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The Ten Elements Course

The origin of Choy Lay Fut

Chan Heung (陳亨), the founder of Choy Lay Fut, was a native of Ging Mui (京梅) in the county of Xihuui (新會), Canton (廣東). Chen Heung was born in 1806 (the 11th Year of the reign of Qing Emperor Jiaqing/清嘉慶). When he was a young kid, he began to learn Kung Fu from his uncle, Chan Yuen Wu (陳遠護). Chan was a Shaolin disciple. After some years of training with his uncle, Chan Heung was introduced to Lee Yau Shan (李友山) to further his skill. Lee Yau Shan was a classmate of Chan Yuen Wu. In 1826 (the 6th Year of the reign of Qing Emperor Daoguang/清道光), Chan Heung was referred to a Shaolin monk named Choy Fook (蔡福) to further his martial arts knowledge after 4 years of hard training under Lee Yau Shan. Choy Fook was a classmate of Lee Yau Shan and a guard of Shaolin Temple but became a Shaolin refugee living in seclusion at Luofu Mountain (羅浮山) after the burning of the Shaolin Temple by the Qing troops. Chan Heung returned to his hometown in 1833 (the 13th Year of the reign of Qing Emperor Daoguang/清道光) after 8 years of training under Choy Fook. During that time anti-Qing activities of the Miao nationality (苗族) spread all over the southern part of China. Lung Tang (龍騰), the leader of the Miao nationality, was a friend of Chen Yuen Wu. Lung Tang sent his son, Lung Gee Choy (龍子才), to Canton. Lung Gee Choy finally became a disciple of Chen Heung. Lung Gee Choy later contributed his own power to assist in establishing the Choy Lay Fut system.



Chan Heung revised, refined all that he had learned from his teachers with his disciples, and finally established main hand and leg techniques. Hand techniques include Kum (擒) - Slapping or pressing palm deflection, Na (拿) - shooting arm bridge, Gwa (掛) - back fist, So (掃) - sweeping, Chop (插) - yin/yang fore knuckle strike, Pow (拋) - upward power shot, Jong (撞) - small upward power shot, Chaw (爪) - claw, Bin (鞭) - swinging power shot, Pei (劈) - chopping and Lui Yin (搥陰) - yin/yang fist. Leg techniques include Chan (撐) - bracing, Ding(釘) - nailing, Liu Tat (撩踢) - kicking, So (掃) - sweeping, Jet (截) - blocking, Au (勾) - hooking and Dan (彈) - springing. Ng Lun Ma (Five Wheel Stance Form 五輪馬) and Ng Lun Chui (Five Wheel Striking Form 五輪槌) were the basic techniques that beginners must learn. In addition, Chan Heung spent his time recording his discoveries and knowledge into paper for his earlier and later students to follow.

In 1836 (the 16th Year of the reign of Qing Emperor Daoguang/清道光), Chan Heung formally opened his first martial arts school in the Yuanfuci Chen Family Ancestral Hall in Ging Mui Village (京梅鄉緣福祖祠) and established the Choy Lay Fut system, naming it in honor of two of his teachers, Choy Fook (蔡福) and Lee Yau Shan (李友山), and used the word Fut (佛), which means "Buddha" in Chinese, to pay homage to his uncle, Chan Yuen Woo (陳遠護), and to the Shaolin roots of the new system.

Choy Lay Fut's unique hand techniques contain 10 techniques/elements: Kum (擒) - Slapping or pressing palm deflection, Chuen Na (穿拿) - shooting arm bridge, Gwa (掛) - back fist, Sau (搗) - roundhouse punch, Chop (插) - yin/yang fore knuckle strike, Pow (拋) - upward power shot, Kup (掇) - fist slap, Biu (標) - outward, inside forearm strike, Ding (頂) - elbow or joint strike and Jong (撞) - small upward power shot. This core set of 10 basic strikes permeates throughout all of the handsets and fighting combinations within the Choy Lay Fut system.

