



# Tambo



## **Level I. Yang Grip Basics** (Green belt)

1. Figure 8s: downward and upward
2. The 14 basic strikes: stationary, retreating, and advancing
3. The 6 Basic blocks: stationary, retreating, and advancing
4. Four-count sinawali (double tambo): sticks, partner, heavy bag

## **Level II. Yin Grip Basics** (1 Brown stripe)

1. Figure 8s: downward
2. The 14 basic strikes: stationary, retreating, and advancing
3. The 6 Basic blocks: stationary, retreating, and advancing
4. Six-count sinawali (double yang): sticks, partner, heavy bag

## **Level III. Tambo vs. Tambo Disarms** (2 Brown stripes)

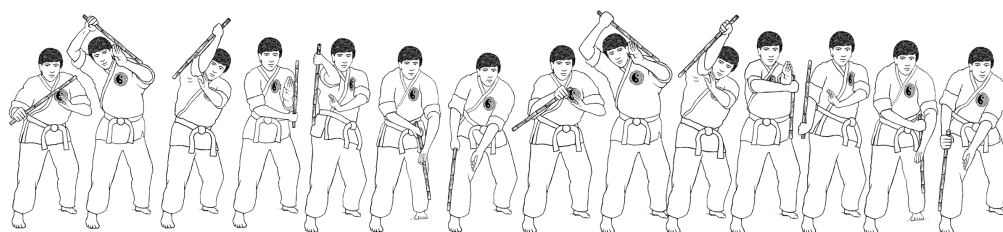
1. Long range
  - a. Use the basic strikes to target the weapon hand
2. Medium range
  - a. Pop: block, grab, and use a hard style block to disarm
  - b. Hooking with the butt
3. Close range
  - a. Double end grip: block, ram, and hook
  - b. Snaking with the free arm

## **Level IV. Tambo 1 and Applications** (Brown belt)

1. Tambo 1 and applications
2. Tres-tres

## **Level V. Tambo 2 and Applications** (2 Black stripes)

1. Tambo 2 and applications
2. Louie-ta-ta-ta



## Introduction

*Tambo* is a Japanese term for the short stick, however the Cuong Nhu tambo curriculum, in classic eclectic fashion, finds its roots in the Vietnamese stick arts. The Vietnamese word for short stick is “doan con,” and the length depends on your height. Holding your tambo in a natural grip, with your arms at the side of your body, the tip should reach just below your ankle. The tambo should be about one inch in diameter. Rattan is safer than hardwood; it is lighter, fibrous, and does not splinter and break. Kata practice is an important part of the Vietnamese stick arts, utilizing hard and fast whipping motions as well as soft fluid motions. In Vietnam, short stick demonstrations were frequently accompanied by drums to enhance rhythm and power.



## Fighting Stance

Lead with the tambo held in your dominant hand, and fight from a crouched position with your knees bent and body hollowed out. Stay light on the balls of your feet. Hold your tambo high enough that the upper part of the weapon can easily cover your head. Keep your guarding hand up and ready!

## Basic Strategy

The most basic strategy with the tambo is to “beat your opponent to the punch” by attacking the outer edges of his body, raining down strikes on the outer regions (i.e., the top and back of the head, the ears hands, arms, neck, waist, thighs, knee caps, and calves; of course, if your opponent is standing sideways, you can then aim at the abdomen, nose, eyes, and groin as well). To effectively practice to the air, you must imagine your opponent standing in front of you. Speed and accuracy are the key components to using this strategy successfully.



## **Level I. Yang Grip Basics (Green belt)**

The natural (yang) grip is the most common offensive position. Hold the tambo at one end so that it extends outward from the thumb side of your clenched fist. The butt of the stick should extend one inch from the knife edge side of your hand. This gives you enough to strike with, but not enough that your opponent could grab the end of the stick and potentially disarm you.

### **Six Guarding Positions (yang grip)**

There are six guarding positions, also called ready positions or “parking lots.” Each of the positions can be utilized as a transition between strikes. Each of your strikes should start and finish at one of these ready positions. When your tambo is “parked,” your free hand assumes a guarding position on your centerline. None of the guarding positions limit the choice of strikes that you can deliver.

