Winter 2000

The Fight Master, Fall/Winter 2000, Vol. 23 Issue 2

The Society of American Fight Directors

The Fight Master

Journal of the Society of American Fight Directors

Asian Martial Arts
Training and Performance

Kabuki Combat

A mass battle scene erupts in *Phuket Fantasea*, a show performed in Thailand. Fights and photo by Richard Ryan, Stunt Coordination by Robert MacDougal.

Vol XXIII Number 2 Fall/Winter 2000

The Fight Master

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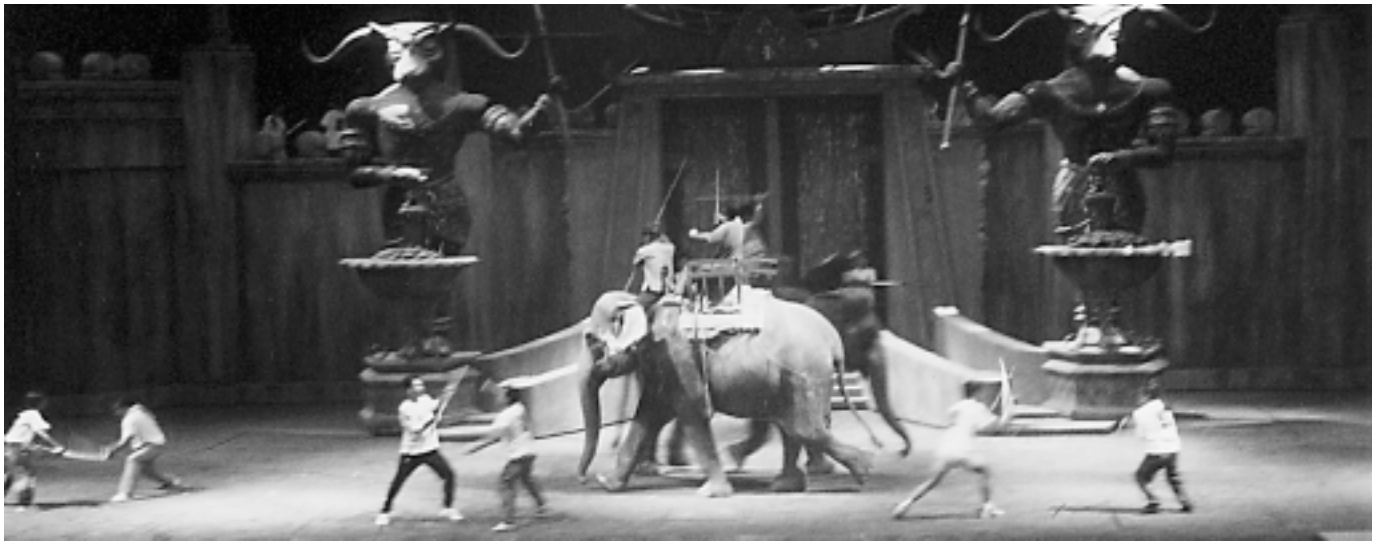

Elephants charge *while fighters engage from their backs in this rehearsal from* Phuket Fantasea. *Fights and photo by Richard Ryan, Stunt Coordination by Robert MacDougal.*

Features

Departments

Miscellany

EDITORIALLY SPEAKING

This issue of *The Fight Master* takes a look at Asian Martial Arts and their impact on western fight choreography and thinking. Since martial arts for actors has become mainstream, it is important that those who are integrating martial arts into actor training programs understand the implications of what they are teaching. Robert Dillon raises some serious questions about the role and process of blending martial arts into actor training.

At the other end of the spectrum, Julia Rupkalvis was part of a delegation of women martial artists to China to train and discover what martial arts means to the Chinese and reports on the type of training going on in China. Kevin Wetmore looks at combat choreography on the *Kabuki* stage and how surprisingly similar the ultimate purpose and principles are to contemporary American stage combat. Tim Pinnow begins the first part of a three-part series that looks at the *Ninja* from a historical perspective.

The Fight Master has received pemission to reprint in the Spring/Summer issue 2001 a humorous short play which is a dialogue between a sword, a rapier, and a dagger which was presented at Cambridge in 1615. Also included is a look at John Waller and Keith Ducklin's new book *Sword Fighting—A Manual for Actors and Directors*. Finally the almost definitive work on Rowland York, who is credited with introducing the rapier into England, will be exposed.

The Fight Master accepts articles at anytime on subject matter that can be related to staged combat. Articles may be of an historical nature, concerned with period movement, costuming and manners, actual hands-on applications of techniques, business and safety issues, and reviews or interpretations of plays involving staged combat. Articles intended for specific editions must be submitted by June 1 for the Fall/Winter issue and November 1 for the Spring/Summer issue.

Feinting the pen briskly,
~Linda Carlyle McCollum

The Fight Master
Journal of the Society of American Fight Directors

The Fight Master is published twice a year.

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Articles and letters for *The Fight Master* are accepted at anytime. Articles intended for inclusion in the Spring/Summer issue must be received by November 1. Articles intended for inclusion in the Fall/Winter issue must be received by June 1.

Submissions to *The Fight Master* should be sent to
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Submitted material will be edited for clarity and length. Articles should be typed, and include a short biography, 50 words or less, about the author. Please include your address, phone/fax and email address in your correspondence.

To advertise in *The Fight Master,* payment and notification should be sent to
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Notification for advertising in the Spring/Summer issue must be received by December 1; artwork due by January 15. Notification for the Fall/Winter issue must be received by July 1; artwork due August 15. Please call for rates or other information.

The Fight Master
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The Society of American Fight Directors

Friend
One need not be a stage fighter, teacher or choreographer to join and be active in the SAFD. Any individual who has an interest in the stage combative arts who wants to keep abreast of the field and receive all the benefits of membership may join as a Friend.

Actor/Combatant
Any individual who has passed the Actor/Combatant Skills Proficiency Fight Test judging them to be safe and effective stage fighters.

Advanced Actor/Combatant
Any individual who has passed the Advanced Actor/Combatant Skills Proficiency Fight Test judging them to be safe and effective stage fighters in a majority of recognized weapons styles.

Certified Teacher
Any individual who has successfully completed the SAFD Teacher Training Workshop. These individuals are endorsed by the Society to teach stage combat and may teach the SAFD Skills Proficiency Test.

Fight Director
Any individual who has held the status of Certified Teacher of the SAFD for a minimum of three years and has demonstrated through work in the professional arena a high level of expertise as a teacher and choreographer of staged combat. These individuals are endorsed by the Society to direct and/or choreograph incidents of physical violence.

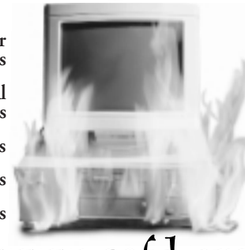
College of Fight Masters
Individuals who are senior members of the SAFD who have through service to the organization and the art form been granted this honorary title. These individuals serve in an advisory capacity as the College of Fight Masters, as master teachers at the National Stage Combat Workshops and as adjudicators of the Skills Proficiency tests.

The Society of American Fight Directors is a not for profit organization dedicated to promoting safety and fostering excellence in the art of directing staged combat/theatrical violence. The SAFD is committed to providing the highest level of service to the field through initiating and maintaining guidelines for standards and quality, providing education and training, promoting scholarly research and encouraging communication and collaboration throughout the entertainment industry.

The SAFD recognizes members at a variety of levels, including Fight Master, Fight Director, Certified Teacher, Actor/Combatant and Friend. SAFD members have staged or acted in countless numbers of fight scenes for live theatre, film and television.

Through its training programs across the United States, the SAFD has schooled thousands of individuals in the necessary skills to perform or choreograph safe and effective stage com

Visit the blazing SAFD Website



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For stage combat assistance, workshop information, and general questions.

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PHOTO CALL

The Fight Master is currently seeking active photos portraying rapier swordplay as well as other images of stage combat for upcoming issues. Black & white and color prints (no smaller than 5"x7") and slides will be accepted. All photos should include performers' names and roles if fewer than five are pictured, photographer, play, playwright, fight director, theatre company and year of performance. Photos should also include return address. Without this information, pictures cannot be used. 8"x10" prints or color slides with strong vertical orientations are also desired for covers; these should be shot as close up as possible (full bodies need not be visible). **Photos from digital cameras do not reproduce well enough to print.**

The deadline for graphic material in the Fall/Winter issue is August 15, for the Spring/Summer 2001 issue it is February 15. Future submissions are accepted at any time. Send all prints sandwiched between two pieces of cardboard in an envelope clearly labeled, "Photos—Do Not Bend" to

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If there are any questions, please feel free to call (919) 835-3557 or email JARJones@aol.com.

Again, exciting photos are encouraged from all levels of the SAFD membership.

~Jeff A.R. Jones

CONTRIBUTORS

Geoffrey Alm, SAFD fight director and certified teacher, resides in Kenmore Washington.

Andrew Vorder Bruegge, a member of the SAFD and the Association of Theatre Movement Educators, serves as chair of the Department of Theatre, Film Studies and Dance at St. Cloud State University in Minnesota. He is co-director of The Roc Havre Dance Ensemble, a dance company devoted to research.

Robert W. Dillon, Jr., Ph.D. is an associate professor of Theatre in the Department of Speech Communicaion and Theatre at Southwest Missouri State University.

Arthur M. Jolly has been working in the film industry in New York for ten years. His stunts have been seen on *Seinfeld, The Cosby Mysteries* and *Backfire.* He was the stunt coordinator for Steven Buscemi's *Trees Lounge, Nadja,* HBO's *Stag* and *Six Ways to Sunday.*

J.T. Marlowe is an LA director who divides time between developing a new play and seeking financing for a first film, which hs been awarded a Kodak Filmmakers Grant.

Tim Pinnow is an SAFD Fight Director based in Las Cruces, New Mexico, where he is a professor at New Mexico State University. He is also the Resident Fight Director and Artistic Director of The American Southwest Theatre Company, an Equity guest artist company in residence at NMSU. In addition to choreographing fights and working as an Equity actor around the country, Pinnow holds the rank of 2nd degree black belt in Bujinkan Budo Taijutsu.

Julia Rupkalvis holds a Ph.D. in Theatrical Hoplology and is a technical advisor for film and television. Rupkalvis, a member of the SAFD and the National Women's Martial Arts Federation, has worked on *Starship Troopers, Bad City Blues* and *Galaxy Quest.*

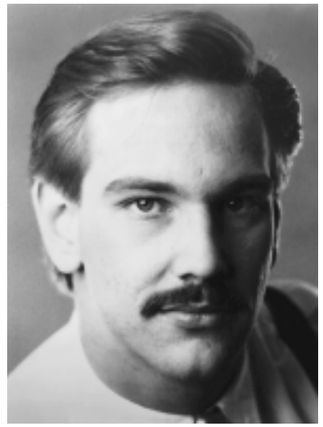
Kevin Wetmore, Jr., Ph.D. has been an actor/combatant since 1994. He teaches theatre history, Asian theatre, acting and stage combat at Denison University. He can be reached at wetmore@denison.edu.

Jay Wurts has co-authored and collaborated on many books, including *In Search of the Woman Warrior* and *Swashbuckling: The Art of Stage Combat and Theatrical Swordplay* with SAFD Fight Director and Certified Teacher, Richard Lane.

Workshop Coordinators and Advertisers

As of the Spring/Summer 2000 issue, *The Fight Master* will only advertise workshops that have officially been sanctioned as SAFD workshops as detailed in the Policies & Procedures. Please note that the SAFD no longer receives any percentage of a workshop's income. Work-shops are entitled to a free 1/4 page ad in *The Fight Master*; larger ads may be purchased at a discount rate. Ads can also be designed by the graphic designer for a slight fee.

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Summer of 2000 marked the first meeting of the newly elected and appointed members of the SAFD's governing body. The annual meetings in Las Vegas provided an opportunity for the member representatives to join forces with the Executive Committee to review the state of the Society, develop a tangible plan of action for the organization, and work towards goals that not only serve the Society and its members, but the entertainment industry as a whole. One letter cannot easily sum up the hard work and extraordinary efforts of these individuals. Each of them in their office, and all of them as a body, has done a great deal to help reorganize and structure the SAFD so that its policies, procedures, and everyday practices truly reflect an organization of almost one thousand members. So much of what they do, and have done, will go unseen by our membership, however, the effect of their efforts will be felt by everyone in the years to come.

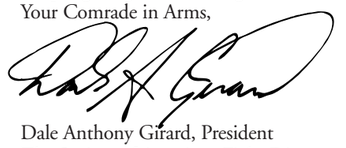
For those members who have had some trouble receiving publications, test information or other such matters related to the internal paperwork and data management of the Society, there is now a bright light at the end of the tunnel. SAFD Treasurer (Julia Rupkalvis) and Secretary (Angela Bonacasa) took on the monumental task of overhauling the organization's filing and database systems. In that process they developed a database system specific to the Society's needs, and then transferred all records to the new system. Because of the limitations of the old, outdated database, pertinent membership information was difficult to enter, organize and locate. With the admirable efforts of these ladies, however, the Society's records are not only up-to-date, they are easy to update, upkeep and access. Now it is the memberships' turn to keep the governing body posted of any changes in their information so that they will not miss the fruits of such labor.

Actor/Combatant Representative, Geoffrey Kent, did an excellent job championing the causes of the Society's largest pool of members–Actor/Combatants. He, along with fellow governing body Actor/Combatants (Bonacasa, Rupkalvis and proxy Robert Wessley), did a great deal to insure that the concerns of this important part of the organization were addressed. Many of the subtle changes of policy may not be readably noticed by the Actor/Combatants. One addition, however, will hopefully be noticed–and taken advantage of. To acknowledge those members of the Society who are serious students beginning their journey towards a greater understanding our art and craft, the governing body has established an Actor/Combatant Scholarship. The Scholarship will be presented annually to a SAFD Friend, Actor/Combatant or Advanced Actor/Combatant in good standing who, in the opinion of the Governing Body, has shown themselves worthy of assistance in continuing their training. The scholarship will provide tuition and housing for attendance at the NSCW Actor/Combatant Workshop, Intermediate Actor/ Combatant Workshop or Advanced Actor/Combatant Workshop. This is a new and exciting opportunity for our membership, and anyone who is interested is encouraged to ask his or her teacher, or go to the website, for further information.

In a move to formulate a conduit for the flow of information between all nationally recognized organizations and to foster better relations and a mutual respect and understanding between those foreign associations that are similar to the SAFD in philosophy, practice and policy, the governing body developed the special honorary rank of Fight Director Ex-Officio. This new, honorary rank must be voted in by the governing body, and can only be awarded to select members of such foreign organizations. Candidates for the new honorary position must carry a similar rank or status in their home organization and must also hold the leading office, title or position, such as president, chairman or chief executive officer. The rank is a nonvoting classification and is only valid through the individual's term in office in their home organization. As this move was intended to help foster professional relations between the SAFD and organizations of similar philosophies of safety and theatricality, the organization that a Fight Director Ex-Officio represents must be recognized by the governing body as a foreign associations similar to the SAFD in philosophy and practice. The review process for candidates has already begun, and we eagerly look forward to welcoming these new members.

Along with these changes, the governing body and the College of Fight Masters have made improvements to the day-to-day operation of our Society. Much of the change has happened in the area of business management and operation. So much of which will not be noticed by most of our membership. What the governing body hopes will be noticed, however, is that the time and energy everyone has put into improving how things are run will produce more time to continually address the needs of the membership. The meetings this past summer produced a great many things, best of all, was that it produced yet another governing body who is dedicated to the art and organization. With that in place, the sky is the limit!

Keep Fighting the Good Fight,
Your Comrade in Arms,



Dale Anthony Girard, President
The Society of American Fight Directors

COMBAT CHOREOGRAPHY ON THE KABUKI STAGE

by Kevin J. Wetmore

Fighting in the Kabuki theatre *is displayed in this artwork from the 1850's.*

In 1600 Tokugawa Ieyasu defeated Ishida Maitsunari at the Battle of Sekigahara in a valley along the Nakasendo road, resulting in the unification of Japan under the *Tokugawa Shogunate*. Although as a class they had ruled Japan for several centuries, the social structure which Tokugawa decreed following his victory placed the *Samurai* at the top of a rigid social hierarchy in which military and combat skills were highly valued and admired. Ironically, Sekigahara had another consequence, however, which was to render the *Samurai* as warrior obsolete. The *Samurai* who received a great deal of military training would never see battle, as the nation was at peace for the next two and one half centuries. Nevertheless, the Shogunate not only encouraged but demanded that the *Samurai* class be trained in the use of sword and the martial arts, resulting in the development of artificial training situations to test military skills. Such was the reality of Tokugawa, Japan.

A few years after Sekigahara, *Izumo no Okuni* (Okuni from Izumo), a *shinto* priestess began performing dance dramas in Kyoto, the imperial capital of Japan. Though initially performing for commoners, in 1607 she danced in Edo(the new capital) for Shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu. As a result of her popularity, many female performers copied her performances, and more than a few of these mimics were also prostitutes who used the dance drama (now called *Kabuki*, meaning "outrageous") as a way to advertise their other services. Prohibitions against women performers resulted, followed by prohibitions against the boy performers (oftentimes also prostitutes) who took over the art form after women were banned from the stage, and *Kabuki* finally developed into the all-male dance drama that is seen today in Japan. Other laws were enacted which prohibited *Samurai* from attending *Kabuki*, making it the drama of the middle class.

