



Secrets of the CANE

Principles and Techniques of Hapkido's Most Hallowed Weapon

by Steve Petermann
Photography by Rick Husted

Martial artists either love the cane or hate it—depending on whether they're on the giving end or the receiving end. No student likes to role-play the attacker during a workout that focuses on the cane because everything hurts. A lot. That effectiveness stems from the nature of

the cane, which has been called the Swiss army knife of martial arts weapons. Its rigidity can be used to increase the leverage of locks, twists, trips and submissions. Its hardness can be used to amplify the force—and the pain—of a strike or poke. Its length can provide a significant increase in reach. Put all those attributes together, and you have a weapon that can hit as hard as any punch, jab as deep as the toughest finger, hold as securely as the strongest hand and leverage a limb as efficiently as any lock—all without risk

example, if you're using one to compensate for a weak or injured leg and you lift it to strike an assailant, you could be the one who winds up on the ground.

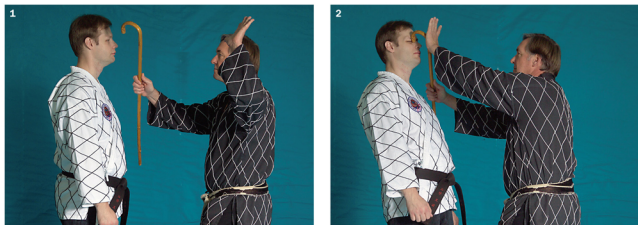
Of course, the specific limits will vary from person to person. Fortunately, the art of the cane includes so many possibilities that it can accommodate almost any level of dependence. Note, however, that those adaptations must be taught by a martial artist who's made a detailed study of the weapon.

The second consideration is an ex-

The best way to avoid that shortcoming is to approach your study of the cane through the art of *hapkido*. Developed by Choi Yong-sul, the traditional Korean style, whose name translates as "way of coordinated power," has a repertoire that encompasses punching, kicking, twisting, locking, throwing, pressure-point methods and plenty of techniques for using and defending against weapons.

Three Principles

Jang mu won hapkido, the art founded



ASSISTED STRIKE: Steve Petermann readies his left hand and uses his right to raise his cane so the handle is near his opponent's face (1). Once he picks a pressure-point target, Petermann palm-strikes the weapon to drive the end of the handle into the corner of the man's eye (2).

of injury to any of your body parts.

Reality Check

The cane may sound like the ultimate weapon, but its use demands two considerations. First, if you really need a cane to walk, you should know that your requirements for support dictate the limits of the weapon's usefulness for self-defense. For

trapolation of that point: The cane has so many features that true proficiency demands serious training. Imagine trying to understand a Swiss army knife without having been shown the way to use a screwdriver, toothpick, awl or corkscrew. Much of its utility would go untested and ultimately be wasted—as would the utility of the cane without proper study.

by *Black Belt* Hall of Fame member Chong S. Kim, has always had a special place in its curriculum for the cane. Many of its self-defense techniques can benefit from the addition of a cane, and the weapon's aforementioned attributes have inspired the creation of numerous specialized fighting methods.

Hapkido techniques are guided by

POKE ATTACK: Steve Petermann (right) and Chris Noelck face each other (1). The hapkido master seizes the opponent's left wrist and applies a lock, then raises the arm (2). Targeting the man's exposed armpit, Petermann pushes the tip of the cane into it and twists (3).





HOOK AND ABRASE: The opponent (left) moves into Steve Petermann's defensive range (1). Maintaining eye contact, Petermann squats to shift his hold from the handle of the cane to the shaft (2). He then hooks the man's right leg and moves to his right so he can position the shaft of the weapon against the opponent's shins (3). A palm strike to the chest and a push on the cane send him to the ground (4).

three concepts: the water principle, the circle principle and the power principle. They apply as much to the cane as they do to the art's empty-hand techniques.

The water principle encourages you to be fluid, enveloping and persistent. The circle principle reminds you that deflection may be a better option than direct opposition. And the power principle teaches

you the relationship between your power, your opponent's power and the power of objects, both moving and stationary. A subset of the power principle is the concept of *yin* and *yang*, which is often expressed as push/pull. Further study of these principles will only enhance your understanding of the cane's many abilities, nine of which are outlined below.