The following six guarding positions are given for a right yang grip, however you should practice them on both sides with both your right and left hands. They are:

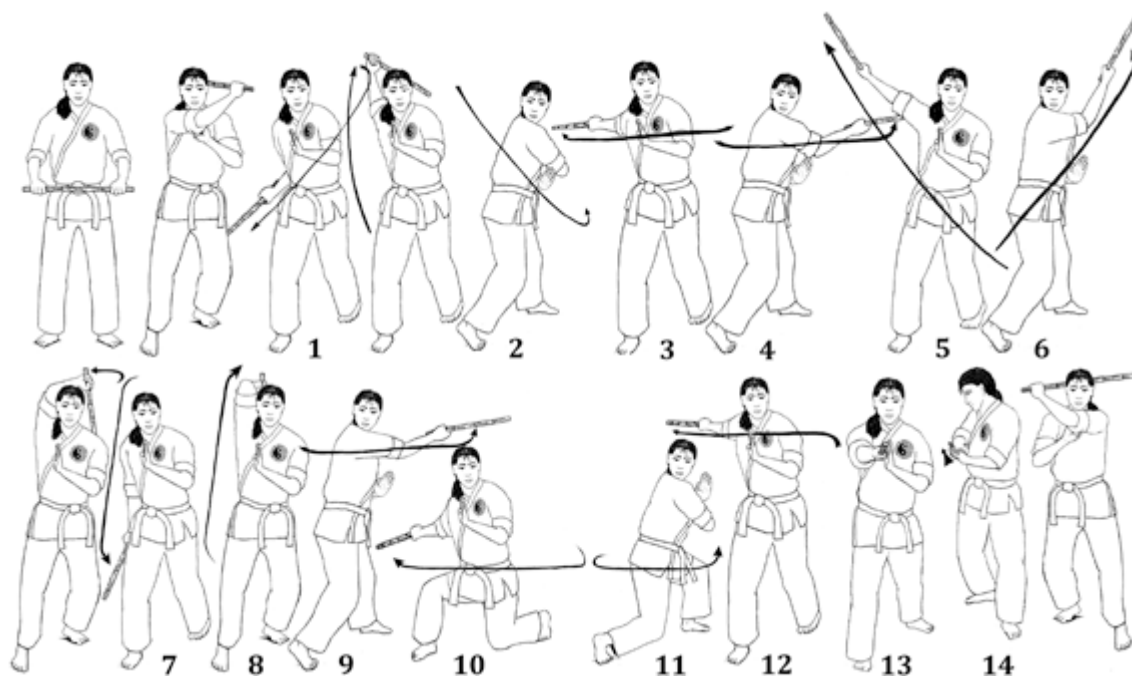
1. Over your left shoulder
2. Over your right shoulder
3. Outside your left arm (by triceps)
4. Outside your right arm (by triceps)
5. By your left hip
6. By your right hip (palm facing out)

### **Figure 8s (yang grip)**

The figure 8 is a basic twirl that consists of two strikes, a downward diagonal strike from right to left followed by another from left to right, forming an “X” in front of you. The shape could also be seen as a figure 8 on its side, like an infinity symbol ∞.

## **14 Basic Strikes**

There are 14 basic strikes in the Cuong Nhu tambo curriculum. Each strike can be performed with your tambo in the yang or yin grips, but only the yang grip strikes are required for the rank of one brown stripe. Practice the strikes separately at first; checking to make sure you follow the same path each time you strike. Use a mirror to check whether you are striking through the same point each time. Strive for precision and swing hard, following through with your hips and shoulders on each strike. The pattern below is explained using a right grip. When you have mastered the right side, switch to the left grip and repeat the pattern using the mirror image strikes (e.g., a right to left diagonal strike in the right grip becomes a left to right strike when using a left grip). Develop striking power by hitting a heavy bag or tire.



### From a ready position:

1. Diagonally downward from left to right
2. Diagonally downward from right to left
3. Horizontally from left to right
4. Horizontally from right to left
5. Diagonally upward from left to right
6. Diagonally upward from right to left
7. Vertically downward through centerline  
(i.e., through opponent's nose, solar plexus, and groin)
8. Vertically upward through centerline  
(end with tambo behind your back, right hand at right shoulder)
9. Horizontally high (temple level) from right to left
10. Horizontally low (knee level) from left to right
11. Horizontally low (knee level) from right to left
12. Horizontally high (temple level) from left to right
13. Jab forward to solar plexus
14. Jab behind by switching tambo to yin grip, reinforcing the tambo along your forearm and sliding back into a back stance

