

CHIN-NA, a seizing art

擒拿

By Tommy Blackburn

Chin-Na [擒拿] is a Mandarin term describing techniques used in the Chinese martial arts, which attempt to control an opponent's limbs so he cannot move, effectively neutralizing the opponent's fighting ability. Chin-Na seizing and locking techniques form an integral component of many traditional Chinese boxing and wrestling systems. Spiralling force is used to close the joints or bend them backwards to the point where resistance is impossible. **Chin** means to seize or trap, **Na** means to lock or break, and while those actions are very often executed in that order (trap then lock), the two actions can also be performed independently in training and self-defence; which is to say, a trap isn't always followed by a lock or break, and a trap does not necessarily set up a lock or break.

Chin-Na movements should be light and nimble, so that the opponent will not be aware of the counterattack in progress. In this issue we shall look at a technique common to many systems called Xiao chan si. This technique is very effective and its also one of easier methods to learn

Xiao chan si [小纏絲] is a counter to a wrist grab, the name means small [xiao], entwine or wind [chan], silk or thread-like [si]. Small entwining silk, because a small spiralling wrist movement is used to perform the move. Like twisting silk, smooth movements are used otherwise the thread would break. It's designated small because there is a big version, and entwining silk to show that the defender uses a continuous twisting motion. This technique is performed on the outside of the antagonist's arm. If your arm is grabbed pull very slightly, hopefully causing the attacker to pull back forcefully, follow him. Start to turn your wrist and push your arm towards your attacker in a spiralling fashion [figure 1] extend your fingers and go forward and anti-clockwise over the attacker's wrist; hold his fingers on your wrist with your other hand. [figure 2] Keep turning to lock up first his elbow, then his shoulder. Push down on his elbow region with your elbow to complete the move [figure 3]. The manoeuvre must be performed smoothly, if at any time it seems to be ineffective be ready to change to another move. Be aware that if the attacker senses your counter he may attack with the other hand or try to kick.