As a result of developing in the military reality that was Tokugawa, Japan, *Kabuki* reflected this culture with plays which told stories of battles, such as *Chronicle of the Battle of Ichinotani*, or of great sword-wielding heroes, such as those of *Shibaraku* and *Sukeroku*. The first choreographed stage combat in *Kabuki* probably took place in 1655, in a play which called for over a dozen warriors with cudgels to clash on stage. Since then stage violence has played a major role in *Kabuki*. As Benito Ortolani notes in *The Japanese Theatre*: "Spectacular stage combats and completely choreographed fighting scenes are an important part of almost all *Kabuki* roles, and even female roles are not spared from the need to perform deadly fights or deeds of suicidal self-sacrifice according to the rules of military etiquette"(190). The *Kabuki* stage features plays which require lengthy combat, stabbings, decapitations, executions, suicides in a variety of manners, including *hara kiri*, and, frequently, fights which pitch a single opponent against many, or two large groups against each other. Another example and memorable play is *Kami No Megumi Wago No Torikumi* in

which dozens of *sumo* wrestlers brawl on stage with scores of firefighters using ladders, hooks, and buckets as weapons. In other plays weapons have included carpentry tools, dining utensils, chopsticks, oars, branches, brooms, ropes, and chairs, in addition to the standard sword, knife, and spear. In short, *Kabuki* stage combat is as wide and varied as its western counterparts, perhaps even more so.

In order to perform these variety of fights the actors must be highly skilled and highly trained. *Kabuki* authority Leonard Pronko compares them with Elizabethan actors for their need to master dancing, tumbling, acrobatics, and swordplay, frequently integrating all of them at once (Pronko 162). Actors must even be familiar with the history of swordplay and the meaning of phrases which have their origins in combat. *Kabuki* actor and teacher Nakamura Matazo reports in his memoirs of having to pass the written exam to become a full-fledged *Kabuki* performer. One of the questions he had to answer was to tell the origin of the phrase *seppa tsumaru*, meaning *to be at a loss to do something*, but translating literally as, *to be pushed to the hilt*. The idiom is a fencing term meaning that when one has only the hilt of the sword to use, then one cannot do anything (Mataso 55-65). To be a *Kabuki* actor means not only being able to fight on stage, but to understand the place of combat and combat-related language in society and history.

One actor in every company is the official *tateshi*, which means *fight scene master*. This person has studied the martial arts, specifically for the purpose of adapting them for the stage. The *tateshi* is knowledgeable about fights and fight techniques, he has learned the over two hundred *kata* that make up the *tate*, formalized, stylized combat techniques used on stage. The job of the *tateshi* is to know how to choreograph the different kinds of fights; whether for two evenly matched opponents, a group brawl, or, most commonly, several fighters attacking the hero.

While *Kabuki* roles are highly stylized, and the playing of them is dictated by tradition, the *tateshi* actually has enormous personal freedom in the arrangement of the fights. He must decide not only how to choreograph the *tate* and *tachimawari*, but also the placement of *tonbo*, which are acrobatic flips carried out when an actor is struck by a weapon or a fist. Over twenty different types of *tonbo* exist, although originally there may have been as many as sixty. The *tonbo*, claims Samuel Leiter, are "an integral part of the story" which are used to demonstrate the skill of the hero whose blows send others tumbling and flipping away (Leuter 659). Actors train for ten years to learn to execute these acrobatics safely, effectively, and spectacularly.

The *tateshi* also chooses the rhythm of the fight and the music which accompanies it. Fight scenes in *Kabuki* do not have dialogue—no speaking takes place during combat. Instead, the music plays and the actors perform the choreography in silence, ending each sequence of the combat in a *mie*, a stylized freeze which shows the inner strength of the hero. The *mie* is also selected by the *tateshi*. In other words, the combat choreographer is responsible for choosing, teaching, and directing the entire combat section of the performance, ensuring the hero remains attractive, graceful, and brave; and that the stage picture be well composed and beautiful.

Stage combat in *Kabuki* is called *tachimawari* and it literally means *standing and going around*. The term *tachimawari* refers to all fight scenes, but can also specifically refer to non-conventional techniques and movements not formalized as part of the two hundred or so *tate*. *Tate* specifically refers to approximately two-hundred precisely styled patterns for sword, spear, and unarmed combat, each with its own name. Here is an example of a *tachimawari* scene which calls for several *tate*. In the play *Sukeroku, Flower of Edo* (translated by James R. Brandon), Sukeroku, the hero, is attacked by Mombei and Sembei, henchmen of his enemy Ikyuu:

> They draw their swords...A STAGE ASSISTANT pulls empty benches upstage. *Batan* and *battari tsuke* beats [drumming rhythms] punctuate SEMBEI's and MOMBEI's attack. They strike alternately right and left. SUKEROKU seizes their wrists at the same instant. He looks at SEMBEI's blade, then throws him to the ground, stepping on SEMBEI's sword. He pulls MOMBEI forward to inspect his blade, kicks SEMBEI into a heap, and sends MOMBEI sprawling prostrate across SEMBEI. He strikes MOMBEI's back three times with the flat of MOMBEI's sword. Again, RUFFIANS appear and advance on SUKEROKU. Music stops (Brandon 72).

Each one of these individual moves is a separate *tate*, choreographed together into a duel. After the above exchange, in which no lines are spoken, Kukeroku poses in a *mie* with the sword over his head in triumph, and then tells the advancing ruffians, "Move and I will cut them through!" The play goes through a series of *tachimawari* between Sukeroku and Ikyuu's henchmen until the final *tachimawari* between the hero and the villain. When the henchmen do finally attack, they attack in twos, and each is struck by Sukeroku's flute and sent flying in a *tonbo* only to return again.

This phenomenon perhaps best demonstrates the use of violence on the *Kabuki* stage: cartoon-like, the hero's enemies keep getting up and coming back for more even after being thrown head over heels by his sword, or, in the case of Sukeroku, his flute. The violence is not intended to be realistic, as with contemporary western fight choreography. The violence furthers the plot and demonstrates the character of the hero. It is not unusual for men who have just been killed or even decapitated by the hero to stand up at the end of a fight, as *tachimawari* always ends in a *mie*, a dramatic freeze. One may not perform a *mie* lying down, thus all stand, even the dead, to strike a spectacular upright pose. Realism is sacrificed for spectacle. The violence itself is less realistic, more stylized, and most *Kabuki* scholars consider *tachimawari* to be more rhythmic dance than simulation of actual combat.

Combat in Kabuki theatre *is more closely related to dance than actual combat.*

Yet, the job of the *tateshi* remains remarkably similar to the job of a western stage combat choreographer. And in both cultures the violence exists not as violence but as a form of acting. The combat exists to serve the performance and stage violence is ultimately a form of acting. In the last decades of the seventeenth century in Kyoto, the *Kabuki* actor and acting teacher Sugi Kuhe wrote in *One Hundred Items of the Stage*:

> Nowadays when a *tachiyaku* [leading male role] turns his sword round and threatens his enemy, it is but show and his heart is not in his sword play. When he thus turns his sword edge, he has in his heart only the thought of praise the audience will give him. Thus it is not the enemy he threatens with his blade, it is in effect turned towards the audience...It is a matter of working in partnership, and provided that one of them respects the other's performance, and his own is respected by the other, the scene is exactly *right*... (Dunn 31).

Across three centuries and in another culture, the principles behind stage combat remain remarkably the same. While it is in the style and execution of technique that *Kabuki* differs from contemporary American combat choreography, the ultimate purpose and principles of stage violence do not change.

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Fin

In Search of the Historical Ninja, Part 1

by Tim Pinnow

To the western mind, the image of the *Ninja* is derived mostly from a plethora of B-movies depicting these ancient Japanese warriors as silent assassins employed by the movie's evil warlord. While it would be tempting to say that nothing could be further from the truth, the fact is that some of the *Ninja* were indeed assassins—though few could be designated as working for evil warlords.

In the arena of stage combat, adapting *Ninjutsu* techniques to serve the fight director's needs can be a difficult task. The subtle nature of *Ninjutsu* movement creates few visual cues for the audience. Furthermore, *Ninja* fights seldom last very long, particularly since a *Ninja* would certainly avoid direct confrontation. The *Ninja* was much more likely to work behind the scenes, manipulating events to his liking rather than picking a fight. When a fight was necessary, it was most likely a guerrilla-type action that relied on surprise and stealth to effect a victory with a minimum number of casualties.

For the purposes of stage combat, it is the use of surprise, distraction, concealment, and costume that are the clearest indicators for the theatrical audience. Also, use of signature weapons like the straight-bladed *Ninjato* (*Ninja* sword) as opposed to the curved *Samurai katana*, or the use of stage *metsubishi* (blinding powders) or hand claws, can give violence a distinct *Ninja* flavor.

The true historical *Ninja* developed as a secretive counter-culture to the ruling *Samurai* elite. In a society where the *Samurai's* power was unchallenged, abuses of that power became worrisome to the peasant underclass. As a result, these same peasants sought to find ways to protect their families and themselves while not betraying their own existence and bringing down the full wrath of the *Samurai* upon them. Most of the *Ninja* clans developed in the mountainous Iga and Koga provinces. The martial systems these clans developed were a combination of indigenous Japanese systems, teachings of Japanese *Yamabushi* (mystic warrior priests), and influences of Chinese expatriots who fled China for the wilderness of Japan. During the height of the *Ninja*'s power, fifty-three clans developed in the Koga line and forty-five in the Iga lineage.[1] Of these ninety-eight clans, only three Iga clans survive intact today: *Togakure-ryu Ninpo*, *Kumogakure-ryu Ninpo*, and *Gyokushin ryu-Ninpo*.[2] The grandmastership of these three *Ninja* arts are held by Dr. Maasaki Hatsumi of Noda City, Japan, who teaches and grants rank in these three arts under a combined system with six other ancient arts (including *Samurai*, stick, and ancient naval arts) called *Bujinkan Budo Taijutsu*.[3] As of this time, no other claimant to a lineage of *Ninja* arts has been able to produce the hereditary *densho* scrolls which transfer grandmastership from one generation to another.

The Ninja in popular western culture *is a subject of grea mis-representation, as lampooned in the comic book* The Tick.

TOGAKURE-RYU NINPO

The oldest of these three *Ninja* schools, the *Togakure-ryu*, dates to its first grandmaster, Togakure Daisuke in the *Oho* period (1161-1162).[4] Hatsumi-soke is the 34th grandmaster in the line. Among the notable names in the school was the 32nd grandmaster, Shinryuken Masamitsu Toda, the sword instructor for the *Tokugawa Shogunate* in the mid-nineteenth century.

Given that the *Ninja ryus* developed as a method of family and personal self-defense within the *Ninja*'s home area, the techniques of the *Togakure-ryu* clan are heavily influenced by the forested, mountainous Iga province where they lived. The often-seen graphic of a *Ninja* in silhouette with knees deeply bent with weight shifted toward the backward foot, lead arm straightened toward the front and trailing arm bent with the hand pointed toward the other shoulder is a representation of the stance *Ichimonji-no-kamae* from the *Togakure-ryu*. It is a defensive stance utilizing a relatively narrow base useful for fighting on narrow mountain paths—or between parked cars in a darkened parking lot. Furthermore, the outwardly turned hips and extended lead limbs create an oblique target picture and keep the torso and head at a distance from the attacker. In addition to standard weapons training, the *Togakure-ryu Ninja* also developed a specific type of *shuriken* (throwing stars) and utilized both *shuko* and *ashiki* (hand and foot claws). The *ryu's Senban shuriken* was a thin, flat, light, four-pointed star with a hole in the middle. It is thrown much like a frisbee, causing it to spin through the air toward the attacker. This *shuriken* was not razor-sharp, as modern media would like to suggest, because it would be very difficult to han-

dle and throw. Nine of these *shuriken* were carried in a pocket concealed inside a shirt or jacket and were thrown toward the attacker as a distraction technique. If one can imagine patrolling a mountain path at night, only to have something suddenly whizzing by one's face, tearing a cheek or eye, one can understand that in the moment of a nearly invisible attack, the *Ninja* could quickly counterattack or retreat quickly into the mountain darkness.

KUMOGAKURE-RYU NINPO

The *Kumogakure-ryu* has had fourteen grandmasters beginning with Sagenta Nobufusa Toda in the sixteenth century.[5] In most respects, the movement and techniques of the *Kumogakure-ryu* closely resemble those of the *Togakure-ryu*. The *shuriken* were long and cylindrical, much like a pencil and were sharpened on one end. Because of their shape, these could indeed be used as a much more injurious weapon than the flat *shuriken*. The *Kumogakure-ryu* techniques also included a number of movements that use foot movements that keep the knees very close together throughout the technique. Dr. Hatsumi has suggested that these techniques were particularly suited to female *Ninja*s (*kunoichi*) because they could be executed while wearing a kimono.[6] It is probably important to note here that, as opposed to many martial arts including *Samurai* traditions, the *Ninja* clans always trained women in martial ways. In fact, many of the *Ninja*'s most successful practitioners were *kunoichi*—specifically because they were able to get much closer to intended targets, even taking them as lovers, without suspicion.

GYOKUSHIN-RYU NINPO

Dr. Maasaki Hatsumi is the 21st grandmaster of this art which was founded by Goeman Teruyoshi Sasaki probably in the late fifteenth or early sixteenth centuries. It is generally accepted that this school is more concerned with espionage, strategy, and planning techniques than with individual combat techniques, though apparently there are some combat techniques listed on the *makimono* (record of techniques) scroll held by Dr. Hatsumi. It has been suggested that some of the combat techniques include unbalancing the opponent by lifting the arms and then striking directly to the ribcage. The *ryu* may also include *kusarigama* (three foot weighted chain) techniques.

TRAINING

Historically, the training of a *Ninja* included eighteen different levels and types of skills. This training included:

1. *Seishin Teki Kyoyo* (spiritual refinement)
2. *Tai Jutsu* (unarmed combat)
3. *Ninja Ken* (*Ninja* sword)
4. *Bo-jutsu* (stick and staff fighting)
5. *Shuriken-jutsu* (throwing blades)
6. *Yari-jutsu* (spear fighting)
7. *Naginata-jutsu* (halberd fighting)
8. *Kusari-gama* (chain and sicle weapon)
9. *Kayaku-jutsu* (fire and explosives)
10. *Henso-jutsu* (disguise and impersonation)
11. *Shinobi-iri* (stealth and entering methods)
12. *Ba-jutsu* (horsemanship)
13. *Sui-ren* (water training)
14. *Bo-ryaku* (strategy)
15. *Cho-ho* (espionage)
16. *Inton-jutsu* (escape and concealment)
17. *Ten-mon* (meteorology)
18. *Chi-mon* (geography) [7]

It is the first of these areas that leads to the approach to all the others. The phrase among the *Ninja*s that says, "*Ninpo Ikkan*" translates as *Ninja law rules forever*. The connotation of the saying, however, is that the *Ninja* law operates in harmony with the natural laws of the universe which are immutable and, ultimately, spiritual. In any area, the *Ninja* seek to act in accordance with the surrounding universe so that defense is accomplished by slight change of body position and power is effected by weight, gravity, and whole body movement rather than muscular tension. Likewise, the combat styles of the *Ninja* do not rely on complicated body positions or imitation of animalistic movements as do numerous other martial arts. Rather, advanced techniques occur from positions like *Shizen-no-kamae*, a natural-body posture of standing with the arms at the sides and the weight evenly distributed over both feet. In addition, the *Bujinkan* system only utilizes five *kata* (forms) each of which is only two or three movements long and reflects a different natural element: *chi* (earth), *sui* (water), *hi* (fire), *fu* (wind), and *ku* (void). Since every other technique is somehow related to these five elements, another unique concept of *Ninjutsu* emerges—fight how one feels. If a *Ninja* enters into a battle on a day where he feels anchored and solid, he would utilize *chi* techniques to maintain harmony between his internal and external states. Likewise a day where the *Ninja* is bouncing around on his toes and feeling light as air would lend itself to *fu* techniques. Furthermore, because the techniques are so natural to the state of the *Ninja* at any time, the *Ninja's Taijutsu* actually improves with the subtlety and weaker strength of age and can be practiced with equal effectiveness no matter the practitioner's physical strength or size.

The *Ninja*'s study for spiritual depth also is reflected in the *Ninja*'s search for *jihi no kokoro* or benevolent heart. The result of this search is that a *Ninja*'s battles are governed by boundless, universal love. To this end, the *Ninja* perseveres in the battle until universal justice is secured. Even the word, *nin* in Japanese is made of two other *kanji* (symbols) which denote blade and heart. The meaning, then, is that a *Ninja* perserveres even with a blade at his heart. But perhaps the spiritual meaning of the *Ninjutsu* is best expressed in the grandmaster's own words.