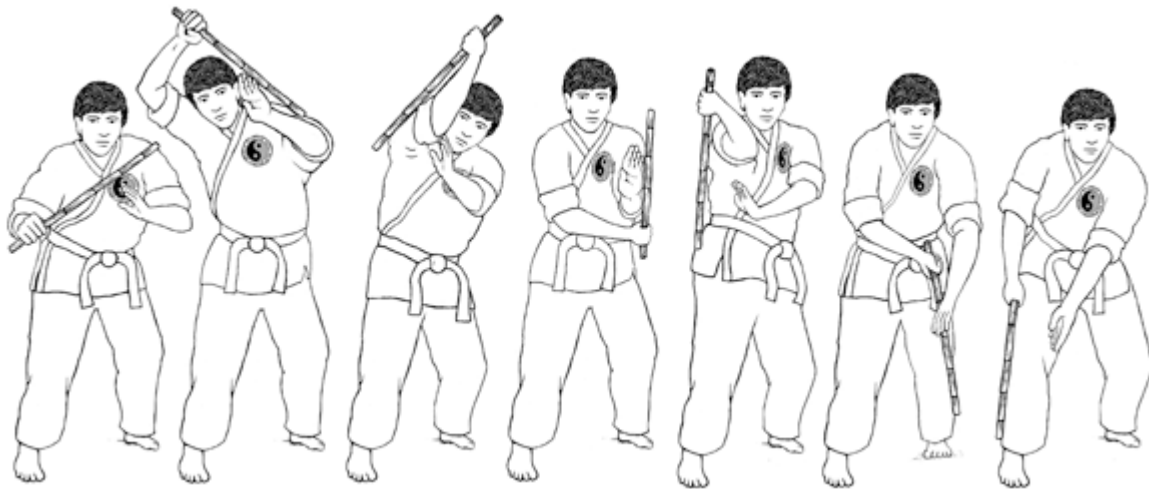
### Focus on:

- Precision** Hit with the tip of the stick to maximize your psi.  
Strikes #1-8 should all pass through a 6" target at solar plexus level.  
Use a target stick to test yourself (shoot for 90% accuracy).
- Angle** "Cut" from shoulder to hip on diagonal strikes.  
Make vertical strikes as vertical as possible.  
Check yourself in a mirror or have someone look at you.
- Stance** Pivot on the balls of your feet to get the power of your hips into your strikes, but do not turn your body so much that you leave yourself open to a counter attack.
- Follow-through** Finish in one of the "parking lots" ready to strike again!

## Six Basic Blocks

There are six basic blocks in the Cuong Nhu Tambo curriculum. There are two high blocks, one on the left side and one on the right, two middle blocks (left and right), and two low level blocks (left and right). Block the weakest part of your opponent's weapon (close to his hand) with the strongest part of yours (the lower half of your tambo). Immediately follow each block with swift and logical counter attacks.

Target the opponent's weapon hand at the earliest opportunity. Double strike by following butt strikes with tip strikes and vice-versa. As you get more comfortable with the tambo, try practicing in different conditions: in the rain, on uneven surfaces such as stairs, while sitting, or even lying on the floor. Substitute your tambo with improvised weapons (an umbrella, tennis racket, etc.).



## The Blocking Progression

### Basic: Static Blocking

This exercise teaches you to “take the shot.” Keep the free end of the tambo firmly anchored against your body. Block hand to hand and stick to stick. Once you no longer fear the opponent's weapon, you will begin to move with more strength and confidence. Practice in front of a mirror to perfect your positioning.

### Intermediate: Static Blocking with Movement

Option 1. Move in to jam the strike in the acceleration zone, before it reaches full speed. Utilize *chung chi* (forward flowing energy). Strive to strike his hand with your block while you use your empty hand to check the opponent's arm or attack his face.

Option 2. Move into the deceleration zone to weaken the strike, meeting it at its outer limit. This leads to advanced dynamic blocking.

### Advanced: Dynamic Blocking

Use footwork, angling in and away from the attack to avoid the strike. Block stick to stick and hand to hand, maintaining cohesion with the opponent's weapon hand and/or controlling the weapon. The free end of your tambo does not touch your body, but neutralizes the incoming attack with a short but powerful “pulse strike.”

## **The Blocking Drill**

Beginning with high diagonal strikes and high blocks, continue with mid-level strikes and middle blocks, and finish with low strikes and low blocks. One partner strikes while the other blocks and then strikes back at the same level, allowing both partners to block and strike. Both partners should move, stepping around in a circular pattern as they strike and block. Remember to always check the opponent's weapon hand with your guarding hand. Try different variations on this drill by holding the tambo in different grips, changing the order of the blocks, etc.

## **Four Count Sinawali**

Sinawali refers to the activity of “weaving”, as applied in the Pilipino arts of eskrima, arnis, and kali using two weapons with or without a partner. Sinawali training is often introduced to novices to help them develop certain fundamental skills such as timing, coordination, rhythm, footwork and body alignment.

Start with both sticks chambered on your right side, right hand on top, and left hand underneath. Swing the right stick across your center from right to left (1). Follow it with the left stick (2), which comes to rest underneath the right arm. Swing the right stick back across your center from left to right (3). Follow it with the left stick (4), which again comes to rest underneath the right arm. Repeat.

During the initial learning stages, it is acceptable to perform horizontal strikes, but strive to make them into diagonal downward strikes.

Practice first to the air, then to a partner's sticks which he holds out stationary before him. Once you have the pattern, perform the drill with a partner, hitting each other's sticks in front of you. Strike a heavy bag or hanging tire to develop power.

