

# WING CHUN'S CHI SAU STANDS UP!

Abridged from "Ving Chun Kuen: The Art of Invincibility"

by Kevin Earle

## PART 1 - Setting The Record Straight

From time to time articles on Chi Sau (Sticking Hands), a signature of the Wing Chun system and a drill most martial arts enthusiasts associate with the late Bruce Lee, appear in martial art publications. Supposedly written by "leading world authorities" on Chi Sau, or their well meaning but ill-advised students, I am generally disappointed to find they are authored by persons obviously ignorant of Wing Chun Chi Sau; and practitioners of arts that have no historical syllabus of chi sau. One can only wonder at the purpose of writing such articles. An attempt to attract a wider audience of prospective members, by capitalizing on the public's ongoing interest in Bruce Lee, and their fascination with Chinese martial arts? Reminds one of when the first Kung Fu flicks hit the theaters in the late sixties early seventies, and Karate schools across the USA took down their "Karate" signs and erected "Kung Fu" signs overnight. And it didn't just happen in the USA!

One may be familiar with the more recent phenomenon where, almost overnight, punching and kicking arts began "revealing" their grappling techniques following the tournament success of Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, and a new era of martial marketing was born.

Prior to public exposure of the art of Wing Chun Kuen - the art that Bruce Lee studied as a lad in Hong Kong - Chi Sau was never mentioned in any other martial art syllabus. Dust of those pre 1964 (when Bruce Lee made his appearance at Ed Parker's Invitationals in Long Beach), Black Belt magazines and Karate books you have in your closet and find a reference to Chi Sau training.

With more than thirty years experience as a Wing Chun Instructor I feel some responsibility to correct any impression

that might mislead persons to believe that all "sticking hands" drills are the same as the Wing Chun Chi Sau learned by Bruce Lee. Enough hurdles confront students without them being confused by misleading labeling.

In my opinion a fraud is perpetrated when one who desires to learn the skills embodied in Bruce Lee's mother art, Wing Chun, is lured by advertising that shouts (or suggests) "we do that to!". Reminds one of the saying "Jack of all trades, Master of none". Interestingly such deception is most often committed by those who talk loudest about "integrity" and "honesty" in martial arts, and who promote "control" of all martial arts through "unification". Naturally they see themselves as leaders of such governing bodies, their tentacles spreading into all martial arts. Power and greed corrupt, no less in martial art circles.

Appreciate that my following remarks relate only to the Chi Sau of Wing Chun, and are by no means comprehensive. A deeper analysis of Wing Chun's Chi Sau is best done through one-on-one instruction once one has developed a practical understanding of Sui Nim Tao, the "encyclopedia" of the Wing Chun system.

Nevertheless, many struggle to understand the Wing Chun theories and the practicalities of basic principles such as relaxation and natural body movement, and those readers I hope will find something of value in my remarks.

### Wing Chun Chi Sau is Unique

A number of martial arts have two person drills that to the uninitiated may at first appear to be similar to the Wing Chun Chi

Sau. Visual similarities between various martial arts can often be seen, after all we do have a maximum of two arms and two legs each, however Wing Chun Chi Sau is unique to the Wing Chun system, and not at all like the sticking hands type drills of White Crane and Mantis, or the Wing Chun Do of James De Mile. Nor is it the same as the push hands of Tai Chi or the Kakie drills of Goju Ryu or Shaolin Kempo, and it is quite different to the hand drills of the Filipino martial arts.

I am not alone in this belief. Other Wing Chun experts are of the same understanding. *"These movements, called 'sticking hands', are unique to Wing Chun."* K.T. Chao & J.E. Weakland; *Secret Techniques of Wing Chun Kung Fu*; *"Tan Sau is a technique unique to the Wing Chun system."* Yip Chun; *Researching the Origins of Wing Chun*. Now it stands to reason that if the Tan Sau, one of the "three seeds" of the system, is unique to Wing Chun then its chi sau is unique.

Having experienced a little Tai Chi Push Hands with a Tai Chi Master, some Mantis sticking hand drills with a Master of that art, and having some familiarity with Filipino martial arts, I can assure readers that in my practical experience these two-person drills are as similar to Wing Chun Chi Sau as chalk is to cheese.

