

Shaolin COMBAT

from the Tat Moh Mountain Training Camp



Iain Armstrong

In the remote mountains of Mae Hong Sorn (The Land Of Mist) lies the Tat Moh Mountain Training Camp where the original fighting arts of the Shaolin masters are still being taught - the old way!

Each month Combat magazine invites you to join in with a specially selected piece of this training!

Shaolin Combat 5: Knives

I try to encourage experienced martial artists to come to visit us at the Mountain Training Camp. A real martial artist never stops learning and one of the easiest ways of learning is to exchange techniques with other experienced martial artists.

Recently, my friend Bob Melia came to stay here. Bob has over 30 years experience, mainly in Shaolin kung fu and Sun style tai chi but also in a range of other arts. He has some very interesting knife defence techniques. With knife crime a major issue in the UK and many other countries at the moment, I thought it would be of interest to Combat readers if we were to share some of these techniques with you.

These techniques are based on the Philippine art of Bakkaban.

Technique 1a: threatening with knife to the throat.

In this scenario, I am threatening Bob with a knife to his throat, (fig 1). He quickly responds by pulling my wrist towards him and down while pushing against it a little with his body so that I am in a wrist lock, (fig 2). It is essential that the flat of the knife is pressed against his body to render it safe. At the same time as pulling back on the wrist, he slams forward with a palm strike under my nose (fig3). As well as hurting, this unbalances me and obstructs my line of sight. He now presses with his right hand against the flat of the knife to lever it out of my grip whilst applying a thumb lock with his left hand as my grip on the knife opens (fig 4). Note that he is still maintaining the wrist lock by pressing forwards against my wrist with his body while trapping my hand in place with his left. He then circles his right hand under my trapped arm in a classic 'crane wing' movement so as to really tighten the lock (figs 5 & 6) and delivers a kidney punch against which I am unable to defend (fig7).

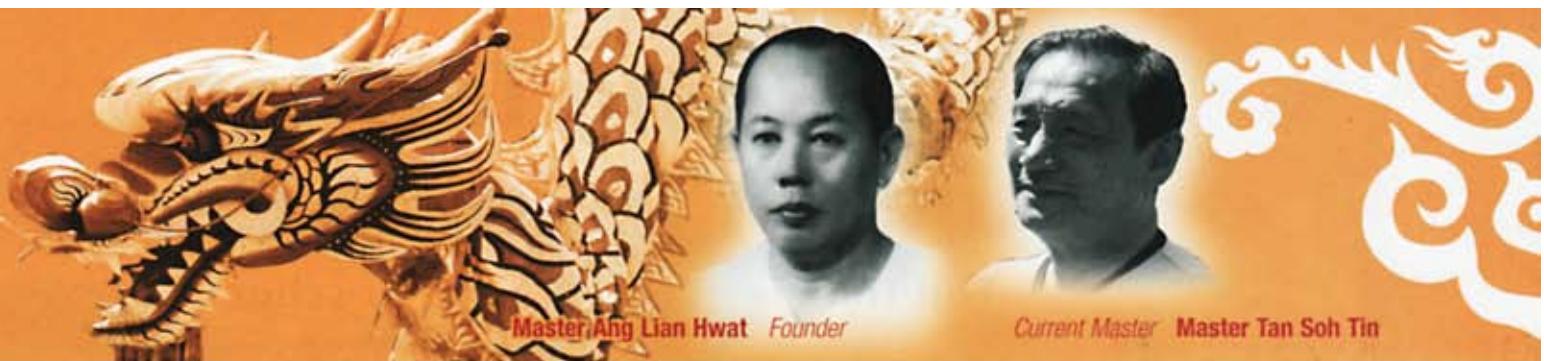
Key features:

This sequence illustrates well how to press against the flat of the knife blade to redirect it and eventually twist it out of a grip. It also contains a couple of good locking moves.

Technique 1b

Once again, we start with a knife held to the throat as a threat (fig8). This time Bob starts with the knife. I push my chest right forwards so as to move the knife point as far away from my neck as possible whilst simultaneously trapping Bob's knife hand with both of my hands, once again locking the wrist (fig 9). This time I use both of my hands to twist the knife out of Bob's grip and catch it in





Master Ang Lian Hwat Founder

Current Master Master Tan Soh Tin

my left (fig 10). I finish off with one of my preferred techniques: to circle my right arm around Bob's head to apply a basic guillotine choke (fig 11). I don't need to lock the choke on with the left as I have the knife lined up nicely to pierce Bob's intestines, (fig 12), a particularly painful move, (think of the worst stomach pains that you have ever had and multiply).

Key features:

Body pressure against the flat of the knife is the key to initiating this technique. The wrist lock leads easily into a disarm and taking the knife from the opponent always confers an advantage. Finally, rolling the arm around the neck into the guillotine sets an opponent up for any number of nasty surprises.

Technique 2: threatening with a knife to the kidney.

Here I start with a knife pressing into Bob's kidney and loose hold around his neck, (fig 13). Note that it is important to start your defence before your opponent has locked his hold on too tight. Bob turns his body and uses his right arm to push the knife away from his body and lock it against my midsection. At the same time he pulls my arm away from his neck with his left hand, (fig 14). With the knife still trapped against my body by his right hand he quickly uses his left to pull my hand away from it, (fig 15). Keeping hold of my hand, he circles his right arm up under mine, (figs 16 & 17) so as to apply an arm bar, (fig 18) and finishes with a shin kick to my face, (fig 19).

Key features:

Using an opponent's body to trap his own knife is a neat trick. This type of arm bar can be employed in very many different situations. Shin kicks to the face are devastating, especially when an opponent is bent down low - I will cover these in detail in a future instalment of 'Shaolin Combat'.

Give these techniques a try: they could save your life some time! No doubt you will adapt them somewhat to your own style, the key is to make them work for you. Bob and I used real knives since we feel that this is the only way to prepare mentally for the worst. I would advise, however, that if you are not fully confident and experienced with handling sharp knives you train with imitations, which are much safer. Either way, train diligently!

Thanks to Bob Melia, chief instructor of sun shi taiji association and representative of Bakbakan UK under Pangulong Guro Peter Lewis.



For more information and to watch video footage:

www.combatmag.co.uk

www.namyang.co.uk

<http://uk.youtube.com/user/namyang1954>