

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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DAN BONG SUL: THE SHORT STICK WEAPON OF HAPKIDO

WHAT IS DAN BONG SUL?

The Dan Bong, also known as a short stick, is one of the preferred weapons of Hapkido martial artists. Short stick techniques have been used in a wide variety of martial arts. The Dan Bong is prominent in Hapkido and this weapon is unique to the art. The Dan Bong is known to be an efficient weapon that can inflict serious damage on an opponent. The weapon can be used to strike vital areas on the body and can also be used as a means to take down an aggressor from any type of attack. Jang Mu Won Hapkido, created by Grandmaster Chong Sung Kim, uses Dan Bong Sul in its curriculum to enhance self-defense techniques. The word Dan means short, Bong means stick and Sul means technique in Korean. Historically, the Dan Bong was used by noble people and musicians. For the noble people, the Dan Bong was the same size as a calligraphy brush container. When the noble people had to travel long distances, they encountered various threats. The need for a self defense technique using the short stick arose from these threats. The Dan Bong weapon measures about thirteen inches in length with a 1 to 1.5 inch diameter. This weapon resembles the baton that runners use in the Olympics and drum sticks that musicians use. The Dan Bong is usually made out of a sturdy material such as wood or bamboo. When properly used and applied in the right situations, the Dan Bong can result in devastating effects such as immobilization of joints, broken bones and damaged ligaments/nerves. What makes the Dan Bong unique is that the practitioner can hide the Dan Bong in the sleeve of a uniform and the weapon is mobile enough to carry around. It does not look like a menacing weapon but in the hands of the Hapkido practitioner, Dan Bong Sul adds another dimension to self-defense techniques.

DAN BONG APPLICATIONS

The Dan Bong becomes an extension of the martial artist's ability to strike. Anyone can pick up a short stick and use it as a weapon against an aggressor. However, if the practitioner knows where to strike, the weapon becomes a more effective tool. The Dan Bong can be used in different applications such as blocking, first moving attack striking, defense against punching and defense against kicking. It can also be used to defend against other weapons such as the sword, middle stick (Joong Bong), knife and bo staff (Jang Joong Bong).

GRIP & STRIKING

In order to make the Dan Bong effective, it is important to know how to hold the weapon. When using the weapon, the practitioner should control the movement of the weapon with the bottom three fingers of the hand (the pinky, ring and middle finger). The Dan Bong weapon should be able to flow through the hand while the three fingers (mentioned above) tighten when the defender hits the attacker at the point of impact. The Dan Bong should have one inch at the bottom of the weapon with the hand resting comfortably. This is useful if the defender wants to hit the target with the back end of the Dan Bong. By using this grip, the practitioner can scrape the opponent's vital areas to inflict pain. It is also important to tighten the stomach and Ki up when delivering the strike. This allows for the energy to project from the practitioner's Ki and results in a stronger technique. Various striking methods can be used with the Dan Bong, such as straight thrust strikes, which use the tip of the Dan Bong to hit vital areas such as the cheekbone, eyes, shoulder, wrist, and knee. Other striking techniques involve gouging the eyes, throat, chest, and groin area. Striking using the Dan Bong is meant to hit an opponent fast and hard. The purpose in using the Dan Bong for the first strike is normally to



The attacker, Mr. Allen C. Lieu prepares to attack the defender, Master Han W. Kim.



Utilizing a block, Master Kim brings the Dan Bong weapon around the punch while blocking with the other hand.



Master Kim applies pressure to the attacker's neck with the Dan Bong weapon.



By maintaining pressure on the neck, Master Kim is able to neutralize the opponent's strike.

daze the opponent, which is usually followed by a successive strike to finish an opponent. It is important to note the distance of the attacker and the defender. If the defender is too far from the attacker, the range of the Dan Bong diminishes. If the attacker is too close, the defender must adjust his/her technique to compensate for the distance change. Hitting a pressure point diverts the attacker's attention from attacking to the pain being caused. This opens up the opportunity to convert the strike into a takedown technique.

FIRST MOVING ATTACKS

Hapkido is known as a self-defense art but sometimes the situation calls for the defender to attack the opponent first. If the defender is facing multiple attackers, first moving attacks are more effective than waiting for the attackers to commence their attack. A first moving attack is employed to effectively control the opponent from attacking. The Dan Bong is used to either strike a vital pressure point or to distract the opponent. Before the attacker can strike the defender, the defender can strike with one hand, while grabbing the other hand. If the defender grabs the wrist, this can evolve into a wrist lock takedown. If the defender grabs the collar or lapel, the Dan Bong can be used to target an artery or pressure point to effectively control the attacker.

DEFENSE AGAINST FIST ATTACKS

The Dan Bong is effective against the punch. The first strike is usually executed to halt the energy of the punch. By keeping the opponent off balance, the defender can divert the attacker's energy for the takedown. The defender can use the attacker's punch against him. By blocking using a circular motion, the Dan Bong can flow through the defender's



Master Han W. Kim prepares to defend against the attacker, Allen C. Lieu.



Master Kim uses a strike to hit the opponent's wrist.



The Dan Bong weapon is then flipped on top of the opponent's wrist to create a wrist lock.

hand to deliver a quick strike to stun the opponent. The couple of seconds from being dazed opens up the opportunity to control the opponent and allows the defender to move in for a finishing technique. The Dan Bong is effective to trap the opponent's wrist for a take-down technique. The defender can apply pressure on the wrist using part of the Dan Bong to maintain control. Placing the Dan Bong on the wrist and applying the right amount pressure on the takedown can result in torn ligaments and broken bones. The defender can use the Dan Bong to hit a vital point on the opponent's body such as the neck area to sustain the pain and then go in for the finishing technique. By applying pressure to the opponent's neck using the length of the Dan Bong, the attacker is now immobilized and cannot continue the assault. If the defender is not comfortable using the whole weapon to control the opponent, the defender can use any part of the Dan Bong to apply pressure to maintain control. The pain inflicted from the Dan Bong weapon will completely immobilize the opponent.

DAN BONG SUL

A weapon is only as good as the practitioner who wields that weapon. The Dan Bong short stick weapon can be used in multiple situations. The practitioner must know how to adapt their techniques based on the situation. Dan Bong Sul involves both striking and takedown techniques that are effective against attackers and weapons. Knowing where to strike can prove to be just as devastating as a takedown or control technique.



In a downward motion, Master Kim applies pressure to the wrist to take down the opponent.



Master Kim finishes the attacker by controlling the wrist and applying a strike to the attacker's earlobe.