



# Inner Circle Concepts of WING TZUN

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Vivian punches her larger male opponent with her right hand. Her opponent blocks, then grabs.



Vivian finishes him by advancing into the inner-circle range with a *kau gerk* (leg hook) movement, throwing her opponent down.



Vivian neutralizes the grab with an Anti-Chin Na technique to free her right hand. At the same time, Vivian controls her opponent's elbow.

**W**ing Tzun, a system of kung fu, has been kept a secret until recently. Contrary to what some may believe, Wing Tzun is a complete martial arts system. Today, integrating several martial arts into a functionally complete hybrid has become popular. Full contact, mixed martial arts tournaments are a testament to that. By complete, I mean a system that includes in its curriculum punching or hand techniques, kicking or leg techniques, and inner circle, which includes Chin Na (擒拿) and grappling.

"Inner circle" is an advanced area of Wing Tzun typically not taught in the past. Included in inner circle training is anti-Chin Na techniques (counter attacks from grabs and locks) and *bow gee* (爆指 - breaking hand and wrist techniques). Inner circle represents the closest of the three fighting ranges in Wing Tzun. The outermost is the kicking range (outer circle). Although Wing Tzun does not use kicks higher than the waist level, kicking distance is used in particular situations. The second range is the punching range (mid circle). This is where the majority of techniques are applied in Wing Tzun. Keep in mind that the difference in distance is very subtle but can make all the difference in proper execution of a technique. A simple change of one's footwork can be enough. Then come the closed-door techniques of Wing Tzun, known as "inner circle." In the past, these techniques were only taught to disciples. Law enforcement agencies around the world have sought out martial arts techniques that teach inner circle for their close-quarter capabilities and non-lethal controlling techniques.

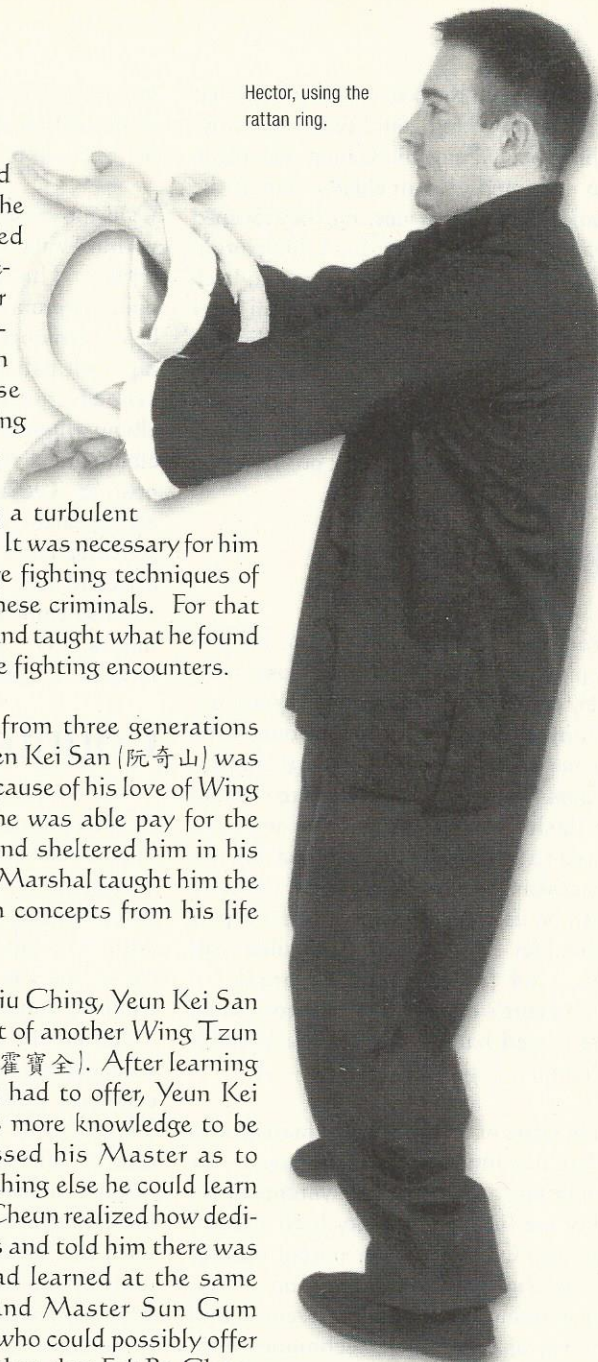
## History

My Sifu often amazed me with stories of how the techniques were passed down to us from our predecessors. The inner circle aspect was emphasized in our Wing Tzun system by a Chinese Marshal, Fung Siu Ching (馮少青). He was most famous for bringing to justice outlaws during a turbulent time in China's history. It was necessary for him to utilize the close-range fighting techniques of inner circle to subdue these criminals. For that reason, he refined them and taught what he found to be effective in real-life fighting encounters.

A Wing Tzun master from three generations back by the name of Yuen Kei San (阮奇山) was a very affluent man. Because of his love of Wing Tzun and his wealth, he was able to pay for the Marshal's retirement and sheltered him in his complex. In return, the Marshal taught him the inner circle Wing Tzun concepts from his life experiences.

