



Shinai Defences:

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Introduction

A startling statistic of today's society is that 70% of all attempted murder cases in 2010 used a weapon of some description and increased to 77% in 2012¹. This is alarming and highlights a trend which martial artists need to train for and be aware of. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate appropriate techniques to take an attacker wielding a shinai to the ground under control and disarm. Firstly, it is important to be aware of how a student progresses to weapon defences along with the etiquette and safety that need to be kept in mind. Following on from that, four different neutralisation techniques will be shown from each attack from a downward strike, a roundhouse strike, a reverse strike and a lunge.

A Student's Progression

As part of the Kyushin Ryu School of Jujitsu curriculum, students progressing through the ranks are required to demonstrate defences against non-lethal weapons such as clubs, with progression to (simulated) lethal weapons inclusive of knives and guns. In addition to this, a requirement for students attaining Ni Dan is to demonstrate appropriate use of techniques in the defence and neutralisation of an attacker wielding a Shinai (竹刀). A Shinai is a bamboo weapon used in Japanese martial arts representing a sword². Although swords are not as common in modern day society, learning to disarm a Shinai maintains the Japanese tradition along with solidifying the principal that a weapon is an extension of the attacker with the focus being on the person rather than the weapon³.



Safety/Etiquette

With any weapons training, particularly Shinai defences, it is important to train safely with both Tori and Uke abiding by the following:

- Uke should maintain a solid grip on the Shinai at all times
- Always respect your training partner
- Train with the end result in mind
- Always disarm the attacker and call out in a loud voice to drop the weapon.

Practical Application

Most weapon attacks are usually made from one of four directions categorised by a downward strike, a roundhouse strike, a reverse/backslash strike and a lunge. Students disarming a Shinai need to be aware to move fast as the Shinai has an extended striking range compared to a knife or a club. It is also important that any attacker wielding a weapon is disarmed and the weapon removed.

¹ (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013)

² (Sasamori & Warner, 1989)

³ (Dedham Shotokan Karate, 2012)

ATTACK by Downward strike

Ippon Seoinage



As Uke steps forward to strike Tori from a downward blow, Tori quickly moves in securing the arms and then executes a well timed shoulder throw. To disarm, a simple figure four bent arm lock is sufficient to remove the shinai.

Figure 4 Takedown



Similar to the attack above, Tori advances on the left foot and blocks the downward strike with the left hand while the right hand comes under and braces the left hand. The third step is for Tori to simply squat (at right angles to Uke's body). Once Uke is on the ground, Tori maintains both hands in the original position placing the right knee upon the fourth rib about a hand span under Uke's armpit then rotates the right elbow to twist Uke's arm.

Rear Takedown



Once Uke brings the shinai up for a downward strike, Tori advances with the right arm moving between Uke's left shoulder and neck, with the left hand ensuring Uke's right arm is across his neck. Tori then clasps both hands together behind Uke's neck in a champion grip with the right hand on top of left hand exposing the radius bone. Tori then steps around and drops on the left knee with Uke falling over the advanced right leg. Once Uke is on the ground, Tori can then disarm by applying kata gatame.

O Soto Gari



Tori advances with the left arm to block Uke's downward attack. From here, the right hand is placed on the upper back pushing Uke slightly off balance towards the rear and then reap the left leg using O Soto Gari. Once Uke is on the ground, disarm by rolling Uke onto his side so that both arms are straight and apply downward pressure to the right arm.

ATTACK by Right Roundhouse Strike

Tai Otoshi



Once Uke starts to attack by swinging the Shinai in a roundhouse motion, Tori positions oneself next to Uke's left foot (farthest away from Shinai), momentarily blocking and grabbing with the left hand and then continuing Uke's circular momentum by executing Tai Otoshi where the right hand is placed on Uke's left shoulder (or the back of the head) to guide Uke around. To disarm from this position, maintain your left hand on Uke's left arm, and disarm by cramping the arm with a figure four bent arm lock.

Koshi Guruma



Another effective defence from a round house attack that keeps Uke's momentum going in a circular motion is Koshi Guruma. Once Uke starts to swing the Shinai, move into position for a right handed hip throw, block and grasp the arms with the left hand while the right arm encircles around the back of Uke's neck. Tori then takes advantage of the existing momentum from the roundhouse attack and throws Uke over the right hip with Koshi Guruma. To disarm, maintain the grip on the arm, step over with the right foot (across the body) and then bring the left foot over and place under the outstretched arm and sit on the shoulder for a straight arm lock.