Abrading and Gouging

Both fighting methods depend on friction to do the dirty work. Abrades are performed with the shaft of the cane and cause friction burns and sometimes rips in the skin. Gouges are effected with the tip of the weapon, which means that sometimes the pain is on a sensitive

patch of skin and sometimes it's behind a muscle or tendon.

Abrades work well on flat, bony surfaces such as the bridge of the nose and the shins. Gouges are better suited for fleshy areas like the groin, ribs, back of the knees and pectoral muscles.

Blocking

When you're using a length of wood, it doesn't matter whether your block is hard or soft because either will stop an attack. Unlike a block with your arm, a block with the cane's shaft will shield large areas of your body from attack. The weapon's versatility means you can hold it in two hands or position it parallel to your forearm for close-range protection. Either way, your foe will receive a painful rebuff to each one of his attacks, and in most situations, the more painful your blocks are, the fewer attacks he'll throw.

Choking

With the shaft or the crook, you can add tremendous power to a choking technique. The advantage stems from two factors: The length of the cane multiplies the leverage you generate, and the smaller diameter of the shaft means it can apply more pressure than your forearm.

Caution: Extreme care must be taken when practicing chokes with a cane. Because you have no feedback regarding the pressure you're exerting, you can't accurately gauge the intensity of your technique. Severe pain and internal damage can result without your knowing it.

Hooking

Using the crook of the cane to control or injure a part of your adversary's body is called hooking. The action may be a trap, such as when you use the curve of the crook to hold a limb or the neck, or it may be a strike, in which the point of the crook is welded like a gaff on a fishing boat.

Applying the yin-yang concept can enhance your hooks. For example, a violent hooking motion applied to your enemy's neck can be paired with a sliding motion of your forearm along the shaft to produce an effective choke. You can hook your opponent's ankle and simul-



DEFENSE AGAINST A PUNCH: Han Kim (right) prepares to punch Chong S. Kim (1). The senior Kim blocks the punch with his left arm and pushes the cane under the attacker's left arm (2). Kim thrusts his right arm forward until his hand is past the opponent's armpit, then circles the weapon over the shoulder and under his chin (3). Kim redirects his adversary's power in the opposite direction to destroy his balance (4). The resulting throw sends the opponent to the mat (5), after which he's finished with a head strike (6).

taneously use your foot to push against his knee for a foolproof trip. Or you can gaff his kidney while you shove your hand into his chest, greatly amplifying the pain.

Poking

Pokes effected with the cane's walking tip are also effective. Even if it's protected by a rubber cap, you can thrust it into your attacker's eye, the base of his throat, his solar plexus, his armpit or any other pressure point—and most likely discourage him from bothering you further. Twisting the weapon will enhance the pain associated with most pokes because it essentially drills into his flesh.

Jang mu won hapkido also teaches students how to "poke" with the handle of the cane: You place the tip of the handle near a target and slap the crook with your free hand to deliver a serious blow. Targets include the eyes, ears, teeth and collarbones.

Striking

When you're holding a cane, the va-



DEFENSE AGAINST A KICK: Chong S. Kim (left) and Joshua Wheeler square off (1). As Wheeler executes a high roundhouse kick, Kim steps to his right and uses the cane to block the technique (2). The hapkido grandmaster immediately drops to one knee and applies pressure to the man's supporting leg (3), causing him to fall (4). He follows up with a poke to the groin (5).



riety of strikes available to you is limited only by your imagination. In hapkido, the cane and other sticklike weapons are used to hit bony regions such as the shoulders, elbows and wrists. If you use the lower third of the shaft, you can administer the strike as a flick that relies on the snapping motion of your wrist, as a one-handed swing that employs your arm and wrist, or as a full-blown circular move in which you whip it around your neck, leg or torso

for maximum speed and power.

Twisting and Throwing

Leverage is one of the pivotal points of twisting and throwing. With the right knowledge, the cane's length and strength can enable you to increase your leverage substantially.

Taking your opponent's balance is

the first step in executing a twist or throw. You can use the cane to keep him from recovering by restricting his movement, perhaps by hooking a knee or foot. An added advantage is that you'll be able to push him off-balance while standing farther away.

When your adversary retreats from the pain you're inflicting, he'll prob-

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