Choy Lay Fut has the characteristics of the hand techniques with the stress laid on the coordination of attack and defence, flexible footwork, unfolding and natural movements, vigorous and forceful fist rushes, mixed exertion of long and short forces, abundance in legwork and proficiency in jumps and leaps. In addition, there are 8 techniques. They are Yin (陰) - negative, Yang (陽) - positive, Kong (剛) - hard, Yau (柔) - soft, Hui (虛) - false, Shi (實) - real, Tou (偷) - stealing and Lau (溜) - sneaking.

Choy Lay Fut was called Southern Fist, Northern Kick and Buddhist Palm Style (南拳北腿佛家掌), meaning a combination of the long arm techniques of the South with the quick agile footwork that characterizes Northern China's martial arts and Buddhist Palm Style. Although the Choy Lay Fut martial arts system was only established a hundred years or so, the style was popularized in Canton, Canada and the United States.

The Ten Elements (十訣):

【Chuen穿】

It looks like mending clothes by passing thread in and out and in two directions. This element has also been called as grabbing 【Kum擒】. The most common combination movements of this element are threading and grabbing (chuen na 穿拿) and curling bridge arm (poon kiu 蟠橋). The former is threading through a block or along an arm from the chest to stop an incoming strike from an opponent. The latter is to block an incoming strike from outward to inward like an incurve strike, a method of blocking a straight strike from an incurve way. The curling bridge arm also acts like a circle, through which a defending mechanism has been established to block an incoming strike from an opponent. Double hands blocking also belong to this element. This element is also closely related to and coordinated with the

element of grabbing (na拿).

【Na拿 grabbing】

It looks like grabbing or controlling something. According to the ancient saying, grabbing means pulling. Therefore, we have to wait for the chance of grabbing one's arm or throat after threading. Curling bridge arm (poon kiu 蟠橋) has also the function of pulling. It even uses an incurve shaped motion to let the opponent losing balance. Both ways have turned the function from defensive to offensive. Once you have grabbed the opponent, you can control the bridge arm of your opponent. Heavy bridge arm (cham kiu 沉橋) has also the meaning of this element.

【Gwa掛 back fist/reverse punch】

It is similar to hang something in the air. This element is specially referred to back fist strike (gwa chui 掛槌). Back fist strike is one has to raise his arm to a proper level and strike downward by using back fist. Back fist strike, which looks like a tank to sweep through the defence of the opponent, can destroy the bridge arm of the opponent or attack directly the cheek of the opponent. Thus, back fist strike can be used as blocking or attacking. Back fist strike is never used alone but should always be accompanied of striking with another arm, such as the combination of back fist strike and fore knuckle strike, back fist strike and sweeping strike, back fist strike and upward palm strike, etc. There are 2 common ways of back fist strike, either using the forearm to attack or turning an elbow to make a swing strike. However, the latter is a short swing strike (短掛槌).

【Sau捎sweeping strike】

There should be wrong pronunciation. It should be called sweeping (so 掃). It has the meaning of rolling back the enemy. The hand techniques of incurve swing strike (so chui 捎槌), and swing power shot/whip strike (tat chui 撻撻/bin chui 鞭撻) and the kicking technique of sweeping strike (so gerk 掃腳) belong to this element. Incurve swing strike really looks like a flywheel because it involves large arc shaped motion from an up-to-down strike (right side to the left for right arm attack). However, the incurve swing strike is never used alone but always comes after curling bridge arm (poon kiu 蟠橋) or back fist strike (gwa chui 掛槌).

