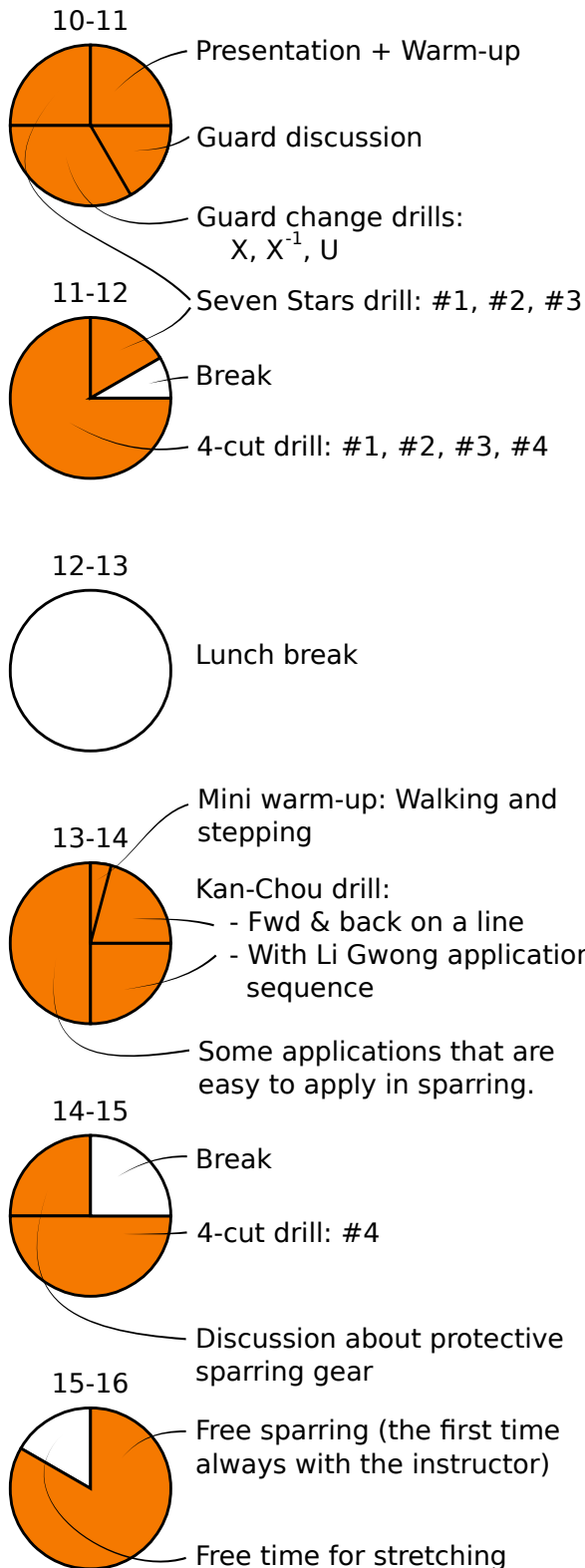


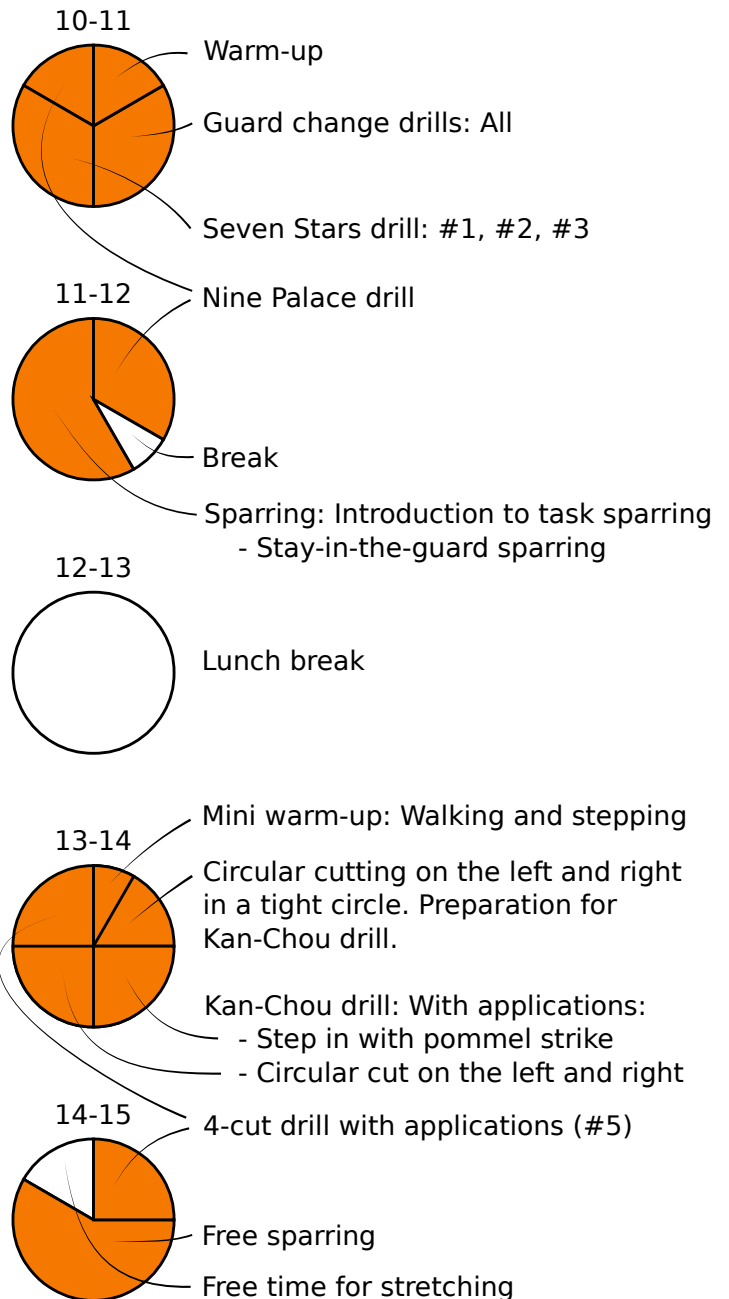
Introduction to Sword Sparring



Saturday



Sunday



These are some short notes for a two-day sparring workshop. If you participated in the workshop they should serve as a reminder of what we did. And otherwise it might give some idea of the material covered in the workshop.

Introduction to Sword Sparring



Guard change drills

- Variants: X, X⁻¹, X², X⁻², U, Leading with the point.
- All can be made big, medium or small.

Some applications that are simple to apply in sparring

16. Li Gwong shooting an arrow at a tiger
80. Sparrow hawk piercing the forest
44. Catching a giant tortoise from the bottom of the sea
63. Cloud signal flag three times (Chou)

The Kan-Chou drill, linear version

- Step forward and back on a line. Take big steps and always keep the same foot forward and move from cat stance to reverse cat stance. Chop down (Kan) on the opponents head when you go forward, flick the sword straight back when you go back to defend against the opponents chop (Chou).
- Even though this drill is really quite simple it takes a while to get right. Pay attention to the footwork. Use big movements for Kan and Chou.
- This drill is easy to use as a platform for practicing various applications.

The Kan-Chou drill - Li Gwong application sequence

- When the opponent chops down to your head, do not go back with a Chou, but instead step forward and get up in the Li Gwong guard. Stab to the face. Stay in the rythm - no need for a tempo change at this moment.
- The opponent defends against the stab with a Chou (just the same as he is used to). Do not lower your sword after the (failed) stab, if you do you will get hit on the head. Let the opponent hit you on the sword just to feel that you are in a strong position.
- Next step is for the opponent to go around the strong position and instead step forward with a cut to the body (15. Shooting star chasing the moon). Simply go below the sword with a Heng to the body instead of a Kan to the head.

The Kan-Chou drill - Pommel strike

- When the opponent defends against your Chop with a Chou, use the strategy "Action broken intent unbroken". You will be standing in a reverse cat stance with your right foot forward, so just push off with your rear foot and go straight in while you let your sword be folded to the side (left) and strike the opponent in the face with the fist or the pommel. Control the opponents sword arm.

My views on the "sticky swords" exercise

