

嶺南洪拳

電影・社群

LINGNAN

HUNG KUEN:

KUNG FU IN CINEMA

AND COMMUNITY





■ Studio portrait of Lam Sai Wing in Tit Sin Kuen (Iron Wire Boxing) pose.

CHAPTER

1

LEGACY OF LAM FAMILY HUNG KUEN

Hing Chao

The Lam family is one of the most respected martial arts families both in Hong Kong and internationally. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, they have been at the forefront of martial arts development and have played a formative role in creating modern kung fu culture. The head of the family, Lam Sai Wing (1860–1943) was one of the earliest modernizers in Guangzhou and led the effort to transform traditional martial arts into a modern system during the 1920s and 1930s. Following in his footsteps, his son, master Lam Cho (1910–2012), forayed into different kung fu styles and aggressively expanded Lingnan Hung Kuen, giving form to the contemporary Hung Kuen system. Today, under the leadership of Lam Chun Fai (b.1940), Lingnan Hung Kuen has grown into one of the most comprehensive and influential kung fu systems with a significant

presence throughout the Eurasian continent, extending to Southeast Asia, the Americas, Australasia and beyond.

The achievements of the Lam family are broad and far-reaching. Since Lam Sai Wing's days, the family has pioneered the use of photography and other media tools to document Chinese martial arts. This spirit of innovation has continued with each successive generation as they explore new strategies to record and disseminate kung fu. Today, working closely with International Guoshu Association and the Centre for Applied Computing and Interactive Media, City University of Hong Kong, the Lam family has gone beyond conventional media in their quest to preserve the family legacy in a future-proof manner, making use of an array of documentary strategies including motion capture, 3D animation and



advanced motion analysis. Chapter Five will assess the Lam family's use of digital and media technologies more fully.

The Lam family also played a critical role in modernizing southern Chinese martial arts and creating contemporary kung fu culture. In this connection, Lam Sai Wing and Lam Cho's endeavour to build a modern Lingnan (or Cantonese) martial arts system in the first half of the twentieth century through to the first two decades after World War II, centering around the Nam Mou Athletic Association, was particularly significant. This laid the foundation for subsequent developments which slowly took shape in Hong Kong in the 1960s and 1970s. The emergent modern kung fu culture extended beyond the traditional realm of Chinese physical culture, as community kung fu practice amalgamated with new media forms, and in particular cinema, which came to dominate mainstream popular culture post war. Followers of Lam family teachings, in particular the legendary Lau Kar Leung and his family, played a leading role in this process, as we shall see in Chapter Two.

After a century of development, in the eyes of many, the identity of Lam Family Hung Kuen has become interwoven with popular culture and cinema. It is true that the Lam family has benefitted from an explosion of interest in the wake of a long list of Hung Kuen-inspired kung fu films from 1949 onwards. At a fundamental level, however, beyond the occasional dabbling in film and media, the Lam family has always kept their focus on kung fu practice itself, preserving its legacy and spreading martial arts as an invaluable form of Chinese physical culture, and making this accessible to the wider global community.

In the biographical journey outlined below, through three generations of Hung Kuen

masters, we attempt to sketch their individual achievements as well as collective contributions to Chinese martial arts and contemporary kung fu culture as a whole.

Founder of Lam Family Hung Kuen: Lam Sai Wing (1860–1943)

Lam Sai Wing was born into a martial arts family in Pingzhou, Nanhai prefecture, in Guangdong province. He learnt martial arts from his grandfather Lam Baak Sin and great-uncle Lam Geui Chung, both accomplished Hung Kuen martial artists. Early training gave Lam Sai Wing a solid foundation but he continued to study with renowned masters after moving to Guangzhou. In "A Brief History of the Late Master Lam Sai Wing" by Cheung Biu Wun, in Chu Yu Zai's *Iron Wire Boxing* (1951), it is said that Lam followed renowned masters Wu Kam Sing, "Northern Chinese boxer surnamed Kang", Chung Hung San¹ and, finally, Wong Fei Hung. It is uncertain exactly what he learnt before taking instruction from Wong Fei Hung, but likely he fused his earlier learning into the Hung Kuen system. According to *Mr Lam Sai Wing's Abridged Biography*, written by Wai Siu Baak, "Lam followed Master Wong Fei Hong for over twenty years and inherited Wong's teachings. Then he set up his own martial art school in Guangzhou at the age of forty-five."²

