

Raising Cane

The Unexpected Martial Art

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(Excerpt)



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Raising Cane

For my girls
Christine, Teresa, and Gloria

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Part One

Basics

Introduction

When you think of a cane, do you imagine an elderly person walking down the street, using the ‘stick’ as a crutch? Do you picture an injured or handicapped individual slowly making his or her way down a grocery store aisle? Does the mere sight of a cane signal weakness and vulnerability?

When I think of a cane, I see a hard-hitting stick with a crook and horn capable of incapacitating any assailant in a matter of seconds. I see the most incredible self-defense tool ever created.

After years of studying Kali (a Filipino stick-fighting martial art also known as Escrima or Arnis de Mano), I discovered the Goju-Shorei Weapons Branch, founded by Master David McNeill. This martial arts system uses only street-legal weapons, such as the cane, the folding knife, and the fan.

I studied the cane and found it the most modern, versatile, and law-abiding weapon ever created.

The cane can be used as a stick, but it also has a curved crook and a horn that easily can trap an opponent’s neck, arms, ribs, or legs. It can be carried anywhere and it will never attract undue attention. I know this from personal experience—I have even carried my cane through airport security without so much as a raised eyebrow.

After studying this unique weapon, I felt compelled to write a book that chronicles an all-inclusive system dedicated to self-defense with a cane. The result of this effort is what you hold in your hands.

I have incorporated many Filipino stick-fighting techniques into each of the book’s sections, but these in no way detract from the Goju-Shorei system. Like the legendary Bruce Lee, I am a strong supporter of mixing a variety of martial arts styles.

I believe the combination of techniques presented herein serves as a strong foundation for effective self-protection.

In addition to Master McNeill, I am indebted to Master Mark Shuey, the man behind CaneMasters. CaneMasters creates fighting canes—and I mean *fighting canes*.

I own a plain walking cane (known as the Guardian Cane), as well as a custom job designed for effective self-protection. Information about CaneMasters can be found at the end of this introduction.

As with any martial art, make sure you are in good physical condition before practicing any of these techniques. In particular, make sure your joints can tolerate the stresses of handling and manipulating the cane. If you are unsure of your physical condition, you should consult a physician first.

Important!

Understand that this is a self-defense system and should never be used to inflict harm upon others. Just as importantly, recognize your limitations and never stand your ground if there is an avenue of escape. What does this mean? Run, run, and run. Only if you are cornered or have no other recourse, should you fight, fight, fight.

To learn more about CaneMasters, please call 1-800-422-CANE or visit their Web site at www.canemasters.com.

If you require more information about the Goju-Shorei Weapons Branch, please send an e-mail to dave_goju@pyramid.net or visit the master's Web site at www.gojushorei.com.

Cane Nomenclature

Think of a cane as a stick with teeth. The 'stick' component consists of the shaft and tip, whereas the 'teeth' component consists of the crook and horn (Fig. 1). The stick component can be used to thrust (using the tip), strike (using the end of the shaft), and block all types of attack. It is the crook, however, where the cane can generate its most effective (and devastating) maneuvers.

A stylist can use the crook and horn to take down an opponent by an arm or a leg—or even worse, to take down an assailant by the neck. The horn can be buried into a groin, ribs, or other soft body parts. A simple pull on the shaft and the opponent will be in agony, which will in many cases lead to incapacitation. Defensively, the crook and horn can be used to disarm an opponent.

Specially designed canes offer additional self-defense options. For example, some canes have a sharpened horn, which enables a stylist to more easily penetrate an opponent's soft areas. Canes can also have 'bumps' along the crook or shaft; such protrusions can cause damage when a stylist strikes or 'rubs' the cane on a soft spot or along bone.

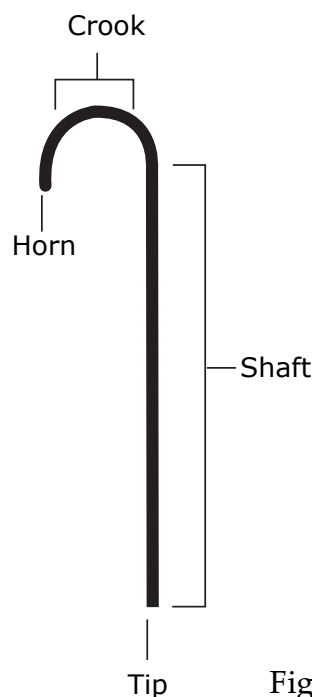


Fig. 1

Strong and Weak Sides

To help you learn the techniques contained in this book, I have divided the body in half (Fig. 2). The half that holds the cane is called the strong side, with the other half known as the weak side. It does not matter if you are left- or right-hand dominant.