Prior to meeting Fung Siu Ching, Yuen Kei San was a dedicated student of another Wing Tzun master, Fok Bo Cheun (霍寶全). After learning all that Fok Bo Cheun had to offer, Yuen Kei San still felt there was more knowledge to be had. He eagerly pressed his Master as to whether there was anything else he could learn in Wing Tzun. Fok Bo Cheun realized how dedicated Yuen Kei San was and told him there was another master who had learned at the same time as him from Grand Master Sun Gum (新錦 - "painted face"), who could possibly offer something new. It was then that Fok Bo Cheun arranged for Yuen Kei San to meet the Marshal.

Hector, using the rattan ring.



As her opponent tries to overpower her with his grip, Vivian borrows his energy and breaks his wrist by hyperextending his hand backward, illustrating a *bow gee* (爆指 - hand/wrist break) technique.

Vivian punches her opponent with her right hand. He blocks by using a *bong sau* (膀手 - wing arm).

Her opponent counterattacks with a *quai sau* (葵手 - vertical back fist). Vivian deflects with a wing arm.



At first Yuen Kei San was skeptical that Fung Siu Ching could teach him anything new. Fung Siu Ching was ready to retire and was an elderly man at the time. At their first meeting, they touched hands (sparred). Fung Siu Ching intentionally allowed Yuen Kei San to back him into a corner and then used an inner circle technique to trap him and flip him onto the floor. Yuen Kei San could not believe that an elderly man with minimal body muscle could control him with such ease. From that point on, Yuen Kei San became his disciple.

## Inner Circle

Yuen Kei San passed down to his disciples these newly refined, close quarter, controlling techniques. Yuen explained to his disciples that one of the benefits of inner circle is fighting indoors where there is no room to execute a flashy move. Wing Tzun was created to be very precise, eliminating unnecessary moves. Any part of the body can be used as a weapon, like a hip or shoulder. If necessary, a shoulder can be used for leverage to break an opponent's elbow. These theories can be traced back as far as the Shaolin Temple (少林寺).

There are many systems of martial arts that use inner circle techniques. For example, a few popular systems of today are Jiu Jitsu, Aikido, Judo and obviously Chin Na. The potent tournament fighting style of Muay Thai kickboxing uses the effectiveness and power of inner circle techniques with elbows and knees while controlling the

opponent. Wing Tzun has a vast arsenal of effective techniques using inner circle in its curriculum.

One movement that is well known within Wing Tzun is the "inch punch" (寸勁). This powerful punch only requires approximately an inch to wind up before striking. Within the inner circle, an "inch palm" (寸勁掌) strike is also very effective. The secret is the proper elbow alignment and use of explosive elbow and wrist power from a relaxed posture. Other striking techniques are elbow, knees, chops and finger jabs to sensitive parts of the body such as the eyes and neck, or pressure points, which are also emphasized in Chin Na techniques. Many moves executed in the inner circle require a grab.

## Counter Attack

A practical system will teach not only inner circle moves but counter attacks as well. We call this area anti-Chin Na. The main goal is to counter-attack a grab. Grabs are very dangerous because you can become controlled and trapped, thus neutralizing your arms. Additionally, a grab can lead to a devastating lock or even break one's powerhouses (wrist, elbow or shoulder). Throws and takedowns are usually used to finish the opponent after a grab. There is a specific way to grab to optimize its effects. In our system, we grab with the hand vertical to the ground, with wrist up, and the eagles mouth (elbow) perpendicular to the ground. The fingers are gripping pressure points. One of the advantages of this form of

grabbing is that it will pull the opponent as you grab. Keep in mind that Wing Tzun was developed for anyone to use, specifically a female. Wing Tzun does not rely on brute force but rather physics. Therefore, if a male were to grab a female to control her, she could use an anti-Chin Na movement to escape and counter with a strike. By taking the centerline, the opponent's power could be "borrowed" and his energy is redirected against him (as shown in the techniques).

## Bow Gee 爆指

One way to finish your opponent while counter-attacking a technique is by using *bow gee* (爆指). These are movements that focus on breaking the opponent's hand and/or wrist so they can no longer use that as a weapon against you. These movements will give a fighter confidence to encounter an opponent who uses grabbing techniques without fear, but rather with an edge. People are fascinated when they see how a female can make a grown man go down to his knees from a *bow gee* movement.

