

THE KNIFE - ATTACKING AND DEFENSIVE DANGEROUS WEAPON

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Abstract:*In a world dominated by the wish to distinguish oneself and the gaining of goods in a very easy way, the wrong path is chosen by a growing number of individuals, who, in response to their desire of achieving the personal “goals”, does not avoid using classical or improvised weapons, without taking in consideration the human or social standards.*

The knife, as designed, the way of procuring and its aim, is one of the most used and dangerous weapon, utilized to intimidate and for annihilation. The persons from military structures (from national security department, the one responsible to maintain and re-establish the public order), need to have technical abilities and a strong psycho-physical format, required to avoid anti-social disorders, as they are the first being facing this hostile elements.

We are bringing to the attention of interested parties, theoretical, practical and tactical aspects regarding (self) defense against aggression with sharp objects from the perspective of martial arts and operative experience.

Keywords: *knife, psycho-physical preparation, martial arts, self defense*

1. ANALYSIS REGARDING THE ACTUALITY OF THE THEME

We are leaving in a world where the old knight virtues from past times are becoming untouchable high standards for a generation dominated by artificial intelligence. Despite the fact that technology advanced remarkably in the past times, the people are coming back to the era where they are led by instincts and the life is a continuous fight with the stronger being the winner, ignoring the honor codes or the social laws being in place.

The number of people being injured by offenders is growing day by day. The persons responsible to control and maintain the order and public safety are hardly conducting their duty in the real world today, because of missing law enforcement to protect their service and the lack of time for physical preparation and self-defense tactics. We are guiding our self based on the principle “this could not happen to us”, but this is a wrong approach, anytime we can find our self in the position of being robber, in the impossibility to solve a mission.

The knife is one of the most utilized and dangerous weapons, used for attack or defense, because of the simplicity to employ it and the gravity of the injuries those are provoked. As it does not have a big dimension, it can be easily hidden by a professional, simply using the hand, it can be hardly detected, as the facts are narrow down by victims surviving attacks using the knife: the bigger amount of people being attacked are declaring that they were not observing the aggressor possessing a knife.

In fact, if we perform an analysis of the statistics about the aggressions using a knife, the exposure is not an attack itself, it is an ambush and there are few situations when the aggressor is attacking the victim after showing the knife.

We need to distinguish between threaten having the knife as and an object, a situation when the aggressor has a low probability to wish to kill the victim and a knife attack, which has a big brutality and it is very dangerous. The first situation is encountered during the robbery injuries, as threaten and it is most probably that the aggressor to be disarmed by the victim without being seriously injured. The second form is much dangerous and it is referred as “knife attack”. There are multiple ways in which the aggressor can attack using a knife. The main direction of aggression, from the mechanical perspective of the movement, the attack refers to:

⇒ cutting

⇒ pricking/stitching.

Taking in consideration these aspects, we need to distinguish between sport, martial arts and the reality of a street fight or national security situation, where “surviving” is the key word. In a real situation, there is no rule, there is no time limit for the action to be materialized, there is no referee or sensei from dojo, who will tell you what to do.

Nothing is fixed and safe in a real situation... it is all about surviving! Most of the people are approaching contact disciplines (kick boxing, mixed martial arts, box), which is helping from physical strength perspective, in the creation of a better conditional reflex or superior coordination in the real fight, but at the beginning, the advantage is with the one using a weapon.

Why this highlight? Because in the real fight it is appearing the stress, with his well known effects: the level of adrenaline is increasing, hyperventilation, the heart beats is increasing, the ability of taking decisions is reducing, the side view is decreasing, the movement abilities are decreasing, the appearance of “freezing effect” – mostly to the subjects lacking the training or the one conducting a superficial training.

Learning the offensive part using such a weapon is necessary to gain the maturity and dexterity required to approach with efficiency an aggressor with knife. Majority of the experts from martial arts are having the opinion that if you know how to use a knife in an attack, you will be more prepared to confront with it. In the special literature of this domain, it is highlighted the methodical approach of learning starting from the attack and later it is treated the defensive approach.