A comparison can be drawn with Wooden Man training. Many Kung Fu styles utilize wooden dummies in their training, yet each style has its own theories, techniques, purposes, style of dummy, and history, that sets them apart. Thus just because one trains on a wooden dummy, does not make him/her a Wing Chun practitioner. Likewise, a karate practitioner might "borrow" the Wing Chun Chi Sau postures, yet his Chi Sau would utilize the

principles and theories of Karate and they could not be correctly called Wing Chun. Take as an example two draughts players borrowing a chessboard and pieces to play draughts. They are not chess players just because they are using a chess set. Or, as another Wing Chun practitioner recently wrote; *"It's like sticking an F-16's wings on a Volkswagen; the wings will never fly again and the car still won't get off the ground"*.

In other words it is not the posturing that determines Wing Chun Chi Sau, but the principles and theories. In fact it is not possible to achieve a reasonable level of proficiency in Wing Chun Chi Sau without a thorough understanding of Wing Chun's first form, Siu Nim Tao.

I also point out here that although some other arts have their own peculiar types of so-called sticking hands drills they are not (generally) a predominant part of the system, whereas many Wing Chun practitioners spend much of their pairs training practicing Chi Sau, once they are familiar with the empty hand forms.

I am not suggesting that Wing Chun Chi Sau is superior to the Kakie of Kempo, the Push Hands of Tai Chi, or the hand drills of other arts, simply that they are different. This is understandable, since Wing Chun is the complete opposite to other martial arts. Why expect to find sameness? What I am suggesting is that practitioners of various systems should not mislead students and confuse the gullible public using terms that are not associated with their art, and that do not best describe the theory and practical application they endeavor to promote. And I am suggesting all practitioners should be proud of the art they associate with, and use the terms that best define it. To the Wing Chun student I say; *"Dan Inosanto said one should look for similarities between the arts. I say similarity is skin deep - enjoy the differences that make Wing Chun unique."*

### **Theoretical Differences**

I am certain that the numerous hand drills of the various arts are as deep and profound in their variety and purpose as the sticking hand drills of Wing Chun, and that I am at least as ignorant of their complexities as their adherents are of the complexities of Wing Chun Chi Sau,

however without any pretense of a complex study I present some basic differences, in the hope the reader may have a better understanding of what one should look for and expect from a study of Wing Chun Chi Sau.

When one who understands Wing Chun Chi Sau looks at Kakie [referred to as chi sau in a recent magazine article, but more accurately and most commonly described as "push hands", "hooking hands", and "push-hand sensitivity and strength drills"], one can easily see that the methodology and outcomes desired by Kakie devotees are obviously quite different to those desired by the Wing Chun practitioner.

*"What is the main purpose of kakie or pushing hands? Kakie....learns you to develop strong muscles and the feeling of the opponents strength..." Sensei Meitatsu Yagi, Meibukan Goju-ryu Karate, Okinawa 1993.*

"Pushing", (or pulling), to develop strength, is the opposite to "sticking" to control force. Pushing and pulling have no part in Wing Chun Chi Sau, which adheres to the principles of "Skill To Overcome Brute Force", and, "Using The Opponents Strength Against Them". Of course, using skill to overcome brute force is the expressed goal of many martial artists, however Wing Chun practitioners have quite a different way of viewing and expressing the path to that goal.

Developing muscular strength (as quoted by Meitatsu Yagi) is of no concern to the Wing Chun practitioner, who is taught to utilize only his or her "natural body strength"; meaning the strength one has "inherited" as a result of what nature has endowed, and of ones lifestyle. Not being reliant on strength, the Wing Chun practitioner does not waste effort developing it. The opponent will provide all the strength required.

Developing muscular strength requires resistance to stimulate muscle growth. Pushing and pulling against a partner will provide that necessary resistance. Result: training the use of brute force, which is contrary to the Wing Chun principle of "Conservation Of Energy". The result from a Wing Chun perspective is the development of a muscular response unsuitable to the development of skill.

Wing Chun practitioners are not taught to resist force, but rather to control force.