In martial arts folklore, the Lok Sin Theatre Incident, in which Lam Sai Wing and his students were ambushed by a horde of assailants, was legendary.³ As oral tradition had it, Lam Sai Wing escaped from the incident relatively unharmed, while inflicting serious injury on his attackers. After this incident, which took place probably some time in the 1900s in the twilight of the Qing dynasty (1644–1912), legends about his martial arts prowess became widespread. The Lok Sin Theatre Incident looms large in Cantonese



■ Portrait of Sun Yat Sen and the presidential medal dated 5th May in the 10th year of the Republic, i.e. 1922.

martial arts folklore in general, and occupies a central place in Lam Sai Wing's mythology in particular. In historical terms, however, Lam Sai Wing's real contributions, which were well-documented, took place during the Republic of China (1912–1949).

Lam Sai Wing shot to prominence soon after the establishment of the Republic and was among the leading martial artists in Guangdong at the time. In 1922 his performance of Tiger and Crane Boxing to fundraise for an orphanage in Canton won plaudits from Sun Yat Sen, the founding father of the Republic of China, who awarded him the presidential medal and addressed him as "Mr. Fu-Hok" (Mr. Tiger-and-Crane).

During the late Qing and early Republic, Chinese martial arts went through a phase of intensive modernization with competing models emerging in different parts of China, including Ma Liang's New Martial Arts under the Beiyang regime in northern China, Chin Woo Athletic Association,

China's first indigenous martial arts association modelled on the YMCA, and Zhang Zhijiang's Central Guoshu Institute in Nanjing, which eventually became the dominant form throughout the country.⁴ Strong regional character coloured these experiments, reflecting the fragmented nature of Chinese politics in the first half of the twentieth century, but with the exception of Chin Woo Athletic Association, what they had in common was a close association with the military.

In line with national development, Guangdong's military governors during the late 1920s and 1930s also attempted to construct their own regional martial arts systems. Originally, after attending the first national Guoshu examinations held in Nanjing in October 1928, Guangdong governor Li Jishen (1885–1959) looked to adopt the Guoshu model as he set up Two Guang Guoshu Institute in March 1929. However, his position was usurped several months later and Two Guang Guoshu Institute did not survive its infancy.

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■ Lam Sai Wing in Nationalist government military uniform. Chinese title reads: "Guoshu (i.e. Chinese martial arts) instructor for National Revolution Army First Army Headquarters". Image from 1936 edition of *Gung Gee Fok Fu Kuen*.



■ Chu Yu Zai, novelist and Lam Sai Wing's student, also the author of *Tit Sin Kuen* (circa 1950s, exact date unknown).

The man who replaced him, Chen Jitang (1890–1954) set his mind on modernizing and industrializing Guangdong, but while he took a personal interest and patronized Chinese martial arts, even going as far as engaging civilian boxers as military combat instructors, he fell short of building a comprehensive system to rival the Central Guoshu Institute or, indeed, that could be compared with Ma Liang's New Martial Arts or Chin Woo Athletic Association.

Be that as it may, Lam Sai Wing maintained and further cemented his position as a leader in Guangzhou's martial arts community during Chen Jitang's rulership between 1926 and 1936. He became martial arts instructor for the general headquarters of the National Revolution First Army — a continuation of his association with the military which began with Lee Fook Lam⁵ — taught hand-to-hand combat to the officers and choreographed a sabre routine, Commander's Sabre, which is preserved in the Lam family's repertoire and continues to be practised to this day. At the same time, he served as martial arts teacher to Chen Jitang's family, a role he fulfilled until Chen's overthrow in 1936. During this period, as one of the premier martial artists in Guangzhou, Lam Sai Wing probably also had some level of exchange with other leading masters, including northern Shaolin master Gu Ruzhang, with whom it is said Lam Sai Wing had a falling out.⁶ It was probably during this time that he also choreographed the famed Fifth Brother Trigram Pole.⁷

It is said that at the peak of Lam Sai Wing's career, anyone who wished to open a martial arts school in Guangzhou had to seek his approval, such was the extent of his influence and the awe in which he was held.

Around 1926 Lam Sai Wing was invited by the Hong Kong Butchers' Association to teach martial arts.⁸ This can be seen as a stepping



■ Lam Sai Wing with his followers in HK, dated 1935.



■ Nam Mou Athletic Association 1954 reunion, commemorative photograph with Lam Cho (fifth from left) and Geng Dehai (fifth from right) in the centre.





■ Lam Sai Wing posing with his students in a studio.



■ Lam Sai Wing's school group photo, dated New Year's Day of 1935.