

TanDao Animal Power

For Modern Self Defense



The Shaolin Crane

Lawrence Tan

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TanDao Animal Power is a branch of the TanDao System. This ebook provides a brief introduction to the system, its branches, and focuses on one of the Shaolin five animals: the crane.

Introduction

What is The Evolving Martial Artist?

Today there is such a worldwide profusion of both traditional and modern masters, that the idea of mastery has lost its true meaning. The popular notion of mastery usually refers to superior fighting prowess. That is incomplete. Realizing that the true martial way is more than fighting, I coined the phrase *the Evolving Martial Artist*. It is as an ideal. For the Evolving Martial Artist, the master is not just a warrior, but also a scholar and monk. Therefore, the Evolving Martial Artist is an advanced practitioner committed to an integrated approach to skill, knowledge and wisdom.

The TanDao System is designed as a holistic path for the Evolving Martial Artist. It evolved out of my close to half century endeavor to integrate two seemingly irreconcilable perspectives: Bruce Lee's iconoclastic modern Jeet Kune Do and Bodhidharma's ancient Shaolin tradition. The warrior, scholar and monk represent the physical, mental and emotional components of our being. It is important to realize that this is an integrated way. The three components are interrelated and inseparable. Although the technical stage focuses on the warrior's physical skills, the strategic stage on the scholar's knowledge and the intuitive stage on the monk's way of wisdom, each stage does not preclude the other two components. TanDao teaches meditation, philosophical reflection as well as martial training at each stage. It is a system of balance.

Recognizing that each individual is unique with different goals, our comprehensive system unifies the classical and contemporary models by embracing the full spectrum of the martial arts experience: hard, soft and internal stages. Each builds upon and integrates the other.

The TanDao System for the Evolving Martial Artist

TanDao has three branches or stages:

Technical Stage (Hard) – Kick boxing/grappling focused on Bruce Lee's modern approach to realistic self defense and high level physical fitness.

Strategic Stage (Soft) - TanDao Animal Styles adapt traditional techniques - tiger claw, leopard paw, snake fangs, crane beak and dragon claw - for modern reality hand-to-hand combat. Most importantly this stage also emphasizes form training as a moving meditation and introduces zen and daoist thought in a secular context.

Intuitive Stage (Internal) - Dazzling Hands free flow fighting. Cultivating internal life force energy (qi) and seated meditation is for health, wellness and longevity. Martial arts deepens as a spiritual path.

TanDao Modern Fighting

Modern martial artists seek a well-rounded proficiency in all fighting ranges: kicking, punching, trapping and grappling. This stage of the TanDao System emphasizes practical techniques and strategies absorbed from different systems based on scientific investigation and modern cross training methods. It reflects the universal style that Bruce Lee envisioned. The Evolving Martial Artist discipline will go a step further, recognizing the value and depth of traditional form.

TanDao Modern Fighting	
Stand up & Ground Techniques	
Kicking Range	Core Kicks: Front Side Round Spinning Back Wheel Kick
Punching Range	Core Punches: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Straight Punches • Back Fist • Upper cut • Hook • Hammer Fist
Trapping Range	Trapping: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Elbow 2) Knee 3) Head Butt
Grappling Range	Throws: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Takedowns 2. Sweeps 3. Trips
	Joint-locks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chokes • Breaks
Ground Range	Top & Bottom <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submissions

TanDao Traditional Forms

The TanDao System has ten traditional forms designed for advanced martial arts. At this stage, martial artists should be proficient in practical kick boxing/ grappling, is discovering classical forms as an art, science and moving meditation. TanDao is unique from traditional systems in that the secret keys to decoding the hidden knowledge are openly taught. The Evolving Martial Artist has an opportunity to move beyond the physicality of form and towards the next level of awareness. The movements may also flex their zen strength. This is the echo Bodhidharma.

TanDao Traditional Forms	
1) The Universal Form	Moving meditation for health, Qi energy and longevity.
2) Shaolin Ten Postures	Secret keys to techniques and strategies for stand up fighting.
3) Stone Fist Form	Core punches: straight, back fist, upper cuts, hooks and hammer .
4) Yin Yang Form	Punching based on simultaneous block and strike strategy.
5) Leopard Form	Speedy leopard paw for devastating strikes.
6) Tiger Form	Powerful tiger claws for striking, grabbing and ripping.
7) Crane Form	Crane beak, crane wing and punches.
8) Snake Form	Deceptive snake fang strikes to vital points.
9) Dragon Form	Circular flowing throws, joint locks and internal strikes.
10) Reincarnating Hands	Dynamic free flow movements combining all five animals styles.

