

Report of the first high-level student's seminar of the ELYWCIMAA

by Marcel Meyer

Finally, after two years of Corona pandemic, Lok Yiu Wing Chun practioners from Germany, Italy, Czech Republic, Croatia, France and Switzerland met again for a seminar in the head quarter of the European Lok Yiu Wing Chun International Martial Art Association (ELYWCIMAA) in Namborn, Germany. Instructors and very advanced students gathered for the first high-level student's seminar of two days from the 1. to the 2. of octobre 2022.

In this seminar report I want to highlight the leaders of the seminar and several theoretical thoughts and advisements. And at the end shortly some words about the seminar itself, the participants and atmosphere.

In this report the theoretical considerations take a lot more room than in the seminar. In the seminar it was the opposite: train, train and train. In this report it is a try of a summary of some important inputs for advanced students. Every participant of the seminar knows: the real understanding of Lok Yiu Wing Chun comes from practice not from theory.

Thus, the focus of the whole seminar was very practical, with a lot of exercises, particularly chi-soa and go-sao. Only from time to time the leaders gave some theoretical explanations and reference to core principles, especially the mentioned later on.

The leaders of the seminar: Si-Fu Sven Dittrich, Si-Fu Petr Kozar, Si-Fu Zvonimir Budja and Si-Fu Peter Steiner



Figure 1: Master Lok Yiu (sitting), Master Lok Keng Sang (left), Master Lok Keng Kwong (right), Master Wilhelm Blech (behind), ca. 1991

Si-Fu Sven Dittrich, Si-Fu Petr Kozar, Si-Fu Zvonimir Budja and Si-Fu Peter Steiner were leading the seminar. They were all To-Dais of the late Master Wilhelm Blech (1952-2012), the first and only non-chinese student of Master Lok Yiu (1922-2006). After the death of Master Blech 2012 they maintained the contact and familiar connection to the sons of Master Lok: Master Lok Keng Kwong and Master Lok Keng Sang. They and other direct students of Master



Figure 2: Group foto, 2017: Benny Chung, Master Lok Keng Kwong and Master Lok Keng Sang (sitting from left to right), former To-Dais of Master Blech (standing)

Blech visite their Si-Bas Master Lok Keng Kwong and Lok Keng Sang on yearly basis in Hong Kong. They are today the representatives of Lok Yiu Wing Chun in Europe. For more information see also www.lokyiu.com .

Theoretical Input 1: What is more important, receiving and following the (opponent's) force or the fist punch?

This question (in the subtitle above) was raised after the first day of the seminar. The explanations and reflections followed the 2. day: Si-Suk Sven and the other 3 seminar leaders explained then the parts of Lok Yiu Wing Chun in practice: 1. Engaging and contact, 2. Following the force and control and 3. hitting (back). The 3. part is to be seen as a result, a byproduct of the processes of part 1 and 2 – Si-Ba-Gung Kwong calls it also a “gift”. The seminar leaders pointed out that we should not emphasize on striking but a lot more on engaging properly / establishing a good contact and then following the force by adapting the body to it under contact. As soon as this force is no longer effective on our body there is a window of opportunity to strike (back). Often as well as intended, the (best) window of opportunity opens at the split second, when the “opponent” loses balance. This 3-part process is the essential meaning of the two principles:

lui lao hui soong (1), lut sao jik chung (2)

Lui lao hui soong, lut sao jik chung has been often translated as follows: “As my opponent comes, I receive him; as he leaves, I escort him [= (1)], upon loss of contact, I charge forward [= (2)]”. The second of these two principles in German regularly is translated as: “*Ist der Weg frei, stosse vor*” or word by word in English: If the way is free/open, attack (back). In this version of the translation one aspect of the process is clearer than in the first English translation: After the first established contact, the first *dim*, I want to free myself of the influence of the opponent’s force, and at same the time I want to hold the established contact. And this is normally only possible by adapting the own body (positions) to the effective force in certain Wing Chun-specific ways: For example by changing from a tan sao to a bong sao – in such situations Si-Ba-Gung Kwong says: It wasn’t me, who did the bong soa, it was the other guy. In this context it is all about following or escorting the force as long as it is effective on my body.

Theoretical Input 2: The power comes from the ground

A good stable stand is a key enabling factor for stability and balance. And stability and balance are precondition to develop power into movements and techniques. And not to forget that a Lok Yiu Wing Chun practioner should generate power not (primarily) by the muscles but by movements (e.g. collocations in form of turns / twists, or e.g. in form of steps).

The power comes from the ground - *lihk chuhng deih hei*

was a third principle discussed at the seminar.

