

十二支橋

The 12 Bridges (Sahp Yih Ji Kiu) of Hung Gar

As Interpreted by Gam Bok Yin Sifu

金博賢

Version 3: Jan 10, 2002

Hung Kuen is known for its 12 bridges (Sahp Yih Ji Kiu) or Kiu Sau. However the concept of Kiu Sau is common to many styles of Chinese martial arts. From the books on Lam Sai Wing's Tit Sin Kuen and Fu Hohk Seung Ying Kuen, and discussion with many others, together with my own training throughout my life, my own interpretation of the execution of the 'bridge' principle is of (a) the transference of power or energy (chi) across the 'bridge' that links internal and external, and (b) the resulting delivery of the technique through the arms as the 'bridge' for delivery. These two are intrinsically linked in the execution of 12 bridges, and mainly represent close fighting with an opponent who may be grappling, holding, restraining or in close proximity.

Progressing from the basic knowledge of a movement in any particular form that you may know as consisting of where and how to place the limbs and body, the 12 bridges focus exclusively on teaching you 'the holistic concept of the WAY a movement is executed, rather than simply where and how to place the limbs and body'. For example, it is possible to select a particular movement from a Hung Gar form and execute it in a Bik¹ or Jai³ or Wan³ **WAY** (see table below for explanation of the bridge techniques and way of execution).

In understanding and executing the 12 bridges it is essential that you have an understanding and capability of the following, which comprise this holistic concept mentioned above:

- internal and external fundamentals that are embodied in the combination of the stances,
- center of gravity positioning,
- the sounds,
- breath control,
- Dan Tien focus,
- muscular control,
- balance and body position,
- directions of attack and defense,
- correct use of the arms (blocking, punching, controlling, breaking, grabbing), and
- spirit and focus.

It takes many years of dedicated training in Hung Kuen to master these internal and external holistic fundamentals described above, as well as appropriate physical development to provide the strength and stamina to execute them and the 12 bridges effectively.

The 12 bridges also represent important keywords and principles of Hung Gar that form the basis and meaning of the art, and that also serve to guide the student along the path of discovery towards the unlocking of what some may interpret as the mysteries of the art.

To make the 12 bridges easier to memorize they were traditionally learnt as a verse of two lines of seven words each, which was quite a common practice in literature (something like rhyming couplets in English; or the Haiku 17 syllable verse in Japanese).

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That requires a total of fourteen words, but there are only twelve here. Therefore for completeness of the verse two extra words are added, which of themselves usually have no particular meaning to add to the significance of the words for the 12 bridges. Some typical pairs of very elegant extra words to add may be Saan¹/Hoh⁶ OR Kin⁴/Kwan¹ OR Yam¹/Yeung⁴.

So an example of the complete two-line verse of 7 syllables (words) each for memorizing the 12 bridges is as follows:

1st line: Gong¹ yauh⁶ bik¹ jik³ fan¹ dihng⁴ chuen³

2nd line: Taih⁶ lau³ wan³ jai³ dehng⁶ (saan¹ hoh⁶)

Bridge Technique	My Interpretation of the Meaning and Application
1. Gong ¹ - hard 剛	<p>This is one of the very foundations of Hung Kuen, as primarily a hard style, and the practitioner must know how to create and deliver this force that is taught in every form and represents the merging of all of the internal and external fundamentals mentioned above.</p> <p>In executing many of the bridge techniques through the arms, the force moves from soft and relaxed to the hardness that results from the dynamic tension applied to the forearms that unites the wrist forearm and upper arm into a powerful unit.</p> <p>Also the change of stance from Sei Ping Bat Fahn to Ji Ng Ma, and the generation of power by twisting the waist provides another example of generating the ‘hard’ power referred to.</p> <p>It teaches and enables the practitioner how to generate and focus the internal strength from the Dan Tien to the outside as a hard and powerfully focused explosive force. This is fundamental to many of the Hung Kuen techniques.</p>
2. Yauh ⁶ - soft 柔	<p>The gathering of the internal power through the soft circular and relaxed movements replenishes the internal strength at the Dan Tien. The arms are relaxed at the shoulders, and move in a circular fashion using the formation of the ‘Dihng⁴’ bridge technique explained below. In addition to replenishment, this soft technique is useful in redirecting an opponent’s own force such that you may gain advantage and in preparation for attack, immobilization or destruction of balance.</p> <p>Examples: tit sin 26, 29, 51, 52. fu hohk 20, 21</p>
3. Bik ¹ – forcing, crowding 逼	<p>Direct the internal force of Dan Tien and the body from a strong stance upon application of the technique, which is a short powerful deflecting block. Usually the range of movement of this technique is very small and it can be delivered with single or double arm movements.</p> <p>Examples: tit sin 5</p>