TanDao Animal Power For Modern Self Defense

In TanDao, advanced martial art skills are taught through the study of five animals styles: leopard, tiger, crane, snake and dragon. Classical Animal Kung fu styles – exotic, powerful and graceful are fascinating methods of hand-to-hand combat. Ancient Buddhist and Daoist masters observed the way of nature, in particular the animal kingdom for insights to enhance their methods of healing, health and longevity. It is no wonder then that the evolution of a diversity of animal fighting styles were spawned in China.

TanDao Animal Styles have been adapted for modern martial arts combat situations. Usually the traditional applications are presented in a stylized context which is not appropriate for urban street self defense. To facilitate combat realism, TanDao addresses three major points: 1) re-interpreting the stylized movements so that they are natural and functional in a modern fighting context. 2) special hand training and 3) adopting a TanDao action stance in place of traditional stances.

TanDao animals are for the Evolving Martial Artists who want to augment and enhance their existing system. Claws, paws, fangs and beaks should always be viewed as advance technique to refine your kick boxing and grappling skills.

Crane Legend

The graceful crane, a symbol of longevity, is a favorite artistic motif in traditional Chinese culture. Over the ages an exotic fighting style developed emulating the crane in combat. There are two stories of its origin.

According to one Kung fu legend, as a Tibetan monk named Ordator was meditating, he witnessed an ape attack a crane. He was surprised that the elegant crane was able to startle and confuse the powerful predator by flapping both wings while dodging back and forth. When there was an opening, the crane used its beak as a weapon then flew off. This incident inspired the monk to create the Hop Gar Crane System, a “soft fighting style” based on mobility, intimidation and evasion.

There is also the story of Fang Qiniang, daughter of Fang Zhionggong, a Monk Fist master. He was killed while protecting his village against bandits. She vowed to hone her martial skills to one day avenge her father's death. While walking in a bamboo grove she heard noises. Upon closer look, she saw two cranes fighting. She observed their intimidating calls, deceptive wing movements, quick jumps and precise clawing and pecking. Her attempts to chase them off were met with superb defensive and evasive skills. From this observation, along with its integration into her father's Monk Fist kung fu, she developed a new style, White Crane. Fang Qiniang was the first woman credited with the development of a new martial art system, The White Crane System.

Characteristics

The style is characterized by the crane hand which resembles the head of a crane. It is used to peck like a crane impaling a fish with its beak. The long swinging punches of the style resemble the flapping wings of the crane. Each of these long-range movements can be a block or a strike. Crane is renown for it's elusive footwork, darting back and forth, like a crane engaged in a mating dance, to confuse the opponent.

Historical Crane Origins

Historically there are three major crane systems categorized by where they originated:

- **Hop Gar and Mot Gar**

Originated in Tibet by the Buddhist lama named Ordator (1430 – 1498). Hop Gar is primarily a Qi gong health system as well as fighting style.

- **The White Crane**

Developed in Fujian China at the end of the Ming Dynasty three centuries ago. It focuses on close quarter in-fighting, including five versions: Jumping Crane, Screaming Crane, Sleeping Crane, Feeding Crane and Flying Crane.

- **The Black Crane**

From northern China, influenced by the Tibetan school. It was adopted by the Manchus imperial guards during the Qing Dynasty. It emphasizes long range and mid range fighting distance.

The TanDao Crane Form

The TanDao Crane Form's mark of distinction is the technical, strategic, and aesthetic fusion of both southern mid-range and close quarter hand strikes and northern long range kicks. The kung fu adage “southern fists and northern legs” distinguishes northern and southern Shaolin styles. Athletically, a high degree of flexibility, endurance and coordination is required, making the TanDao Crane the most physically demanding of the five animals. While Tibetan Hop Gar, Southern White Crane and Northern Black Crane specialize in two ranges, TanDao employs all three ranges – long range kicks, long and mid range Crane punches and close range crane beaks strikes.

For the Evolving Martial Artist, seeking perfection of form encompasses practical application for self defense, aspiration of power and grace, and movement as meditation. This integrated approach connects to the roots of the original Shaolin way.

The Crane Hand Positions

The signature hand position, resembling the head of a crane, is formed by bending your wrist and bringing your thumb and four finger tips together. This hand position can be employed for two different techniques: head and beak depending upon the contact point.

White Crane Weapons
Crane Beak
Crane Head
Crane Wings
Crane Palms
Crane Punches

- 1. Crane head**
Generates power using the bent top of the wrist to strike soft areas.
- 2. Crane beak**
Utilizes a soft whipping motion of the fingertips.
- 3. Crane wing tips**
This open hand position, imitating the crane's flapping wings.
- 4. Crane palms**
Soft palm strikes that uses the flicking wrist for quick explosive strikes.
- 5. Crane punches**
Crane punches are long range fist attacks that are characterized by large circular swinging patterns that resemble the flapping of the wings.