> *Ninpo*, the highest order of *Ninjutsu*, should be offered to the world as a guiding influence for all martial artists. The physical and spiritual survival methods eventually immortalized by Japan's *Ninja* were in fact one of the sources of Japan's martial arts. Without complete and total training in all aspects of the combative arts, today's martial artists cannot hope to progress any further than mere proficiency in the limited set of muscular skills that make up his or her training system. Personal enlightenment can only come about through total immersion in the martial traditions as a way of living. By experiencing the confrontation of danger, the transcendence of fear of injury or death, and a working knowledge of individual personal powers and limitations, the practitioner of *Ninjutsu* can gain the strength and invincibility that permit the enjoyment of the flowers moving in the wind, appreciation of the love of others, and contentment with the presence of peace in society.
>
> The attainment of this enlightenment is characterized by the development of the *jihi no kokoro* or benevolent heart. Stronger than love itself, the benevolent heart is capable of encompassing all that constitutes universal justice and all that finds expression in the unfolding of the universal scheme. Born of the insight attained from repeated exposure to the very brink between death and life, *ninpo's* benevolent heart is the key to finding harmony and understanding in the realms of the spiritual and natural material worlds.
>
> After so many generations of obscurity in the shadowy recesses of history, the life philosophy of the *Ninja* is now once again emerging, because once again, it is the time in human destiny when *ninpo* is needed. May peace prevail so mankind may continue to grow and evolve into the next great plateau.
>
> Dr. Maasaki Hatsumi
> 34th Generation Grandmaster
> *Togakure Ryu Ninpo* [8]

THE *NINJA* TODAY

As noted earlier, the ancient *Ninja*s are represented today in the *Bujinkan Budo Taijutsu* system taught by Grandmaster Maasaki Hatsumi and his licensed teachers throughout the world. The *menkyo* (rank licenses) granted by Dr. Hatsumi continue to confer rank in all three *ninpo* arts as well as the other six arts comprising the *Bujinkan* system. Dr. Hatsumi originally opened *Ninja* training to non-Japanese in the 1970s. Dr. Hatsumi's first American student was Stephen Hayes, who rose to the rank of *Shidoshi* (gentleman teacher-5th degree black belt) before leaving the *Bujinkan* in the 1980s. Currently a number of higher-ranking *Shihan* (teacher of enlightened warrior ways—10th degree black belt) teach in the United States and around the world.

The *Bujinkan* system is still a live, ever-changing martial art which has maintained its warrior heritage. As such it is an exceptional self-defense art, because it teaches techniques for life-and-death scenarios. There is no sparring, there are no tournaments, it is not a sport—the techniques are deadly and must be respected as such. This is *Shinken Gata*—real-life fighting. In fact, the CQC (close-quarter-combat) style used by the U.S. Army Special Forces (green berets) and some Marine Force-Recon units were developed from *Ninjutsu* techniques by American 11th degree black belt *Shihan* Jeffrey Prather. Also, as a testament to the vital, live ever-changing nature of the art, the upper levels of training also include handgun and rifle combat training, as they are weapons likely to be encountered by the *Ninja* in today's world.

In the end, the historical *Ninja* never really vanished, they have simply evolved into new generations, with each generation constantly adapting the art to best be able to defend home and family. The modern *Ninja* is a highly trained warrior, rooted in the traditions of the past and ready to serve justice with a benevolent heart.

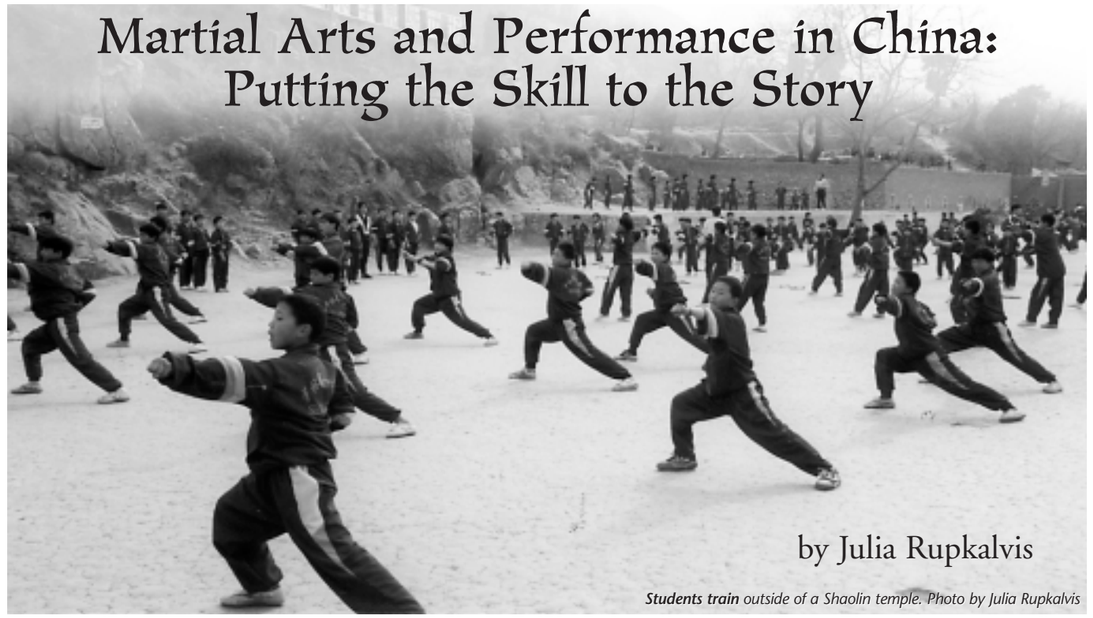
In the next article in this series, examples of signature unarmed techniques will be discussed in addition to illustrating safe stage combat adaptations of those techniques. Finally, in the last article in the series, *Ninja* weapons techniques will be discussed with their stage combat applications.

NOTES

[1] Hatsumi, Maasaki. *The Essence of Ninjutsu: The Nine Traditions.* Contemporary Books: Chicago, 1988, p. 176-178.
[2] *Ryu*=school, *Ninpo*=the higher order of *Ninjutsu*, implying not only the physical skills (*jutsu*) but also a harmony with the forces of the universe.
[3] *Bujinkan*=Warrior Spirit House. *Budo*=warrior way. *Taijutsu*=Body Skills.
[4] Hatsumi. *Essence of Ninjutsu.* p. 173.
[5] Hjelm, Mats. www.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Hatsumi, Maasaki. *Ninjutsu: History and Tradition.* Unique Publication: Burbank CA, 1981, pp. 13-17.
[8] Ibid. Author's preface.

Fin

Martial Arts and Performance in China: Putting the Skill to the Story



by Julia Rupkalvis

***Students train** outside of a Shaolin temple. Photo by Julia Rupkalvis*

Editor's Note: *In March of 2000, Julia Rupkalvis was fortunate enough to be a participant in a delegation of women martial artists to China. Sponsored by the China Women's Association for Science and Technology(CWAST), and LIYA International, their North American advisors, the trip allowed her to train in martial arts in four quite different provinces. Along with discovering what martial arts means to the Chinese, she was able to meet with individuals and institutions trying to develop and teach stage combat, which is a new philosophy in that country. These pioneers were excited about possibilities of intellectual exchange and were thirsty for how this field has developed in the west.*

Overall, the delegation was surprised at how focused the Chinese were on martial arts as a sport rather than an art. For example, several schools taught *Tae Kwon Do*, a Korean style, that one did not expect. However, as *Tae Kwon Do* is now an Olympic event, the government encourages excellence in this style regardless of its origin.

Shi Shahai Sports School, the first Martial Arts school visited, was indicative of this approach. Along with *wushu*, or martial arts, the school offers table tennis, badminton, gymnastics, volleyball, and tennis. They are primarily concerned with trophies and teach only the aspects of martial arts that are used in sport competitions. *Wushu* can also translate as *National Art*, and was adopted as the official name for martial arts in China during the 1950s, although the term *wushu* had been used since 1928. A renewed interest led to the formation of a national committee to review all Chinese martial art styles and combine them into a new, socially acceptable form. The country's political structure gave rise to a new form of martial art. This form is known as *Modern Wushu* and it stresses competitions. *Traditional Wushu* is *wushu* practiced prior to the communist takeover of China, and stresses combative use and development of internal energy.

Seeking *Traditional Wushu* and hoping to discover how martial arts are used in performances and in performer training, the delegation traveled to four cities in China: Beijing, Xiían, Zheng Zhou, and Shanghai. An overview of the experiences and the opportunities that exist in these four locations is in order.

BEIJING

In Beijing, the delegation had a meeting set up at Beijing Television (BTV) by the China Women's Association for Science and Technology. The intention of this meeting was for the delegates to meet their *professional counterparts* in China. Because of their lack of understanding about the delegation's interpretation of both martial arts and stage combat, members actually met with Zhao Ying Jun, who works in the Sports Division, televising martial arts tournaments! It was challenging to work through a translator and try to explain the difference between *performing and choreographing staged combat for film and television* and televising competitive sports events. Fortunately, the delegates were able to convey their point of view, and found a place for their philosophies at BTV.

BTV granted a tour of the studio facilities, led by Lui Jie, a news department editor. BTV, the second largest producer of television programming in China, is a very modern, professional operation. Its headquarters has its own hotel for visitors and out-of-town partners, a snack bar, a grocery store, a gift store, and more.

The tour passed through several checkpoints staffed by the Chinese Military. The soldiers were professional, friendly, and courteous, and caused one to reflect upon one's gratitude for the First Amendment.

After the tour, Zhao discussed how Chinese television productions coordinate fights and stunts for their shows. Zhao admitted this area was a problem for them. The current system is to hire a martial arts master to come in and set up a fight. This system has not been very successful, and he sees it as a problem now that they are competing with programs from Hong Kong and the West. He sees their biggest problem is in training and equipment. For example, they have to set up their stunts without ratchets, air rams, or decent air bags for higher falls.

The discussion turned philosophical, with both sides pointing out issues of using the fight as dialogue, and the art of showing the camera and the audience the information they need for emotional connection to the storytelling. Zhao suggested that BTV would be interested in funding the start of a school to teach stage combat using the philosophies of the Society of American Fight Directors, as he felt its viewpoint was exactly what was needed in China at this time.

XIIAN

Xiían, probably the oldest City in China, served as the country's capital over three thousand years ago. It has become a popular tourist city, as it was the starting point of the Silk Road, visited by Marco Polo, and is the site of Emperor Qin Shihuang's terra-cotta warriors. Currently, it is the capital of Shaanxi Province, and has a population of over six million.

The delegation visited many martial arts schools in Xiían, most notably the Zhao Chang-Jun Wu Shu Institute. Founded in 1991 by China's *wushu* star, Zhao Chang-Jun, the institute is a full-time boarding school that combines general knowledge instruction with *wushu* training. Located in the southern suburbs of Xiían, the institute has over a thousand students and over a hundred faculty members. This institute was one of the first in China to see a purpose in providing acting training to martial artists. The Movie and TV Play Department is designed to train students to be *wushu* acting professionals. Prospective students must have mastered basic *wushu* skills and have shown certain acting talents. They must have the desire to perform and must pass a series of tests.

Hong Jinbao, a successful Chinese movie actor, serves as the department's art superintendent. President Zhao Changjun serves as its *wushu* director. He has been conferred the title of the *Chinese Wushu Star* by the National *Wushu* Association. The department has also invited a number of performing artists and *wushu* stars to teach the students. Some of their students were the king's sons in the film *Anna and the King*. Thirty percent of the students are girls, and seventy percent are boys.

The department provides full time schooling and strict discipline. During the study period the students may be sent to participate in the production of movies or TV plays. Those who have distinguished themselves in studies may be recommended to work in movie companies or in TV stations, or to join the *wushu* team of the institute.

Ma Zhenbang has taken part in the production of over ten films, such as *Wudang*, *Wang Wu the Swordsmen*, and *Bloodshed at Dongchang*, in which he acted as the star and *wushu*-fighting designer.

The institute is the only non-government-run institution in China's northwest entitled to recruit foreign students. So far, the institute has trained nearly a hundred students from the United States, Europe, Japan, and Saudi Arabia.

Some members of the delegation spoke in greater depth with Sophia Shan Wenyan, a professor in the performance department. In discussing their criteria for student selection, she said they look for intelligence and the ability to pick up skills quickly. Through the conversation, she admitted they are actually training stunt people, and not actors. Most of their graduates perform fights for film, but never speak or show their faces to the camera. The Institute would rather train them to be actors who know how to fight, but they are only now learning how to combine the two skills. Stage combat is just not a skill known in China, although they see the need. Students remain at the Institute until a film company selects them. Most students get picked after about a year and a half.

Wenyan also became excited about the Society and its philosophies. She hoped that a relationship could continue to develop. Often, once her students graduate and have completed a film, they choose to come to the United States. She hopes she can refer them to the SAFD to find classes so they can continue their training. She also invited the delegation to encourage its students to consider a course of training in China.

ZHENG ZHOU

On the outskirts of Zheng Zhou stands that icon to martial artists, the Shaolin Temple. While primarily a monastery, it will be forever linked to its martial arts training and philosophy because of the films and television shows depicting the martial monks. For more than fourteen hundred years, Buddhist monks, martial monks, and lay people have lived at the Shaolin Temple.

The monks arrive after separating from their families, devoting their lives to the pursuit of enlightenment and *kung fu*. Morning meditation begins at 4:30 a.m., followed by training. Training begins with a run in the mountains. After breakfast, training continues with basic moves and stretching, such as jumps, kicks, punches, and stances. These basic moves will be the entire curriculum for at least the first year of a monk's training. They must perfect control and focus. Training continues all day and includes forms that are not allowed to be shown or taught outside the monastery.

The history of the Shaolin Temple matches the pattern in all Chinese arts. The temple began with an Indian monk called Ba Tuo. Upon the arrival of Bodhidharma, and the many legends that arose with his teachings, the temple grew in importance. Shaolin *kung fu* developed as a style, and the temple was fairly prosperous, until 1928, when a local warlord burned it to the ground. In the 1950s, the communist government outlawed the martial arts, and the temple was burned again in the 1960s amid the cultural revolution. Some monks continued their training in secrecy, and it is because of them that the temple rose again and that training is available at all.

Many schools, both private and government run, offer teaching to thousands of Chinese students. Students begin training at age five and are selected based on their physical makeup, facial features, and *parental motivation*. Most students train six hours per day and take other classes for four hours per day. The dormitory housed seven children in a room that held seven twin beds and not much else. Each student is allowed to have one small duffel bag for his or her personal effects. Some of these children will choose to become monks. Many, many more will try for championships and medals. And a few will try to become film or theatre actors.

Even the revered ground of the Shaolin Temple has caught Hollywood Fever. One student of the Shaolin School of Film and Television, which is only a few years old, began specialized training in act-

ing at age fifteen. He was not very interested in the martial arts for themselves, although he is very interested in moving to Los Angeles and becoming a movie star.

SHANGHAI

In Shanghai, the goal was to visit the Shanghai Theatre Academy and learn about their methods of training actors. This visit proved quite problematic. At each request through the Chinese guides, delegates received an extremely polite "No." They could not possibly give the kind of respectful treatment deserved on such notice. Two members finally decided it was time to buck the system and try an American solution to a Chinese problem.

Removing their official nametags, and anything associating them with the group, they grabbed a taxi. Upon arrival at the Shanghai Theatre Academy, they wandered about until they captured official attention. The academy looked like a typical college campus, with bookstore, student union, and administrative buildings looking the same as they do in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

Several officials tried to speak to them, but since their Chinese was extremely limited as was their English, they mostly looked at each other in confusion. Eventually, a man walked passed, and the officials called him over. He spoke English. The two said to him that they were Americans visiting China, and having a lovely trip, but since they train actors professionally, they were curious about how such training was accomplished in China. They asked if he knew anyone who could speak with them and answer their questions? He paused for

Performance training *at the Zhao Chang Jun Wushu Institute. Photo by Julia Rupkalvis*

a moment, considering. Then he said, "I suppose that would be me. Please join me in my office." By chance, he was the head professor of acting training, named Wang Yang, who answers also to the western name of Michael. He was quite generous with his time.

Shanghai Theatre Academy is fifty-five years old, the oldest theatre school still open in China. In its history, it has had to struggle to present instruction according to the political philosophies of the times. His description of the acting training sounded very close to Meisner Techniques, although he did not use that term.

As they discussed martial arts and fight training for actors, he informed them that *Qi Gung* is required for all actors at the academy. The academy felt that the ability to feel and sense the energy between people is vital to the development of any performer. This stop was also the first place where traditional Chinese performance was still being taught. It was good to hear that the styles of ancient opera and theatrical performance were not disregarded here.

Wang Yang or Michael also encouraged an exchange of students with the academy. He felt they had much to offer the western acting student, and that his students would benefit from the kinds of training available in the west.

Overall, the martial arts skills of the Chinese students were magnificent. The struggles of modern educators and performers show the continuing struggle in China between cultural and political forces. For example, in the 1980s, the film industry fell on hard times, faced with the dual problems of competition from other forms of entertainment and concern on the part of the authorities that many of the popular thriller and martial arts films were socially unacceptable. In January 1986 the film industry was transferred from the Ministry of Culture to the newly formed Ministry of Radio, Cinema, and Television to bring it under *stricter control and management* and to *strengthen supervision over production.* Now that martial art films are back in acceptance, Chinese performers, educators, and choreographers are thirsty for information and training in stage combat. It will be fascinating to watch their version of this art form continue to develop.

Fin

Students training *in Bejing. Photo by Julia Rupkalvis*

Swashbuckling
Place from Spring/Summer 2000 issue

Accounts of Martial Arts in Actor Training: An Enthusiast's Critique

by Robert W. Dillon, Jr.

Genuine knowledge must be open to disproof, or else it is simply dogma in disguise.
–Ken Wilber, *The Eye of Spirit*

Since the sixties the notion of martial arts for actors has gone from being alternative in every sense of the world to being mainstream. Martial arts for actors and martial arts as an adjunct to stage combat training as a subject of serious and responsible discourse, demands re-examination.

Martial systems cannot be integrated into actor training or stage combat programs without careful adaptation or modification. They are far too cumbersome, complex and embedded too deeply in specific worldspaces to be profitably brought casually into the movement or combat studio and stitched onto the fabric of training, as if out of whole cloth. Regardless of whether movement, combat, and acting teachers deem martial arts of value to actors, the question of exactly how martial practices might be transformed into theatre practices remains.