## Curriculum

The Wing Tzun system of kung fu has three forms: a wooden dummy form, rottan ring techniques, and *chi-gerk* (黏腳 - sticky feet) and *chi-sau* (黏手 - sticky hands), which include thirteen individual methods also known as "letters," symbolizing Chinese characters. There is also weapon training such as the butterfly knives and the 6 ½ point

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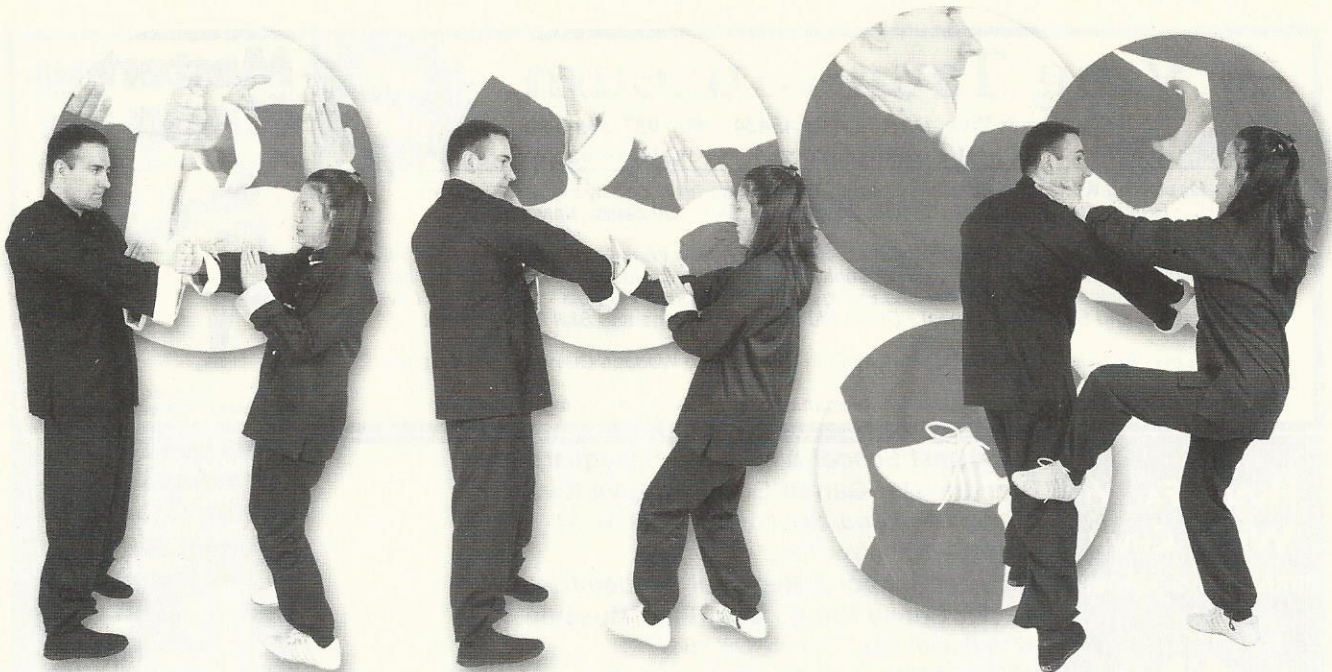
Vivian blocks her opponent's attack by redirecting his punch with snake block (蛇搭手).



Vivian applies an arm lock while quickly slide stepping, closing the gap.



Vivian takes him down to the ground with a *til gerk* (挑腳 - sweeping technique).



Vivian punches with her right hand. Her opponent blocks, then grabs.

Vivian escapes the grab with a *lan sau* (攔手 - barring arm).

Vivian simultaneously strikes with a palm to the face and a kick to the leg joint (月影腳 - Moon Light Shadow) maneuver while grabbing with her right hand.

pole. The aforementioned techniques shown in this article are cleverly mixed into all of the forms. Without instruction from a qualified instructor, the effective application of a movement can be overlooked even if the form is seen.

The first form, *Sil Lin Tao* (小念頭 - "little practice") emphasizes the wrist. It has many anti-Chin Na techniques. *Chum Kiu* (尋橋 - "searching for the bridge") concentrates on the elbow. This form includes footwork and twisting power. The third form, *Bil Jee* (標指 - "darting fingers") applies the throw-downs, finger jab and the elbow strikes. By practicing the forms properly, one can remember and master the

moves. Another good way to improve your inner circle skill is to use the rat-tan ring. This is a tool that helps improve taking the centerline, which effects the concept of borrowing your opponent's power.

I have been fortunate enough to be a part of Si Gung Sum Nung's (師公岑能) lineage, whose name is now used to identify our system of Wing Tzun. My Sifu, Leung Dai Chiu (梁大釗), learned from the late Si Gung Sum Nung. My father, Sifu Dr. Teddy Wong (黃鐵衛博), also a student of the late Si Gung Sum Nung, has also helped me refine my techniques. My closest sparring partner and partner in life,

Hector Bourren, has contributed a great deal to my improvement of the system, relating Wing Tzun to his law enforcement experiences. My hope is that all the different styles of Wing Tzun are reunited as in the past. By sharing this knowledge, perhaps this generation can better understand the capabilities of Wing Tzun. ☺

Vivian Wong Bourren has been studying Wing Tzun since the age of 9. She learned from Si Gung Sum Nung on his U.S. visit in 1995. She has trained numerous students and has performed in countless performances revealing the beauty of the art. For further information on Vivian Wong Bourren, email: MercuryBRC@AOL.com



Vivian intercepts her opponent's punch with a block, then grab, redirecting the punch away from her centerline.

Vivian simultaneously strikes his face with a palm and *gwei ma* (跪馬 - "eats" his horse).

She finishes him with a follow up left palm while controlling his elbow as he is collapsing.