2. THEORETICAL FUNDAMENTS REGARDING THE KNIFE AS A COMBAT WEAPON

To survive an aggression of the knife usage, the knowledge package needs to be very rich, starting from learning of specific elements mentioned in the above paragraph, and also including different scenarios that will lead the trainees close to the real life. Training in different tactics with weapons usage is the most important one, because, from our opinion, in most of the cases, the real life beats the movie!

Only after attending a long period of intense training, approaching multiple scenarios – that will lead to operative situation, with a suitable psycho-physical training enriched with a widely technical martial art package, suitable to the individual, it can be discussed about an efficient approach of aggressions having as a weapon a **knife**. This is more to be considered as, the imagination of human being contributes a lot in this domain by creating weapons/knives of different forms and dimensions, which creates opportunities of being used broadly and an aggressor possessing a knife, with or without training, can decide your destiny in a fraction of a second.

3. SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF KNIFE FIGHT

Starting from the intention of cutting and pricking with the knife, those were presented above, the experts in fighting using the knife have developed other possibilities to engage the knife as a weapon, by taking in consideration the different aspects materialized by “specialized people” from this domain, identified with the *specialization*.

From superficial cutting or pricking (in the region of arms), to attacks in specific well defined or vital zone choosed from the perspective of individual surviving, the range of attacks is really diversified. Another aspect that needs to be taken in consideration is the wrong idea that a knife is deangerous only in the hands of a trained individual. In reality, almost any person, independ of the weight, gender or age can be dangerous on the same avarrage, if it holds a knife in his hand. Attacks with knife are hardly intuitive, are very quick, impling many succesive kicks, with changes of the angle, from unpredictable postures, and are parcticed by and expert or any person, even a kid from the corner of the street.

The saying that, “there is no chance when faicing a knife”, is most of the time true, related to the case of missing martial arts knowleges – even at a low level – or lacking of psyho-physical fromal tarining, but also from the perspective of missing basic knowledge about knife fight.

In regards to our experience, the practice has demonstrated the truth. Behind the martial arts abilities and training in fighting using the knife (*Tanto-jutsu* – in Ju-jitsu), in background, there are capabilities evolved in the psyho-physical system of the tarinees, those “are not given by default” to each individual.

Those could imply:

- ☉ improving the trust in oneself;
- ☉ better coordination;
- ☉ space-time orientation;
- ☉ the feeling of tempo and rhythmus of the fight;
- ☉ intuitive feeling

At the same time, knowing the effects of cutting and the counter measures of (self) defense techniques as an answer, involuntary some moral capabilities are amplified like: tolerance, compassion, the wish to appreciate the life, reducing the aggressiveness.

Regarding the reduction of aggressiveness, our daily experience, from martial arts or operative perspective, has shown that the probability of an aggressor to attack vital zones of human body is having a low level. Evidently, we are not taking in consideration an aggressor being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, neither for those having psychical affections.

The majority of operative situations with which we have confronted have shown a unspeakable truth: 8 out of 10 aggressors are using the knife for intimidation!

This is the reason why there is a need for a strong training, with a big focus on mind control!

If we are discussing about the body zone selected to be attacked, generally, this is “suggested” by the victim through his attitude in the moment of action:

- ✓ stretching or the intention to stop the attack using the hands through the direction of the attack;
- ✓ the intention to intercept or catch the knife of the aggressor at the moment when the attack is started;
- ✓ when the panic is established;
- ✓ turning around and showing the back side of the body to the aggressor;
- ✓ lost of control or self confidence.

Any type of attack is dangerous, based on the body zone which has been cutting or pricking. The top of the list is occupied by the veins and arterials. From the perspective of the profile of the attack, as psychological aspect, this is aiming the instauration of the panic to the potential victim, and then, the wish to annihilate it through the cutting or pricking actions by targeting the arms, the chest, the abdomen mostly, the legs or the higher part of the body (the neck or the face).

The specialized people from this domain are familiarized with what is named a *bio-mechanical cut*, having the scope to broke the tendon and ligament normally used to execute catching movements and not only that. In regards to the cutting or pricking attacks, we need to highlight that these are very dangerous and can lead to death when reaching vital organs, being on the same time hard to intercept or defend.

Generally, the bigger error performed during the (self) defense against this type of attack is that one when it is tried to intercept the knife.