Training in martial arts *at the British National Stage Combat Workshops, Paul Burke (left) and Peter Noble work on a sequence. Photo by Scot Mann.*

Phillip Zarrilli, in his introduction to *Asian Martial Arts in Actor Training*, attempts an answer to the problem of integration when he offers "four ways of integrating Asian martial arts into the training process:"

1. Students are immersed in long-term study of one or more martial disciplines.
2. Selected exercises from one or more martial arts are integrated into a comprehensive program of acting/movement training.
3. A teacher trained in martial arts uses his own experience as an inspiration or taking-off point for his own teaching, allowing it to influence how he attempts to approach and solve acting/movement problems.
4. The student is advised to seek martial arts training under a master outside of the prescribed course of study in acting/movement (Zarrilli 16).

Careful reading reveals some problems: Number One does not *integrate* martial training into actor training; it makes it an adjunct only. Number Two and Three taken together amount to the same thing but number Two ignores the all-important role of an expert in choosing Zarrilli's selected exercises. Number Four amounts to a generic recommendation and, like number One, does nothing at all to integrate martial and actor training. It also depends upon the kind, type and quality of martial experiences available in whatever region the student finds himself. Number Three, in fact, appears to be the only truly integral methodology available.

An active rethinking is needed. Zarrilli writes, "The specific martial techniques utilized and how they are integrated into actor training depend on how the individual teacher understands acting, and the process used to actualize a particular paradigm of acting" (16). This makes a fatal error: it presumes martial arts expertise. An integral solution for bringing martial arts fully into training programs depends, not upon "how the individual teacher understands acting, and the process used to actualize a paradigm of acting," but primarily is dependent on a prospective teacher's martial qualifications, understandings, and motivations coupled with a secondary but still important way to a particular understanding and approach to acting pedagogy.

One way to tap the resource is to design and institute programs that integrate it as Zarrilli suggests in numbers Two and Three. Programs that bring in recognized experts to design and teach Asian discipline-based courses including martial practices, succeed though only to a degree that varies with the skill and credentials of the instructor. Furthermore, there exists no wealth of martial experts who are also theatre proponents. Extant examples of such programs and instructors are thus quite rare and likely to stay so.

Richard Nichols writes in Chapter Seven of *Asian Martial Arts in Actor Training* of *tai chi* as an actor's *Way* (44). But *tai chi* is not one style but many and, in any one of its styles, it requires many years of study for mastery. This art, like all martial arts, is embedded in a complex social and cultural framework, unique to it, which cannot be easily, nor always profitably, stripped away. Again, the problem is not in the values of *tai chi* as an actor training tool (as Robert Benedetti, no doubt would quickly point out (23) but in how the general run of actor-trainees and actor trainers will avail themselves of it.

There are a plethora of officially recognized *aikido* styles and systems worldwide with a wide array of stated goals, methods, and trappings. No less a martial scholar than Donn Draeger(one of the first truly scholarly Western explicators and exponents of Asian martial disciplines and involved particularly with those of Japanese origins) wrote, back in 1974, that

> The word *aiki-do* is a generic term coined in the twentieth century. It is representative of a group of modern disciplines that have broad aims, such as spiritual discipline, religious cultism, physical education, self-defense, recreational activity, and sport. More than thirty different sects of *aiki-do* exist today[This was in Japan in 1974]... It is most unrealistic to take the position that there is only one *aiki-do*...(*Modern Bujutsu and Budo*, 137).

Each of these *aikido* sects or styles require years of disciplined study for basic mastery. *Aikido*, depending on instructor or style, will immerse the student in a complex and specific world view, complete with all sorts of Japanese and, sometimes, pseudo-Japanese trappings which are more or less part and parcel of the art.

Without those trappings, just as with *tai chi*, *aikido* begins to lose its unique character and become something else. Martial aspects become deeply submerged into theatrical ones. And this is absolutely essential, necessary, and positive if one is, in the words of Zarrilli, to train actors in part through martial arts. In other words, true integration transforms martial study into something new with emergent qualities not present before. It does not just translate it. Syncretism is not integration. A martial system, truly integrated into movement training for actors, is simply no longer that distinct martial discipline.

It ought to be clear by now that the saturation of martial arts training for actors creates a formidably complex set of pedagogical, practical and technical problems for the average college, university or conservatory movement/acting teacher to overcome despite expertise or inexperience. Martial arts may be a valuable set of resources. In its sheer complexity, it is a resource of widely varied value and availability for most acting instructors and their students.

"Martial arts," writes noted martial scholar John Donohue and his colleague Kim T. Taylor, "is a term useful for the general public, but not for serious scholars of these systems (unless they are referring to the stereotyped ideas of the general public)" (13). Martial scholars of the status of Hunter B. Armstrong acknowledge the term's currency in popular usage to mean any fighting art but especially those of Asian origin (Donohue and Taylor, 13). In attempting to give Asia primacy through such uses of the term it becomes obvious that

> writers are attempting to make an argument for a East/West dichotomy in fighting arts [and, not incidentally, spiritual and artistic disciplines] that gives Asian culture the moral and aesthetic high ground: Asians are profound, insightful, and refined...as opposed to Western warriors...It is an interesting argument, revealing perhaps more of the predisposition of the researchers than of a grasp of history. As fashionable as it might be to portray the Western military tradition as a vast, technological juggernaut, it is not an accurate assessment of history. Personal weapons were *the* most important element in combat in European history for millennia....

The argument for some sort of cultural aesthetic sense in Asia alone that led the members of its various societies to emphasize personal weapons requiring great skill is charming, romantic, and wrong. It is however, an idea that is extremely difficult to eradicate...All fighting is dirty, destructive, and practical. Complex social, historical and economic reasons account for the disparate development of fighting systems between East and West, not the intrinsic moral superiority of Asian culture (Donohue and Taylor, 13-14).

Martial arts, wonderful as they are, possess no special powers or properties, are, in fact, very straightforward and mundane affairs though they often are couched in metaphysical language and dogma. One does not have to know *kung fu* to teach a stage combat student how to deliver a theatrically effective kick to the head.

Incorporating martial arts style *into unarmed stage combat is the goal of Peter Noble (left) and Paul Burke at the BNSCW VI. Photo by Scot Mann.*

The real world of martial arts is no more like David Carradine's *Kung Fu* T. V. shows than the world of theatre is like a Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney movie. Martial arts exotica and esoterica has flowed down through the sixties' radical search for all that was alternative (through the popularity of Bruce Lee, Jackie Chan, Chuck Norris, and Steven Seagal) and into a mythology of the East that has often passed for understanding. Martial arts exotica and esoterica has, in fact become a barrier to understanding.

An integral approach to martial and theatrical disciplines demands that so-called martial terminology be clarified and demystified too. To do that requires first the realization that the native language of a martial discipline has simply no special powers or significance, that all history needs constant reevaluation, and that jargon in all its forms is the enemy of clarity.

These complex, foreign signs and signifiers, this kind of jargon, offer *translations* of martial experience. They by no means automatically lead, in or of themselves, to *transformations*. Martial training is certainly mystical, that is the student is asked to immerse himself, through direct experience, in questions that may have no simple answers. Yet, dogma founded upon belief alone and shrouded in obscure language has no justifiable role for the intellectually responsible student or teacher beyond a pleasure in something exotic. Acting students can do without fancy foreign terminology when ideas like centering or posture will do just fine. Zarrilli nicely sums up the case.

> I believe that *better* practice results from being clear, articulate, and concise about what we are doing and why we are doing it—and from taking into account the implicit ideological and power dynamics at work in both intercultural borrowing and the pedagogical process. I intentionally demystify practice of non-western techniques so that the students do not project romantic misconceptions about the "orient" or "mysticism" onto the bodily-based materiality of the hard work of daily practice. Even though I have studied extensively with traditional "gurus" for a number of years, I intentionally do not construct myself as a guru but rather as a particularly positioned Western teacher who has had a particular set of experiences studying in India and the United States. I place responsibility for learning on the student. [See the quote from Onuma Hideharu below for an extension of this last point.] ("Between Theory[es]" 115).

One might be well-advised to follow Zarrilli's lead and demystify martial-based terminology and pedagogy wherever and whenever possible.

> By supposing that all Japanese fighting men formed a single group united by common principles and ideals it is easy to ignore the fact that throughout Japanese history, men of combat have stemmed from different social strata, entered military service for different reasons, utilized different weapons (and thus different fighting techniques, strategies, and tactics), been guided by dissimilar ethics,

Unarmed martial arts *was taught by Scot Mann to Peter Noble (left) and Paul Burke at the BNSCW VI. Photo by Scot Mann.*

> enjoyed different rights and privileges, and exercised different political positions. Because these are group differences they are not to be ignored. And in the interest of accuracy, they must not be lumped together under broad generalizations (Draeger, *Classical Bujutsu*, 16).

Very few *Samurai* pursued martial training in the *budo* sense. They were too busy making a living. During wartime most *Samurai* relied on basic training and personal experience to survive combat. During peacetime they worked or managed farms, ran the country, engaged in trade, and otherwise attempted to make a living. All members of the warrior class were not martial artists. Becoming a martial artist has been and will always be a matter only for those with the leisure to permit it.

The word *Samurai* itself is problematic for martial historians. Donn Draeger says that "it is an error to refer to all warriors as *Samurai* or to assume that the *Samurai*, as a group, ruled the nation of Japan either during its periods of military government or at any other time" (*Classical Bujutsu*, 16). *Samurai* literally means one who serves and was used to designate only a specific set of ranks within the warrior class (*buke*) during specific, limited periods of history. The use of terms like *Samurai* has become so shrouded in myth and magic as to make them next to useless in anything but popular discourse and as metonym, or trope.

The retro-romance associated with mythic martial arts goes on and on. The notion that the Japanese swordsman's body was "directly exposed and inviting attack" is romantic, Asian-centric, nonsense with no basis in historical reality (*Asian Martial Arts*, 103). "The warrior left his body exposed to the opponent. His goal was to let the opponent make a wrong move and react decisively with his own blow. In combat one cannot worry about death or injury" (*Asian Martial Arts*, 105). Avoiding weakness or *suki* in posture is essential in classical and modern swordsmanship; unless, in classical times, the swordsman felt suicidal or, in modern times, the swordsman wishes to lose every match. *Suki* is a matter of tiny increments of time and space and few who have not practiced an authentic form of classical swordsmanship will understand just how tiny. The Japanese sword is handled with either one or two hands not because of some strange idea that it is braver to face the enemy frontally but because the earliest aristocratic soldiers in Japan were archers first and swordsmen second. When arrows were spent or the last bowstring broken then both hands could be used on the sword.

It is likewise unlikely that any decent *kendo* player would exchange a flurry of "ten or fifteen blows in second" unless they were showing off (*Asian Martial Arts*, 102). The referee looks for that one telling blow and he and teacher look harshly upon such waste of energy. One blow, correctly done, is all it takes.

All martial claims and historical assertions ought to be subject to such scrutiny. Stage combat has already been clarified and historical connections solidified by careful reference to evidence and historical sources weighed and examined carefully. This work is ongoing. One must do the same with Asian martial history and not settle for the esotericism, jingoism and hagiography that often passes as history.

When it is clear that one's grasp of (and subsequent communication) of a principle in one's native language is somehow not adequate alone, then, and only then, should one make substantive use of non-native terminology. There are no *aikido* terms or *tai chi* terms as such just Japanese or Chinese words and phrases with no special or inherent powers. Furthermore, Japanese and Chinese, are ideographic and inflected languages and are thus very difficult to render precisely into English without close grasp of the written characters involved and a deeply cultural and contextual comprehension.

Lexicography and its use is, of course, not the only area where martial arts as esoterica or exotica, as mythic level belief system, becomes problematic. As a special badge of authority and skill the black belt is simply a twentieth century myth which actually confers no universally recognized status upon teachers or students outside of specific, limited, and quite prosaic contests. Belt rankings were first invented by the Japanese at the turn of the century. Kano Jigoro, the father of modern *judo* and Funakoshi Gichin, the father of modern *karatedo* were both instrumental in the adoption of belt rankings. Ranking served, in part, as a method of ordering and ranking public school pupils. In the then-new Japanese public schools, modeled after European and American school systems, students would take *kendo*, *karate-do*, and *judo* much like today's students take physical education. Belt rankings, then and now, represent only levels of achievement within specific organizations. They have no universal meaning.

With martial myth and dogma set aside, the simple hard work at the heart of martial disciplines, comes to the fore. Martial art simply has no inherently elevated status, is in fact, just another set of tools among tools. One of Japan's preeminent martial artists, archer Onuma Hideharu, has written

> *Kyudo* [Japanese archery] cannot really change us, we can only change ourselves. *Kyudo* is a metaphor for life. Shooting is merely a reflection of our true selves; how you are in life is how you will be in shooting. Someone who is sloppy and careless will have problems with the shooting procedure. One who is competitive and aggressive will compete with himself and others and fight with the bow and arrow. People who have a tendency to focus their attention on one subject at the expense of all else will focus on hitting the target and ignore form and etiquette. Excuse-makers will make excuses. Boasters will boast. *Kyudo* itself cannot change all this, but it can make these things much more obvious to us. It then becomes our responsibility to recognize the problems and make the necessary changes (Hideharu, 144)

Elevate them though one might, martial arts cannot magically create discipline. It is true that the more disciplines one practices, the more discipline may grow in oneself. It is not true that martial art will have a universal or automatic effect on the actor's level of discipline, even among those rare ones who will commit some

effort, money, and time to them. There are simply too many variables involved. Again, an actor will get from martial art training only a context-specific and limited set of outcomes. For some it may be just the ticket—given, again, the right level of commitment and discipline. Others will never even go into the *dojo* in the first place. Some will find the elevated value claims of martial disciplines or teachers (or National Stage Combat Workshops) off-putting. Some will just believe (and they are, of course always partly right) that these elevated claims are just too good to be true. Martial arts, including stage combat, then become simply unattainable or merely unworthy. Reduction in elevationism brings martial practices like stage combat down to earth where one may more clearly see them for what they are and more readily integrate them in the broader range of theatrical practice.

The last concern is a complex one that can be expressed quite simply: Zen Buddhism and martial practices are not identical. Any assertion or implication that Zen and martial arts are one is at best an oversimplification and at worse misrepresentation and myth, pure and simple. Even so, the idea that Zen Buddhism is somehow directly and automatically related in some verifiable way to martial practices has proven almost impossible to eradicate.

Where fighting men were in fact Buddhist they tended to practice more practical and action-oriented Buddhist forms. For instance, *Tenshin Shoden atori Shinto-ryu*, founded c. 1390, has maintained a relationship with True Speech or *Shingon* Buddhism. The basic faith of *Shingon* is that humans can be liberated at this very moment and that meditative rituals and practices of mind, speech/breath, and body can secure better functioning for the practitioner right now.

For perfectly obvious reasons Japanese warriors must have had a wide array of experiences with Zen Buddhism. It was for various periods, the state religion. It was, at different times, fashionable and unfashionable. The fact is Zen Buddhism has shared an influence over Japanese (and consequently martial) culture with many other forms and schools of Buddhism (*Soto Zen*, *Rinzai Zejh*, *Shingon*, *Tendaik*, *Kegon*, various forms of Pure Land), classical and neo-Confusianism, mainland Chinese *Taoism*, indigenous *Shinto*, and even, from 1549, Catholicism and, later, Protestant Christianity. The trappings of modern *karatedo*, though certainly influenced by Zen, are mostly *Shintoist.*

Few martial proponents of Zen are actually deeply knowledgeable of Zen Buddhism. Yet popular consciousness suggests that martial artist means Zen adept. With all due respect to his experiences in China, the late professor A. C. Scott ("Reflections on the Background of the Performing and Martial Arts of East Asia," Chapter 2 *Asian Martial Arts in Actor Training*), distorts the role of Zen in performing arts and martial culture.

Scott discusses Zen as if it were a singular phenomenon. Then, mostly by leaps of faith, he links Zen with *Kabuki*, *Noh*, Indian dance, *tai chi*, gesture on the Asian stage, and so on. The problem is that he is writing throughout of a particular spirit deduced from a generalized understanding. There is nowhere in his account any substantive or substantiated connection made between Zen, martial arts or performing arts. This kind of generalization is clearest in the statement that "The history of physical exercise developed as mental discipline did not originate with Zen, but its emphasis on action to obtain a freedom of the mind became peculiarly applicable to the actor" (Scott 34).

Scott's efforts to link Zen Buddhism with a general Asian aesthetic covering martial arts and performing arts fail on several levels.

Practicing blocks, *actors Philip d'Orleans (left) and Rosa Nicolas combine Eastern philosophy and movement with stage combat. Photo by Scot Mann.*

For one thing, very few Asian performing artists, given the rigors of those disciplines, have been or are martial artists. *Wushu*, the Chinese stage combat-like performance art, is a theatrical discipline first. The fact that Beijing Opera actress Yen Lu Wong spoke to Robert Benedetti about her prolonged search for tranquility (*Asian Martial Arts*, 10) or, as suggested by Scott (*Asian Martial Arts in Actor Training*, 10) to "stand still while not standing still" by no means implies a Zen connection nor a martial one. Wong was not, according to the essay in question, a martial artist at all. That martial artists or theatrical artists might indeed be questing after the same things, again, suggests nothing more than that itself. Zen or Zenistic practices is not the only way to get to tranquility or concentration; Wong's search for tranquility does not link her with Zen.

Scott relies on implied connections between Buddhism, Asian performance art, and martial disciplines. Zen Buddhist thought linked to martial practice must first and at the very least account for Buddha's recorded admonitions against violence and killing. Some few, in Japan and elsewhere, have successfully done just that—many teachers of modern *kyudo* and *iaido* for instance. The simple fact is that most Japanese, Chinese, and Korean martial teachers do not promote any particular religion or spiritual practice.

