

MEANING OF THE FORMS

By training and studying the forms, you see that these forms are linked with each other and together form the basis of Ving Tsun Kung Fu. Each form contains its own details and therefore one cannot say that when the level of the second form has been reached the first can be forgotten and no longer needs to be trained. The forms of Ving Tsun can become compared to a tool box: the movements are the tools and in each situation, you learn which tools to use. As opposed to the kata's as they are known in the majority of the other martial arts, the order of the movements does not have to be considered as a small series or imaginary fights against several opponents.

The forms are more like the menus of computer programs, where items are systematically classified by type. The forms contain volumes of knowledge: the answer to a question can sometimes be found in the movements of the forms. This applies especially to the first form, the most important form.

The forms of Ving Tsun are not even attacks or defenses with an application. The movements are universal and teach the practitioner the positions for many situations. Training the forms improves also the functioning of the joints. By training, a practitioner can learn to analyze movements and to abandon superfluous elements.

Training the forms raises the coordination and control of the body. Every movement in the form is first carried out with the left hand and then with the right. This emphasizes the use of the left hand.

The vast majority of people are right-handed and there is a natural inclination to favor the right hand. Ving Tsun demands the equal use of both hands. It has been proven that a fighter who is able to use both hands effectively has a much larger chance of hitting and winning in a fight.

The forms are not more important than training with a partner. Training with a partner is something very different than making movements in the air. An advantage of training the forms is that the practitioner can evaluate a movement in a quiet manner without being disturbed by an opponent. This gives him a chance to think about the movements and their usage. This makes him stronger for when he again trains with a partner or spars. There must be a balance between training the forms and training with a partner. At the various stages which a practitioner goes through, sometimes the emphasis can lie on training forms or on practice, depending on the need of the practitioner.

A practitioner will never complete a form well if he does not understand the real world situation. On the other hand it is also be such that a practitioner does not have to know all contexts and argumentations of the forms to have the practical advantages of them; what is important is that he carries out the movements well and strives for perfection.

In the old days in the Chinese training style, a practitioner had to master the first form before he received an explanation of what the techniques were about and what they stood for. Only after a year or so of training the first form would a student receive critique and explanations of the principles of this form. Then, little by little, a student would get a bit of explanation concerning the movements as a sort of reward for his commitment to training. Many students got little or no explanation if they



showed little dedication or interest. Because so many people did not receive the proper explanations, they would use their own imaginations to explain the forms, resulting in many differences and interpretations. Wong Shun Leung believed that a student should receive explanations at an earlier stage in order to prevent the illogical deductions devised through speculation and fantasy.

By regularly training the forms, a practitioner can be more relaxed and develop more agility and strength. An older practitioner will have more vitality from the trainings. The forms contain relaxation, tension, strength and movements in several directions. The forms can also function as a warm-up. The movements are comparable to gymnastic exercises.

In spite of the personal guidance in the school, a degree of self-sufficiency is expected of a student. This results in a better development and also makes it possible, for example, to do exercises at home. Imitating a movement or series of movements is quite different from when you do it yourself, when more concentration and consciousness are needed. Only after the student knows the order of the form does the actual training and pursuit of quality begin. At the following stage, when the movements can be carried out more routinely, one can occupy oneself more with devising applications of the movements in an actual fight.

In Ving Tsun a form acts as a summary of all (basic) techniques, which the student, by consistently training the form, must blindly be able to execute. As a result, the techniques become routine and the principles thereof a habit. Sloppiness is often a break in coordination but also sometimes the laziness of the practitioner. Tiny errors or differences must also be taken seriously, they won't go away by themselves, instead, they will grow larger as time passes.

The forms are meant as exercises for an eternity and students must pursue perfection. Learning the correct arm and body position is an important function of the form training. Additionally, it is about learning the ideal angles for aiming, how to handle the strength of your opponent and how to move economically, and to improve stability and flexibility. By being in a better position to utilize these forms in a real fighting (or sparring), the practitioner will enjoy greater effectiveness and proficiency.

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