Through the experience of the daily work and specialization in martial arts, we have enlighten our self about the most efficient (self) defense technique, regardless of the direction of the attack, the technique which we have named **FUNDAMENTAL (SELF) DEFENSE** having as primary manifestation the fact of *NOT BEING THERE where the aggression is taking place!*

“*Avoiding to be there*”, in the context of efficiency of (self) defense, does not mean to *start running*, but the manifestation of the efficiency of the technique through roll-out or turning around and let the attack follow his course, take it over and initiate the adequate annihilation technique.

The actual informational package about approaching the knife, being at anyone disposal, and taking in consideration the psycho-motive evolution of the human beings, imposes a diversification of operative situations related to (self) defense for these types of aggressions, starting from the discovery of main techniques of attacks, as follow:

- the four classical directions of the attack:
 - vertical descendent attack;
 - vertical ascendant attack;
 - the side attack;
 - the pricking attack .
- on the classical directions of the attack it will be developed all the manners of usage the knife as:
 - crossing descendent attack;
 - crossing ascendant attack;
 - „the shape of 8” attack;
 - „turning around the hand” attack;
 - hidden blade attack.

4. TACTICAL PRINCIPLES OF (SELF) DEENSE IN CASE OF AGGRESSIONS WITH CUTTING-PRINCKING OBJECTS

As highlighted above, specific aspects of the fight implying cutting-pricking objects imposes the need to know of some tactical principles for actions, that can guarantee the surviving during the different scenarios of the fight. Taking in consideration this aspect, the tactical principles to be aware of during the situations under discussion, arousing from our martial arts experience and from the operative activities, refers to:

- ✓ the appreciation of the optimal distance of the attack (*MA-AI*);
- ✓ the usage of the most efficient techniques that is exposing the defender with a lower risk;
- ✓ the intuition of the direction of the attack from the way how the weapon is hold;

- ✓ the usage of specific tools, the personal belongings, the objects from the surrounding as a defending weapon;
- ✓ the usage of the fight psychology.

- ***Appreciation of the optimal distance of the (MA-AI)***

MA - AI or the optimal distance of the attack, represents the perfect time-distance that is between two fighters, ensuring the evaluation, respectively the appliance in optimum time and efficient way of techniques for attack or defense.

The one who can appreciate in an efficient and spontaneously way, eventually to annihilate this distance in the shortest time period, will gain an advantage against his opponent, and give himself the possibility to use his psycho-physical-technical capability. In combat or self defense domain, the continuous changing of fight and guard position is increasing of reducing the attack or defense possibilities. This is the reason why we are considering this aspect extremely important for the study and consolidation of the knowledge. On the same time the ability to appreciate correctly (and spontaneously) of the distance are welcomed during the daily business of specific activities for the employees of the Ministry of Interior.

Some experts from the domain (D. Deliu, 2002) are expressing the notion “security sphere”, aiming the imaginary sphere that is surrounding the fighter for a distance of approximately one meter. Inside that, a skilled fighter can take the most efficient decision, not only about the attack, but also in relation with the defense.

From distance point of view, in budo (martial arts) we can distinguish three types of distance:

- *small distance (CHIKA - MA);*
- *optimal distance for attacking (MA – AI);*
- *large distance (TO - MA).*

Fighting distance (Ma-ai)

Ma – Ai regarded as *optimal distance for the attack*, is the perfect time-distance separating two fighters, ensuring the evaluation and application at the proper time in an efficient manner of attack or defense techniques. In short we can mention:

- ❖ *small distance* – is “the fire distance” being preferred by the fast *budoka* or those having as favorites technique (*tokui – waza*) short strikes, ascending of descending. Small distance is specific for joint (articulation) or strangulation techniques.

- ❖ *optimal distance for attacking (ma – ai)* – is the most used fighting distance from where can start a large variety of techniques, but still keeping a safe distance for protection. When fighting with the knife, this is the recommended distance.

Ma – ai is instinctively considered by the beginners (some times the large distance is choose), but for the skilled fighters it represents a strategy about the approaching of the fight because it creates the chance to execute the most efficient technique. It has to be highlighted the fact that keeping the proper distance – in any domain, not only in *budo/self defense*, expresses respect for the partner or adversary in physical and spiritual plan, and could be a friendly attitude and on the same time cautious. The actions those could be taken associated with this type of distance are unlimited, especially when the knowledge level is higher.