Then from where do these ideas come? They may originate in the latter writings of D. T. Suzuki. Suzuki was the first popularizer of Zen in the west and his ideas have stuck. It was he that promulgated the modern generalization, beginning in the 1930s, that Zen and swordsmanship (and by extension, martial arts in general) are one.

But the vote it turns out, was not all in. In his review of two books in the Summer 1998 issue of *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review*—Brian Victoria's *Zen at War* and Iris Chang's *The Rape of Nanking*—Josh Baran neatly sums up the problem.

> Chang recounts the following incident:
> "In teaching new Japanese soldiers how to behead Chinese civilians [*The Rape of Nanking*], Tominaga Shozo recalled how Second Lieutenant Tanaka instructed his group. 'Heads should be cut off like this,' he said, unsheathing his sword. He scooped water from a bucket with a dipper, then poured it over the blade. Swishing off the water, he raised his sword in a long arc. Standing behind the prisoner, Tanaka steadied himself, legs spread apart, and cut off the man's head with a shout, 'Yo!' The head flew more than a meter away. Blood spurted up in two fountains from the body and sprayed into the hole.

The scene was so appalling that I felt I couldn't breathe."

With this image in mind, consider the following passage that D.T. Suzuki wrote at the time of the Nanking massacre:

"The art of swordsmanship distinguishes between the sword that kills and the sword that gives life. The one that is used by a technician cannot go any further than killing....The case is altogether different with the one who is compelled to lift the sword. For it is really not he but the sword itself that does the killing. He had no desire to harm anybody, but the enemy appears and makes himself a victim. It is as though the sword automatically performs its function of justice, which is the function of mercy. The swordsman turns into an artist of the first grade, engaged in producing a work of art of genuine originality."

In the light of Nanking, Suzuki's writing is grotesque. The spiritual justification for killing and mass brutality is undeniably the worst perversion of religion imaginable. It is truly deplorable that Zen could devolve from the great meditation tradition of Bodhisatva 50 Path into a glorification of slaughter as a great work of art (Baran 95-98).

In the hands of some, spirituality can easily be coopted to allow murder and "the search for selflessness and the art within" (Nichols, 56) can easily become the search for selfishness and the art of winning. Calling a certain practice a martial art cannot in itself raise that practice above mere violence.

In conclusion martial arts for actors has reached a developmental stage out of which something new must grow. That emergent entity will integrate martial arts (meaning specific disciplines from around the world and not some populist, mythic, generic, and necessarily fuzzy notion of a mysterious Asian practice) with theatrical arts in new and exciting ways. That this transcending and including of the martial arts by the theatrical is already well underway is clear in Michael Chin's 1998 NSCW report and David Boushey's 1999 Advanced Workshop promotion, the appearance of *aikido* and *tai chi chuan* in the offerings of regional stage combat workshops, as well as the ongoing work of integrating historical and modern fighting methods with the theatre arts which one calls stage combat. Nurtured and explicated by people like Zarrilli, Nichols, Richmond, Lengfelder, Scott, Harrison-Pepper, Turner, Tsubaki, Rupkalvis, Burt and Doersch martial arts for actors has begun to fill the worldspace created for it. *Tai chi* and *aikido* can now be found integrated into college theatre programs and SAFD regional workshops. Future developments and maturity will of necessity grow into a new-founded and new-formed worldspace, the worldspace that is being created. In that space one will move beyond current practices while deepening understanding into new and emergent territories of thought and practice. That development will transcend mere syncretism of exotic sounding words and ideas and reach towards true integration. It will abandon romanticism, mystification, and myth in favor of something deeper.

And it will do this in several ways. It will be, in the light of serious study and reflection and responsible discourse, adopted, adapted and fully integrated into the work of the movement studio by martial artists who also train actors. Contemporary stage combat and China's *wushu* become worthy models, fully integrating martial practices into theatrical practices. Its exotic and esoteric sounding languages will be lovingly augmented with clear, empirical, experiential injunction, data-illumination, and verification. Shallowness will be its enemy and depth its ally; its highest ideals will be pursued into its depth and shallowness supplanted wherever and whenever possible.

Fin

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longswords:

In History and on Stage

Part II: A Fighting System

by Jay Wurts

Editor's Note:{Part I of this article explored the development of two-handed sword technique as derived from such fencing masters such as Mener, Liechtenauer, and Talhoffer, augmented by nineteenth century bayonet fighting methods—the direct descendant, and beneficiary, of centuries of longsword, polearm, and quarterstaff fighting experience.]

Swordplay with true two-handed weapons (swords with blades longer than thirty-six inches and handles longer than ten inches) blends aspects of traditional broadsword with the techniques of polearm and short-form quarterstaff—the exact mix determines the distance separating the combatants.

Figure 1 (Photos provided by Jay Wurts)

For example, a typical two-handed duel would begin with the combatants in the full-sword position (both hands on the handle in broadsword fashion) using one of a dozen or so basic wards, or stances, designed to close certain lines of attack and create opportunities for others. As with rapier and dagger, one fighter's stance often triggered a change of stance by the other. These preliminaries would continue until one combatant spotted an opening and attacked with a full-sword cut or thrust. The defender then responded with the appropriate defensive move or counterattacked immediately, hoping to spoil the opponent's technique and land a wounding or killing blow.

Eventually, one fighter would beat the other's time and move inside the arc of a full-sword cut. At this point, it would be extremely dangerous for either fighter to maintain the full-sword grip—it is simply too difficult to maneuver a large crosshilt effectively at very close quarters with both hands on the handle. Both fighters would, therefore, choke up on the weapon and assume the half-sword grip, putting the left hand on the blunted (or leather covered) *ricasso* and the right hand on the pommel. In this grip, the left hand serves as a pivot for the right, which uses the sword's long handle to quickly maneuver the blade. This produced a thrust-oriented fighting style, although cuts were still possible on all lines. Naturally, as distance decreased, margins for error decreased too, and opportunities for punches, kicks, grapples, and disarms multiplied.

Finally, if the fight continued, the opponents often found themselves chest-to-chest, at least momentarily. Here, the grip was shortened to the extreme, leading to what might be called quarter-sword exchanges. The left hand moved up the blade to grasp the bottom of the foible while the right hand slid up the handle to its normal (full-sword) grip. A variety of short-form quarterstaff methods were available using a quarterstaff with teeth: a formidable dagger to the left; a heavy-knobbed club to the right. This phase could be very violent and brief: a fusillade of stabs, jabs, cuts, and pommel strikes mixed with kicks, punches, and throws. Typically, one or both fighters retreated (or pushed off) to re-establish half- or full-sword combat distance.

Even this quick sketch of a typical longsword fight shows many opportunities for creating theatrical excitement. An examination of each of the four main phases shows their techniques and dramatic potential: Initial Stances, Full Sword, Half Sword, and Quarter Sword.

Figure 2

INITIAL WARDS AND STANCES

Twelve basic wards (called *grundstellung,* or stances), all using the full-sword grip, were catalogued by German swordmasters.[1] Some of these stances are also reflected in the Italian manual of Marozzo.[2] In the German system, the sequence of stances begins with the point of the sword at its highest position and ends with the tip nearest the ground—although certain wards in between these extremes do not follow this convention. Some old masters even use the same name for different stances: Liechtenauer uses *shrankhut* (stance 12) for Mener's *Ochs* (stance 2) but it is

the stance—not the name or number—that counts. For convenience, Mener's system is used.

Stance 1: *Tag* (*Day*): The sword points roughly at the noontime sun. It is a very open stance that invites an attack to the body while threatening a vertical cut (See Figure 1).

Stance 2: *Ochs* (*Ox*): The sword is held further back (slightly lowering the tip), in an even deeper invitation for a mid-line attack while threatening a vertical or inverted cut (See Figure 2).

Stance 3: *Olber* (*High* or *Over*): Since the blade overhangs the shoulder, covering the high line, vertical or horizontal cuts are easy to launch from this ward (See Figure 3).

Stance 4: *Phlug* (*Plow*): This ward matches the standard stage combat en garde used in broadsword. It is a strong defensive ward. All parries are easily reached and the sword is easy to manage in evasions. It is less apt for attack (See Figure 4).

Stance 5: *Zornhut* (*Wrath*): Because of the sword's aggressive over-the-shoulder position, it is a good preparation for a variety of cuts (See Figure 5).

Stance 6: *Langort* (*Extension*): This is exactly how it makes the fighter look and feel: overextended. Offensively, it is a weak ward, leaving little for the weapon to do but drop into a parry or move further back (perhaps during an evasion) in preparation for a cut (See Figure 6).

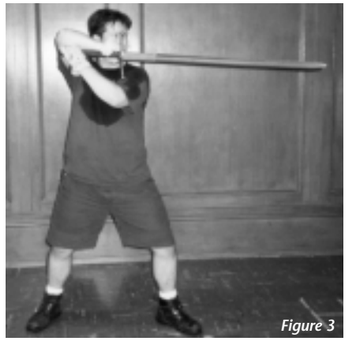


Figure 3


Figure 4


Figure 5


Figure 6


Figure 7


Figure 8

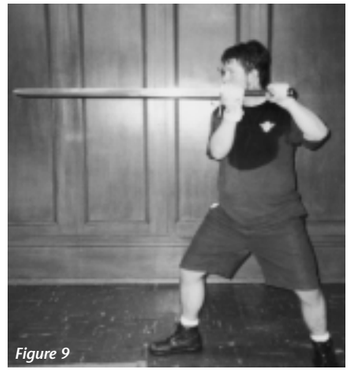


Figure 9


Figure 10

Stance 7: *Wechsel* (*Change*): This is a versatile and dangerous ward. Ostensibly it closes the lower inside line and invites an attack on the right side—but all are easily parried and a thrust is a serious threat (See Figure 7).

Stance 8: *Nebenhut*: Here is another deceptive ward. The close guard protects the right leg while inviting an attack anywhere on the defender's inside line. It is a powerful platform, though, for launching inverted cuts or switching from the outside- to the inside-line abruptly (See Figure 8).

Stance 9: *Hangetort* (*Hanging Extension*): This is an aggressive ward that threatens a high thrust and many kinds of cuts on the inside line (See Figure 9).

Stance 10: *Schlussel* (*Key*): It is the only ward using the flat of the blade. It threatens a thrust to any target and closes the outside line on defense (See Figure 10).

Stance 11: *Eynhorn*: *Unicorn* does for the outside line what Stance 9, *Hangetort*, did for the inside line (See Figure 11).

Stance 12: *Shrankhut* (*Barrier* or *Closed Guard*): This ward closes the line on virtually all attacks

while making possible all outside line cuts and high-to-low thrusts (See Figure 12).

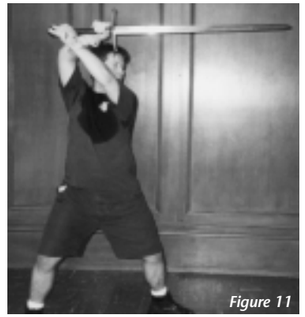


Figure 11

Which ward one chooses will depend on each character's aggressiveness and physical orientation on the stage: not all stances show the sword and the swordfighter best from all angles.

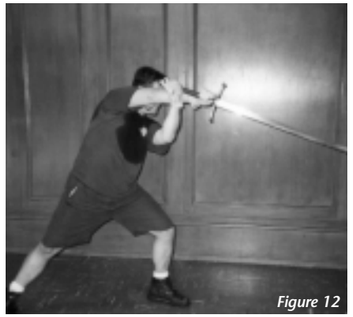


Figure 12

FULL-SWORD TECHNIQUE

Full-sword fencing with two-handed weapons closely follows standard broadsword practice and requires little comment.[3] Three factors bear special mention when the longer weapon is used.

Space. The combatants need plenty of space in full sword, especially for the really big *beidenhanders*: those with blades exceeding forty inches. This includes vertical as well as horizontal clearance—one reason many swordfights (indoors, in narrow streets, or in battle ranks) probably began in half-sword position.

Weight. Even well-balanced longswords require a bit more muscle in full-sword than their shorter, lighter cousins. actor/combatants will tire more quickly—and fatigue is the enemy of safety—therefore, phrases in full-sword should be short and mixed with other grips.

Geometry. It is importatnt to remember, everything on a longsword is bigger, not just the blade. The *quillons* are wider, the handle is longer, and flukes (if present), can accidentally scratch or poke a careless combatant. Longsword fighters spent long hours with their weapon, prompting one fifteenth-century master to tell his students to, "Practice every day or the sword will be dangerous to its handler."[4] Today's performers should be just as careful.

HALF-SWORD TECHNIQUE

Three basic stances, or guards, seem most useful for half-sword engagements, whether the fight is started in this ward or the combatants simply adopt it during a pause. The first two wards, with the left foot leading, come straight from the nineteenth century bayonet fighting manuals but are also reflected in Talhoffer. The third is derived from full-sword Stance 7 as the best of several options for holding the weapon on the left side while the right foot leads.

Middle Guard. This is half-sword's bread-and-butter stance. It closes the outside line and is somewhat analogous to a single-handed sword guard in three (See Figure 13). The left foot leads, toe pointed at the opponent, with the right foot at ninety-degrees, heels roughly in line. The body is somewhat open to the opponent: The shoulders are *not* aligned with the heels. The tip of the weapon angles across the chest, giving some protection (and threat) to the inside line. The left hand is in pronation on the *ricasso* (thumb toward the *quillons*—do not use a rifle grip); the right hand is on the pommel, *not* the handle. One should hold the sword somewhat out from the body with the right hand/pommel just about belt level. Legs are slightly bent in a springy horse stance. The fighter's center of gravity is fairly low but not as low as in full-sword.

High Guard. This stance is similar to Middle Guard except the weapon is raised (the hilt is approximately the same height as the head), with the blade angled slightly downward—the tip should drop no lower than the level of the left elbow (See Figure 14). Given the very long blade, this ward effectively closes both high and low lines, the inside as well as the outside line. The only real drawbacks are its more limited attack options and the effort needed to hold the weapon in this somewhat awkward position.

Low/Reverse Guard. This ward is useful when, for some reason, the weapon must be held on the left side of the body or the right foot must be forward (See Figure 15). Raising the sword can produce a more threatening stance, but experiments show this threat is mostly hollow. The pommel is available for strikes in either position, and it just does not take that much more time to cut effectively from the lower position. Inverted cuts are even faster. Parries on a backward pass or *volte* are speedy and can protect all quadrants. Besides, the sword is held a lot easier when the arms are low. In this stance, the right foot leads with the left foot at ninety degrees and the heels roughly aligned. The shoulders should twist slightly to the right (*not* aligned with the heels), opening the chest. The blade angles downward to the rear. The combatant should make sure the tip does not touch the ground.


Figure 13

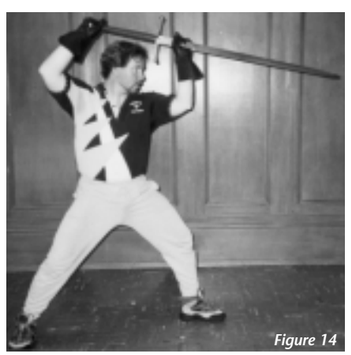


Figure 14


Figure 15


Figure 16

Experiments with these stances show that Middle Guard is by far the easiest to maintain and most flexible in attack and defense. Quickly raising the pommel provides instant protection for low-line attacks. High Guard looks dramatic and is very threatening, and the tip is somewhat easier to manipulate for *coupés* and disengages because the right arm is less extended. However, its bark is worse than its bite. High-to-low thrusts are quick but easy to parry, and stop or lance thrusts (as well as most cuts) are almost impossible.


Figure 17

Parries. Parries on the inside-, outside-, high- and low- lines, as well as hanging parries, are all possible in half-sword. From Middle Guard, prime is reached by raising the hilt (thereby lowering the blade) and rotating the weapon to the left with the true edge out—usually accompanied by a backward pass (See Figure 16). From prime Parry 2 is reached by simply crossing the weapon in front of the body until the true edge faces right and (usually) passing back (See Figure 17). From Parry 2 one reaches Parry 3 by lowering the pommel, thereby raising the tip. The right hand follows a slightly convex path—going out at the beginning of the descent then pulling back as the motion is completed. This allows the defending blade to sweep the body from the centerline outward as it moves to meet the attack (See Figure 18). From Parry 3 the actor/combatant finds Parry 4 by rotating his shoulders to the left while making a backward pass or *volte* using the left foot, leaving the true edge facing the left (See Figure 19). A false-edge Parry 4 (called 4A) is quicker, but weaker, requiring only a direct lateral movement of the sword across the chest and no footwork (See Figure 20).


Figure 18


Figure 19

Parry 5 is reached from Middle Guard by retreating (to keep the left foot forward) or passing back and raising the blade to the standard broad-sword Parry 5 position. In half-sword, though, the left hand should be slightly to the right of the head to avoid catching the attacking blade on the fingers (See Figure 21). Parry 5A (or 9) is reached from Middle Guard by raising the pommel and transferring it across the face to the left side of (and just above) the head while pushing the left hand upward, ending in left hand supination. In the correct end position, the right elbow will be resting on the inside of the left wrist, with the right forearm more or less aligned with the handle (See Figure 22). The left hand is slightly to the left of the head to avoid accidental contact of the fingers with the attacking blade.


Figure 20


Figure 22

Hanging parries to the left and right can be made using similar arm and blade motions with standard evasion footwork: right for the Hanging 5; left for the Hanging 5A (or 9). In both cases, the blade is angled slightly downward, roughly aligned with the body, above and slightly in front of the outstretched leg.