To truly master these techniques, you must practice them using either hand effectively. The hand wielding the cane is known as the weapon hand; the empty hand is called the Alive Hand (in some systems it is also considered the supplemental-weapon hand). The Alive Hand can be used to block or check an opponent's attack, or if it also has a supplemental weapon it can be used to mount a secondary, or follow-up, attack.

Alive-Hand Placement

The principal purpose of the Alive Hand is to protect the heart. Thus, the hand rests on the chest, with the elbow tucked into the rib cage (Fig. 3). The idea is to sacrifice your hand before exposing your heart.

Some Filipino stick-fighting systems call the Alive Hand the Sacrifice Hand for this reason. Another possible reason for this placement is for economy of motion. In other words, the hand does not interfere with the dominant hand's movement and the entire arm itself presents a minimal target. Many Filipino fighting systems advocate a 'taking anything presented to you' style, and thus keeping the Alive Hand a minimal target ensures that it is not unduly sacrificed.

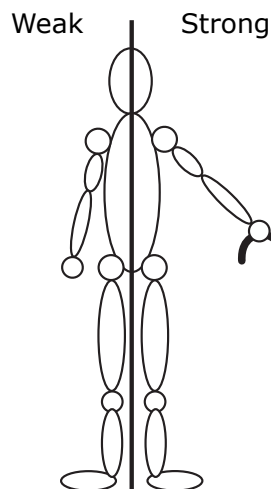


Fig. 2

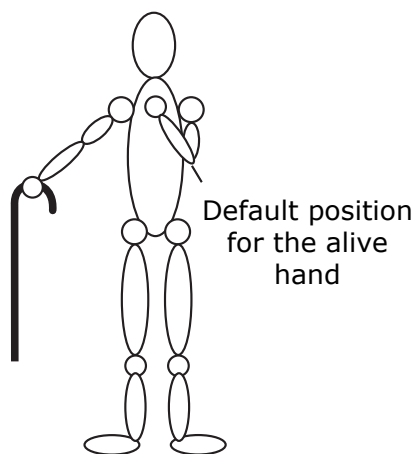


Fig. 3

Perpetual Blows

Once you have learned the techniques outlined in this book, you should practice combining them until you have developed a flow between strikes, blocks, takedowns, disarms, and other techniques.

This self-defense method advocates that you continue to strike until an opponent is down on the ground. Inflict as many blows as possible, using all the strength in your body to execute each strike.

In the heat of combat, you will strike blindly, with the majority of blows missing the target. That is why you should continue to strike—eventually, the cane will connect.

As you mature as a stylist, you most likely will remain calm during a fight, thus enabling you to strike more accurately at an opponent's vital areas. Or better yet, you will "take out" anything your opponent does not defend, such as a finger, a knee, a chin, until he or she is in so much pain that you can move in and inflict damage on even more vulnerable areas.

The key to winning a fight is to move ever-forward, invading the opponent's space, all the while striking as much as possible with as much power as possible.

Stances

Martial arts are filled with proper stances; this system will address the three most basic and effective of them, particularly as they pertain to the cane. Based on fencing and stick-fighting methods, these stances will enable you to move forward when attacking and to move backward when defending.

The sets at the end of Parts Two and Three will incorporate these stances and will demonstrate how to advance and retreat with them. Before you begin to practice these stances, make sure you understand which half of your body you consider the strong side and which you consider the weak side.

Strong Stance

To assume this stance, bring your strong foot forward so that it is approximately 45° from your weak foot (Fig. 4). You can place a stick on the floor diagonally to ensure that both feet line up properly (Fig. 5).

Your weapon hand should hold the cane upward, ready to strike or defend at any moment. The Alive Hand should be in its default position, protecting the heart (or holding a secondary weapon at the ready).

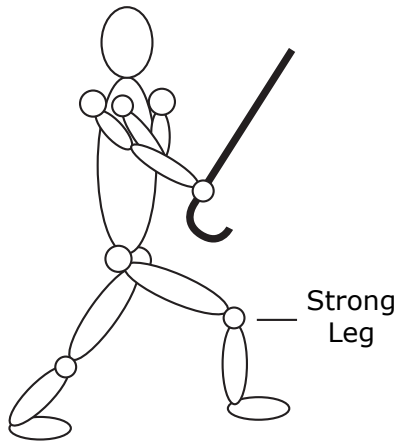


Fig. 4

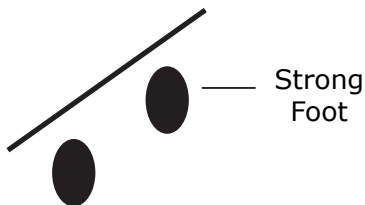


Fig. 5

Weak Stance

To assume this stance, bring your strong foot back so that it is approximately 45° from your weak foot (Fig. 6). Use a stick to make sure you are in proper position (Fig. 7). Weapon and Alive hands remain the same.