Traditional Form Crane Stands On One Leg

Traditional Form and Modern Fighting

The classic technique, *Crane Stands On One Leg* is found in our TanDao Crane Form and is also Posture #6 in TanDao's Shaolin Ten Postures. This posture displays the grace and poise of a crane standing in the water. From a superficial examination, this has little relevance to practical self-defense. Does this epitomize "flowery hands and embroidered feet"? Or more succinctly: does this really work?

Fancy, but Impractical?

There is, of course, a formal application (as depicted in the Karate Kid film) taught by many traditionalists. This is a deceptive fighting stance that appears unstable and lures the opponent into attacking. The opponent is intercepted by a powerful jumping front kick delivered from the crane stance. This may seem credible, but to the skeptical modern fighter, there is still doubt.

An experienced fighter may find this stylized explanation unrealistic. As a fighting stance, it defies the twin purpose of mobility and stability. Furthermore, to contemporary mixed martial artists, experts in ground fighting, this stance invites a tackle or take down. A likely conclusion drawn would be that this crane technique embodies the fancy moves inherent in traditional forms; it looks great, works in film fantasy fighting but is utterly useless and dangerous for realistic combat.

Modern practitioners value scientific verification over unquestioned faith in orthodox teachings. However, from the perspective of a traditionalist who is privy to the secret teachings, this conclusion is inaccurate.

Form and Secret Function

Traditional martial art has a two tier system of teaching:

1. Outer knowledge: disseminating the obvious formal teachings.
2. Inner knowledge: revealing subtle, hidden meaning that goes beyond stylized application.

One major key to form “literacy” is that the stylized stances and postures are codified symbols for the basic elements of combat. When seen in this light, this abstract language of form transforms into a powerful tool to analyze the techniques, strategies and tactics of diverse combat situations.

Practical Form Application

TanDao animal techniques work for urban street defense because the secret teachings have been effectively integrated with some of Bruce Lee’s JKD principles.

Here is a secret key:

Imagine the formal posture as a frozen moment in time during combat. However, realize that the application of the technique is a transition movement, alive and flowing, not a static fighting stance as the formal explanation suggests (this is an example of deliberate misinformation for the uninitiated). It is not merely a pose, and with this in mind, we can re-examine the efficacy of the movement.



Modern Practical Function

#1. Knee Jam into the Body



This is an offensive knee attack where you crash into your opponent as you simultaneously strike with punches. The intention is to destroy the opponent's balance. Since falling makes it difficult to tense up, your strikes are more damaging. The tactical use of the knee jam, must be distinguished from a knee thrust and knee bump where the knee is the weapon of attack.

It is especially effective as an intercepting stop hit by jamming your knee into the opponent attempting a lead side kick or wheel kick before the kick is fully executed.

#2. Outside Leg Block



This is a defensive leg lifting movement that can be delivered from a stationary stance when the opponent attempts to kick you. With proper timing, the outside leg block is very effective against round, circular and spinning kicks. Note that for high kicks your arm is positioned to rise up to block. This single leg block can also be used as an aggressive defense, a leg check, as you advance into the opponent with a barrage of punches.

#3. Knee Smash Attack

This is a decisive knee attack delivered from an outside range. Unlike the knee bump and knee thrust which are executed from a stationary position in trapping range, the knee smash travels across space – like a missile - from kicking or punching range into close range. Your entire body weight is behind the attack. It should be used cautiously: the opponent can intercept it, but a careful execution will surprise the opponent. The momentum of your entire body mass crashing into the opponent creates tremendous force.



Summary

TanDao teaches the Evolving Martial Artist that even a seemingly fancy, classical technique can be a formidable weapon for realistic combat. When viewed through the eyes of one initiated into the hidden language of form, a stylized technique becomes a tool for discovering a multitude of applications suitable for the contemporary martial artist concerned with practical self defense.

We've examined the single signature technique from the TanDao Shaolin Ten Postures and TanDao Crane Form. There are 18 fighting applications for *Crane Stands On One Leg* (Posture #6). We've shown you three. How many can you discover on your own?

If just one animal technique contains so many fighting applications, imagine the wealth of hidden martial arts knowledge concealed in a complete TanDao form? Think about it.