Figure 21

Parry 7 in half-sword is a false-edge parry. Like the false-edge variant to Parry 4 (Parry 4A), it is quicker to achieve than prime, but is not quite as strong. To reach 7 from Middle Guard, the pommel is raised as in prime, but instead of *volting* or passing back with the left foot, the combatant simply passes the sword to the left until the false edge is in the correct end position (See Figure 23).

Attacks. Cuts to the left, right, diagonal, vertical, and inverted are easy to make in half sword once the actor/combatant has mastered the basic motion: one leads with the right hand and follows through with the left. In essence, this means bringing the pommel forward (which moves the blade to the rear) as the preparation, followed by the action of advancing the left hand (as pivot) while snapping the blade into final position with the right hand. For example, from Middle Guard, the combatant cuts to the opponent's left (high or low) by raising the pommel with the right hand, bringing it across the chest to the left (see Figure 24), then pushing the left hand slightly forward while crisply pulling the pommel towards himself (See Figure 25). This delivers a true-edge cut to the target area, the power of which (as well as ease of delivery) is increased by passing forward as the blade advances.


Figure 23


Figure 24

To cut to the opponent's right (high or low) from Middle Guard, one passes forward (or passes back) to assume the Low/Reverse Guard in which the pommel is now leading. Technically, this puts the combatant in position to begin the cut, but for stage combat, one may want to give his partner an additional preparation by raising the pommel further or pushing it more to the left (See Figure 26).

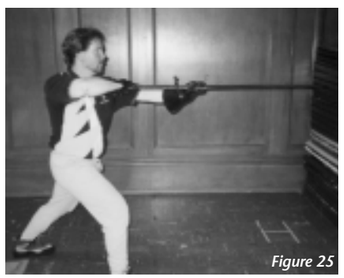


Figure 25


Figure 26

Figure 27

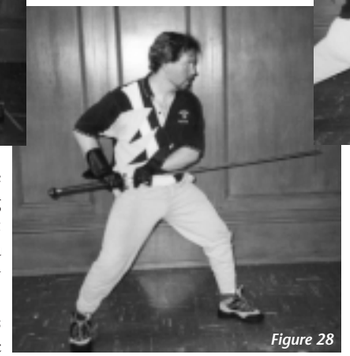


Figure 28

Figure 29

To execute the cut, the combatant pulls the pommel crisply to his stomach while pushing his left hand forward, letting the *ricasso* pivot under the palm (See Figure 27). This delivers a true edge cut to the target area—again, aided by a forward pass as the blade advances.

Vertical and diagonal (high to low) cuts are delivered on either side using the same basic technique: one just raises his left hand higher to create the desired arc.

In each case, though, it is *not* the force of the left hand pushing that creates the power of the cut, but the right hand snapping the pommel toward oneself using the left hand as a pivot. This principle applies to any sport where a human arm uses a mechanical extension to strike an object, as in tennis, golf, baseball, or polo. In these sports, the power of the stroke (or drive, or swing) is determined mainly by timing, not brute strength. Maximum energy is imparted to the object the instant the wrist of the hand guiding the racket, club, bat, or mallet snaps into position. In stage combat, this snapping motion stops short and outside of the targeted body part, but the combat energy it simulates is quite convincing.

Although half-sword cuts look exotic and add variety to a fight, most two-handed (and polearm, and bayonet) combat involves thrusts. From Middle or High Guard, thrusts are delivered by simply extending the point to the target area, then crisply lunging or advancing. Some fight directors like to precede the extension with a brief preparation in the opposite direction, but extension alone can suffice as the preparation, provided the *action* (lunge or advance) does not begin until the defender reacts. For best historical simulation, one withdraws the point quickly as soon as the lunge or advance is complete, even if the attack is parried or results in a choreographed wound or kill. Remember, half-sword (bayonet- or spear-type fighting) is a darting, parry-and-riposte affair. The actor/combatant should save those languorous, transfixing thrusts for the *coup de grace* or a surprise kill, such as a stop thrust or lance thrust (see below).

Finally, pommel strikes are easily choreographed using the half-sword grip. The attacker's hand already covers the pommel, and most half-sword parries on the left side leave the hilt well positioned for a counterstrike.

Special Moves. One of the big differences between full- and half-sword grips is the latter's astonishing ability to control the point. In High Guard, for example, it is quick and easy to *coupé*, disengage, change beat, and even change engagement (such as drop to Middle Guard) before launching an attack(moves that are less practical in full-sword). Indeed, the best training for half-sword proficiency is probably small sword, where point work, yield parries, and quick, flat *ripostes* are standard fare. To get a feel for these quicker techniques using the bigger weapon, one must practice smallsword point control drills—such as inscribing a series of diminishing, perfect circles in the air—using the half-sword grip (left hand as a pivot with the right hand controlling all the motion).

One trick taught by Sir Richard Burton illustrates this technique. When coming on guard against an experienced opponent (including a swordsman or a lancer), he suggests keeping the tip in motion, weaving a pair of circles (right to left)—particularly if the opponent is using similar tactics on you.[5] This makes it harder for the opponent to plan an attack and, with the mass of the blade already in motion, it creates a pseudo universal, circular parry that can save the day.

Pris de fer in half-sword is another matter. Unless the longsword is equipped with flukes, *croisés* and *glissades* involve some risk to the left hand; and binds and *envelopments* must be made carefully. However, these moves become easier with practice and have definite value in half-sword. For example, one traditional function of *pris de fer* is going from defense to offense while closing the gap between combatants. As historical fight manuals show, a defensive move in half sword is often followed by a punch or grapple, or changing to the quarter-sword grip. All these involve releasing the left hand anyway; therefore a carefully planned *pris de fer* can keep the fingers safe while morphing to these other moves.

Feints were also used liberally in half-sword engagements. These fell into three categories: stamping the lead foot to distract the opponent (*appel*); retreating unexpectedly; and false targeting. If successful, the *appel* caused the opponent to instinctively begin a parry, opening a line of attack. Similarly, if an over-eager opponent hastily followed his opponent's unexpected retreat, they could fall victim to a stop thrust. False targeting was probably used most often and was the hardest to get right. It simply meant threatening one part of the body then re-directing the thrust when the defender moved to parry. In half sword, like smallsword, deceptions and *doublés* work well as feints since the point is easy to disengage without losing the momentum.

Finally, the most spectacular half-sword attack of all was the so-called lance thrust or lunge out, which was used to transfix an over-eager opponent while he was apparently out of distance. To perform a lance thrust from the Middle Guard position, the combatants prepare by sliding the hilt backward until the right hand is on the handle just below the *quillons* in its normal full-sword (or broadsword) grip (See Figure 28). Now the attacker passes forward into a deep lunge while simultaneously extending the sword with

the right hand as far as possible toward the target (See Figure 29). It takes a bit of muscle to hold a two-hander with one arm at full extension, but bracing the long handle under the forearm, throwing the left arm back, and keeping the body upright makes the move a little easier.

Obviously, this was a tricky maneuver even under the best of circumstances. Like a rapier *passata sotto*, it was an all-or-nothing attack that either stopped the fight or left the attacker extremely vulnerable. On stage, safety can be enhanced by bringing the blade to full extension, as a preparation, *before* moving into the passing lunge. Even so, defender reaction and the attacker's point control are crucial, so the move should be trusted only to experienced actor-combatants.

QUARTER-SWORD TECHNIQUE

If half-sword distance was lost, both fighters choked up further into what might be called the *quarter-sword* grip. Basically, this is the same as a reinforced broadsword parry, with the left hand moved out to the bottom of the foible and the right hand moved up to just below the *quillons*. This grip works much like short-form quarterstaff, whose techniques are directly applicable—but with one big difference: this quarterstaff has teeth. *Quillons* and flukes (if present) also make formidable weapons (and can be safety hazards on stage) while the blade between the hands can be used to block attacks or force the opponent off balance.

Wards. It is unlikely that a combatant would choose to start a longsword fight in quarter sword, but it could happen if a defender is taken by surprise. More typically, fighters will momentarily pass through quarter sword after closing the distance from half sword and before resuming another stance. Even so, some fast and exciting exchanges can be choreographed in quarter sword. For these moves, standard short-form quarterstaff technique is appropriate: performed either open (chest-to-chest), for a slash-and-bash style of fight; or closed (using Middle Guard or Low/Reverse Guard, but with the quarter-sword grip) for a more thrust-oriented, bayonet-style exchange.

Parries. Quarter-sword parries are performed as one would with a quarterstaff (meeting an attack on one side with the opposite end of the weapon), but aware of two important differences. First, the longsword is likely to be shorter than most quarterstaffs. This means distance will be closer and margins for error smaller. Second, long *quillons* (and flukes, if one or both swords have them) can pose unexpected dangers to both attacker and defender. These complications—plus the simple fact that the combatants may be so close that an audience can not follow the action—suggest that quarter-sword exchanges should be brief. Ideally, a few quarter-sword moves will lead to the re-establishment of half- or full-sword distance; or some clear and recognizable dramatic outcome, such as a wound or a disarm.

Attacks. Despite the inherent problems of quarter-sword exchanges, they can be very exciting—with blade points and pommels passing close to the combatants. Because distance is so close, off-target targeting (as well as good *quillon* awareness) is absolutely essential to a safe routine. On the plus side, because the left hand is on or near the foible, it is easy to control the point and some very nice (and safe) push or pull cuts—and even upstage jabs—can be choreographed. Because these are quick and use only a small part of the blade, they are ideal for simulating wounds. Pommel strikes also read well at very close-quarters.

Special Moves. Quarter-sword technique facilitates two combat moves that are often hard to achieve convincingly in half- or full-sword: the disarm and the yield. Because the fighters are already so close, the audience accepts the fact that a small mistake can result in the loss of one or both ends of the weapon; and if the other combatant takes advantage of it—immobilizes the defender's sword and puts the loser on point—the fight is over.

In the old fight manuals, parts of the longsword were sometimes used like billy clubs, or a policeman's nightstick: applying leverage to break grips, break bones, and otherwise immobilize the opponent. Typically, these special moves came after a standard defensive move, such as a parry that turns into an arm- or blade-lock and ends, after a clever twist, with the winner's point against the loser's throat. *Quillons* were not only used as war hammers, but to trap blades or pull the opponent's sword, elbow, leg, knee—even neck—in a desired direction. Some of these special moves have been described in other issues of *The Fight Master* and all deserve careful study by the history-minded fight director or performer. However, since they tend to be by- products of a particular combat situation and depend on targets-of-opportunity, they do not really fit into a coherent combat system.[6]


Figure 30


Figure 31


Figure 32


Figure 33


Figure 34


Figure 35


Figure 36

SOME LONGSWORD SALUTES

Big swords look great on stage and lend themselves well to ceremonies and rituals. While the possibilities for longsword salutes are— lengthy—here are two favorites:

Henry VIII Salute. The combatants approach each other (or the sword bearer approaches a dignitary) with the longsword shouldered like a rifle on the left side, left hand on the pommel, *quillons* parallel to the chest (See Figure 30). The bearer stops, legs slightly bent and feet a shoulder-width apart, then—taking the handle with the right hand—transfers the weapon to the right shoulder, keeping the left hand on the pommel (See Figure 31). From this position, the sword point is brought forward in a large arc and lowered almost (but not quite) to the ground while the bearer simultaneously pulls the right foot back and bows at the waist (See Figure 32). If one is bowing to a real king, one would probably lower his eyes and head as well. If saluting another duelist, the combatant would keep his head up and eyes locked on the opponent. After holding the bow a moment, the blade is returned to the right shoulder, still using the full-sword grip. One can now left-shoulder the weapon and resume marching, or, if in a duel, assume a full-sword ward or, if one is a student of Liechtenauer, launch a surprise attack before one's opponent completes the salute.

McClellan's Salute. The famous Yankee general, fencing expert, and showoff, George B. McClellan, invented a rather complicated salute with the bayonet which works perfectly well with the longsword. He defined the salute as "a compliment paid by the fencers to spectators, and to each other." To perform it, one faces his opponent (or chief dignitary) in the half-sword Middle Guard position (See Figure 33). The combatant makes two *appels* with the leading foot, then pulls the left heel back against the right, coming to attention as he raises the blade vertically in front of the right shoulder (See Figure 34). Keeping his feet in place, he angles his body (and his face) to the right, extending the weapon—still vertical—in that direction (see Figure 35), then pulls it back. Then, still keeping his feet in place and the weapon vertical, he angles his body to the left and makes a similar extension and return in that direction. Finally, he angles back to face the opponent/dignitary and makes the extension and returns a third time—but this time, dips the point slightly as he extends it (See Figure 36). When he is finished, he returns to Middle Guard and, in case the audience has fallen asleep, makes two *appels* with the leading foot.

The longsword is one of history's longest-lived weapons. It gained that longevity because of its great versatility, combining the cutting power of a broadsword with the thrusting power of a polearm. When used by a skilled fighter at very close quarters, it rivaled the quarterstaff in speed and could be as precise as a small sword. A dramatic and showy weapon, its use in stage combat has only begun to be explored.

Andrew Fox, Media Relations Coordinator for the de Young Museum in San Francisco, Bob Borwick, SAFD Recommended Actor-Combatant and Associate Director of the Academy of the Sword and actor Micah Chandler assisted in preparing this article.

NOTES

[1] Daniels, Charles. "The German Two-Handed Sword." *The Fight Master*. September, 1985. pp.10- 11.

[2] Marozzo, Achille. *Opera Nova*. 1536.

[3] Many good tips on applying Talhoffer's methods to stage combat are found in J.R. Beardsley's and Paul Dennhardt's article, "Hans Tallhoffer: An Approach to Broadsword," *The Fight Master*. Spring/Summer, 1998.

[4] Daniels, p.11.

[5] Burton, Richard F. *A Complete System of Bayonet Exercise*. London: William Clowes & Son. 1853. p.31.

[6] Talhoffer, Hans. *Talhoffers Fechtbuch*. 1467. Talhoffer is by far the best historical source known for practical and ingenious close-quarter combat moves—not just with longsword, but a variety of weapons, including single-handed swords, daggers, shields and bucklers, polearms, and unarmed.

Fin

THE HIGH FALL FORMULA

by Arthur M. Jolly

This is a brief explanation of a physics formula by someone who hates physics. It is also a brief formula, and the result of cheerfully throwing aside all the stipulations that true physics requires.

It came about as the result of a somewhat complex high fall stunt that required using climbing equipment to arrest the fall and determine how much strain would be put on the equipment.

Physics cannot allow anything to be simple. For example, one starts with the classic formula for gravity. The acceleration of gravity is 32 feet per second, but this is only true with three additions: at sea level, in a vacuum and on this planet.

Everything is measured in newtons which has nothing to do with fig bars, but was confusing at the time.

By eliminating, the extraneous stipulations, and converting a 26 g force variable formula using half the Greek alphabet into this, the $E=MC^2$ of high falls:

h/d=g

The distance a body falls (h) divided by the distance it decelerates in (d) equals the number of g forces acting on it.

This is useful. It is a rule of thumb, rather than an exact physics formula; a rule of thumb specific to stuntwork on this planet, ignoring air resistance, at sea level.

If one falls twenty feet into a box rig that slows the person falling down in five feet, one feels a four g force (20/5=4).

A one g force is simply the effect of the Earth's gravity. A four g force will be four times gravity's effect.

If one is hanging on a cable, or climbing equipment, exerting a four g force only means one is exerting four times one's body weight.

Doing high falls, one rapidly learns that being able to simply and easily calculate the overall g forces of the impact allows one to establish some general guidelines as to what one feels comfortable with.

Generally, in a four g to six g force, deceleration is soft, and allows a comfortable margin of safety. An eight g force is a pretty hard knock. Ten or so will knock the wind out of the person, and much higher than that, one starts brushing with what the doctors term "vertical impact trauma."

This is not exact. In most landings one does not slow down at an even rate. For example, falling twenty feet into a bucket of water a foot deep will not give the person falling an even deceleration of twenty g force. It will slow the person down very slightly for half a second, and then hit him with a whole lot of force for that last half inch.

It is also important to remember that d is the distance one uses to slow down, not the depth of the landing material. A mat four-feet deep may only compress two feet or so. The stuntperson's deceleration is spread only over those two feet.

It is a rule of thumb; but as such it is invaluable. Consider the death of A.J. Bakunis. He was a high-fall specialist with years of experience, who in the seventies died while trying to break a high fall record by falling 323 feet into an air bag he had designed. It was twelve-feet deep, but he had helped build it and had great faith in it.

Using the formula, one can see that even in the idealized situation of the air bag evenly slowing him down from the moment he touched the surface until he reached the ground below, he was asking the air bag to dissipate a force of 26.9 g's or almost twenty-seven times his body weight. He was also asking his body to withstand a force of almost 27 g's. In hindsight, this simple formula shows he never should have attempted it.

This formula should not be used to take the place of slow, careful testing, working up from lower heights gradually. At times it is necessary to look at a fall and determine confidently how many layers of boxes it will take to keep the stuntperson safe and be able to to answer a director when he wants to know the maximum height a fall into a crash mat can be.

Careful testing allows one to know what his body will take; what g force he can subject it to on different mats and air-bags. Using the high fall formula allows the stuntperson to extrapolate that experience before he takes the big leap.

The distance a body free falls, divided by the distance it slows down in, equals the number of g forces acting on it.

h/d = g

Using the knowledge wisely avoids buckets of water or scads of cushions.