A simple concept, yet a complex subject. I can't speak for anyone else, however one of my personal goals in training (a goal all Wing Chun practitioners should strive for, in my opinion) is to have my body act spontaneously to a stimuli in a (particular) fashion, and the point about resistance training is that it creates a muscular response to resistance that is the opposite to the response one should be developing for Wing Chun skill. Repetition "burns" a neurological pathway, and once a track has been burned, the bodies automatic response to the resistance of force, is to take the path of least resistance. That is, follow the pathway already burned. The more times the muscle(s) not required for a specific task are triggered during the performing of that task, the harder it becomes to stop those muscle(s) from being triggered! The result of improper muscle use, or to many muscles being used, is excessive use of energy and loss of power. This is in accordance with neurological law, (regularity in natural physiological occurrences), in particular the "Law of Facilitation".

Therefore it is established that since Wing Chun should enhance the skill of moving or destroying force without muscular resistance, and that using resistance training to establish neurological pathways to trigger an incorrect automatic muscular response is detrimental to ones Wing Chun training and contrary to the aforementioned principle of "Conservation Of Energy", then any drills that promote pushing, pulling or any type of resistance to force, should be avoided by the Wing Chun enthusiast. It is so easy to label this or that as Chi Sau; hopefully one can now see how careless labeling leads to misunderstanding and develops bad habits.

### **Chi Sau Misunderstood Leads To Injury**

I have personally experienced numerous examples of Wing Chun being misunderstood and misrepresented on a practical and theoretical level. I recall one occasion when a practitioner ("Grand Master" no less!) of another art quoted (misquoted, actually), to me from a Wing Chun book in an attempt to validate his theories on chi sau application, after agreeing that his sticking hands was not

of Wing Chun origin! (Like someone laying down the law on the strategies of chess although they've never played the game). On another occasion a traveling seminar specialist who professed Wing Chun told his audience that he "no longer taught Bong Sau in Chi Sau as it caused to many shoulder injuries."! So it can be seen that Chi Sau is easily misunderstood by some. Even by "Masters" who have (supposedly) studied Wing Chun!

The fact is that Bong Sau is one of the "Three Seeds" of the Wing Chun system, and without it there is no Wing Chun Chi Sau. If Bong Sau is understood correctly, there will not be any injury to the shoulder. Indeed, if there is soreness or fatigue of the shoulder joint then the Bong Sau action is incorrect.

Do you fatigue in the shoulder during chi sau? Do you feel pain in, or have ever strained, the muscles supporting the shoulder joint? Worse still, have you suffered injury to the rotator cuff? You are resisting your partner. You are meeting force with force. You are lifting your partners force with Bong Sau rather than redirecting force. You are struggling, using brute force in an attempt to overcome greater force or mass. Harsh but true. Don't blame your partner! Take action! What is immediately required is corrective action on your part. Correct guidance, honest self-analysis and considered application to correct your Chi Sau technique.

## **Natural Body Movement**

Wing Chun actions are based on natural body movement. One's shoulder doesn't get sore raising a glass to one's lips, or running one's fingers through one's hair, and since Bong Sau should be performed as naturally, casually, and as effortlessly as either of those movements, then injury to the shoulder should not occur.

But what does "natural body movement" mean? The Wing Chun practitioner understands it as "simplicity"; *"...all the movements are simple and uncomplicated; they are based on natural body movements...they do not involve difficult or contorted maneuvers."* Wing Chun Kung Fu by Karen Armstrong and Sifu Jim Fung. But performing natural body movements is not as simple as it may first seem. For beginners, it may mean

having to stretch, strain, as they struggle with new ideas, new postures. At the very least it will probably mean being uncomfortable for a time while they unlearn bad posture and "improper" muscle use. Through regular training habits one must apply oneself to develop natural body movement. In other words, what one normally does, is not necessarily natural. For example, as a baby one just breathes naturally. Over time one begins to breathe shallow, high in the chest. Such breathing is accepted as normal, yet it contributes to ill health in old age. Consider also that for many people smoking cigarettes is normal. Yet to smoke is not natural, although it may feel natural to the habitual smoker. Simply put, the bad habit has become normal practice. Hopefully this explanation will help one to discern what I mean when I mention the difference between "natural" and "normal" body movement.

