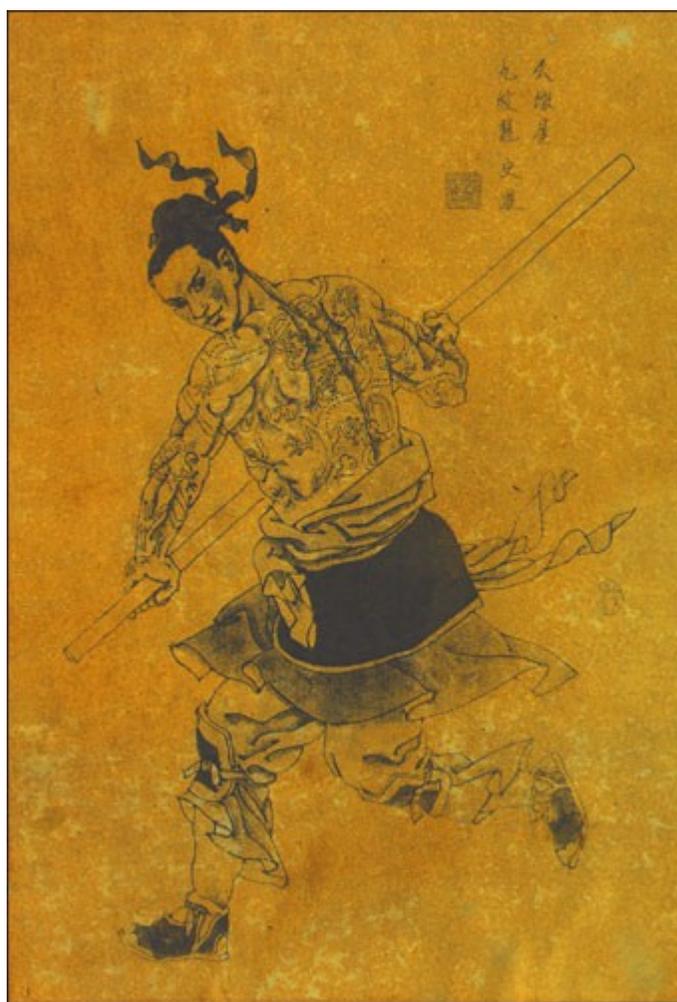


Flyinghammerfist Presents

Overview Of Martial Arts



Feel The Wrath Of My Bo

James W. Brown

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Chapter One

A Close Look At Belts

With most types of martial arts, the color of the belt that you have will signify your rank within your style of martial arts. The belts that are used with martial arts signify your rank within that style, although they have no universal means or ranking within the martial arts world. More or less, they tell others how much you know about your specific martial art. Some dojo's use stripes on a belt to signify the progression of a student. Typically a stripe is applied as each form is learned. A student may get a black stripe for learning a form, another stripe for sparring and a final stripe to show they are ready to be tested for the next belt. Each dojo is different.

The use of belt colors in martial arts is an old practice, dating back hundreds of years. Belts and their use in martial arts all started by a man known as Jigoro Kano, who created the style known as Kodokan Judo. Kano started out by using only white and black belts to signify rank within his style of martial arts. His reason for using belts, was to specify which students could compete in different activities. For example, those with white belts couldn't compete in the same activities as those with black belts.

Shortly after Kano introduced his idea of using belts, other belt colors were introduced to the world of martial arts. Over the years, it became a great way of telling what experience a student had in his style - just by the look of his belt. Other styles began to use this system as well over the years, including Karate, Taekwondo, and several others.

The only problem with using belts to signify ranking, is the fact that one school may have different requirements from another school. Even though they both may teach the same style of martial arts, their ranking system and requirements to get a certain ranking may be totally different. This can cause confusion in ranks, especially if a black belt from one school isn't as versed in the style as a black belt from another school. Even though most schools stick to the same criteria, there are schools that choose to incorporate their own unique style as well.

Although most martial arts styles use belts to signify rank, there are some martial arts out there such as Shootfighting that don't use belts at all. The styles that choose not to use belts don't go by rankings either, as they are more or less for self defense purposes. Pitfighting is another style that doesn't use belts either.

These styles are great to learn for protecting yourself - although they differ from the traditional sense of martial arts.

All things aside, belts are an innovation to martial arts. They give students something to aim for, and a reason to keep practicing. Most students that study martial arts aim for getting the black belt, which is the most prestige belt in martial arts. A black belt takes years of practice to obtain, as the student will move through many lower ranked belts before getting the opportunity to try and earn the black belt.

Chapter Two

A Look At Kung Fu

The martial art of Kung Fu is an exchange of culture, a type of exercise, and also a way of defending yourself. The art is very popular throughout the world, also being known as Gung Fu, Wu Shu, and even Kuo Shu. It shares some common traits with Karate, such as using both hand and foot techniques. Kung Fu is one of the most popular forms of martial arts - and also one of the oldest.

Within Kung Fu, there are several styles and variances, although the most popular are those that have their roots in the well known Shaolin Temple. What most people aren't aware of however, is the fact that Kung Fu was practiced in China years before the first Shaolin temple was even thought of.