Fin

Try D&S for your R&D

A Report on New Toys

by Andrew Vorder Bruegge

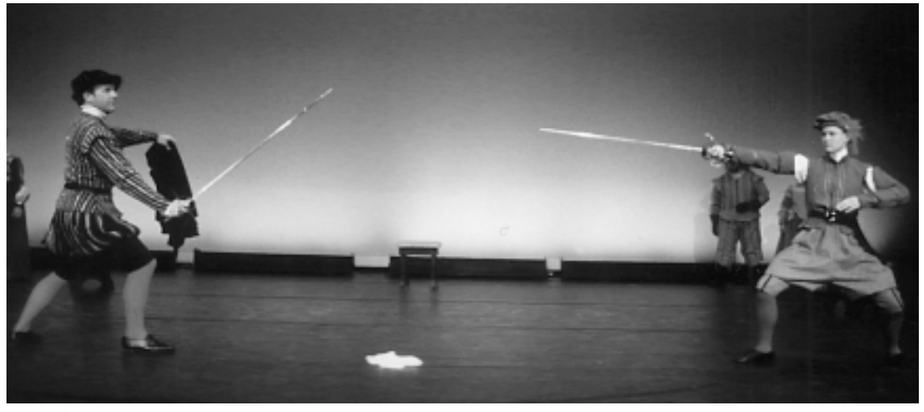
The Saflex dagger *is used by Marco (Bethany Urban) to parry Giusseppe's (Andrew Vorder Bruegge) attack in St. Cloud University's* Collaborations. *Fights by Andrew Vorder Bruegge, photo by David Borron.*

Two newly developed blades (Deltin rapier blade and Saflex dagger blade) are on the market and are excellent choices for the rapier and dagger. These two blades have interesting properties that were discovered recently while using them in fight choreography.

The Deltin blades read very nicely on stage. The wide forte and authentically long length give it a strong physical presence that is easy for audience members to see. The diamond cross-section gives it wide, flat surfaces for stage lights to strike and reflect brightly. When Deltin blades engage, they generate a wonderfully theatrical ring. They truly sing on *croisés* or binds or when the blades *glissade*. On a horizontal cut, the blade creates a clear *woosh* as it slices the air. Visually and aurally, the Deltin blade vividly articulates its lethal power to an audience. (See Chart B for specification of the blade.)

Because of the longer length and greater weight, a Deltin blade mounted on the proper hilt has more of an authentic balance and weight than the popular *Schlager* blade. The Deltin blade's length, like any longer blade(such as a forty-two inch or forty-five inch *Schlager*), means that it does not have the same amount of stiffness as the standard thirty-four inch *schlager* blade. Upon handling a Deltin weapon for the first time, the combatant immediately notices this *whippiness* in the blade as well as its heft and tip-heavy balance. Again, because the Deltin blade more closely resembles an authentic rapier in weight and length than a *Schlager* blade, a combatant will find that a Deltin-mounted weapon will require increased energy and skill to maneuver and to stop it. The Deltin blade certainly does not lend itself to a lightning-fast style of swordplay. Rather, it will appeal to the fight choreographer who truly wants to create a conflict with clear, bold, deliberate moves. On a continuum between the small sword and broadsword, the Deltin blade seems to push rapier swordplay a bit toward the broadsword pole.

Combatants must remain alert to a few unique properties of Deltin-mounted weapons in order to use the Deltin blade safely. First, they must redouble their precautions to maintain proper distance. Compared to many of the popular fencing blades used in stage combat, such as epées and *Schlagers*, the Deltin blade gives each combatant about eight more inches of reach. Second, when executing low parries (Parry One or Parry Two) with a Deltin-mounted weapon, combatants must learn to complete such maneuvers without dragging the tip on the ground. The extra length makes this an important concern. Similarly, combatants must particularly avoid a common novice mistake—attacking too low in one or two. The defender—because of his excellent training—might be inclined to execute a Parry One or a Parry Two a bit lower in response (in order to meet the attack with a parry in the forte near the hilt). In this case the defender may not be able to execute the parry, because the tip of the Deltin blade will be caught on the ground.



The Deltin's wide forte *and ample length give it physical presence in this engarde between Giusseppe (Andrew Vorder Bruegge, left) and Marco (Bethany Urban) from St. Cloud University's Collaborations. Fights by Andrew Vorder Bruegge, photo by David Borron.*

The Saflex dagger blade offers a sturdy, authentic-looking choice for stage combat. A Saflex-mounted dagger is very light weight, making it easy to manipulate (See Chart C for specification of the blade.) Even though it is light and flexible along its length like the more popular Flexi-dagger blade, the Salflex blade's broad width at the hilt gives it substance. When a combatant executes a correctly executed parry, the forte of the Saflex blade—reinforced by the fuller's presence—provides a solid, rigid plane of steel. When used in the choreography as discussed later, the Saflex dagger blade worked especially well in the execution of a bind, again because the fuller-enhanced forte section of the blade offered a rigid plane of steel. Finally, like the Deltin rapier blade, the Saflex dagger blade's broad, flat surface boldly reflects stage lights.

The Saflex dagger blade has a distinctive joint between the blade and the tang. A quarter inch square sleeve of steel encloses that joint. Obviously, this sleeve makes the diameter of the tang thicker than average. Any hilt and grip mounted to a Saflex blade will require some retooling in order to fit over its tang. Specifically, the hole in the *quillon* block and the center hole in the grip both need to be bored out to a larger size. Practically any armorer with the most elementary of tools can complete these adjustments in fifteen minutes, as was done to prepare the Saflex dagger blade for the stage fight described. Such minor re-engineering of the *quillon* block and grip did not diminish the integrity of the weapon. The choreography included a number of dagger parries and a dagger disarm. The Saflex-mounted dagger withstood the normal stresses of the rehearsal process and performance run, including countless disarm drops to the floor.

These two blades proved their durability, safety and authentic appearance to the combatants in this choreography. While both these blades were created primarily as fencing blades for members of historical re-enactment organizations, these blades may be used in staged combat.

CHART A

Fight Choreography following "Canario" dance in Collaborations concert

Marco		*Giuseppe*
Draw sword	➤	Remove cloak and hold it in left hand
Circle right	◄	Draw sword, circle right
Retreat	◄	Thrust to four and slap cloak on floor
Circle right	➤	Circle right, offer invitation with low *seconda* guard across body
Advance in seconda guard, then lunge and thrust three	➤	*Croisé* parry up
Evade with a traverse left	◄	Diagonal cut to the left shoulder
		pass by, back is presented to the opponent
Horizontal reverse cut to the lower back	➤	Evade with a jump away from the cut then turn to face opponent
Thrust One	➤	Parry One with cloak
Parry Three and maintain the parry against the pressure glide	◄	Thrust Three, charging in with a pressure glide until the hilts of the swords are locked
Grab opponent's right wrist		Close to a *corps-a-corps*, fouling the opponent's weapon with cloak and grabbing opponent's blade with left hand through the cloak
Fall down then crawl SL		Struggle turning CW 180 degrees, then jab opponent in stomach with right knee, retreat SR with both weapons
Stand up slow and draw dagger		Toss own sword to opponent and arm self with opponent's sword, stand in *terza* guard
Advance, showing to two	➤	Parry Two with cloak
Withdraw weapon then thrust two	➤	Parry Two with sword
Parry with dagger and bind	◄	Thrust One
Drop dagger upstage, then retreat	◄	Kick dagger with right foot
Grab opponent's right wrist with off hand	➤	Attack five with pommel

CHART B

THE DELTIN RAPIER BLADE

ARMOURER: Scott and Lesley Wilson, Darkwood Armory,
5514 Frank Hugh Road, Panama City, FL 32404, (850) 872-1973
http://www.darkwoodarmory.com.index.htm
sales@darkwoodarmory.com

Darkwood Armory originally conceived of the Deltin rapier blade design. Darkwood Armory wanted to offer an authentic-looking, durable and safe blade to customers primarily in the historical re-enactment fencing community. Darkwood Armory chose Fulvio to make the Deltin blade because that company has all the best equipment to produce a finished, quality product in bulk, and the company was willing to take on the challenge of making this blade.

The metal of the blade is an alloy of chrome vanadium, and the manufacturer (Fulvio) uses this alloy in all their blades. The blade is three-quarters of an inch wide at the shoulder. The blade width tapers down to a measurement slightly under a half inch at the tip.

CHART C

THE SAFLEX DAGGER BLADE

ARMOURER: James Koch, Alchem, Inc.,
314 East 195th St., Euclid Ohio 44119, (216) 313-8674
http://www.en.com/alchem/fencing.html
alchem@en.com

Alchem, Inc. designed the Saflex dagger blade primarily for customers in the historical re-enactment fencing community. The blade design and construction attempts to produce a safe, durable, flexible, authentic-appearing fencing weapon. The blade is eighteen inches long. The blade has a fuller stamped into it that runs about a third of the length of the blade from the shoulder up along the forte. The blade is three-quarters of an inch wide at the shoulder, tapering to three-sixteenths at the tip. The blade is about one-sixteenth of a inch thick. The tang is six-and-a-half inches long. Alchem, Inc. threads the last one-and-a-half inches of the tang to a six by one metric standard. The blade's metallurgic content equals 1075 @ 52Rs. The tang's metallurgic content = 01@58Rc.

The manufacturing process includes several steps. First, Alchem, Inc. contracts a company to laser-cut the blades according to their specifications. A second contracted company with expertise in heat treatment vacuum anneals the cut blades. Alchem, Inc. then inspects all the blades, weeding out the ones that do not meet quality specifications. Next, a forge stamps the fuller into the blade. Then, a cold forming shop rolls the tips. The tangs—already cut, milled and threaded—are bonded onto the blades at a hydrogen atmosphere furnace braising company. The complete blade returns to the heat treating company for another vacuum annealing. Alchem, Inc. inspects all the blades again. The blades then go to a second heat-treating company for hardening and tempering. Finally, Alchem, Inc. grinds the blade edges to a smooth radius and coats them with boiled linseed oil (to retard the rusting process).

The company maintains a stock of blades, so any order can be filled immediately.

Notes

The author successfully used these blades in a brief rapier and dagger choreographed fight in December 1999(see chart A) and offers this report to his colleagues in the Society of American Fight Directors, who might find these new blades to be worthy for inclusion in their personal armories.

Fin

To the Point

by J.T. Marlowe

The Fight Master met with martial artist Eric Oram at his *Wing Chun Kung Fu* studio in Los Angeles. Eric's expert teaching provides his students inspiration as they, too, attempt to follow their *sifu* (teacher).

Eric Oram demonstrates *the butterfly sword guard position*

IN THE BEGINNING

Having seen Bruce Lee's *Enter the Dragon*, Eric was hooked on martial arts. His journey led him to train in *Wing Chun Kung Fu* at the age of fourteen with the Grandmaster William Cheung (teacher and boyhood friend of Bruce Lee). At the age of sixteen, Eric began teaching as Cheung's assistant. At the age of seventeen, he became the youngest certified instructor of traditional *Wing Chun* in the world. With over fifteen years of teaching, Eric's academy in Los Angeles is the only certified school west of the Rocky Mountains. Quite an accomplishment for a former SAFD workshop participant (Eric received his Actor/Combatant Certificate at the first national workshop in Las Vegas in 1989). Eric has also worked as an actor and fight performer, fight choreographer and co-choreographer in feature films starring Christopher Walken and Eric Roberts.

A BRIEF HISTORY

Wing Chun Kung Fu developed out of China's turbulent past three hundred years ago. As invading Manchus threatened the Chinese race, the *Hons*, a secret revolutionary army trained to defeat them. Instead of training for the customary fifteen years, this new form would take only three to five years. The knowledge was eventually passed down to a young orphan girl named Wing Chun (*hope for the future*) and its practical techniques and strategies are still taught today.

PRINCIPLES AND TECHNIQUES

Observing Eric's students, some of the key principles and strategies such as "economy of movement, avoid fighting force with force, attack the opponent's balance" distinguish this martial arts style from the grappling of *Judo* and the less fluid *Karate*. As Eric says to allow the system to work at its optimum, "one must bring mind, body, and energy to a single point at the same time." Eric's students train for various reasons: self defense, to develop self confidence, physical fitness. Actors, in particular, find great benefit in honing their physical reflexes, balance, coordination, discipline and focus to what Eric calls "a learned naturalness." The use of weapons such as the butterfly swords (originally used to maim bandits attacking monks) allow the martial artist to economically and precisely demonstrate how weapons are an extension of the primary weapons, the arms themselves. *Wing Chun's* "moment to moment reality" (not unlike acting beats) and underlying meditative foundation work toward making the subconscious conscious. Eric relates the actions to a chess game in which, "like a telescope," the participant is focused on the moment as well as the anticipated moves ahead. For example, Eric instructs his students to focus on the opponent's elbow instead of the fist. This simple adjustment allows the student to anticipate the opponent's next move and prepare for the block or escape. As Eric explains, "watch for the commitment to the movement. Force has one direction at a time. Like a matador waiting for the bull to charge." The repetition of the various moves in *Wing Chun* are synthesized by the participant whose movements and reactions become fluid and deadly. The speed and agility achieved is quite impressive. Eric has even used these techniques to improve the performance of football players.

THE FUTURE

Eric continues to teach and work as a fight choreographer. He continues to refine his methods to find more efficient ways to use *Wing Chun* in film, making it theatrical and inviting the audience along for the ride. The safety distance in *Wing Chun* is certainly less than what normally is utilized in other media such as the theatre. The visual reflex and the physical reflex of the participants are even more critical. Certainly. the popularity of Jackie Chan and Sammo can attest to the continued interest and excitement in *Kung Fu*. Having experts like Eric Oram in the profession ensure the safety and practical application of this ancient martial art. Visit Eric's website at www.lawingchun.com.

Fin

Advertised and Regional Workshops

Hollywood Clash
November 17-19, 2000, Los Angeles Fight Academy, Van Nuys, CA
(818) 446-0246 www.4lafa.com

Rumble in the Rockies
December 16-17, 2000, The Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Denver, CO
(303) 446-4892 Academy@Dcpa.org

Paddy Crean International Workshop
December 31, 2000- January 7, 2001, IOSP & Banff Centre for the Arts, Banff, Alberta, Canada
(800) 565-9989 www.iosp.org

Winter Wonderland Workshop
January 26-28, 2001, The Chicago Mob, Chicago, IL
(708) 660-0636 www.safd.org

International Stunt School
June 4-23, August 20-September 1, 2001, United Stuntmen's Association, Everett, WA
(425) 290-9957 www.stuntschool.com

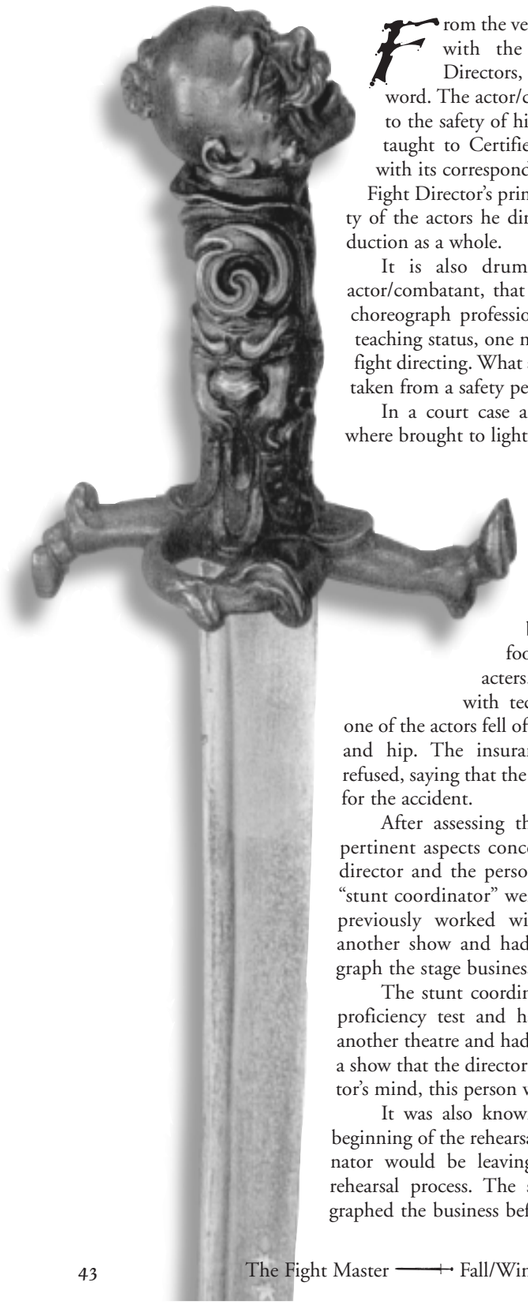
National Fight Director Training Program
Actor Ensemble Workshops
June 9-22, 2001, SAFD & Celebration Barn Theatre, South Paris, ME
(207) 743-8452 www.safd.org

National Stage Combat Workshops
Teacher Training Workshops
July 9-27, 2001, SAFD & University of Nevada, Las Vegas, NV
(702) 895-3662 www.safd.org

Summer Sling V
August 23-26, 2001, Fights4 & Pace University, New York City, NY
(718) 788-4957 www.safd.org

SAFETY FIRST!

by Geoffrey Alm



From the very beginning of one's association with the Society of American Fight Directors, safety first has been the watchword. The actor/combatant's first responsibility is to the safety of his fight partner. Every technique taught to Certified Teachers goes hand in hand with its corresponding relationship to safety, and a Fight Director's primary responsibility is to the safety of the actors he directs and safety within the production as a whole.

It is also drummed into the heads of the actor/combatant, that he is not qualified to teach or choreograph professionally, yet to be considered for teaching status, one needs experience in teaching and fight directing. What are the proper steps that must be taken from a safety perspective?

In a court case a few years ago, these concerns where brought to light in that arena.