## Level II. Yin Grip Basics (1 Brown stripe)

Now that you have learned your tambo basics using the yang grip, you will need to learn the same techniques using the reverse, or yin grip. The yin grip is considered a deceptive position because the stick can be easily hidden. The butt of the stick should extend one inch from the thumb side of your clenched fist. The majority of the stick extends from the knife edge side of your hand.

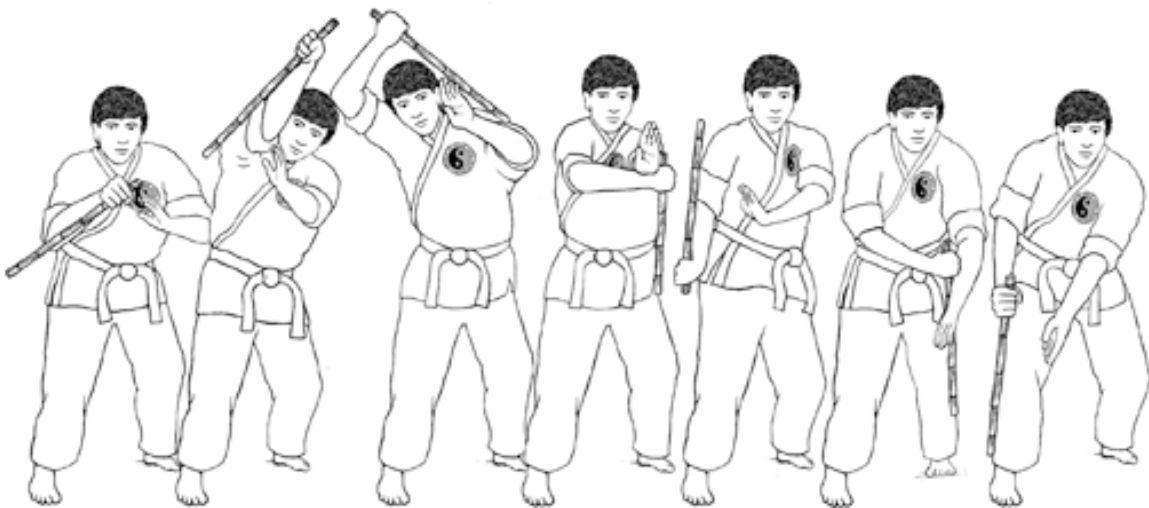
### Five Guarding Positions (yin grip)

There are five guarding positions utilizing the yin grip. Each of the positions can be utilized as a transition between reverse grip strikes. Each of your strikes should start and finish at one of these ready positions. When your tambo is “parked,” your free hand assumes a guarding position on your centerline. None of the guarding positions limit the choice of strikes you can deliver. These positions can also be used to hide or conceal your weapon. The following six guarding positions are given for a right yin grip, however you should practice them on both sides with your right and left hand.

1. Over your left shoulder
2. Inside your left arm (by triceps)
3. Behind your right arm (locked against forearm)
4. By your left hip
5. By your right hip (palm facing out)

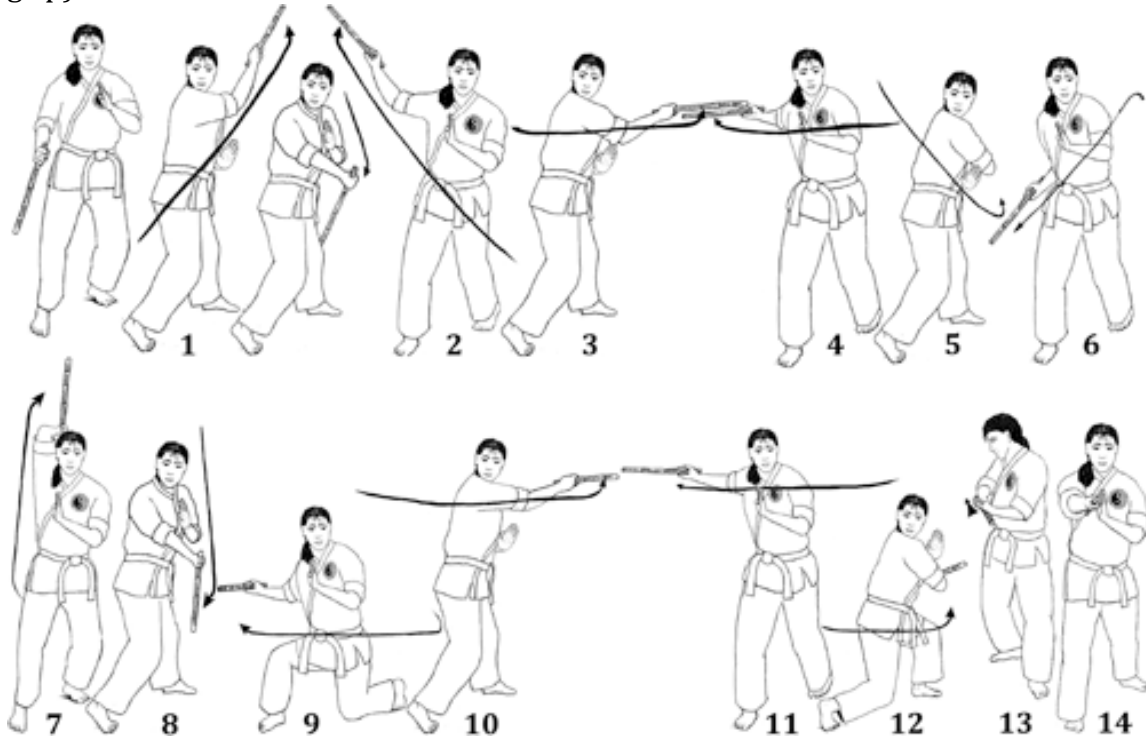
### Six Blocks (yin grip)