A majority of martial arts enthusiasts think of self defense as being the ultimate goal of any martial art, including Kung Fu. While self defense is involved with Kung Fu, the martial is so much more than just fighting and defense - it is a true art, one that develops the mind, body, and the soul.

Kung Fu doesn't teach students to overcome others, as it teaches students to look within themselves and learn to have complete and total control over their emotions. Kung Fu is an art of harmony, that teaches to students to remain at peace and avoid confrontations. If a situation threatens bodily harm to the student, then he must rise to the occasion - becoming the warrior and defending himself.

Just like other types of martial arts, Kung Fun teaches the balance that is crucial for executing techniques and the proper movement. The basic concept behind the balance is that same balance that the Chinese believe keeps the balance between heaven and earth. This concept of balance can be achieved by

students if they completely focus their thoughts and empty their minds free from any type of distractions.

Kung Fu is a martial art that can be learned by anyone. It does take a strong desire, just like any other martial art. It has a rich heritage, and a proud legacy. Kung Fu is indeed a deadly martial art, if used in the wrong ways. There are variations of Kung Fu as well, which include the infamous five animals - Tiger, Dragon, Eagle Claw, Crane, and the Snake.

Adapted by the animals in which they are named after, the five animals style is some of the most impressive in martial arts. Tiger Claw is by far the deadliest of the five animals, teaching students to strike just like the dreaded tiger. This style teaches the student power in his hands, so that when he strikes, he tears the flesh. Tiger Claw is very deadly, although it is very hard to find instructors that teach this style now days.

Unlike other martial arts, there really are no competitions for Kung Fu. Stylists can compete in other competitions, although there really aren't any that are for only Kung Fu. It is an ancient martial art, that is to be used only in instances where there is no other option than to fight back. When provoked, the stylist should try everything he or she can to avoid confrontations.

Kung Fu aims to teach the lessons of respect, fairness to others, harmony of the spirit, and total self control no matter what. These characteristics, when paired together, allow students to achieve success in a hard to deal with society. Kung Fu is all about developing the student's overall well being - and following the straight path to mental and physical toughness.

Now that we have talked about Kung Fu, let's mention that the ideas probably came from India, brought to China by a traveling monk. India has a long history of martial arts and the system of pressure strikes. Weapons found in India, include a trident spear which had small metal balls at the end. The weapon was used to strike an opponent from a distance and render a portion of his body useless. The same idea can be applied by hand. A spear thrust to the nerve which is centered between your arm and chest, starting just at the underarm...if hit correctly will cause the arm to become useless for about two minutes. The arm ceases to function and drops to the side, which in olden days of battle would have been handy for getting a foe to drop his sword, so that you could move in for the kill.

Chapter Three

A Look At Ninjutsu

The martial art known as Ninjutsu is very secret, with a very clouded history. The history isn't documented all that well, as most of what is known about the martial art is that which has been passed down from generation to generation. There are a lot of historical records that state families from the Koga region as being the creators to this very secret style.

Over 70 different Ninjutsu Ryu have been identified and discovered over the years, however most of them have died out. A majority of them were created around a set of specific techniques and skills, although when those skills of a specific Ryu were no longer needed or wanted, the Ryu seems to die out and fade away from existence.

The art of Ninjutsu is best associated with the ninja's from ancient Japan. The ninja's are well known all around the world, for their stealth and very secreted life. The ninja is known to have went through very tough and demanding training, which hardly anyone really knows about. Those that were actual ninja's are either dead, or not allowed to let anyone know their true identity.

During the 1980's, when the ninja trend really hit the United States, the instructors of Ninjutsu popped out all over the place, making black a very happening color. Years later, the trend seemed to die out, and there aren't that many people trying to learn the art.

In regards to the art, the term of Ninjutsu doesn't actually refer to any certain style, but rather a group of the martial arts, with each one having it's own view that's expressed with each of the different Ryu. The Ryu vary, meaning that one may focus on one certain physical dynamic, while the next may be focused on redirection.

What many people aren't aware of, is the fact that Ninjutsu involves both unarmed and armed fighting skills, along with philosophy, strategy, and history. There are a few dojo's that offer the art, many of them being quite comprehensive with the way they teach.

During combat, Ninjutsu focuses on distance, posture, and flow. Stylists are taught to react to every movement, and respond in ways that will place them in the advantage position. From being in a position of advantage, the stylist can effectively change the outcome of the encounter - quickly going from negative to positive.

Those that practice the martial art of Ninjutsu are instructed and trained to use their entire body for everything they do, which provides the most leverage and power. Ninjutsu is well known in Japan, and for good reason. It is a very secretive martial art, yet very powerful. The techniques can be used or self

defense, along with stealth. It can be a great martial art to learn - if you can find a dojo that teaches it.

Chapter Four

A Look At Wing Chun

Up until the turn of the twentieth century, the martial art known as Wing Chun was very obscure not known much about. Back then, Wing Chun was just getting started, not practiced by a lot of martial artists. Over the years, it became a very dominant force in China, becoming one of the most prominent martial arts in existence. Even today, hundreds of martial artists study Wing Chun and everything it provides them with.