The facts were as follows:

During a production, the director had inserted a physical comedy sequence around the hanging of a banner by three actors. Involved in the sequence was a bit of business taking place on a ten-foot stepladder between two characters. During the first run- through with technical support in the theatre, one of the actors fell off the ladder and broke his elbow and hip. The insurance company for the theatre refused, saying that the actor was ultimately responsible for the accident.

After assessing the facts, some interesting and pertinent aspects concerning the process used by the director and the person listed in the program as the "stunt coordinator" were discovered. The director had previously worked with the stunt coordinator on another show and had asked this person to choreograph the stage business.

The stunt coordinator had passed his basic skills proficiency test and had been the Fight Captain at another theatre and had choreographed the violence for a show that the director had staged earlier. In this director's mind, this person was a professional.

It was also known to the director, prior to the beginning of the rehearsal process, that the stunt coordinator would be leaving town half way through the rehearsal process. The stunt coordinator had choreographed the business before leaving, spending a total of four-to-six hours with the actors. After that, the actors were on their own, under the supervision of the assistant stage manager, the stage manager and the director, none of whom had much experience with staged combat.

Physically the action was choreographed as follows: The three characters enter carrying the ladder, do some funny business and then set up to hang the banner. One character goes up the ladder, panics because of the height, causing the actor who was eventually hurt to go up the ladder with him. In his panic, the first actor reaches over and grabs the second actor by the hair and pulls him over the top of the ladder.

The actors ended up with two variations of this action. In the first, the actor whose hair was grabbed was supposed to swing back and forth on top of the ladder platform. This is the version the fight director had left with the actors.

When the actors discovered that with having two people on either side of the ladder with their heads and shoulders above the warning label and no one holding the ladder, the swinging action was causing the braces to bend, they went to the director and producer; because the actor who was eventually injured was concerned about the safety. The director and producer agreed that it was a problem and should be changed. Since the fight director was gone, the actors fixed it on their own even though neither of these actors had any practical stage fighting experience. They took the swinging out and made it a straight hair pull that would propel the actor up and over the top of the platform where he would end up bent over the top of the ladder. They rehearsed it until they were comfortable, and then moved into the theatre. They worked for a couple of weeks before the accident had occurred.

In reading the various depositions it was never clear how the actor actually had fallen or what had physically caused it.

In interviewing the injured second actor on the physical action of the scene, it became clearer how the accident had happened. As the first actor went up the ladder and had his moment of fright, the second went up the other side. The hair pull was done by placing the closed hand on the head, and the victim pinning it to control the action. He then would reach to get his hand hold on top of the ladder at the same time. The first actor's cue to move off the top of the ladder and start down the other side had been the pinning of the hand.

The second actor said that although he had gone up the ladder faster than usual during this first technical run-through, the cues took place as usual with one crucial mistake. As the second actor was to grab the hand hold on top of the ladder and the hand pulling his hair at the same time, both of his hands had been off the ladder for a second. The first actor had not moved down the other side of the ladder as he had been supposed to when the hairpull had begun, so he had blocked the handhold. The second actor had nowhere to grab and that is why he fell. He had no time to react. He said he could have pulled the other actor off with him but chose to let go.

It had been assumed that the second actor would never take both hands off of the ladder at once. Since they had been unsupervised, no one was available to catch this mistake. Although they were successful with this move during rehearsal, when trouble occurred during performance, the actor had fallen and had been hurt.

When all had become clear in the trial, the second actor was awarded a six-figure settlement with the insurance company, the theatre, the director and stunt coordinator listed on the settlement. If the insurance company did not pay the settlement, the director and fight person were liable for twenty percent each of the money awarded.

Several conclusions about this case are pertinent. Many mistakes were made but more from ignorance than anything else. The insurance company believed that it was pretty cut and dried that the actor was responsible for the staged business on the ladder. They were surprised, according to one representative that there was such an organized body of knowledge concerning the art and safety of staged combat.

The theatre had survived for years without any accidents and were use to allowing the director's discretion to determine whether to use and/or how to use a fight director. Only the director and designer were paid.

The director had very little experience with staged combat and since this stunt was such a small part of the overall show, a friend who was considered a professional was used.

Most of the responsibility is to be directed to the choreographer. The stunt coordinator constructed a difficult stunt that exceeded the actor's abilities. The fact that the stunt coordinator could not follow the process through to its conclusion also was a mistake. The stunt coordinator left the actors to troubleshoot their own stunt without a qualified outside eye for safety.

The very fact that two actors had been choreographed doing business on a ladder built to hold one, with no safety factors built in, had been a recipe for what eventually happened. The stunt coordinator stated that other fight directors leave before the process was done. Sometimes fight directors are busy, but the consequences can be disastrous. If the fight director cannot finish the job, he should not have taken it.

So what are some solutions to this problem?

In a general sense, it is important to continue to try and educate directors and theatres about the process of teaching and staging fights. It is in the fringe theatre where the biggest problems occur. Very little money exists in fringe theatres, and many times people who are not qualified are asked to help out. As a society, teacher candidates are expected to have experience in teaching and fight direction. How do they get that experience without putting themselves at risk? Teachers have a pretty clear path to follow. One can assist a current teacher to gain experience, but as a fight director, the path is not as clear.

A fight director candidate must have a true sense of his own abilities and experience. Fight directing at the minimum is putting moves together. The safety of the actors choreographed is the fight director's responsibility. He needs to be aware of safety considerations. He can take advantage of the system that is in place. If he has questions, he must ask. If there are Certified Teachers, Fight Directors, or Fight Masters in the area, he may check the process through with them. He needs to discuss safety and be aware that everything he does, reflects on the organization as a whole.

A fight director candidate needs to put in his time and continue to train. This is not about keeping people from becoming teachers and fight directors. Litigation has become part of the world and, as this case suggests, the consequences of one's actions can have far reaching effects. The fight director needs to be vigilant, now more than ever, safety first needs to be the continuing focus and dedication.

Fin

NSCW 2001 Staff Applications

The SAFD is seeking to hire six Teaching Assistants and Seven Interns for the upcoming summer workshop. The criteria for applying are as follows:

Teaching Assistant:

To apply for a Teaching Assistant position you must

1. Be an SAFD member in good standing (i.e. dues paid in full)
2. Be a sanctioned and recognized SAFD Fight Director or SAFD Certified Teacher.

Submit the following materials:

1. Proof of paid up dues
2. A letter of intent
3. Picture and acting resume
4. Stage combat resume

Intern:

To apply for an Intern position you must

1. Be an SAFD member in good standing (i.e. dues paid in full)
2. Hold Advanced Actor/Combatant Status (recognition in at least six out of eight weapons skills.)

Please submit the following:

1. Proof of paid up dues
2. Proof of valid Advanced Actor/Combatant Status acknowledging that you have passed the Skills Proficiency Tests and are current in at least 6 weapons.
3. A letter of intent
4. Picture and acting resume
5. Stage combat resume
6. A letter of recommendation from any of the following: Fight Master, Fight Director, and/or Certified Teacher.

Priority for the seven available Intern positions will be given to SAFD members holding Advanced Actor/Combatant status. In the event that there are not enough applicants who meet this qualification, then choices will be based upon highest degree of skill proficiency.

Send all Teaching Assistant and Intern application materials to

Michael G. Chin
SAFD/NSCW Coordinator
260 W. 22nd St. #3
New York, N.Y. 10011-2731

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS: MARCH 31, 2001

Put to the Test

Results of the SAFD's Proficiency Skills Tests

Location	**Date**
Instructor	**Adjudicator**
Person Tested	Weapons Proficiency
RD Rapier & Dagger	UA Unarmed
QS Quarterstaff	SS Smallsword
BS Broadsword	S&S Sword & Shield
KN Knife	SiS Single Sword
Renewal	Renewal of Actor/Combatant status
EAE	Examiner's Award for Excellence

April 2000

April 1 — **Cornish College of the Arts**
Robert MacDougall — **David Boushey**

Earl Alexander	RD UA BS
Ryan Spickard	RD UA BS
Lance Park	RD UA BS
Brendan Eveland	UA BS
Tavia Gilbert	UA QS
Rhonda Soikowski	UA QS
Jessica Barkl	RD BS
Jen Grigg	RD BS
Jon Mitten	RD UA QS
Troy Miszklevitz	RD UA QS
Gabriel Baron	RD UA QS
Erin Phillips	RD UA QS
Naekkae Wells	RD UA BS
Therese Tucker	RD UA BS
Alyssa Keene	RD UA BS
Chloe Chapin	RD UA BS

April 21 — **University of Iowa**
Michelle Ladd — **David Woolley**

Phil Nohl	UA
Jennifer O'Toole	UA
Robert Curry	UA
Christopher Shorer	UA
Joseph Medina	UA
Nickolas Westergaard	UA
Sheila Franklin	UA
Aaron Galbraith	UA
Jeremy Ping	UA
Bradley Smith	UA
Samantha Chavis	UA
Ari Herbstman	UA
Brook Labagh	UA
Emily Zeien	UA
Erin Huisman	UA
Mike Cassady	UA
Peter Dangermond	UA
Fatama Al-Shukali	RD UA QS
Noemi de la Puenta	RD UA QS
Ansa Akyea	RD UA QS
Jeremy Van Meter	RD UA QS
William Caise	RD UA QS
Katherine Guthrie	RD UA QS
Suzanne Hauser	RD UA
Sherri Marina	RD
Paul Dunkel	RD UA QS-EAE
Douglas Howington	RD UA QS-EAE
Cheryl Kaplan	RD UA QS
Bari Newport	RD UA QS
Ayeje Feamster	UA
Jeff Lynch	UA
Tony Wheaton	UA
David Svengalis	UA
Chris Sweeney	UA
Christian Breecher	UA
Morise Sullivan	UA

May 2000

May 4 — **Virginia Commonwealth University**
James "Jamie" Cheatham — **David Leong**

Stephen Atherholt	RD UA-EAE
Jerry Tan	RD UA-EAE
Christopher Shorr	RD
Jen Spieler	RD UA
Jim Quesensberry	RD
Elizabeth Ward	RD

May 10 — **University of Houston**
Brian Byrnes — **David Woolley**

John Smetak	RD UA BS
Eric Todd	RD UA BS
Kristina Short	RD UA BS
Ann Harlan	RD UA BS
Illich Guardiola	RD UA
Tina Pedon	RD UA BS
Eric Jackson	RD UA
Matt Joseph	RD BS
Leah Farrelly	RD
Ryan Heitzman	BS
Anne Mallory	BS
Alan Hutton	BS

May 12 — **Temple University**
John Bellomo — **Drew Fracher**

Robert Hamilton	RD UA QS
Jason Nuzzo	RD UA QS
Anthony Hagobian	RD UA QS
Jamie Hurley	RD UA QS

Samurai MacBeth *(Quenton Baker, right) is challenged by MacDuff (Khris Lewin) at the National Fight Directors Training Program at the Celebration Barn Theater. Fight Direction my Michael J. Anderson, photo by Allen Suddeth.*

May 12 — **New Mexico State University**
Timothy Pinnow — **Dale Girard**

Amber Hammonds	QS KN
Daniela Vestal	KN
Leah Lynnae	KN
Richard Luna	QS KN
Jesaida Gonzales	QS

June 2000

June 1 — **Columbia College, Chicago, IL**
David Woolley — **Richard Raether**

David Yondorf	RD SS-EAE
Matthew Kepler	RD SS
Rececca Welles	SS
Emily Hunt	SS
Sean Levine	RD SS UA BS
Nathan Ozug	RD SS UA BS
Casie Knowles	RD SS UA BS
Daniel Telfer	RD SS UA BS
Joe Vonderhaar	RD SS UA BS
Mark Dodge	RD SS UA BS-EAE
Juan "Tony" Sancho	RD SS UA BS
Sarah Losey	KN
Joy Ronstadt	KN

June 12 — **Actor's Gymnasium, Chicago, IL**
Charles Coyl — **David Woolley**

Laura Forbes	QS
Lorelei Kutcher	QS
Dawn Hunt	QS
Steve Deasy	QS
Natalie Meyer	UA QS
Jeannette Beauregard	QS
Symmonie Steger	QS
Anne Foldeak	QS
Dan Marco	QS

June 19 — **Swords & Surf Workshop, HI**
Aaron Anderson, Gregory Hoffman — **J.R. Beardsley**

Michael Lee	UA BS
Maria Leezer	UA
Elmira Tereschchenko	RD UA BS
Kathleen Stuart	RD UA BS
Kirsten Pauka	RD SiS BS
Joseph DeLorenzo	RD SiS UA QS
Jessica Jacob	RD UA BS
Matthew Malliski	RD UA BS
Tiana Krohn-Ching	RD UA BS
Jon Burnett	RD UA BS
Ryan Walrod	RD UA BS
Scot Davis	RD UA BS
Dezmond Gilla	RD UA BS
Harry Wong	RD UA BS
Anthony Salatino	RD UA BS
Jennifer Neale	SiS SS BS S&S
Linda Park	SiS SS BS S&S
Megan Rice	SiS SS QS S&S-EAE
Nicole Tessier	SS-EAE
Andrew Sutherland	SiS SS BS S&S
Tiffany Burris	SiS SS BS S&S
Lisa Niemczura	SS S&S
Megan Evans	SiS SS BS S&S

June 25 — **University of Washington**
Geoffrey Alm — **David Boushey**

Catherine Kettrick	RD BS
David Mills	RD BS
Carolynne Wilcox	RD UA BS
Marco Sabbatini	RD UA BS
Carol Roscoe	RD UA BS
Evan Whitfield	RD UA BS
Heidi Wolf	RD UA
John Lynch	RD UA-EAE
Michael Crowley	RD UA-EAE

June 25 — **Alabama Shakespeare Festival**
Colleen Kelly — **Erik Fredricksen**

Devin Haqq	RD UA QS
Robert Fleming	RD UA QS
John Triana	RD UA QS
Michael Reilly	RD UA QS
Christopher Ensweiler	RD UA QS-EAE
Mendy Garcia	RD UA QS-EAE
Jenny Wales	RD UA QS-EAE
Scot Mann	RD UA QS-EAE

July 2000

July 2 — **Blue Jacket, Xenia, OH**
Mark "Rat" Guinn — **Drew Fracher**

Peyton King	RD UA QS
Anna Kozak	RD UA QS
Robyn Lee	RD UA QS
Walter Tillman	RD UA QS
Ian Lauer	RD UA QS
Alexander Thompson	RD UA BS QS
Rodney Barge	RD UA QS
Katerina Tamburro	RD UA QS
Michael Duggan	RD UA QS
Joshua Mercer	RD UA QS
Jason Whicker	RD UA BS QS
Josh Uhrich	RD UA QS
Benjamin Patch	RD UA BS QS SiS S&S-EAE
Keith Conway	SiS KN
Jacki Blakeney	SS KN
Bret Koppin	RD UA BS QS SiS S&S
Christina Northrup	SS KN
Jeffrey Demaria	RD UA BS QS S&S KN
Marcus Lane	KN
David Beisinger	KN
Cliff Jenkins	SiS KN
Pete Fitzkee	RD UA BS
John Coleman	RD UA BS QS S&S KN
Tanner Thompson	RD UA QS
Shameca Ashby	RD UA QS
Jacob Bailey	RD UA QS
Holli Hawthorne	RD UA QS
William Algea	RD UA BS QS

July 6 — **National Conservatory fo Dramatic Arts**
Michael Johnson — **David Woolley**

Sarah Eron	RD
Maria Godzawa	RD

July 30 — **National Stage Combat Workshops**
University of Nevada-Las Vegas
D. Boushey, D. Fracher, D. Girard, R. Raether, J.A. Suddeth, D. Woolley — **Boushey, Fracher, Girard, Raether, Suddeth, Woolley**

Benaiah Anderson	RD UA BS-EAE
John Armour	RD UA BS SS SiS KN
Christopher Beaulieu	SS SiS S&S KN
Angela Bonacasa	RD UA BS SS SiS S&S KN
Nicholas Bonora	RD UA BS-EAE
Leland Burbank	RD UA BS SS SiS S&S KN
T. Fulton Burns	RD UA BS
Macaela Carder	UA
Regina Cerimele-Mechley	RD UA BS SS SiS S&S
Joseph Cincotti	UA
Jonathan Cole	RD UA BS-EAE
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Society of American Fight Directors

DEDICATED TO IMPROVING THE QUALITY AND SAFETY OF STAGE COMBAT

The Society of American Fight Directors (SAFD) is a non-profit organization devoted to training, and improving the quality of stage combat. We are committed to the highest standards of safety in the theatrical, film and television industries. The SAFD offers educational opportunities across the country at universities, privately and at the annual National Stage Combat Workshop expressly to disseminate this information. In addition, the SAFD tests individuals in three categories:

Actor/Combatant ◆ Teacher ◆ Fight Director

However, one need not take any sort of test to become a member of SAFD. Anyone interested in the art of fight choreography and stage fighting can join. SAFD members receive a 10% discount on SAFD workshops; *The Fight Master*, a journal published twice yearly; and *The Cutting Edge*, a newsletter published six times yearly with news updates on SAFD activities, policies and members.

To apply for membership in the SAFD fill out the form below and send to

The Society of American Fight Directors
1350 East Flamingo Road #25
Las Vegas, NV 89119

Dues are $35 annually. (For members outside the U.S., annual dues are $40)
Your enclosed check of $35 will cover dues for the current year.

Please make checks payable to Society of American Fight Directors

Membership Application
Society of American Fight Directors

Please Print

Name_____

Address_____

_____

_____

Phone_____

If you have passed the SAFD Proficiency Skills Test, please fill out

Date tested_____

Instructor_____

Weapons_____

Adjudicator_____

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Chinese students train outside a Shaolin temple.
Photo by Julia Rupkalvis.