



Kobudo-Bo-Jutsu

Author: Helmut Kogel
Genre: Aikido and Other Martial Arts
Publisher: Oxford: Meyer and Meyer, 2006
ISBN: 978-1-84126-172-0
RRP: £9.99 (+£2.80 p&p)

As a student of Aikido I've often train with wooden weapons, but rarely have I had the opportunity to get to grips with a Bo staff - a weapon normally used in Karate - until now.

Throughout the world, and long before man managed to invent the forge and craft the first sword, he has always been able to rely on the humble stick, whether it be a quarterstaff in the hands of Little John (of Robin Hood fame) or a Bo in the hands of Donatello the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle (who is sort of a man), or any of the variations of a staff such as the spear. And it is this version of staff-fighting from Okinawa - known as Bo-Jutsu - that Professor Helmut Kogel MD, a senior medical figure and high-ranking black belt in several styles of martial arts writes about here.

Spread over about 170 pages or so, the main body of the book is separated into two main sections: 'A: General Part', and 'B: Special Part'. The General section is split into nine subsections which together provide an overview of the specific art of the Bo, it's 'parent' art of karate and how they have developed, being taken into the wider Japanese culture while still maintaining the unique culture of the island(s) of Okinawa. Subsequently, the 'Special section' then gets down to the full instruction. From the very basic instructions on how to hold the Bo (which measures about 6 feet in length) through to various frame by frame instructions for the katas (with bullet point instructions) down to the painstaking illustrated diagrams for every move, block and strike, this really is one of the most thorough books of this type I have read. The fact that this is on a particular martial style that has far less written about it than others that could be mentioned is also a good thing.

I think one of the strongest points in favour of Professor Kogel's text is that it has supportive forewords penned by three of the most senior karate instructors in the world (10th, 9th and 8th Dans respectively). If you want to learn to use a stick, you can't do much better than this.

9 sausages out of 10

RW Oct 2014