Ma-ai is the distance of those having equilibrium during the fight and why not in the complex situations of daily life. The correct and spontaneously appreciation of optimal distance for the attack creates the premises of executing the most efficient procedures for self defense or attack.

- ❖ *large distance (to - ma)* - represents that distance when the executed technique is reaching the target only after moving forward and approach the opponent, as a quick step or a short jump.

On the same time, *the large distance*, is the observation distance, offering the opportunity to analyze and calm down the fight, in a safety zone. This is frequently used in combat fight to secure the advantage of the accumulated points. The appreciation of the distance during the fast actions of the fight is the most difficult ability and it is gained only with continuous practice. It must be permanently searched by the person interested about self defense domain.

Below schemes are showing the three types of the distance (figures 1 - 3).

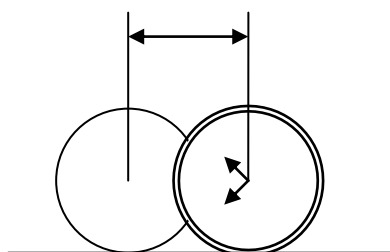


FIG. 1. small distance [for attacking]

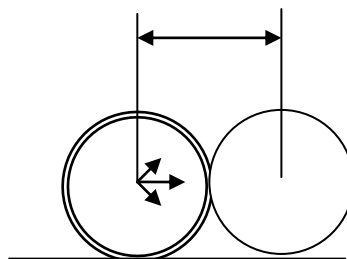


FIG. 2. optimal distance [for attacking]

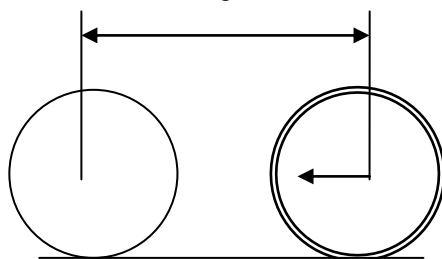


FIG. 3. large distance [for attacking]

○ **the usage of most efficient techniques those are exposing the defender in a less risky way**

To highlight this fact, we take in consideration the following aspects:

✓ usage of the most efficient techniques for movement/turning around, making the opponent to lost his equilibrium, striking techniques with preference for arms usage, but not excluding the kicks using the leg to the sensible portion of the opponent body to make him losing his control and braking the rhythmus and attacking desire or his annihilation;

✓ creating the opportunity to apply the joint techniques;

✓ creating the opportunity to apply *kyusho* techniques.

○ ***intuition of the direction of the attack from the way how the weapon is hold***

During the specific trainings [in Ju-jitsu] one of the elements those are studied in *Tanto-jutsu*, is about taking in consideration as a spontaneous observation the way how the aggressor is holding the weapon. Doing so, studying the way how the lever is handled it can be anticipated the attack direction and in reaction, the proper response that applies.

Of course, a skilled aggressor who knows how to handle the weapon can change the way of holding it in a short time period. Our experience in martial arts give us the chance to have an objection: the probability to be attacked by a *Tanto-jutsu* expert, is very low!

This is because of the moral discipline that is developed during the training hours dedicated to the instruction, so that, in our opinion the above expressed idea is truly valid.

○ ***usage of specific tools, personal belongings, the objects from the surrounding as a defending weapon***

Ed Parker, karate grand master and multiple times world champion during '70 was questioned: „What you will do if somebody is approaching you in an aggressive manner pointing a knife in your direction and asking for your wallet?” „I will give it without any hesitation”, it came the answer. „My life is much more important...”

So, this is a way to address a situation from a posture of a big champion!

As a Ministry of Interior or Ministry of Defense employee, as a simple citizen we are not willing to approach the situation in that manner because of different concepts!

For an efficient self defense, we suggest:

✓ usage of specific tools during mission execution (correction stick, spray, handcuffs, fire weapon);

✓ usage of the personal belongings as a interception/intimidation weapon: the jacket, the necktie, the belt, the muffler, the hat, the keys or the cell phone to be thrown in the direction of the eyes of the aggressor;

✓ usage or transformation in a weapon any object from the surrounding: branch from a tree, a stone, any object that is close to you (a chair) to put it between the victim and the aggressor or to be transformed in an interception/attacking weapon.

