



## Stick Fighting: techniques of self-defense

**Author:** Masaaki Hatsumi/Quintin Chambers  
**Genre:** Aikido and Other Martial Arts  
**Publisher:** London/New York/Tokyo: Kodansha, 1981  
**ISBN:** 9780870114755  
**RRP:** £11.99 (+£2.80 p&p)

*The humble stick... just a bit of wood, or a deadly weapon?*

Stick Fighting is a book detailing the techniques of the 'Kukishin Ryu', an ancient Japanese method of, well, stick fighting. It details dozens of different techniques using a wooden staff against various methods of attack, both armed and unarmed, and is as comprehensive as it is interesting. Yet its focus is not exclusively on the Japanese; instead the authors, Masaki Hatsumi and Quintin Chambers, adopt a very general outlook in their short but interesting introduction, detailing the history of stick fighting throughout the world. Specifically, they include a brief summary of stick fighting practices in Europe and England, and more importantly still, they detail why these passed into disuse.

This enjoyable, if succinct, opening soon gives way to the main body of the text. Split into 8 sections spread over just under 150 pages, it employs hand-drawn diagrams alongside hundreds of photographs, augmenting the detailed (but not 'waffly') instructions on how to carry out each manoeuvre. As one might expect, the first section of the book, 'Basic Movements' lays the ground work for the more advanced techniques that come later, the more practical of which are shown in several variations. These include adaptations designed to deal with an unarmed attacker employing punches, kicks and grabs, and also with armed assailants using sticks, knives and other weapons. All this is supported by a thorough glossary of the Japanese terms.

So, this book is quite unusual in that it assumes that the person defending themselves is actually armed, and still more so because many of the 'attackers' portrayed are often unarmed – no doubt these techniques would have been being required learning for the Samurai of old. I would probably recommend Stick Fighting to an experienced martial artist who wants to increase their ability and overall coordination rather than to a student in the early stages of their 'career'. For reference purposes, i.e. a way of keeping age-old knowledge alive, this is a very good effort.

8 sausages out of 10

RW Mar 2014