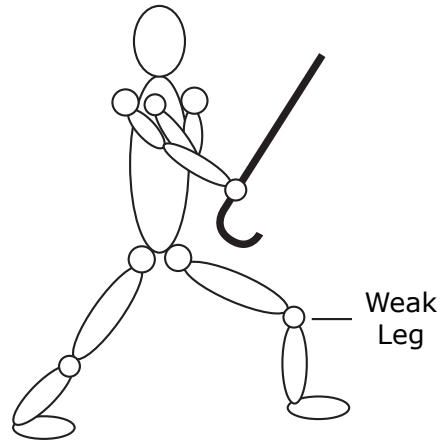


Fig. 6

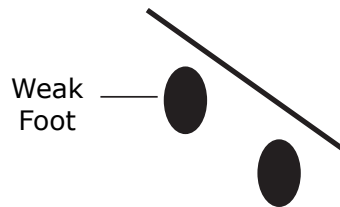


Fig. 7

Neutral Stance

The neutral stance is perhaps the stance you will take when on the street (Fig. 8). This stance serves as an intermediate step between the strong and the weak stances. From this stance you can assume either position at a moment's notice.

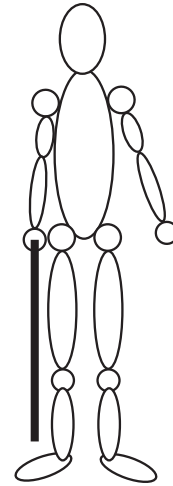


Fig. 8

Footwork

The three basic stances outlined in the previous section lead to a triangular style of movement. Triangle principles are very common in Filipino stick-fighting techniques. This basic system of footwork will enable you to move quickly and dodge all types of attacks. It also will enable you to strike from a number of angles.

Triangle Principle

Note: the following descriptions and figures assume that the strong side of your body is your right hand side. If this is not the case, the positions of '1' and '2' in the figures will be reversed.

To try out the triangle principle, place two sticks in the shape of a 'V' on the floor and stand at the closed end of the 'V' (Fig. 9). Assume a strong stance by moving your strong foot to the end of the stick labeled '2' (Fig. 10).

From this position, you can shift into a neutral stance. To do this, bring the weak foot forward so that it is next to the end of the stick labeled '1' (Fig. 11).

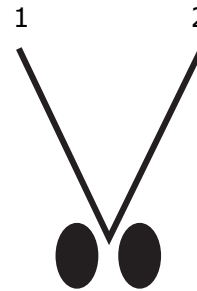


Fig. 9

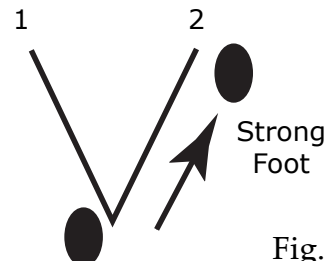


Fig. 10

From this position, you can move into a weak stance. To do this, bring the strong foot back to where both sticks meet (Fig. 12).

Reverse the steps and go from a weak stance all the way to closure, where both feet are at the point at which the sticks intersect. As you become comfortable with this movement, pivot in another direction and make even more triangles.

To pivot, use the foot that has more weight on it. Turn this foot 90° either to the left or to the right. Create a full triangle and pivot again. If you pivot four times clockwise or counterclockwise, you will face all four geographical directions (north, south, east, and west). You also can pivot at another angle, thus creating yet another angle of attack.

Your pivot foot can be used to confront multiple attackers. As you defend against and subsequently dispatch one attacker, you then can pivot and face another.

As you become accustomed to these movements, you can begin to manipulate your entire body. For example, you can crouch, strike low then high, alternate your strong and weak sides, bring the cane around your back, and so on.

Combining such movements with speed will often confuse your opponent because in effect you can create unlimited angles of attack.

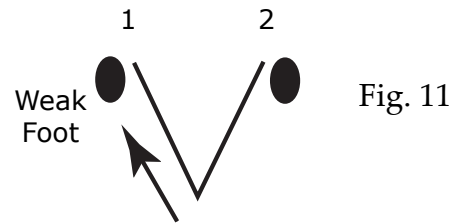


Fig. 11

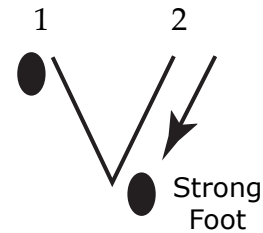


Fig. 12

Part Two

Strikes

Power Strikes

Power consists of force coupled with speed. Regardless of the stick-fighting system, there are in essence nine strikes designed to deliver maximum power. This section presents these strikes.

Some Filipino systems call the two sets the *Cinco Tiros*, which is Spanish for the 'Five Shots' or 'Five Blows.' There are two sets of *Cinco Tiros*, both of which have one strike (the thrust) in common.