One's shoulder is at greatest risk of injury during the "stretch and strain" phase of learning the positioning and movement of Bong Sau, thus it is important that one does not attempt Chi Sau practice to early on in their training. The more time spent practicing Siu Nim Tao (Wing Chun's first form), with correct guidance and thoughtful consideration, the less chance of injury occurring when one begins practicing Chi Sau. One should only attempt Chi Sau when their Siu Nim Tao is effortless, and they have grasped at least some understanding of Wing Chun theory. Otherwise, like attempt to give up smoking, bad habits can take a long time to correct.

There are other aspects to consider also. For example, there are numerous movements that are natural to perform, but that are inferior movements to use for certain purposes. Like Jim Kelly syndrome in "Enter The Dragon", many martial art followers are more concerned with "looking good" than developing the best tools for the job. In fact within martial arts in general, there are a number of punches and kicks that are not, in my opinion, the best tools for the task they are assigned to. For example, extending your arms in front of you, you can easily rotate them so that the palms face the ground. This can be considered a "natural" movement, appropriate for many tasks. Yet it is not the best movement for delivering a punch. Others have reached the same conclusion.

For example, earlier this century Les Murray, New Zealand's greatest Lightweight boxer, had this to say about the popular method of punching with the palms down; *"...try reaching out to the wall with your hand held that way and you will see why so many boxers break their hands and otherwise damage them.....Actually, your hands hang naturally at your sides with the palms in....I believe that the natural way is the correct way in nearly every branch of boxing, and the correct way to punch brings maximum effectiveness."* ("Kiwis With Gloves On", by Brian F. O'Brien). Talking about natural body movement is one thing. Understanding body mechanics in relation to the principles of control of force is quite another. Les Murray understood.

Further, it is perfectly natural to use the various muscles of the body. That's what they're for! Use them or lose them! However in Wing Chun theory relaxation is used to overcome brute force. Thus while striving to learn new movements and adopt new postures, students of Wing Chun Chi Sau - most especially beginners - should give honest and thoughtful consideration not to how they can develop more strength and endurance, but as to how they might develop skill in applying the theory of using "Relaxation To Overcome Brute Force".

*Read about the importance of relaxation in part 2 of*

**"Wing Chun's Chi Sau Stands Up!"** in the next issue of **Fight Times**.

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## WING CHUN'S CHI SAU STANDS UP!

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by Kevin Earle - PART 2

In Part 1 of this article I took the position that Wing Chun is the complete opposite to other martial arts, and that the Wing Chun Chi Sau (Sticky Hands) is unique. I wrote about the importance of correct labeling and how misunderstanding can lead to injuries, and introduced the Wing Chun principle of "Natural Body Movement". In this issue I continue to write about the importance of relaxation and balance, and their relationship to natural body movement from my Wing Chun perspective.

### Importance of Relaxation

It would seem that the average westerners understanding of Martial Arts appears to revolve entirely around fighting, an understanding reinforced by wave after wave of action packed movies in which the star is a kung fu expert destroying anything and everyone in his path. Actually this is a correct understanding. Fighting is a purpose of martial art - some would say the only purpose. Yet anyone can already fight. (Survival is the most basic human instinct, which civilization, so-called, tries by social engineering to suppress). Anyone can already punch and kick. No need to enroll in martial art classes to learn those

things! Anyone can cook; anyone can enjoy a cultural feast without needing to understand the hundreds of years of history behind the seasonings and flavorings. Yet if one wishes to become a chef able to prepare tantalizing culinary delights to tempt even the most tasteless of palate, best one should have some understanding of the culture and become expert in the preparation, lest the essence of the flavor and aroma elude them and they never rise above second rate. Likewise if one wishes to be a kung fu Instructor or martial expert, one will find much of value - even a hint of the very essence of kung fu power - in the generations of cultural wisdom associated with their chosen art. Martial art movies illustrate only a wet tissue result, not the path. The essence won't be found at the box office, but found woven deep and wide within the rich fabric of Chinese culture, taken for granted by birthright, yet almost hidden to outsiders within teachings such as the centuries old theories of Traditional Chinese Medicine which teach methods of stress free relaxation for health.