Theoretical Input 3: Lok Yiu Wing Chun, an internal martial art

There exists a distinction of martial art systems in internal and external martial arts. Very simply defined: external martial art uses (brutal) force of the own body while internal martial arts try to use the opponent’s force. The typical example for an internal martial art is Tai Chi Ch’uan. Lok Yiu Wing Chun also an internal martial art? Yes, sais Si-Suk Sven Dittrich, but with more speed and power. The seminar leaders pointed out that Lok Yiu Wing Chun in its essence is an internal martial art. Why? They pointed out that important preconditions for the first 2 parts of this 3-part process (receiving, establishing contact (1) following, escorting the opponent’s force (2)) is stability,

balance and feeling. Those three enabling factors are not at all or only very hard to see. The feeling e.g. is an internal process, that each person can only feel by him- or herself. In other words: Especially I myself can register if the opponent's force is still effective on my body, how, when and how much I can or have to change my body structure to get to point that the opponent's force is "away". Chi sao is the most important exercise to learn and develop this kind of feeling under permanent contact. Master Wilhelm Blech as his Si-Fu Master Lok Yiu pointed out, that chi sao is the heart of Wing Chun. The leaders of the seminar added that a beginner of Lok Yiu Wing Chun needs to acquire the body structures and techniques of the forms, primarily from the first form *Siu Lim Tao*. Advanced students need to shift the focus more and more also to internal processes like feeling, but also stability and balance.

Theoretical Input 4: Every body develops his own Wing Chun

Everybody develops his own Wing Chun a lot influenced by your Si-Fu and Si-Hings. This was an other interesting consideration with the advise: Do not only imitate your Si-Fu and Si-Hings, but learn to understand with your own body (external) and within your own body (internal), how Lok Yiu Wing Chun works for you.

Know it gets tricky: Please no misunderstandings like you develop your own Lok Yiu Wing Chun in the sense of developing a knew martial art. No, but for the advanced practinioners comes more and more the point, where he or she has to find out, how his or her body can move in certain situations under contact and handle them. Si-Fu Peter Steiner pointed it out like this: We can only give you the way, but you have to walk it by ourselves. I understood it like this: There are the core movements (techniques) from the forms, and there are several basic and core exercises to learn how to handle and apply this movements form the forms. Paricularly also under constant contact. Further on there are some core principles that advise how Wing Chun works. But in the practice of go-soa-situations you have to combine everything by yourself, you have to feel and decide by ourself how you move next. And this is not by thinking in a cognitive way – there is no time for this. It is by internal real-time processes like feeling on the basis of good and well trained external body structure and then adapt this body structures to the prevalent situation.

The seminar, seminar's participants and atmosphere

The seminar began like a normal training after a warm reception and address of welcome by the four leaders of the seminar. The first hour was warming up, forms and basic partner exercises: first dan chi sao, then basic chi sao. Si-Fu Peter Steiner, Petr Kozar, Sven Dittrich and Zvonimir Budja went around and observed without intervening a lot. Si-Suk Sven joked around: "Dan chi sao in a high-level student's seminar? Why can I not do go sao. I know dan chi sao, I did it a lot. Dan chi sao?!!!" And everybody knew, you never did enough basic training!

There was a lot of enthusiasm, engagement but also jokes and fun the whole seminar on both sides the leader's and the participant's.

Further on the chi sao training was intensified, but also exercises to establish contact. And after that exercises to follow / to escort the opponent's force have been trained. In this context Si-Fu Petr Kozar made by unforgettable demonstrations very clear, how important quik movements are like quik elbows. Si-Fu Peter Steiner explained the importance of short steps without giving a lot of forward power.

In conclusion it was a very good seminar for very advanced students benefitting a lot by trying to understand better core concepts and essentials of Lok Yiu Wing Chun practice. Thank you very much, Si-Suk Sven, Si-Suk Petr, Si-Suk Zvonimir and Si-Fu Peter!



Figure 3: Si-Suk Petr Kozar, Si-Fu Peter Steiner, Si-Suk Sven Dittrich and Si-Suk Zvonimir Budja (sitting, from left to right), the group of participants standing behind

Some last words ...

In this report I summarized a lot of theoretical considerations like some core principles. These principles are like recipes: To get a good meal you do not have only to understand them, but above all you have to try to cook them. And do not think that the recipe gives all the information. By practice you get the optimal boiling point, you feel and taste, when you have to add a little bit more or little bit less of this or that. With the cooking comes the mastery and at the end: the perfect meal. Perfect? A saying says: "Everything will be fine at the end; and if it is not fine yet, it is not yet the end". We know, there is no absolute end in Lok Yiu Wing Chun, but there's a continuous way of practice to get a little bit better from time to time. Even Master Lok Yiu should have had said: My Wing Chun is not bad, but still there is room for improvement and greater mastery.

What can I wish you more than a lot of good practice!

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Yours Marcel Meyer,

To-Dai of Si-Fu Peter Steiner,
Instructor III in training