How do you know if your strikes are generating power? Each strike must literally 'break wind.' As you execute a strike, listen for a whoosh-like sound. That sound means you are beginning to generate power. Unless otherwise noted, the Alive Hand should be kept in the default position during these strikes.

At the end of each *Cinco Tiros* set, I have provided a full graphical representation of the strike-flow pattern.

Power Strike One: Sweep Down

Assume a strong stance. Bring your weapon arm up, folding the elbow so that your forearm is parallel with the body and the cane is perpendicular to it (Fig. 13).

With as much force and speed as possible, sweep the cane downward, with the shaft coming from your strong side to your weak side (see the arrow on Fig. 13).

The cane's momentum should carry it around your waistline (Fig. 14). Because of the power you are generating, let the cane wrap around your weak hip (Fig. 15). This will enable you to stop to the cane's momentum without sacrificing power.

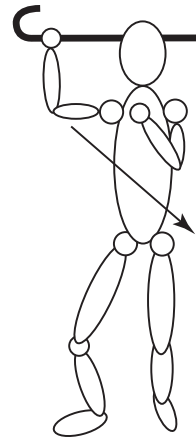


Fig. 13

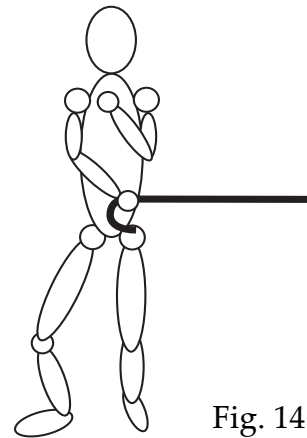


Fig. 14

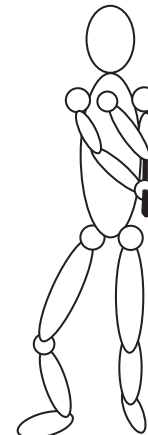


Fig. 15

Power Strike Two: Sweep Up

To execute this strike, simply reverse the steps outlined in Power Strike One (as shown in figs. 16-18). To generate additional power, you can use the Alive Hand to “push off” from the cane’s shaft.

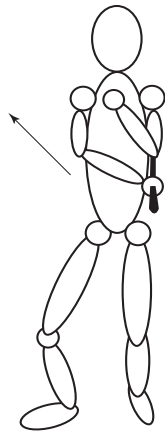


Fig. 16



Fig. 17

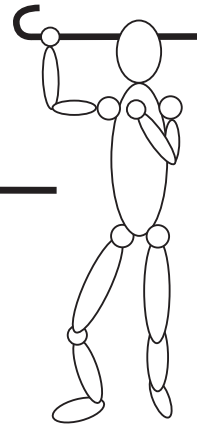


Fig. 18

Power Strike Three: Reverse Sweep Up

With the cane perpendicular to your body from having finished Power Strike Two (Fig. 18), bring the cane down so that it parallels your body (Fig. 19). Continue the movement downward until the shaft is perpendicular to your shoulder and hip (Fig. 20).

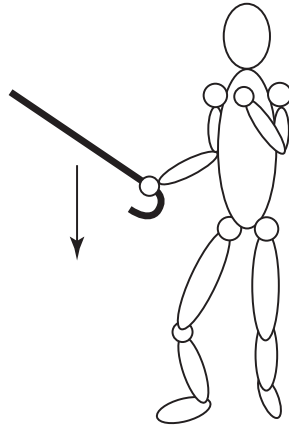


Fig. 19

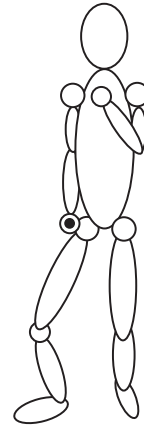


Fig. 20

Once you complete this preparatory move, muster all the power you can and swing the cane to your weak shoulder (Fig. 21).

Use your own body to stop the cane’s momentum (Fig. 22).

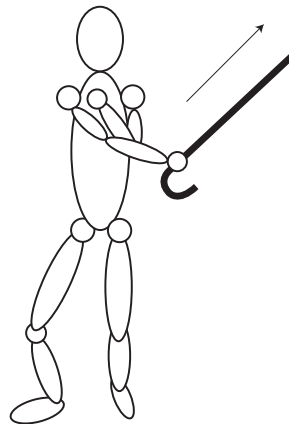


Fig. 21

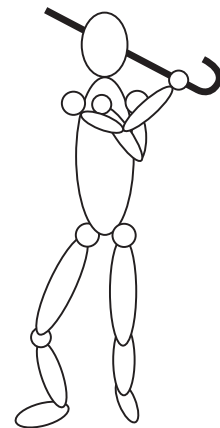


Fig. 22