Bruce Lee style kung fu flicks prove a double-edged sword, for without the fast and furious martial arts movie madness

many would not be inspired to seek out a Wing Chun class. Yet I see many capable students stop their training too soon, because Wing Chun does not live up to their preconceived expectation. Expectation built on false premise. On celluloid heroes. Certainly there is nothing wrong with being fit, healthy, and strong. Admirable attributes sadly lacking in many of today's youth. Bruce Lee's magnificent physique is legendary, but forget those tension packed poses, they are strictly for the movies. Observe instead the movements of babies. They remain quite relaxed. By thoughtful observation one will see that natural body movement does not require brute force. Quite the opposite. Brute force restricts one's power, holds power back, while real power comes from relaxation. Note the babies rapid development which comes not by resistance but by mind intent. *The eyes have it!*

### What Is Relaxation?

"Relax! Relax!" Shouts the instructor. Yet often neither the instructor nor the student have the slightest idea of what is meant by "relax". What exactly does the instructor require? What is the student meant to achieve? Many teachers and students do not even bother with the con-



cept of relaxation. Also, there are differing levels of understanding of "relaxation". (I point out here that one cannot be totally relaxed - unless one is dead!). With regard to the Wing Chun principle of Natural Body Movement, I mean relaxed is "half way between tense, hard; and loose, floppy". I mean, "to avoid using brute strength". I mean, "to remain natural in the eye of the storm". I mean, "relaxed and natural in demeanor". I mean, "to be filled with a firm yet flexible force".

If understanding relaxation from a Wing Chun perspective is not as easy as it may first seem, practicing it during chi sau is harder still. Many are led astray by their competitive spirit. Competing on a mental level with ones training partner creates mental tension. Mental tension creates physical tension. Likewise competing on a physical level with ones training partner creates physical tension which in turn creates mental tension. One must release any thought of striking or beating their training partner if they are to attain a higher level of skill. Leaving ones ego behind Chi Sau should provide a safe environment within which ones mind can relax free of stress and fear. Chi Sau is not a fight. It is a learning process. Only when one stops competing with others, stops trying to hard, can one truly relax. Only when one is relaxed can one really learn, and retain what is learned.

On the other hand one must not lose sight of the fact that Wing Chun is meant to be effective in practical use. When employed correctly it is a powerful and devastatingly effective method of unarmed combat. So I describe the relaxation that the Wing Chun practitioner is trying to develop as an "invincible force" - a unique type of force that is developed through regular daily practice of Sui Nim Tao and Chi Sau, with adherence to Wing Chun principles.

Theories of, for example, postural alignment and how they affect the ability of the Wing Chun practitioner to relax, may have little relevance to say a grappler, or a boxer, even though relaxation itself may be equally important to boxers and grapplers. What might determine these differences? Sometimes it is ignorance; it may be poor coaching; oft-times methodology dictates adherence to theories and principles that are requirements of the specific art, for example in Wing Chun the theories of "Conservation of Energy", "Economy of Movement", and "Natural Body Move-

ment", should determine ones body posture. There are also subtle differences apparent when comparing the basic postural alignment exhibited by some Tai Chi exponents to that of Wing Chun, and even in Wing Chun circles not all instructors understand the complexities of postural alignment, natural body movement, and relaxation. To give you some further insight into this complex subject from my Wing Chun perspective, I shall briefly explain the affect ones own posture may have on ones ability to relax, and how resistance to force or sudden impact affects relaxation.

#### Natural Phenomenon

Relaxation is a natural phenomenon of ones body movement. Try taking special note of your musculature as you go about your normal daily activities. Are your muscles tense? Of course not! Now try tensing up every muscle in your body as you walk to and from. Feeling a little stiff legged? Robotic? A little ridiculous? Now try to relax. Fallen in a heap on the floor? Of course not! What a wonderful computer keeps our body in harmony! No need to ask it to tense a muscle, or remind it to "Hey, take another breath!". It employs just the correct amount of muscle mass for whatever task required of it without prompting, and automatically carries out those functions that sustain life without being asked. Except, of course, when we slip into sloppy habits. That is, when "normal" overrides "natural", and even our health can be affected. So often it is the simple and natural things in life one takes for granted. What do you really know about your body, and how what you do, or don't do, can affect your health - or your chi sau?