Just as there are six basic yang grip blocks in the Cuong Nhu Tambo curriculum, so too are there six basic yin grip blocks. There are two high blocks, one on the left side and one on the right, two middle blocks (left and right), and two low level blocks (left and right). Each block can be performed with your tambo in the yang or yin grips, and since the curriculum is cumulative, both are required for the rank of one brown stripe.



## 14 Basic Strikes (yin/am grip)

There are 14 basic strikes in the Cuong Nhu tambo curriculum. Each strike can be performed with your tambo in the yang or yin grips. Both are required for the rank of one brown stripes. Practice the yin strikes separately at first, checking to make sure you follow the same path each time you strike. Use a mirror to check whether you are striking through the same point each time. Strive for precision and swing hard, following through with your hips and shoulders on each strike. The pattern below is explained from a right grip. When you have mastered the right side, switch to the left grip and repeat the pattern using the mirror image strikes (e.g., a right to left diagonal strike in the right grip becomes a left to right strike when using a left grip).



### From a ready position and the tambo in a right hand yin grip, strike:

1. Diagonally upward from right to left (palm down)
2. Diagonally upward from left to right (palm up)
3. Horizontally from right to left (palm down)
4. Horizontally from left to right (palm up)
5. Diagonally downward from right to left
6. Diagonally downward from left to right
7. Vertically upward, through centerline  
(i.e., through opponent's nose, solar plexus, and groin)
8. Vertically downward through centerline  
(end with tambo in front of you, right hand at your left hip)
9. Horizontally low (knee level) from left to right (palm down)
10. Horizontally high (temple level) from right to left (palm up)
11. Horizontally high (temple level) from left to right (palm down)
12. Horizontally low (knee level) from right to left (palm up)
13. Jab behind by reinforcing the tambo along your forearm and sliding your right foot back into a back stance



14. Flip the tambo to yang grip and step forward with a jab to solar plexus

### **Level III. Tambo vs. Tambo Disarms (2 Brown stripes)**

When confronted with an armed opponent, it is to your advantage to disarm him at the earliest opportunity.

#### **The Four Ranges**

##### **Throwing Range**

Your longest range with the tambo is actually throwing range. Throwing your weapon can come as a big surprise to your opponent, giving you the opportunity to close the gap between you and neutralize him before he can recover. It can be a good strategy against a longer weapon or when you have an extra weapon and can afford to lose one. Throw your tambo vertically to maximize your chances of hitting the attacker and close the gap immediately, rushing in behind your stick to check the opponent's weapon and end the confrontation with an empty hand disarm.

##### **Long Range**

Cuong Nhu encourages you to attack your opponent's hands with your own tambo. Your opponent's hand is the closest part of their body to your weapon. A hand strike usually requires less power and does less bodily harm to your opponent than a head or body shot. Move just out of range of your opponent's attack and strike his hand to disarm.

##### **Middle Range**

Another opportunity to disarm your opponent comes immediately following a block, before your opponent can retract his strike. This takes good timing and a basic understanding of how to disarm your opponent. To set up a disarm, block "stick-to-stick and hand-to-hand," intercepting your opponent's weapon with your own, and putting your empty hand to your opponent's weapon hand. From there, quickly slide your hand and grab your opponent's weapon. For maximum control, grab your opponent's tambo close to his hand. From this position there are a variety of disarms to choose from, but the easiest and most effective disarms involve simply grabbing your opponent's tambo and twisting it sharply, breaking his grip through the gap between the thumb and forefinger. You could also strike his hand with either the butt or the tip of your tambo to disarm him. If you miss the disarm, you can follow up by flowing directly into a hooking or snaking disarm.

##### **Close Range**

Move in to block the opponent's strike and, in one smooth, fluid motion, grasp the free end of your tambo with your free hand and slide along the opponent's weapon, using *chung chi* (forward flowing energy) to drive the middle of your tambo sharply into his weapon hand as you drive the butt of the stick into his face. Hook his weapon hand with the butt end and twist your body sharply to disarm the opponent.