【Chop插 thrusting strike using fore knuckle】

It looks like driving a nail into a wooden board. In terms of weapon movements, it is piercing and pounding with a spear and staff. Coupled with panther fist (chiang tzi chui 薑子槌), fore knuckle strike/straight punch (chop chui 插槌) is straight as a sharp knife. The sharp attack of knuckle fist can penetrate the force into human body directly. This is the major style of straight-line attack of the Choy Lay Fut system, which has a number of variations and different applications. When the thumb is up, it is yang knuckle strike (yang chop 陽插). When the thumb is down, it is yin knuckle strike (yin chop 陰插). When the back palm is facing the sky, it is flat knuckle strike. The leg-propping kick (chan gerk 撐腳) also belongs to this element. Back fist strike (gwa chui 掛槌), sweeping strike (So Chui 捎槌) and fore knuckle strike (chop chui 插槌) are widely known as major striking techniques of Choy Lay Fut Kung Fu. If one can make good use of the twisting of stances, shoulders and waist, fore knuckle strike can reinforce the power of attack and bring serious destruction to the opponent.

【Pow拋 upward power shot/cannon strike】

It is similar to stormy wave throwing up a small boat. The strike is from down to up in an arc shape by using a fist or palm. There are upward strike, back upward strike, upward palm strike and double-palm strike, etc. This element always comes with the element of small upward power shot. When using, the front palm lifts up the opponent's bridge arm while the back palm making use of the opponent's driving force gives a counter attack immediately. The main targets of attack are solar plexus and ribs. Its force is extraordinarily strong enough to throw out a person. When using back upward strike, the first motion is throwing and then follows by an elbow strike.

【Kup扱 stamping fist】

It is similar to put an empty cup from up to down on the table. Stamping strike, either using a fist or palm, is an overhead straight-arm downward strike, which travels in an overhead diagonal manner. Stamping strike can be tiger claws, a fist, and hammer strike, etc. The most pictographic motion of this element is stamping fist, using the knuckles of a tight fist to strike vertically, like using a brick knocking against the cheek. Incurve swing strike is a combination of sweeping and stamping fist.

【Biu標 outward, inside forearm strike】

It looks like an arrow coming out from the bow. It means whenever you attack, your power, strength and stance coming out at the same time like an arrow shooting out from the bow. According to the martial art saying, "Swiftiness can overrun all fortifications." Any movement in martial art is based on swiftiness; otherwise everything will be an armchair strategist. The form of stepping forward, combined with touching the ground with the tip of one foot (back leaning stance/cat stance 吊馬), looks like an arrow shooting out from the bow. With flexible steps, it will be difficult for the opponent knowing your movements and coming close to you. Indeed, the combination of stepping forward with yin/yang fore knuckle strike (chun ma chop chui 進馬插槌) is really like an arrow shooting out from the bow.

【Ding頂 holdout against something】

It looks like putting up a shutter to prevent the enemy or thief coming into the house. It can also be described as throwing out something. For example, after grabbing the forearm of the opponent, we can control the distance with the opponent. Then, we can use another hand, which can be a fist or palm, to attack the opponent. Straight strike and upward palm strike belong to this element.

【Jong撞 small upward power shot】

It means two articles strike against each other or the heavier one strikes against the light one. For example, outward/inside forearm strike is using the forearm to knock down the forearm of the opponent and simultaneously attack his cheek. This is the way of simultaneous block and hit (lin sil di da 連消帶打). The power generated from two moving objects knocking against each other must be heavier than one moving object. If we can make use of the opponent's driving force and move quickly to strike against him, this is the way of destroying the incoming strike with a strike of its own (bit sil yi da. 不消而打). Forward leaning stance with yin knuckle strike (跪馬扭插槌) and sliding one foot and sweeping one fist transversely (走馬橫釘槌) are typical examples of this element.

