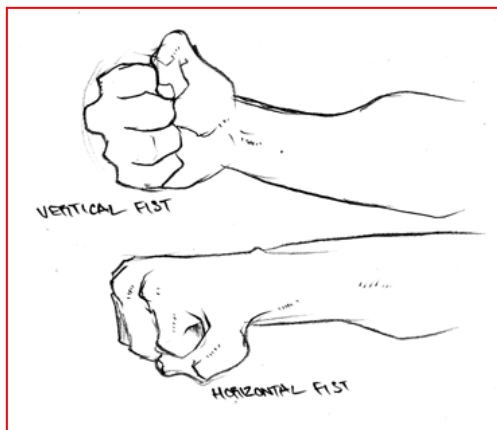




ESSENCE OF WU KUNG, PT. 1

"Da" (Punching)

Before we begin, let me explain the core concepts that all Chinese Martial Arts should be composed of to be within a complete system of fighting.

Ti- kicking

Da- punching

Shuai- wrestling

Na- grappling

Chi/Qi- Chi Kung/ Internal Energy

While it is popular to have all of these components nowadays, especially credited to the Gracie family for helping open the world's eyes toward grappling and wrestling, it must be said that these concepts were around hundreds, to thousands of years before their time (with the exception of frequent ground fighting, which was exclusive to certain forms of Shuai Chiao and other Fists of their time). After many years, these disciplines were fragmented and eventually the "complete" concept became lost. Especially after Chinese Martial practices spread to different countries throughout Asia.

This will be one of many articles that I will contribute to the Chinese Martial Arts community on the combative education for Wu Kung or the general martial artist.

DA- THE ESSENCE OF UPPER BODY COMBAT

Contrary to the literal term, punching within Wu Kung should not be limited to fists alone. It involves striking, pushing and pressing of your entire upper body region. This can fall into several key factors.

Fists- which translates to striking with the knuckles, wrists, back-hand, fore-knuckles, finger tips and ridge-hand. In regards to fists, all of your power should be concentrated within the middle knuckle(s). Funneling all of your physical energy into a single point through punching, thereby destroying whatever the opposing area may be in front of you. Keep in mind, this is specific for "committed blows", but White Crane heavily specializes in "one hit, one kill" philosophy, even with its passive nature.

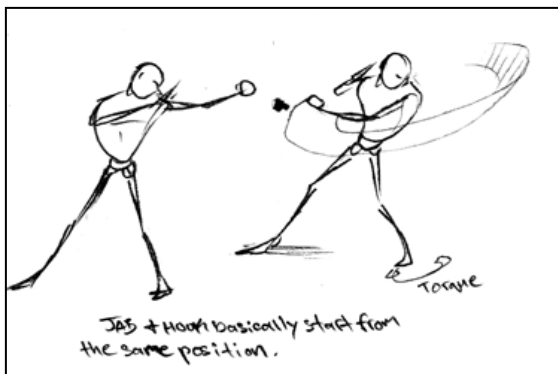
This manner of thinking is also shared within other martial arts as well, particularly *Kyokushin Kai*.

It's not necessarily pertaining to quick jabs or backhands of any sort, however the sense of alignment does apply no matter what your actions may be.

However, our school of Southern Shaolin greatly falls into the "overkill" mentality to a great point.

I'll make this important note from my own experiences: alignment is probably one of, if not THE most important aspect of offensive maneuvers. It can mean the difference between gaining the desired effect from your

enemy from your own power, or creating zero effect and possibly hurting yourself in the process.



I personally practice strong amounts of dynamic tension for punching applications and a lot of surface hitting to condition myself of "stopping force". Mostly with walls, trees, sandbags and other hard surfaces.

As funny as it sounds, punching very slow is a strong key to understanding proper alignment. It helps for you to understand what you're going for, regardless of your end result speed. Speed comes later; you initially need to worry about eliminating bad habits as much as possible.



Mostly for vital area attacks; Tien Hsueh

THE CLOSER RANGES

This is in regards to movements that go beyond simple punching, such as shoulder attacks, upper back attacks (or defenses), elbows, head butts, etc. There are many times where punching may not be adequate according to your positioning around an enemy. I've witnessed fighters continuously attempt to punch, even when they aren't in the proper position to do so and the fights usually end up as sloppy melee flailing matches. That is until a lucky blow slips through unsuspected by both parties and someone gets knocked out purely by *chance*, not by skill.

While I'm not saying that your movements should be perfect, what you should practice is adaptation of attacks in any possible position, combined with fluidity of motion. Not just one attack alone.

What this means is that at certain close ranges, your waist torque, leading to your shoulder bashing your enemy in the chest or chin areas may be more powerful than your extended limb. Considering that your muscular power usually derives from hip torque, you are also giving the pure extent of your power in doing this as well. Rather than having it diluted slightly from another limb's extension, such as your fist.

This can change to Crane's Wing (upper or lower wrist strikes), a stamping shoulder bash (which our school and Baji Fist are famous for), Open Wing (ridge hand), back fists from any angle, various elbowing methods and different types of head butts.

Chin Na grappling is also an essential part of this range, but we'll get back to that later.