## Level IV. Tambo 1 and Applications (Brown belt)

### Single Tambo Kata and Applications

O Sensei Ngo Dong and Grandmaster Quynh Ngo created the single tambo kata. They were designed to take your tambo training to the next level, adding new strikes and blocks and introducing more complex footwork patterns. Each form should be practiced until it can be performed fluidly, precisely, and powerfully. Refer to the Cuong Nhu Training manuals for the specific moves of each form. Once you have thoroughly familiarized yourself with the form, it is time to start applying the moves to actual opponents. Work with your dojo mates to create a smooth and effective set of applications to each kata.

### Tambo 1

#### Stance

#### Action

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Natural stance (north)                            |  |
| Attention stance                                     | Bow with tambo in right yang grip by right side  |
| Natural stance                                       |  |
| 2. Slide back into RCS (north)                       | Roof block (right hand high)   |
| 3. Step into RFPS                                    | Left to right downward diagonal strike   |
| 4. Shuffle forward in RFPS (north)                   | Right to left downward diagonal strike   |
| 5. Shuffle forward in RFPS (north)                   | Left to right downward diagonal strike   |
| 6. Step 180° to RFPS (south)                         | Right to left upward diagonal strike   |
| 7. Shuffle forward in RFPS (south)                   | Left to right upward diagonal strike   |
| 8. Shuffle forward into RFS (south)                  | Right yang grip thrust, left hand wu sao   |
| 9. Step forward to LSS (south)                       | Block behind back, left hand yin grip  |
| 10. Shift to LFS (south)                             | Left horizontal strike left to right (yin grip)  |
| 11. 180° right turtle stance (north)                 | Left rising block (yin grip)   |
| 12. Step up to LSS (north)                           | Left yin grip horizontal strike left to right  |
| 13. Shift to LFS (north)                             | Left yin thrust to face (right hand reinforces left)   |
| 14. Maintain LFS (north)                             | Bring tip of stick up, grab with right yang grip   |
| 15. 180° right turtle stance (south)                 | Left to right low strike into right downward stab  |
| 16. Rise up to RFS                                   | Right upward vertical strike   |
| 17. Jump 180° counter clockwise, land in RFS (north) | Downward figure 8 (right to left then left to right), finish figure 8 in right low block to right side |
| 18. Step to left crescent stance                     | Reinforced high block (tip of tambo on left arm)   |
| 19. Spin 360° clockwise into RFS                     | Right vertical downward strike with butt of tambo  |
| 20. Step right foot back into LBS                    | Flip tambo to yin grip, reinforced back thrust   |
| 21. Step into RFS (north)                            | Flip tambo to right yang, R to L horizontal strike   |
| 22. Step right foot in front of left                 | Circle tambo counter clockwise around head   |
| 23. Slide left foot into LCS (north)                 | Right to left horizontal strike, left arm across chest   |
| 24. Slide right foot in RFS                          | Horizontal strike forward from left to right   |
| 25. Lift left foot into kicking stance               | Pass over head into left yang grip, left low block to  |
| 26. Jump into left X stance (south)                  | Left vertical downward strike, right hand reinforces   |
| 27. Pivot 180° to RCS (north)                        | Right circular chop block, tambo blocking right side   |
| 28 Right front snap kick (north)                     | Left horizontal strike right to left, right hand hikite  |
| 29. Rectangular stance (north)                       | Two-handed downward block then upward block  |
| 30. Right foot attention stance                      | Right hand switches to yin, downward butt strike   |
| 31. Maintain attention stance                        | Release left hand and bring right arm to side, bow.  |
| 31. Natural stance                                   | Hold tambo low in right yang grip  |

## **Tres-Tres Single Tambo Drill**

Tres-tres is an eskrima drill that was adapted from Spanish fencing. It teaches simple blocking and striking techniques in a logical sequence of attack and defense. It is a stepping-stone to the more complex Louie Ta-ta-tas drill. Start developing basic footwork and body movement by shifting back on blocking techniques and forward when you attack. Your free hand should be check and control your partner's weapon hand whenever possible.