Ones point of balance can be likened to standing on a knife edge. Try this simple exercise. Stand at attention, lock your knees, and close your eyes. Being careful not to fall, tilt gently forward. Don't need to move very far before beginning to lose your balance, do you. Try again, this time leaning backwards. Again, such a small movement before you begin to topple. In fact just a few centimeters either way and you will feel muscles begin to tense up in an attempt to prevent you from falling and injuring yourself. Feel them? Can you identify the muscular mass brought into play to stop your fall? When you are perfectly balanced the tension leaves the muscles, and your body uses less energy. *Relaxa-*

*tion and balance are inextricably linked.* On this subject Tim Cartmell writes in a similar vein; "true relaxation allows true balance, it is the state free of bad habits of body use, making full use of all one's inherent strengths while in the state of mind/body unity." Xing Yi Nei Gong.

#### Breathing, Balance, & Relaxation

For the Wing Chun practitioner, one of the (many) purposes of standing in the Yee Chi Kim Yeung Ma (Character Two Adduction Stance), is to understand the point of balance and its affect on their muscles. When ones balance is perfect the body will automatically use only those muscles necessary to maintain upright posture. If, on the other hand, one is leaning forward or backwards, is unevenly weighted to one side, or twisted at the waist, ones body is forced to act like a crane, and the resultant muscular tension burns up vital energy. Therefore it can be seen that to achieve relaxation and release from tension, one must have perfect balance. This means both mental balance, and physical balance. It means mind and body in harmony. Effortless effort. Yin and Yang. *Perfect balance is the single most important element of martial efficiency.*

Such perfect balance and relaxation is delicate, and difficult to achieve. "When I first began to work seriously with my breath....I quickly saw that most of my "efforts" were based on force, on will power, not on skill and sensitivity, and that instead of working with the laws of natural breathing, I was working against them....The more I "tried" to breathe naturally, the more tension I created in myself....I began to understand....that my usual efforts....brought with them unnecessary muscular tension, which not only wasted my energy but also flooded my body with excessive adrenaline and metabolic wastes. Tension creates heat, and my efforts "heated me up," increasing my heart and breath rates....this unnecessary tension caused my sensory system to go on alert, sending distress signals to my brain." Dennis Lewis, "The Tao Of Natural Breathing".

Trying harder; putting in the extra effort; no gain without pain; these are easily recognized as the widely accepted western requirements for improvement. From a Chinese perspective, such extremes result in disharmony, causing stress and leading to injury and illness. If it is so difficult, as Dennis Lewis suggests, to correct ones

breathing, consider how difficult it may be to develop perfect balance and relaxation in the sphere of natural body movement. And since breathing and structure are interdependent, correct breathing enhances power and stabilizes ones body mass, without which perfect balance could not be achieved.

#### **Self Preservation System**

A ballet dancer has beautiful balance, but if charged by a pack of rugby players she will lose her balance. Yet the rugby players will look ungainly dancing to Swan Lake. Although the physical tasks they are performing are quite different each should employ perfect balance in the performance else they cannot achieve their maximum potential and perform to their best in their chosen field. And relaxation is equally important to both. Whether one plays rugby, dances, or practices martial arts; all are subject to gravity on the one hand and on the other has the same physiological makeup that creates a perfect sense of balance from ones birth.

We each have a built in anatomical and neurological self preservation system coupled to an onboard computer that calculates and computes the effects of gravity as we move, constantly ordering the minute postural and structural adjustments necessary to keep our eyes level with the horizon at all times. Constantly compressed by gravity and guided by our nervous system as instructed by our brain, our muscles continually work to keep our bodies in a state of perfectly balanced vertical alignment around our spine. Upright posture is the most energy efficient state - (apart from sleeping of course) - a state of "conservation of energy".

