

In Wing Chun there are basically two types of Bong Sau, High Bong Sau and Low Bong Sau. The High Bong Sau is a very soft technique whereas the Low Bong Sau requires a little more energy to be used.

Soft Hard Bong Sau



Bong Sau is first met in the third part of Siu Lim Tao (Wing Chun's first form), and it is here we learn the basic position. Briefly, the elbow and shoulder in line, wrist at the centre and slightly lower than the elbow. The forearm and wrist should be relaxed and the hand naturally open and facing forwards and down. In the second form the Bong Sau features a great deal and is trained in conjunction with Juen Ma, Wing Chun's turning stance.

In this situation we imagine a straight punch is being thrown towards your face. Using Juen Ma, you turn your body 45 degrees moving your head off the line of attack. Simultaneously, you use Bong Sau to contact the attacking arm. Since the intended target, your face, is no longer in the way, you could say contacting the attacker's arm with your Bong Sau is not necessary. However, the reason you use Bong Sau is to find out what your opponent will do next. If he has not realised you have evaded his attack, his punch will continue forwards. At this point you can use a Lap Sau (grasping hand) to pull him off balance whilst striking back. Fig1 & 2.

On the other hand he may realise you have moved and change the direction of his strike and move his fist towards your face once more. As your elbow is higher than your wrist, you will feel this movement quite clearly and you can use the Lap Sau again. Alternatively he may try and press down on your Bong Sau and use his other hand to strike. If so you can step round, allowing your Bong Sau to drop and bring your Wu Sau forwards changing it into Tan Sau to defend yourself, Fig 3, this position is known as Kwun Sau. From here it is possible for you to counter-attack. Fig 4.

It is important to remember to keep your forearm relaxed whilst you are performing the High Bong Sau in Fig 1. Since you have moved out of the way, there is no need to use energy in your arm, also while



you are relaxed you are much more sensitive and can feel what your opponent is doing and so you can react more quickly.

There are other ways to use Bong Sau. One way is much stronger and can be used to push your opponent backwards.

As your opponent pulls your arm and punches towards you instead of turning to avoid the punch, or stepping back, you can step forwards and lift up your Bong Sau. As you will imagine, it is important to get your stance, positioning and footwork right, and if you do, your Bong Sau will intercept the punch and contact your opponent's forearm towards your elbow. This part of the Bong Sau is very strong, since your upper arm and shoulder are behind it. You should not push forwards with your forearm or lean forwards as this is dangerous, but use your stepping to push you forwards. This Bong Sau has the effect of jamming your opponent's arm up pushing him backwards. (Fig 5. Look closely at the position of the feet, the stance and the Bong Sau). If he still tries to push back, it is quite simple to change to Lap Sau and strike back.

It is often said, that with your elbow raised, your ribs become vulnerable to attack. Fig 6. For this reason, you must be able to turn your body quickly and smoothly to avoid being caught out (this is trained a lot in the second form Chum Kui).

Again, once you have used Bong Sau it is important to stay relaxed and calm. There are basically three simple ways for him to attack your ribs.

1. He may pull his hand back and then punch underneath your arm. If your opponent pulls his hand back, you should quickly turn back to face him and attack his centre forcing him to defend.

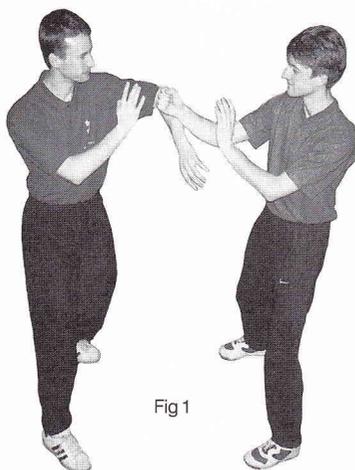


Fig 1

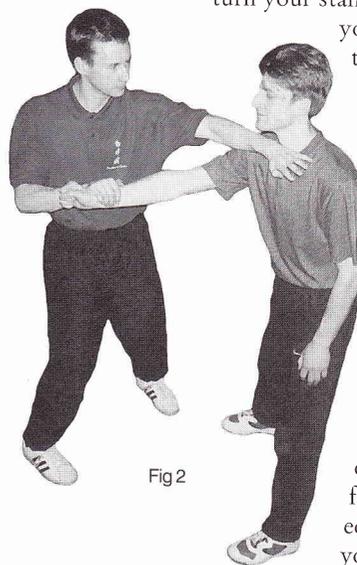


Fig 2

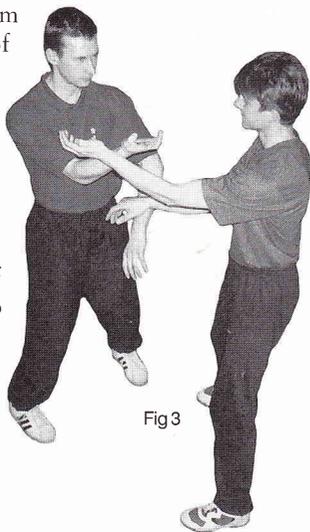


Fig 3

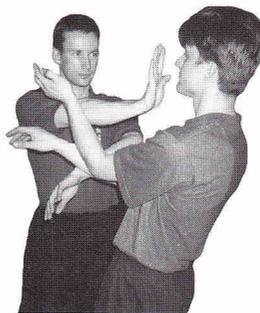


Fig 4



Fig 5



Fig 6

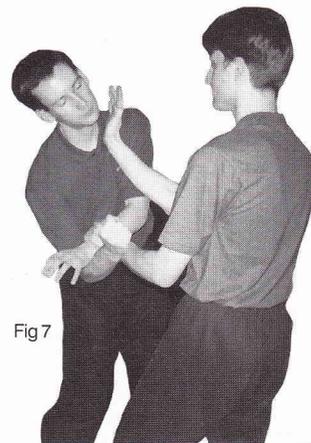


Fig 7

Wan Lan Sau). This gives you more time to turn your stance through 90 degrees, drop your Bong Sau and strike with the other hand. Fig 7.

3. He may try to grab your elbow to lift your arm up. Again as he does so you can turn and drop your Bong Sau and move your elbow out of harms way. Alternatively, if he is too strong, you will have to use good footwork and move into a safe position.

These are just a few things I have found useful, but they are by no means the only ones. You may have found different ones that work equally well or better. However, you can always say, "But what if he does 'this' instead?" The important thing is to look for the connecting principles of the movements and react accordingly, then, when it happens the answer will be there in front of you.

Grandmaster Ip Chun once said, "Bong Sau is one of Wing Chun's perfect hands" and also, his Gong Fu brother and famous master Tsui Shun Tin also once said, "Bong Sau is one of the most intrusive and

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invasive techniques in Wing Chun." For a long time I wondered what they meant. At first I thought Bong Sau was merely a defensive technique, but now I have seen more, I think I am starting to understand a little better ■

by Darryl Moy