Course:

Rudimentary level

La Ma Cho/拉馬操 (Stances Exercise)
Dan Shi Fan Lin/單式訓練 (Training of Single Movement)

elementary level

Hand-form:

Sup Gee Kow Dah Kuen/十字扣打拳(Cross Pattern Grabbing Fist)
Siu Mui Fa Kuen/小梅花拳 (Small Plum Blossom Fist)
Ng Ying Kuen/五形拳 (Five Animals Form)
Tit Jin Kuen/鐵箭拳(Warring Form)

weapon-form:

Shaolin Guen/少林棍 (Shaolin Staff)
Sup Sam Cheung/十三槍 (Thirteen Lances Spear)
Fu Mei Dan Dao/虎尾單刀(Tiger Tail Broadsword)
Lung Hang Kin/龍行劍 (Dragon Sword)
Lan Mun Dai Chai Dao/攔門大寨刀(Long Handle Broadsword)

Fighting-set:

Ng Lun Kuen Do Cha/五輪拳對拆 (2 Men Fist Fighting Set)
Mui Fa Kuen Do Cha/梅花拳對拆 (2 Men Plum Blossom Fighting Set)
Shaolin Guen Do Cha/少林棍對拆 (2 Men Shaolin Staff Fighting Set)

intermediate level

Hand-form:

Ping Jarn Kuen/平拳 (Level Elbow Form)
Pa Gua Sam Kuen/八卦心拳 (Eight Trigrams Heart Fist)
Ping Kune/平拳 (Level Hand Form)
Mui Fa Pa Gua Kuen/梅花八卦拳 (Plum Blossom Eight Trigrams Fist)

weapon-form:

Lung Ying Bin Gwai Guen/龍形扁拐棍 (Flat Crutch Staff)
Kam Tsin Cheung/金錢槍 (Golden Coin Spear)
Fu Cha/虎叉(Tiger Fork)
Right Spear /右槍
Left Spear/左槍
Chor Tau/鋤頭 (Hoe Form)
Wang Tau Tang/橫頭凳 (Horse Bench)
Yin Mei Dan Dao/燕尾單刀 (Swallow-tail Broadsword)
Bow Jarn Seung Dao/包雙刀 (Hidden Butterfly Knives)
Sam Ji Seung Bin/三節雙鞭(3 Sectional Double Steel Whips)
Dai Hung Kei Guen/大紅旗棍 (Great Banner Staff)

Fighting-set:

Dan Dao Cha Cheung/單刀拆槍 (Broadsword Vs Spear)
Seung Dao Cha Cheung/雙刀拆槍(Double Broadsword Vs Spear)
Dai Dao Cha Tang/大刀拆凳(Kwan Dao Vs Horse Bench)

high level

Hand-form:

Fu Ying Kune/虎形拳(Tiger Form)
Hok Ying Kune/鶴形拳 (Crane Form)
Fu Pau Kune/虎豹拳(Tiger Panther Form)
Pak Mou Kuen/白毛拳
Won Hop Kuen/混合拳 (Combination of Northern & Southern Fist)
Muk Yan Chong Fat/木人樁法(秤樁)(Wooden Dummy)

weapon-form:

Tsuen Lam Kin/穿林劍 (Penetrates Forest Sword)
Gwai Cheung/拐杖 (Stick)
Chun Chou Dai Dao/春秋大刀 (Spring & Autumn Broadsword or Kwan Dao)
Hang Jieh Guen/行者棍 (Monk Staff)
Sam Ji Guen/三節棍 (3 Sectional Staff)
Ta Yu Sin/打穴扇 (Pressure Point Striking Fan)
Seung Gup Dan Guen/雙夾單棍(Single and Double Ended Staff)
Seung Lung Dao/雙龍刀 (Double Broadwords)
Kau Ji Dan Bin/九節單鞭 (9 Sectional Steel Whip)
Won Hop Cheung/混合槍 (Combination of Northern & Southern Spear)

Fighting-set:

Dai Dao Cha Cheung/大刀拆槍 (Kwan Dao Vs Spear)

She Hok Kuen Do Cha/蛇鶴拳對拆 (Snake Form Vs Crane Form)

Sam Ji Guen Do Cheung/三節棍串槍 (3 Sectional Staff Vs spear)

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