

E: “I find it amazing how quickly and how much you can learn. I mean I’ve only been doing *chi sau* for, I think—*chi sau*, not *dan chi sau*, but *chi sau*—for I think six months, and already I have a base awareness of when there’s a hole or when there’s different kinds of sensitivity already. And it comes quickly, and I can only imagine years down the road what kind of sensitivity...”

S: “Yeah, it’s like there’s that paradox is that it’s going to be smaller and smaller measurable increments of noticing things, but within that heightened awareness, those smaller things actually feel really big. Right, so even though your holes that you’re going to give me are going to be smaller and smaller, you’re inviting me to open up my sensitivity so that at the very least, they’ll still feel really big. Or maybe even bigger if my sensitivity’s training is better than you are at cleaning up your holes.

“And if we just look at that one piece of sensitivity, that is a limitless skill. So this is one of the things that contributes to Wing Chun being a lifelong art, is that, as long as you’re paying attention, there’s always new information. And so the art will always be fresh and grow and feel alive, as opposed to, ‘oh, I hit this plateau, or ceiling, and, oh, I’m 45 now, my hips and knees are shot from all the rolling around, or kicks, or punishment; I can’t do any of that anymore, I can’t do a spinning side-kick anymore, I can’t jump up and land on my foot anymore without it writhing in pain.’ So some martial arts literally, because of their nature of hard, crash, ground, and pound, put on a lot of armour, have a very short shelf-life. Wing Chun isn’t one of those.

“My Sifu is 66 now; my Sigung’s 70. They still move like the wind, they still hit like bricks. It’s beautiful.

“So that sensitivity piece and...as I change, as I physically, emotionally, whatever evolve over time, change, grow, whatever, diminish, because physically I will diminish and certain things won’t move as quickly as they want to, then the system doesn’t abandon you. You just have to reharmonize the theories and principles to pick up the slack where you can. So if I can’t move as quick anymore, maybe my sensitivity can increase a little bit. So maybe I can’t move as fast, but I’ll move sooner. Or because of, you know, my size and my youth, I’ve got really good structure; well, yeah, muscles are getting weak, bones are getting brittle, maybe, so what could help me compensate for not having as much structure anymore? Maybe better timing. Maybe better balance.

“So it’s not like, so that’s the beauty of the system: it just keeps reharmonizing all the theories and principles, to give you the best possible outcome that you can have in that moment of life in your time. It’s brilliant! That’s why, for me, it’s only been 26 years now for me, but my Sifu, add another 5; my Sigung, 40 plus years.

“And, for sure, for most people in the beginning, it’s about the physical, it’s about the self-defense, it’s about that, but really this art gets into your cells, and we’re not just physical beings and then I’m separate psychologically. It’s like, anything that impacts me physically is going to change me emotionally, psychologically, behaviourally, relationally. I might go kicking and screaming through old habits that I hold onto, but if I keep coming, and I keep training mindfully, I’m letting it in. I’m letting it change me. It will take more and more effort to hold on to my old ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving, while the medicine of the kung fu is actually cellularly reengineering me. It’s quite profound that way.”

E: “Should we stop there?”

S: "Anything, any other questions about *chi sau*?"

E: "Um, I mean the only other, I guess I could ask this question, but we sort of touched on it. So when we start *chi sau*, we always, we roll constantly, and I think we do that up until it becomes much more dynamic, so there's always this constant motion, so we don't just sort of start there, and do a drill, we keep that momentum going. I don't know if you just want to talk about why we do that?"

"Yeah, well, [1:10:00] generally speaking, things in motion want to stay motion, and things that are stuck like to stay stuck. So again, once we learn the sort of basic movements and positions where we may stop to look at things to fix something, after that, you want to keep the roll moving, because in a fight you don't want to stop and stand on salute. It's either you're going in and you're hitting, or you've been shut down, you've changed the line, and you keep going—so your energy is always moving. So it's always there and available. You're riding that wave of fluidity until the experience is done or the fight is over, as opposed to start-stop, start-stop, start-stop. That is slower, and it takes a lot of energy, and the moment I stop, if I don't have any sensate information making me move, then I slip into left-brain: 'hey, what's going on,' and I start thinking, then I might as well be a tree planted in the earth; I'm not going to be moving too fast at that point in time."

E: "So that's why we have...the instructors often repeat: 'if you make a mistake, don't just freeze in the moment, play it out.'"

S: "Yeah, just keep moving. Just keep moving. And keeping moving doesn't mean you have to go fast. Because, again, you know, you want to make sure through the *chi sau* practice, you're going at a speed that you have sensitivity. There's no point going three times faster if you can't feel anything. So again we have to harmonize theories, principles, and attributes. I go at a speed that I can notice, 'oh, does this structure feel right', 'is my timing good with this other person?' So I can notice, and then make changes. Again, that's part of understanding the roll as well: keep it in motion, but not just for speed.

"And I guess the last thing I would like to really emphasize is *chi sau*'s not meant to be competitive, it's not meant to be sparring, it's not meant to be a fight. Where I am competing against you to get in a hit or a strike. We're using each other to up our skill level to be able to control and occupy the centerline with all those wonderful principles and attributes that we talked about. And that, sometimes, I will feed you energy—as my Sifu says, I will invest in loss—so you can get better, so that you can then feed me some energy later on, and invest in loss, and let me do some things so I can get better. And then, if you've ever watched two very experienced people doing *chi sau*, it's very dynamic, it's very explosive, it's very, like you can see there's power there if they pulled the trigger on the hit. But there's also this ability to control it, to change, to have fluidity...it's a beautiful dance of give and take.

"You can say, 'yeah, well that's not really training a real situation'. Well, no, but it's preparing you for it. *Chi sau* is not a fight. *Chi sau* is training me what to do in a fight. If there's hands on centerline, I'll change, and I'll hit them. But I'll pull the trigger on a fight, whereas in *chi sau*, I won't, because I don't want injure my kung fu brothers and sisters, number one—obviously, it's a terrible thing to do; and

number two, you'll eventually not have any training partners!

“The only thing people have to realize is they have to spend some time hitting. So train power on a wall bag, or buy a dummy or whatever else, and pull the trigger there, for sure. So that you won't just, 'oh, my hand's on centerline, great,' bang!, someone punches you in the face because you're looking at your wonderful work of controlling the centerline. Well, the whole point of controlling the centerline with your *tan sau*, *fook sau*, *bong sau* in *chi sau*, is to use skill to stop yourself from getting hit—which is occupying the centerline—so that you can hit. Remember: you have to hit if you want to finish a fight. In *chi sau*, we don't necessarily go to that place, for the reasons I just told you, but the whole reason you get to there is so you can hit and finish the fight.

“There we go. Thank you.”

E: “Thank you very much.”