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4. Jik ³ - straight 直	The technique of delivering direct and straight focused force from the waist through the arm. There are many examples of this throughout the Hung Kuen forms and it is one of the fundamental foundations.
5. Fan ¹ - dividing 分	Direct the internal force from Dan Tien outwards and laterally, usually with the arms both pushing out together, often using back-fists and from a strong stance with lowered center of gravity sinking even further down upon application of the technique. Delivered using a circular outwards movement. Examples: tit sin 20, 35, 44, 58, 68. fu hohk 55, 60, 96
6. Dihng ⁴ - steady 定	Using the arm as a solid iron-like bridge for transference and maintenance of force and steadiness. Executed with either single or both arms straight, palms facing forward at 90 ⁰ or 180 ⁰ to forearm and fingers together and extended. This flexes the forearm muscles in a locked and powerful manner for optimum steadiness. Examples: tit sin 16, 32, 40. fu hohk 7
7. Chuen ³ - inch 寸	Using the straight force from the 'Jik ³ ' bridge technique deliver that force through a single or double straight arm technique with the entire arm from shoulder through to finger tips at 180 ⁰ , sinking the center of gravity low down upon application of the technique. At close quarters this delivers a powerful force from the Dan Tien to the fingertips, very effective at striking the opponents head, neck, solar plexus and ribs. Examples: tit sin 18, 33, 42, 56, 66
8. Taih ⁶ - lift 提	This directs the force from Dan Tien outwards and upwards, with both or single arms lifting upwards and from a strong stance with lowered center of gravity sinking even further down upon application of the technique. Delivered at close quarters using a circular movement to generate a rising power focused usually at the opponents jaw or lifting to break an opponents constraining hold. Examples: tit sin 12, 15, 48, 64. fu hohk 14
9. Lau ³ - reserve 留	Often an opponent can be overcome without excessive physical force. By keeping your force in reserve and carefully evaluating or sensing your opponent's ability, weaknesses and spirit you will know how best to react to the situation. The sensing ability applies both while in physical contact with the opponent or at a distance. A slight pausing between techniques, in which case it will usually be following a Jai ³ technique, can also represent it.

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Bridge Technique	My Interpretation of the Meaning and Application
10. Wan ³ - sending 運	Using the force from the opponent and directing it elsewhere such that you may focus it together with your own force to overcome the opponent either through breaking techniques or destruction of balance to your own advantage. The opponents force is gathered and redirected using a circular motion of the arms. Examples: fu hohk 20, 21
11. Jai ³ - control 制	Firstly direct the internal force from Dan Tien to a single or both arms using the principles of the ‘Yauh ⁶ ’ bridge technique. Then slowly using your hands or tiger claw, and transferring your force from soft to hard, control the opponent’s force, or ability to respond, using a movement towards your centerline with powerful forearms. Executed from a strong stance with lowered center of gravity sinking even further down upon application of the technique, and delivered using the proper breath and sound with a purposeful movement of the arm it can overcome the opponent’s hold and balance. Examples: tit sin 19, 34, 43, 57
12. Dehng ⁶ – arrange, settle 訂	Direct the internal force from Dan Tien through one or both arms and at the same time downwards from a strong stance with lowered center of gravity sinking even further down upon application of the technique. The downward delivery actually assisting your sinking stance and directing even more power through the arms and elbows.

By drawing on the principals of all of the bridge techniques combined with your flow and control of internal/external energy, and your strategy and mastery of all of the other elements of the art of Hung Kuen, you will instinctively know what combinations to use from what you have learned, in order to finalize, subdue or avoid your opponent.

Notes:

1. The superscript numbers to the right of the romanized Chinese words are there to assist with Cantonese pronunciation.
2. The examples referred to are specific movements from the books on Lam Sai Wing’s Tit Sin Kuen and Fu Hohk Seung Ying Kuen. Although there are also many other examples throughout other Hung Kuen forms. However please bear in mind that the 12 bridges refer to the **WAY** the technique is executed rather than the components of the movement.

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