



# 葉問詠春

## Lords of the Ring - *Wing Chun's Jook Wan Huen*

In this 3rd installment of “*Devil in the Details*” article series we will look at the Wing Chun Jook Wan Huen or Tin Wan Huen. The name Jook Wan Huen means “*Bamboo linked circle*” where as Tin Wan Huen refers to an “*Iron linked circle.*” Both names describe the structure of a defensive weapon and training device used to refine and develop explosive vorticular Ging in the Bridge arms of a Wing Chun practitioner. It may also be used in any standard southern system of Gung Fu including White Eyebrow and Southern Praying Mantis.

The source of the information in this article comes from two of my five Wing Chun teachers, Sifu R.L. Harris and Mr. Edmund Kwai both of whom describe the Wing Chun Rings development in the following way. My own research has found limited additional information on the subject.

Within the first and second generations of Wing Chun’s development, prior to a widely standardized Wooden Dummy regimen, the bamboo ring was used by members of the nineteenth-century group called the Red Boat Opera Company (aka Red Flower Union and Plum Blossom Opera) as a means of training their special style of Gung Fu under the guise of a dramatic performance implement. Brightly colored for visual appeal and wielded in choreographed dramatic routines, the rings allowed the Opera members to train their art subtly and could be used defensively (in the hands or by being thrown) against an armed attacker if the need arose. The Red Boat Opera Company disguised its members as traveling entertainers, allowing them to carry out their primary objectives of espionage and assassination. Almost all lineages of Wing Chun, with the exception of the Pao Fa Lien branch, claim descent from the members the Red Boat Opera Company.



The *Tin Wan Huen* “*Iron linked circle*” was used to strengthen and develop the coordination of the Bridge arms in conjunction with the Yee jee kim yeung ma stance and footwork. Because of its heavier weight the practitioner’s elbows sink down while training, and thus are stabilized by gravity (*through relaxed trapezius and deltoid muscles*) and manifest what the Chinese call **Jang Dai Lik** (*Elbow sinking power*).

Once the practitioner’s movements were smoothly integrated, training would progress to the *Jook Wan Huen* “*Bamboo linked circle*” (the lighter of the two versions) where the training of pliable isometric spring strength, individual rotation of the forearms, and vorticular rotation between the bridge arms culminated in an explosive expansion and contraction of Bau ja Ging “*Exploding power*” and Cheun Ging “*Drilling power*”.

If this article generates interest, I will present in future installments the first five of fifteen ring exercise sets to impart this training method to those who are interested.

First Set of Five are:

- (1) • **Lin Wan Bong Sao Wu sao**
- (2) • **Fun Sao Jik Chung Choi - or - Tan Sao & Yat Chi Chung Kuen**
- (3) • **Sik Sao Cao Sao - or - Gahn Sao Gwat Sao**
- (4) • **Jeet Kiu Sao**
- (5) • **Po Pai Jeung**

I was originally taught twenty-seven in all, but some, in my opinion, are



redundant and lack the compact cyclic power needed for fighting. Now let's look at the dimensions of a training ring's construction because just like a good wooden dummy, the dimensions of the Wing Chun ring have to be in accordance with the user's stature.



**First** - The diameter of the ring must match the distance from the individual's centerline to his shoulder, replicating the distance allowance of the right & left combat doors or bilateral fighting gates. Another way to measure ring diameter is to take the distance from your wrist to the bend in the arm as the length of diameter that is best for you.

**Second** - The thickness of the outer edge of the ring should not exceed that of two fingers. A thicker ring adds excessive surface area to the training device and impairs the practitioner's ability to coil the bridge arms smoothly and quickly around and through it.

**Third** - The outer surface of the Ring or Hoop must, in the beginning, be easy to keep contact with. This can be achieved easily by wrapping the ring with electrical tape so that the practitioner can maintain good "Gahn geep ging" sticking to the outer surface.



Later oil may be applied liberally to the ring to simulate the viscosity of Blood, (*Sifu Larry Gibson emphasized this aspect of training*). This aids in the training of cohesive movement, which in the days of old would be especially difficult if the ring were covered in the blood of the opponent or that of the user.

In the 2nd installment of this article I will teach the reader how to construct their own Ring and begin going over the first five ring sets as well as applications. Wing Chun's Jook Wan Huen Ring is a compact and advanced training aid which reflects the systems early development and allows the practitioner to cultivate and refine their bridge arm skills when alone or travelling.

Second Set of Five are:

- (1) • Lin Wan Gum Sao & Cheun Ma
- (2) • Lin Wan Biu Jee Kiu Sao
- (3) • Kwai Jarn
- (4) • Yee Gao Choi, Sik Sao, Pai Sao
- (5) • Kwun Sao & Yee Gahn Sao



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