So what goes wrong? Poor posture caused by laziness and sloppy habits, or of the type affected by those who are trying to "look cool". You know the type. Chest sunken, shoulders rounded, body slouched, Charlie Chaplin walk. Then there is structural imbalance caused by injury from incorrect training practices as a result of ignorance and poor coaching, structural imbalance caused by accidental injury, such as work related accidents, and normal wear and tear. Look around. **Good posture is not the "norm"!** Although standing and moving with good posture and balance should be natural, in fact many who come to Wing Chun need to relearn good habits of body posture and structural alignment. **How can one**

**defend themselves effectively if they can't even stand!**

#### **Develop Good Habits**

The Wing Chun practitioners martial skill should be instinctive spontaneous reflex to what may be a surprise attack. One of the purposes of Chi Sau is to create a skillful response by way of an instinctive spontaneous mechanical action. Mistakenly training to resist force develops automatic neurological muscular responses that are the opposite to those desired for maximizing Chi Sau skills, and ultimately self defense skill. For example, as in triggering "pulling" muscles to execute a punch, which results in the grabbing or holding back of power, rather than the release of power into a strike; as in triggering those same muscles to resist the impact of a blow, which results in a weakened structure that collapses with the impact; as in creating a rigid structure that turns one into nothing more than a lever, a puppet easily manipulated. Those who think they can just 'flick a switch' and override spontaneous neurological impulses on demand, should think back to the hours of training required to create new habits, or to eliminate bad habits, whether postural or lifestyle.

How does one create good habits, eliminate bad habits, build good posture, and learn to relax under pressure? I don't know what others do, but I recommend Sui Nim Tao and Chi Sau.

Chi Sau is simply Sui Nim Tao from a different frame of reference. Sui Nim Tao is a solo forum where the Wing Chun practitioner practices, (among other things), postural balance and relaxation. Some practitioners reach the stage of taking up to an hour or more to complete Sui Nim Tao once, such is their depth of focus. Others may use Yoga, Tai Chi, or specialized breathing exercises to train relaxation. Chi Sau is the forum where the Wing Chun practitioners work in pairs to further develop postural balance and relaxation, (among other things), while their partner attempts to uproot them. This pairs practice is important, for in the clash of combat there can be dramatic shifts in ones point of balance and center of gravity as one attempts to resist the attacking force of the enemy. Rather than struggle against an enemy, however, the Wing Chun practitioner trains to intercept, deflect, and/or redirect force, **without resisting!** That is, without using brute force or muscular ten-

sion to resist an enemy.

So I repeat; don't treat Chi Sau as a competition. Chi Sau is not a fight, it is a learning process. Only when one stops competing with others and stops trying to hard, can one relax, learn, retain what is learned, and focus on developing mind force.

#### **Develop Your Mind Force**

Muscular action without thought is known as **involuntary** muscle use. It is what keeps us alive, even while we sleep. Keeps us breathing. Stops us from falling when we have lost our balance. Pumps blood around our body. Muscles employed to transport us, to clear objects from our path, to feed ourselves, are known as voluntary muscles. These are the skeletal muscles of the body. When a body builder works out to increase muscle mass, skeletal muscle is what is being used. When a martial artist works out, skeletal muscle is what is being used. Skeletal muscles are muscles that we can see, feel, and train, and they usually contract voluntarily, meaning that you think about contracting them and then your nervous system tells them to do so. **Training in Sui Nim Tao, and ultimately Chi Sau, to develop skillful action without thought is quite a complex matter.** It is more than muscles acting involuntarily, voluntarily, or subconsciously, but about developing the **superconscious mind**.

Peter Kelder writes, in *Fountain Of Youth*; "The job of the **superconscious mind** is to take thought, which is pure energy, and give it physical shape in the material world." In Wing Chun I refer to the same process as the **Force Of Idea**. Ultimately **Force of Idea** will lead one to develop **an invincible force**. Now that calls for a lesson or two. Enjoy your training.

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*Editors letter continued...* It all comes down to the action, the audience and giving them what they have come to see or losing their patronage in the future. Getting the mix right is difficult but essential for it to be both an exciting sport and a great night out and a real show. Between fight theme entertainment to keep the punters interested has to be relevant and I have seen major success in the past with rock music, light shows, Harley Davidsons, dance girls and the like, rebel type material and behaviour.

