

Chin-Na. the value of the art of seizing as an integral part of Kung-Fu

Whether studying Japanese, Korean or Chinese martial arts, grappling and/or seizing has a definite and important role within any system, and, In order to be a well-rounded martial artist, it is essential to have experienced, or have been acquainted with, all the aspects of the art. In the Chinese arts seizing (or immobilization of the opponent) is known as Chin-Na, which, while being one facet of Kung-Fu, is essential to the completeness of the art; and if neglected can cause danger to the practitioner of the art.

It is important to become adept at all ranges as on a technical basis, fights occur at three ranges: long range, medium range and short range. An example of long range might be a kick; medium range, a knee to the groin and short range, a choke or hand-lock. However, not all encounters follow the long to medium to short range pattern; short range may be the opening scenario. For example: the defender might be sitting on a bar stool and the foe walks behind him and grabs at his arm. The defender twists around and catches the attacker's arm, strikes down with his free hand into the foe's bent arm causing him to fall forward. Acting quickly the defender takes hold of the attacker's arm forcing it upwards, thus, the defender has control of the situation - by seizing the attacker's arm, he has neutralised the attack.

Chin-Na has another role to play in Kung-Fu, that of an alternative to law. Law enforcement agencies see martial artists from a variety of viewpoints. If too much or unnecessary force is used, the martial artist may be liable for assault charges, even if attacked first, but by using Chin-Na, court appearances, assault charges, hospital charges and personal injury can be avoided.

Another alternative is that of the principles of humanity. The attacker intends to cause harm, but the defender simply turns the attacker away, rather than causing bodily harm. The decision to act 'graciously' or not depends upon the defender's frame of mind at the time of the attack, together with his moral values; which could be the personality of the martial artist or just a one off situation. Either way, the knowledge and use of Chin-Na gives the defender the option.

Environmental factors contribute significantly to the range at which attack and defence occurs. A crowded bar is no place to launch into spinning back-kicks or other long-range techniques. However, Chin-Na has the advantage of needing only a relatively small amount of room in which it can be used.

Chin-Na can be either attack or defence. This gives the option to the exponent of Chin-Na, rather than to the opponent. Some examples of this are: a move may be faked, catching the opponent off-guard, which then enables the exponent to restrict his opponent's movements before he can counteract; the defender is facing the attacker, he fakes a high lead to the face, the attacker fends the blow, the defender slips under the guard and grabs the attacker around the neck and twists, in order not to sustain a broken neck the attacker will follow the path of the hold.

As with all techniques in the martial arts, certain disciplines are essential. For example, to turn a body around, not only requires strength of hands and arms, but total muscular control of the body, which is brought about by daily exercise and physical strength.

Angles, levels (gates), and timing all play a role in Chin-Na as with other parts of martial arts. Chin-Na techniques are very subtle when they are put into (kuen?) forms. distinct from a lunging punch followed by a knee smash to the face. To understand Chin-Na techniques, the martial artist must be familiar with them, analyse them, and appreciate the vital contribution that they offer. The more knowledge gained, the better the insight. That does not mean that learning other aspects of Kung-Fu should cease, as that would be foolish and limiting. No matter how many terms or years a martial artist has attained, there may come a time when he will be 'outgunned', and a martial artist who is familiar with the entirety of his

art will stand a much better chance of survival than someone who has only basic knowledge. Defending against knife attacks is a frightening experience, and great care and concentration are essential against an attacker who is armed with a knife. The prime objective is to avoid being 'cut' , which means that the defender must gain control of the knife. Chin-Na has ways of dealing with this problem. It is not recommended that the defender should try to kick the knife right out of the attacker's hand. He should be allowed to come to the defender - into the defender's territory - where trapping, tying and seizing techniques can be used to the best effect. because his objective is to attack and stab, all his energies will be directed on the knife, while at the same time, the defender's objective is to stop the knife attack. If the opponent lunges, the exponent can pivot, or withdraw backwards to set him up for trapping. The defender must gain control of the knife, and once he has succeeded he must not let go.

Disarming the attacker is a risky business, be it a knife or a short stick he is using, but Chin-Na is designed to trap, seize and tie up the opponent. Therefore, in a confrontation there are three possible results. Firstly a win is accomplished by completely demolishing the attacker; secondly, there is no fight at all, and thirdly, the defender may be beaten. However, Chin-Na has a significant role to play in Kung-Fu. It is an integral part of the martial art and cannot be neglected by an exponent of Kung-Fu.