○ **usage of fighting psychology**

„Master” or beginner, when you are aggressed with a knife by a determined individual with a scary figure, only by keeping a calm attitude can save you. Running with full speed, even that it is said “running is a shame, but is healthy” does not apply!

The usage of fighting psychology in this situation is assuming:

✓ the simulation or creation of the impression that you are not alone; somebody is about to come an help you or is just behind the aggressor! The short hesitation and loose of attention of the aggressor must be used to initiate the defense;

✓ usage of intimidation speech or attitude;

✓ usage of the environment factors: making the aggressor to face the sun, exposing his eyes to the wind, lowering his position, bringing him to unstable ground;

✓ throwing sand or dust in the eyes to distract the attention.

○ **rules those can save your life in real fight**

The topic of fight or self defense with knife usage is very extensive. We consider useful some recommendations extracted from operative and martial arts domain:

➤ ALWAYS make the assumption that the aggressor has a weapon with him;

➤ The body, the arms and the legs of the aggressor could be considered weapons, so be careful!

➤ The knife could be felt not always shown;

➤ Be watchful to the movement of the aggressor;

➤ Keep a safe distance regardless of the circumstances;

➤ In case of an aggression with knife usage do not try to bring the fight to the ground;

➤ Do not try to bring to the ground the aggressor from the first phase. This could be dangerous in case that he posses a knife;

➤ Apply ALWAYS a strike to temper the attack;

➤ There is no place for a polite behavior when the knife is used in a dispute;

➤ When you know that the aggressor has a knife with him and he will use it, if you will not have the chance to run, use any object from personal belongings (handbag, keys, pen, hat, cell phone, lighter) or from the surrounding (chair, brick, stick, dust, sand) to prepare a response;

➤ Accept to fight only if there is no other chance!

➤ If YOU HAVE TO FIGHT, FIGHT FOR SURVIVING!

5. CONCLUSIONS

Starting from the operative, martial arts and experimental-theoretical experience, we are proposing this article for the analysis, preparations and diversification of specific activities belonging to the persons responsible for the maintenance or restoration of the public safety, but also to the other individuals, who can be in the posture of a victim of an aggression conducted by the usage of a cutting-pricking object or being on duty during the mission execution.

A superior training must be conducted in regard to the physical and tactical preparation for the persons working for police forces, especially for the operative department, who is interacting with any kind of people. This does not exclude the other operative categories.

The simple scenario of routine checking the ID of a person, when the person being asked for the papers posting a weapon with his hand or hiding it under the clothes, require the distance and reaction time to be trained to be able to face the situation and being able to create an opportunity and the necessary time to react. Using this example, timing and distance are major aspects those need to be taken in consideration when asking for personal ID of a person.

The attack is all the time quicker than the reaction. This is the reason why you must be prepared for any type of scenario when intercepting an individual. The arms shall be somewhere at the chest level to be able to have a quick reaction in case of an attack.

All the specific tools of a policeman shall be well positioned all the time and must be accessible in the shortest time possible. Of course, the usage and their knowledge must be an obligation coming from their duty and it is a necessity.

The ability to make a fast analysis about the risk presented by the person being questioned can help the policeman to determine as quick as possible if the force needs to be utilized and with which intensity. This analysis can be concluded from the body language, the arms posture and the area where the discussion is taking place. From this perspective, it leads us to the distance that needs to be kept, making the assumption that the each person possessing a weapon that can be any time accessed. The analysis of distance presented in the paragraph above for different scenarios presenting higher or lower risk, is materialized in the distance to the suspect, that is necessary to be able to avoid a possible attack and the optimal technique to apply the defending technique, all of these materialized in order to obtain the operative efficiency.

From our opinion the persons having their duty to maintain and restore the public safety, but also the other categories of person, must train their self as close as possible to the real life scenarios, using the weapons and tools as their duty require, or any other type of objects those could be possible transformed in weapon, being dressed with their intervention or operative equipment.

This is why we are considering our article very important and the different scenarios about cutting objects being treated, will lead to a stronger psycho-physical system, besides the creation of specific abilities in self defense, required by our society where the democratic values of our social life are wrongly understood.

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