The K-1 events have, being a Japanese creation been able to mix both East and West with high power glitz and glamour, combined with a touch of the Eastern Arts. They have made an art of high performance combat sports/martial arts promotion.

You can lose a fortune if you do not get your feasibility studies right and do not appeal to the local audience and provide action packed entertainment.

The oldest combat sports or martial arts competitive code of wrestling has always been an action packed code with its speed, power and non retreat or non submissive rulings and ten second break up rule on the mat if nothing is happening that make for two rounds of constant action or a very quick end if pinned. Wrestlers are very determined and strong, athletic individuals that even when presented on any fight code promotion are well received.

Spectators all appreciate action packed entertainment that can end quickly or hold their attention until the final decision is announced.

Another interesting finding is that the codes that most please an audience are the full on combat sports that the majority would or could not be personally involved in, this adds to the attraction when not your every run of the mill Joe Bloggs is capable of partaking in with little or no risk or excitement to a fight keen crowd.

*Yours Tank Todd*

***To Mr Dave Cameron – Fight Times Wrestling and Boxing Correspondent***

Greeting from Gisborne, please may I have some information on these questions.

Who was the masked wrestler in the 1960's by the wrestling name of "The Black Hun", was he a New Zealand wrestler?

Who was our very first female wrestler on New Zealand?

Did "Dirty" Dick Zolnowski have a brother in pro-wrestling and were they from NZ?

Do you remember a NZ wrestler by the name of "Nugget" Reinsfield?

In 1990 there was a wrestler from USA by the name of "The Terminator". He wrestled for Steve Rickard's promotion called "The Main Event", can you please tell me what his real name was?

***Yours in Wrestling***

***Mr Richard Anderson***

***Reply***

*Dave Cameron kindly replies in answer to your questions Richard*

*Del Adams of Wellington did use "The Black Hun" title, but it was more in the 70's and 80's.*

*The first female wrestler I remember was Donna Collecutt who was married to wrestler "Tiger" Collecutt. It was in the 1970's.*

*"Dirty" Dick Zolnowski did not have a wrestling brother. However he often*

*teamed up with another Polish boy Joe Sokalski. They were Wellington boys. Yes I do remember Nuggett Reinsfield. He was a smaller boy who wrestled for Ernie Pinches in the South Pacific Wrestling Association. His two sons were both amateur champions of New Zealand.*

*The Terminator who wrestled here in 1990 "Main Event" for Steve Rickard was American wrestler Mark Laurinaitis.*

***Kia ora Tank***

I just wanted to say it was great to get the latest issue of Fight Times and see the first part of the article about Wing Chun Chi Sau. It is awesome to see Sifu Kevin Earle writing articles again. He has been an inspiration for many people in the arts since the early 1970's and continues to teach his chosen art to many around New Zealand. Also several of his students have their own schools in New Zealand and Australia.

I have been a student of Kevin's for more than 15 years now and can say that, having trained in many schools around Australasia, his knowledge of and skill in applying the unique Wing Chun Chi Sau is top class. He has made Wing Chun his passion for more than 30 years and looks to spend at least that many again growing better by the day. Playing Chi Sau with Kevin is much like walking into a hurricane and trying to

stand up. If one has a weak structure then look out, you may find yourself struggling to stand let alone compete with his skill.

Every session with Kevin becomes a lesson in humility. Sounds rough huh? Not really, you see a skilful master of Chi Sau will be able to control you and themselves leaving you disoriented yet not injured. Kevin often says "You should not get hurt learning how not to get hurt...otherwise you may as well just go out and pay someone to mug you." Anyway Tank it was good to catch up with you last week and I hope you continue going from strength to strength with the magazine and the Fight Times shop.

I look forward to the next issue of Fight Times and the second part of the excellent Wing Chun Chi Sau article. I hope Kevin will continue to write for your magazine (the best magazine on the arts NZ has yet produced) as he has so much knowledge and experience. He has been around on the scene for a long time and would certainly warrant an interview.

***Awatea Edwin***

***Ving Chun Kuen Kung Fu***

***Aroga Whitu Mau Rakau/Mau Patu***

***Awatea 025 398 533***

*Thanks for that Awatea*

*The second part of Kevin's article is on page 19 this issue*