Ura Goshi



The previous two defences used the existing momentum of the attack to help throw Uke. However, Ura Goshi is slightly different because Uke is thrown towards the rear. When Uke attacks, Tori immediately advances and blocks the attack, then throws Uke over the right hip towards the rear with Ura Goshi. To disarm from here, run the left hand across the back of the tricep to ensure the right palm is facing up and then apply a straight arm lock.

Hadaka Jime



Once Uke starts to attack, Tori moves swiftly away from the sword past the left side of Uke with the left hand outstretched, and then braces with the right hand around the neck with a champion grip (left hand on top this time as it is a left hand technique). Once in position, simply apply the strangle and demand Uke drop the weapon. If non-compliant, apply the strangle until unconscious and release.

ATTACK by Reverse/backslash strike

O Soto Gari



Once Uke starts to attack with a back swing, Tori advances and blocks the upper arm, then transitions into O Soto Gari with Tori's right hand being placed under the chin or on the shoulder pushing them off balance towards the right rear corner and executing the throw by reaping the right leg. To disarm, apply a figure four arm lock to cramp the elbow.

Roundhouse Takedown



As soon as Uke initiates the attack, Tori moves to Uke's right side and momentarily blocks the advancing arm and then continues directing Uke's movement in the original striking direction (now that Tori is beside Uke) and then proceeds to take down Uke in a circular motion. To disarm, Tori places the left knee on the right arm of the face down Uke and lifts the arm for the shinai's release.

Waki Gatame



Upon commencement of the attack, Tori moves to Uke's right side again and blocks the advancing arm with both hands, maintain control with the right hand, transition the left hand over Uke's arm and rotate the arm until the elbow is pointing up. From here, maintain Uke's straight arm and throw the left leg out in front, then sit down with Waki Gatame. The disarm from here is simple as you are already in position for a straight arm lock.

Tricep Takedown



Once Uke initiates the attack, Tori moves to Uke's right side again and blocks the advancing arm with both hands and uses the knife edge of the left hand to roll Uke's tricep and then take Uke to the ground by stepping forward on the right leg. To disarm, maintain Tori's left hand on the tricep and lever Uke's arm with Tori's right hand.

ATTACK by Lunge

Waki Gatame



When Uke lunges with the Shinai attack, it is important that Tori steps out of the way of the attack towards Uke's right side (or outside leg). Once in position, Tori grasps both arms and takes Uke down with Waki Gatame. As per the previous Waki Gatame, simply apply the straight arm lock which you are already in position for.

De Ashi Barai



Similar to the previous defence, it is important that Tori steps out of the way of the attack towards Uke's right side (or outside leg). Once Uke's weight is on the front foot, sweep the leg from under Uke and tilt the arms holding the weapon slightly in the air (to further off balance Uke). To disarm, cramp the arm by applying a figure four arm lock.

Harai Goshi



From this attack, Tori is to step out of the line of attack by ending up on the left side of Uke. Grasp Uke's arms with your left hand and place the right hand in the middle of the back. Bend the knees and sweep the right foot across and throw with Harai Goshi. To disarm, step over Uke diagonally with your right foot, place the left knee just under the shoulder blade and bend the right arm back for a release of the shinai.

Headlock Takedown



Once Uke attacks, Tori steps out of the line of attack on the outside foot of Uke. Tori then grasps the arms with the right hand and strikes Uke to the face with the available left hand and rotates the left arm around in a circular motion with the back of the left hand at the base of Uke's neck. Once in position and Uke's arm is outstretched, simply drop on the left knee and break the arm to disarm.

Disarming

An important part of neutralising an attacker is to disarm and remove the weapon from the attacker's possession to prevent any further attacks from occurring. It is important to transition from the throw or take down to the disarming phase in as little movements as possible. Therefore, practising different disarming techniques would be beneficial for the neutralisation of whatever attack is forthcoming.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to clearly demonstrate appropriate techniques to defend against an attacker wielding a shinai. Initially, it was important to raise awareness of how a student progresses to weapons defences along with the etiquette and safety to be kept in mind at all times. Following on from that, a total of sixteen different techniques were demonstrated from a downward strike, a roundhouse strike, a reverse strike and a lunge along with various disarming techniques. A final note in learning and practising the above techniques - it's important to be aware of and be able to execute a wide variety of techniques when neutralising a shinai. However, in reality, only one or two techniques are needed to be known well for each attack to be defended effectively in a real life confrontation.

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