The way I see it, "sticky swords" is an advanced exercise. Not because it is difficult to do, but because it is easy to let it teach you bad habits. If you have a good foundation in "normal" sword sparring first, then you will probably be able to avoid the pitfalls. There are certainly good things to learn from "sticky swords" practice, but it is necessary to keep it in the right context.

Introduction to Sword Sparring



The 4-cut drill

We use this drill to get beginners to get ready for sparring quickly. We also use it as a platform for practicing applications in setting that is a bit more like in sparring. Also note that this drill is mostly for the benefit of the defender, the attacker needs to feed the defender with suitable attacks and he will not be in a good position all the time.

- #1 Start by doing the guard change drills X, X-1 and the U. Then change them from offense to defense. The attacks becomes defenses and so on. Always move on a line from side to side and always move away from the attack.
- #2 Only high attacks on the left and right. Defend with the Tiger door and Li Gwong (the "U").
- #3 Only low attacks on the left and right. Defend by cutting back like in guard change drill X.
- #4 Attack on the 1. high left, 2. high right, 3. low left and 4. low right (repeat). Defend like in #2 and #3. The transition from attack 4 to attack 1 is like in X-1.
- #5 Random attacks, but do not change until the defender has gotten used to the attack pattern. Always stick to two attack angles, like 1-2, 1-4, 3-2, 1-3 and so on.
- #6 Pick a certain attack variant (like in #5) and defend using suitable applications for this scenario.

Examples of apps for the 4-cut drill #6.

Perform the application on the attack that is marked in **bold**.

A1-A4:

- 15. Shooting star chasing the moon (Heng)
- 44. Catching a giant tortoise from the bottom of the sea

A2-A4:

- 71. Spin and sweep across (Heng)
- 21 Step back coiled dragon (Heng)

A1-A3:

- 63. Cloud signal flag three times (Chou)

Task sparring

- Instead of completely free sparring, give one or both of the participants a certain task to focus on, to help develop the quality of the sparring. Some examples: Weight forward, weight back, only committed attacks (no feints, no hand attacks), only stabs, only chops.
- *Stay-in-the-guard sparring:* Both participants are free to attack as they want, but after each move they need to stay in the guard they ended up in and fight from this position. This teaches you how the guards work and you will understand about the weak and strong points of each position. To make it better you can exaggerate each guard a bit, and if you feel you end up almost in the same positions all the time try some variations or just pick a different guard and try to work with that.