A: Downward diagonal strike to the opponent's left knee (low)

B: Left side inverted block, palm facing out (low)

B: Vertical downward *abaniko* (fan) strike to right shoulder (middle)

A: Right side wing block (middle)

A: Vertical downward strike to partner's head (high)

B: Roof block (high)

**Reverse roles and repeat.**

## Level V. Tambo 2 and Applications (2 Black stripes)

### Tambo 2

#### Stance

1. Natural stance (north)
  - Attention stance
  - Natural stance
2. Step back into RBS (north)
3. Slide forward in RBS
4. Slide forward in RBS
5. Slide forward in RBS
6. Slide forward into RFS
7. Step into left lunge, look behind
8. Shift into RFS (south)
9. Maintain RFS (south)
10. Step forward into LFS
11. Maintain LFS
12. R foot into right lunge stance
13. Shift weight to right
14. R foot to natural stance (west)
15. Step into LFPS (west)
16. Maintain LFPS (west)
17. Maintain LFPS (west)
18. Maintain LFPS (west)
19. Slide back into LBS (west)
20. Turn 180° into RFS (east)
21. Maintain RFS
22. Maintain RFS
23. Drop left knee into RTS (east)
24. Step to left into LFS (north)
25. Maintain LFS (north)
26. Right lunge stance (north)
27. Shift to left
28. Right upward knee (north)
29. Right diagonal stance (north)
30. Shift into RFS (north)
31. Slide forward in RFS (north)
32. Shuffle forward
33. Shuffle back to starting place
34. RFS (north)
35. Right foot to natural stance
36. Attention stance
31. Natural stance

#### Action

Bow with tambo in right hand by right side  
Hold tambo horizontally in both hands  
Upward diagonal strike R to L, short pause  
Downward diagonal strike L to R, continue...  
Upward vertical strike, continue...  
Figure eight (R to L, L to R), continue...  
Front thrust, short pause  
Low block, right hand high  
diagonal upward R to L, then downward R to L  
Horizontal strike L to R (left arm extended)  
Two handed thrust (left hand on top), continue...  
Two handed upward vertical strike, continue...  
Two handed roof block, continue...  
Two handed horizontal strike R to L, continue...  
Left hand slides to end of tambo, short pause  
Left yin grip upward diagonal strike R to L  
Switch to right yin grip, roof block, continue...  
Right yin downward figure eight (R to L, L to R)  
Right horizontal yin strike R to L, continue...  
Right yin grip back reinforced thrust  
Right yin grip low block then rising block  
Right yin grip punch with butt end of tambo  
Right yin upward vertical strike, continue...  
Low wide sweep L to R into downward strike  
Oar block (left hand grabs mid-tambo),  
Left middle grip front thrust  
Right yang roof block reinforced on left shoulder  
Downward diagonal strike R to L, continue...  
Pull into knee kick  
Two handed vertical downward strike  
Right middle grip, twist tambo to right (CW)  
Twist tambo back to left (CCW)  
Three figure eights with tambo in middle grip  
Three figure eights with tambo in middle grip  
Make last part of figure eight a focused strike  
Bring tambo to right side of body  
Bow. Pull tambo to right yang grip  
Hold tambo horizontally with both hands

## Louie Tatata's Single Tambo Drill

A good drill for demonstrations, Louie Tatata's is a partner exercise for practicing blocking and striking techniques. With practice your speed and timing will improve, and as you become more familiar with the drill you can switch roles. Your free hand is your “checking” hand that controls the partner's weapon hand and provides the opportunity for disarming (see Single Tambo Manual, Vol 2).

1.     A: Downward diagonal strike to the pocket between neck and shoulder  
       B: Roof block (high)
2.     B: Horizontal strike to opponent's neck  
       A: Left side vertical block
3.     A: Horizontal strike to exposed ribs  
       B: Low downward deflection
4.     B: Middle level thrust to solar plexus  
       A: Left inverted vertical sweeping block
5.     A: Butt strike (*punio*) to face  
       B: Catch A's wrist with a *pak sao*
6.     B: Vertical downward *abaniko* (fan) strike to opponent's head  
       A: Right wing block
7.     A: Grasp B's wrist and pull arm downward as you strike to knee  
       B: Retreat into cat stance with downward strike to knee
8.     B: Strike/thrust to midsection  
       A: Flip hand into left side inverted block
9.     A: Right vertical strike to shoulder  
       B: Right wing block, left hand checks
10.    B: Left to right horizontal strike  
       A: Right side vertical block, left hand checks
11.    A: Right to left horizontal strike  
       B: *Ducks (bend at knees, not at waist)*
12.    B: Right low diagonal strike  
       A: Right low diagonal block

**Repeat and/or reverse roles.**

## The Tambo versus other Weapons

If you ever need to truly defend yourself with the tambo, it is unlikely that you would face an opponent with the same weapon as you. The biggest difference between weapons is usually their effective range, and there are certain strategies that you should be familiar with that can help you to cope effectively when faced with a longer or shorter weapon.

### Tambo vs. Knife

The tambo should provide a very effective defense against a shorter weapon such as a knife. Target the opponent's weapon hand with precise strikes using the tip of your stick to strike him at maximum range. Use your footwork to keep the opponent at that range and do not let him close the gap between you. You should be able to effect a disarm with a single solid strike, but keep your strikes short and hold your centerline in the event that you miss your initial target, allowing you to quickly strike again.

