are you doing on your own to really bring your training up to the next level? There's so many things, you just practice straight-line, centerline, dynamic, the attributes, the principles, now you've got this thing of internal and external, six element theory. How do you actually bring that into your training now?

"It's all there for people if they want to. And certainly they'll get the instructions or the teachings, but ultimately they have to decide that they're going to engage with this seriously. If they want the high-level kung fu to come, you have to train this with serious intent."

"Do you like the idea...sometimes the idea's been brought forward that you could, before you go to class, say today I'm going to focus on this attribute or this part of the *faat do* or something like that. Do you think that's a good..."

“Sure. And an instructor might invite you do something different. But still if you can weave something in, right? I would say certainly make those opportunities real for you in class when they’re presented. But certainly when you’re training outside class, just practicing your forms or you get a kung fu brother or sister and you get a bunch of you training, say ‘ok, this is what I want actually to focus on’, and you create drills that support your intentional learning. Instead of just ‘oh, let’s just do Siu Nim Tau,’ ‘let’s just do *pak sau*’—yeah, but what are you going to do when you’re doing those things? To get the full benefit of that time, first of all, but also you’re not going to get high-level Wing Chun if you don’t train that way. It’s just not going to happen. It’s just not going to happen.”

“Right, and when you’re in the position of having to come up with your own drill outside of class or something like that, then it’s because you’re intentionally thinking about what do I need to work on, what is the problem or what is the thing that I need to engage with?”

“Yeah, and bring some creativity there. What would be a really cool drill that would really meet these two or three things that I want to integrate. Oh, kicking, or it might be this, or it could be self-defense applications, someone grabs me, like whatever. As long as you’re focused. Moy Yat, and I’m paraphrasing here, he says: Wing Chun is centerline and if you’re training or fighting on centerline, it’s Wing Chun, even if you don’t call it that. And then he says, but if you’re not training on centerline, it’s not Wing Chun, even if you call it that. So as long as you’re focusing on those things that are Wing Chun then it can look like many different things. But you’re still training Wing Chun.”

“Even when it looks strange like Biu Chee, as a beginner.”

“The curriculum is like the alphabet of the system: what poetry you come up with, that’s yours. And this is again where that personal expression and freedom continues to emerge. It’s important to teach the curriculum but don’t be personally enslaved by it in your own personal expression of your kung fu.”

“Ok, should we end there?”

“Ok, sure, yeah.”

“Great. Well, thank you very much Sifu.”

“No, thank you, Eben. Thank you.”