About Tan Dao Animal Power Online Videos

TanDao Animal Power online videos are designed to introduce you to the Shaolin five animals. In this series there are ten videos for each individual animal covering:

- #1. Universal Hand Movement
Learn the basic animal self-defense technique.
- #2. Basic Animal Technique
Secret animal hand training using the Universal Form
- #3. Animal Natural Stance
Quick, offensive and defensive footwork for practical
- #4. Animal Hand Power
Develop strong hands and fingers with secret exercises
- #5. Iron Hand Training
Maximize animal striking power with iron sand training
- #6. Animal Basic Application
TanDao's Triad pattern slap, parry and block
- #7. Move with the Master
TanDao Work out routine using all exercises
- #8. Fist of the Scholar Class
Discuss secret animal strategy and philosophy
- #9. Unleash the Beast
Self defense applications
- #10. Taming the Beast
Core Animal Moving Meditation Form

TanDao Animal Power

General Questions

These questions are to supplement your practice of the TanDao Animal Power online videos. They are designed to focus you on important details that will increase your awareness of the animal movement. Practice consistently.

#1. Universal Hand Movement

Tremendous power is generated from correct application of form. Relax and move naturally. Avoid jerky mechanical movement from trying to be powerful.

- Is my lead elbow turned in and covering my ribs?
- Are the fingers of my lead hand eye level?
- Is my rear hand solar plexus height?
- Are my movements relaxed, smooth and flowing?

#2. Basic Animal Technique

Be aware: if your hand and fingers are not trained, you may injure yourself when hitting. The prerequisite for a powerful animal strike is having a strong and correctly formed hand position.

- Is my hand position correct?
- What is the point of contact with hand?
- Am I tensing all the muscles of my fingers and hand?

#3. Animal Natural Stance

Learn to use a natural stance – shoulder width with one foot forward as if taking a step. This is our usual position when we stand and walk in. Power and mobility come from a stable stance.

- Are my feet shoulder width?
- When I advance or withdraw do I move naturally like when I'm walking?

#4. Animal Hand Power

Each animal hand position has a specific point of contact when striking to maximize your power. Auxilliary hand training strengthens the wrist, hand and fingers position. The secret is to make these exercises daily habits. Practice gradually and consistently over time.

- Do I practice at odd moments throughout the day?
- Do I practice at least three times a week?

#5. Iron Hand Training (Optional)

Caution: it is vital to strengthen your hands and fingers for animal movements to be realistic. Unless you want to break bricks and boards, excessive conditioning that can damage or disfigure your hands is unnecessary. TanDao uses high-level soft power that is devastating. Conditioning is always gradual.

- Am I hitting the iron sand bag too hard?
- Am I relaxing and using gravity not muscle power to generate power?
- Do I vigorously rub my hands and fingers for three minutes before and after hitting the bag?

#6. Animal Basic Application

All formal techniques are prearranged methods to practice and study self defense. They are not real fighting. They must be adapted to meet real life fighting situations.

- Do I understand how this technique works?
- What are the realistic ways to execute it?
- What punches or techniques are not applicable with this technique?

#7. Move with the Master

Try to schedule this work out routine into your life. Practice everyday but if not try a least three times a week. Go the distance. Martial arts practice is for life.

- Am I emulating the movements accurately?
- Am I studying the details of the transition motions?

#8. Fist of the Scholar Class

What makes these techniques truly formidable are the fighting strategy and tactics behind the movements. Martial arts is more than physical exercise and developing self-defense skills.

- Have I learned any new ideas on the meaning of martial arts?
- What are the new insights that will accelerate my training?

#9. Unleash the Beast

Be aware of the power inherent in these self defense techniques and protect ourselves and your training partners from injury. Never develop a false sense of security. There is a vast gap between practice and real self-defense. Fighting is unpredictable, chaotic and brutal. Don't fight.

- Do I understand how to use these techniques realistically?
- What are the moral and legal consequences of self defense situations?
- If fighting is unavoidable what can I do strategically to ensure my survival?

#10. Taming the Beast

In TanDao true power is about self control. Through daily form practice we learn self control. We empower ourselves mentally, physically and spiritually to meet the challenges of everyday.

- Do I practice with the spirit of the animal?
- What does perfection of form mean?
- Do I practice in nature?

This ebook contains excerpts from our upcoming book, **The Evolving Martial Artist**, by Lawrence Tan, a comprehensive guide to key principles for decoding the hidden knowledge in traditional form.

About the Author

Lawrence Tan brings a lifetime of experience to the martial arts. It began in the sixties, with a journey that included studying both in his native US as well as abroad in Asia. The quest for mastery included martial art training, teaching, writing, fight choreography, film. A pioneer in the field of instructional martial art videos, today he brings his work to life in the online community.

TanDao website <http://www.tandao.com> is alive in the blogosphere.



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