### Tambo vs. Bo

When confronted with a longer weapon, it is natural to feel that you are at a disadvantage. However, the tambo can still be used effectively against longer weapons such as the bo. The key to success is to close the gap between you using keen footwork and superior strategy. This is best accomplished before the opponent has an opportunity to launch an attack of his own. Stay out of range until you sense the right moment to attack, but don't wait too long! You must move instinctively and with good timing to avoid getting hit. As most fighters are right hand dominant, use your tambo to check the right side of his weapon as you quickly step in (remember, this is a guideline only). Once you have made contact with his bo, try to maintain cohesion, "riding up" the weapon to the opponent. When you have successfully gotten inside of your opponent's effective striking range, keep his weapon in check by grabbing it with your free hand and rain strikes down on his hands, arms, and head to effect a disarm and neutralize him. Applicable concepts here include "static blocking with movement" and "throwing range."

**Hook** Hooking is the action of stripping the opponent's hand from his weapon using the butt of your tambo. You can hook the opponent's left hand or right hand, from the inside or the outside, and from the top or the bottom, totaling 8 different possible hooking disarms. It is more important, however, to understand the principle of the hooking disarm and be able to apply it from any position.

**Lever** Levering is the action of using the opponent's staff as a fulcrum to pry the opponent's hand from their weapon. As in hooking, there are at least 8 basic ways to apply the lever, but it is more important to understand and be able to apply the principle.

**Pop** Popping is the action of using a sharp force to dislodge the opponent's staff from his grip. To pop the staff, you must first base the opponent's arm, then strike the staff in a direction that will effect a release, usually against the gap between the thumb and forefinger. It is also possible to base the opponent's bo by grabbing it with your free hand then striking the opponent's arm to get the same result.

## **Sparring with the Tambo**

When we spar we use specially padded sticks and wear protective gear, a minimum of a fencing mask, a cup, and a pair of heavy work gloves. Foam sparring hand gear is satisfactory, but was not designed for the hand to be holding a weapon and so tends to leave the thumb vulnerable to injury. The fencing headgear protects the face and head. Since the weapons are padded, simple work gloves seem to be enough to ward off the sting of any hand blows. While we do wear a minimum of protection, feel free to experiment with different pads (forearms, elbows, knees, etc.) so that YOU feel safe and protected. Oh yeah, gentlemen...wear a cup!

Keep in mind that this is just MOCK combat, and that no amount of padding or protective gear can make up for a good temperament, good technique, and good control. The fact is that injuries can occur whenever you are engaging in activities that involve physical contact, and even more so when fighting with weapons. Remember always that you are not out to actually hurt your partner (at least I should hope you are not!), so don't! Discuss how hard of a hit you are each comfortable with, as well as other rules such as "no kicking" or "only controlled take-downs." Start out fighting slowly and with little power. Such fighting is good as both a mental and physical warm-up, as well as an opportunity to feel out your opponent. After a few moments you can gradually step it up a little, until you are fighting at an intensity level that is agreeable to both combatants.

Always keep your head and never lose your cool. Take your weapons and the fight seriously, always keeping in your mind that if these were real weapons, a single blow, even just a shot to the hand, could decide everything. Training with such a mindset will improve your weapons skills much more quickly than a "hit them more than they hit me" attitude. Remember that a good defense is essential. Try to anticipate where your opponent will strike you and then block or move out of range, but remember that defense alone will not win a fight.

**Most importantly, train hard, train safe, and have fun!**

**What, you still want more?**  
**Okay, then try these additional tambo drills:**

Slide and toss the tambo back and forth, grabbing at the three positions (natural, reverse, and middle grips).

Flip the tambo into the air and catch it, first catching the other end ( $\frac{1}{2}$  rotation), then catching after 1, 2, or more rotations. Try flipping it with one hand and catching it with the other.

Roll with the tambo. Try picking it up off the ground with a roll or dive roll.

Practice figure 8's and reverse figure 8's with natural, reverse, and middle grips.

Use tambos in punching drills as you would your fists (in rectangular stance, etc.).

Practice blocking and striking while sitting or lying on the floor.

Hang an old tire or heavy bag and practice striking hard to a target.

Toss a tambo to a partner (play catch), then try tossing two tambos, one for each hand, alternately or simultaneously.

Throw the tambo to the floor and catch it on the bounce, then add strikes after catching it.

Spin the tambo on your palm (palm up, grab, turn palm down and strike, repeat spinning and striking in the other direction (CW then CCW)).

Practice picking the tambo up with your feet (roll it with the ball of the foot up onto the toes and then flip it into your hand).

Practice locking and choking techniques with the tambo.

Read the **Cuong Nhu Single Tambo Manual, Vol. 1&2**

by Masters John Burns and Master Mike Ponzio  
PZO Publications, 1988 and 1991 respectively.