The first thing that students are taught when studying Wing Chun is that they should always use force to counter force. By using force against force, weaker and smaller fighters can easily and quickly take out bigger and stronger opponents. Whenever they get in a confrontation, Wing Chun stylists will use their brains - and use an opponents strength and force against him.

Throughout training, a lot of emphasis is put into that very concept. Students will learn all about force and strength, and how they can properly counter it. What many don't realize, is the fact that countering force requires very little strength from the stylist. Even the weakest Wing Chun stylist can take down an opponent 3 - 4 times his size if he uses the proper technique and his opponents force against him.

Wing Chun teaches other techniques as well, such as punching, kicking, and a few grappling holds. It doesn't teach much grappling though, as most of the techniques use force against force through throwing and striking. The strikes that are taught with this martial art are very fast, and aimed at vital areas on the body of the opponent.

A majority of the most vital areas on the human body are found along the center line, the very area that Wing Chun teaches stylists to protect as well as attack with their techniques. This line is the most vital in battle, which is why martial artists should always aim their attacks for any area that exists along this line. Most of the vital points found in the center line can be the end of the encounter if the stylist is able to land one powerful blow.

As Wing Chun emphasizes time and time again, the shortest straw between the stylist and the opponent is the center line, which is where a majority of movement

takes place. Due to the linear fashion of Wing Chun, students will spend a lot of their training learning how to direct attacks as well as opposing force towards the center line.

Wing Chun is an exceptional martial art, teaching students how to use force against force in any type of encounter. There aren't that many grappling holds or weapons used with Wing Chun, although the techniques and moves that are taught are tried, proven, and above all - very effective for self defense.

Chapter Five

An In Depth Look At Muay Thai

Also known around the world as Thai boxing, Muay Thai is an ancient art of self defense that was created and tested in battle by the fearless warriors of ancient Thailand. Today, Muay Thai is used all around the world. The United States Navy SEALs, Thai military, and even the CIA takes full advantage of the devastating and bone crushing techniques this martial art offers. Although my martial arts training included a large dose of muay thai, I never used it in the security or bouncer field. Legally, I would have been found guilty, had I ever struck anyone. I stuck completely to grappling and the odd pressure point, in order to protect myself, others or to affect an arrest.

Unlike other martial arts, students of Thai don't earn belts for their skills and their progression. Instead, their skills are tested in the ring. Since Thai fighting first began, the only things that the fighters themselves are interested in are the championship belts which showcase their dominance in Muay Thai fighting.

The skills that are taught with Muay Thai are far more dominant to other striking based martial arts. Muay Thai uses very little grappling, but focuses more on crushing kicks, punches, and bone shattering elbows. Students of Thai fighting can often take an opponent down with just one shot, often times breaking bones and sometimes even killing them with just one lethal kick or elbow.

The reason why Muay Thai didn't utilize ground grappling or submission holds is because it was developed in ancient battlegrounds where there were always multiple attackers. These attackers were knowledgeable in sword fighting skills, which made the need for a dependable martial art more or less a necessity.

Muay Thai used swords, spears, sticks, and hard strikes. In this type of environment, you didn't want the fight to go to the ground. The strikes and weapon movements needed be fast, hard, and very precise. With these types of

conditions and the type of environment, Muay Thai needed be a very fast responsive martial art with an excellent weapons system.

Even though grappling and submissions were planned for Muay Thai, the martial art became more of a ring sport before grappling could be implemented. With Thai originally being a martial art for striking purposes, a lot of martial artists have started using the techniques that have been proven time and time again with time boxing.

Although there are other martial arts that put a lot of emphasis on striking, Muay Thai is quite different. The first area in which Muay Thai differs is the effective use of both elbows and knees. The elbows and knees that are used with most Thai techniques are feared all around the world by boxers and other stylists.

Kicking and kneeing is the main objects in Muay Thai. In order to become efficient with kicking, the shins need to be conditioned - which can be quite painful. Once the Thai stylist has conditioned the nerves in his shins for impact, the shins can be used just like a club or a baseball bat. This is something you should really see for yourself in action - as the sound of the impact alone can send chills down your back.

Through years of training and conditioning, Muay Thai fighters can become lethal and deadly weapons. A properly trained fighter can make deadly impact, meaning that his knees, shins, and elbows are quite possibly deadlier than a gun or other type of weapon. For this very reason - Muay Thai is one of the deadliest and most feared martial arts in the world.

All in all, Muay Thai is a great martial art for defense and competition. Thai is one of the best martial arts in the world, proving it time and time again - in both ancient times and anytime it is used today. One only has to look at mixed martial arts to see how muay thai, combined with other skills, can lead to one deadly fighter. In my old dojo, I was taught a system that had 8 different martial arts rolled into one. Muay Thai was a big part of it as was hapkido.

Chapter Six

An Introduction To Aikido

There's no mistaken the fact that Aikido is one of the best and most popular martial art in the United States today. The art of Aikido is best associated with actor Steven Seagal, who made it even more popular with his movies. Now, I never got the chance to speak to Mr. Seagal but I was about one foot away from

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