

ICE AND FIRE STAV

Martial Arts Syllabus, revised May 2017

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Introduction: The Ice and Fire Stav martial arts syllabus covers martial arts training using the stances, principles and concepts of Stav as originally taught by Ivar Hafskjold.

The basis of this training system is:

- The runic stances as taught and practised in Hafskjold-Stav
- Awareness of the lines of the web of Orlog
- The five principles of Stav, usually referred to as Trel, Karl, Herse, Jarl and Konge

The objectives of training are to:

- Teach the stances and encourage the regular practice of the stances by the student.
- Cultivate an understanding of the web as it manifests in everyday life.
- Enable a student to interact with society in accordance with the five principles. This means recognising one's place and role and understanding the place and role of others.

Grading and assessment: The coloured belt grading system as used in contemporary martial arts is a fairly recent Japanese invention of limited practical use. The four levels of progress relevant to Stav are:

- Beginner, someone within first six months of training.
- Student, someone who has completed the foundation syllabus and is capable of practising on their own.
- Assistant teacher, a student who is capable of teaching others under supervision.
- Independent teacher, someone who is capable of devising their own training methods which achieve the objectives of training described above.

Forms of training and practice: Stav martial training can be divided into the following categories:

- Health and well-being and energetic (Megin) practices. This includes Galdre Stances, exercises, diet, manipulation etc.
- Weapon training using traditional weapons of five different lengths, spear, staff, axe, cudgel and tein.
- Unarmed or close quarter combat (CQC) which may be considered more practical for self-defence. The stances can provide the basis for CQC postures and movements
- Distance weapons including hammer, spear, axe or knife throwing and projectile weapons such as long and cross bows and firearms. This category of training has not been regularly included into Stav training, mainly due to lack of facilities. This may change in the future.

At the present time Ice and Fire Stav, with Graham Butcher as its senior instructor, applies the following structure to Stav martial training. Classes and courses tend to be divided between long weapons and close quarter combat. This is mainly for convenience in training. Students do best when they understand that the principles of Stav apply in all contexts of conflict. Training with weapons educates the body in movement and awareness. Close quarter combat training is good for fitness and self-confidence. Self-defence ability is developed on a number of levels. If it gets to the stage where a situation is being sorted out with physical violence then something has gone seriously wrong. Self-defence must include awareness of energetic, emotional and social factors in any conflict situation.

Foundation Weapon Training

Anyone training with weapons in Ice and Fire Stav needs to train with this syllabus for at least three months before moving onto the advanced weapons syllabus. The main weapon for this syllabus is the staff. The staff should be 20 to 25mm in diameter and reach from floor to the student's shoulder.

- Trel Stances
- Holding, carrying and deploying the staff
- Staff exercises based on the stances
- Two person staff training drills using the five principles
- Introduction to five principles knife defence to show another way of exploring the five principles

Objective of foundation training: To develop coordination, judgement of distance and a basic awareness of the five principles of Stav. The foundation training will prepare students to train competently and safely in the advanced weapons class.

Certification would be awarded after a minimum of 12 training sessions over a period of 12 weeks. However, to be able to practice and demonstrate the full list of skills and knowledge described above is more likely to take 6 months to a year to fully absorb.

Advanced Weapons Training

The staff exercises continue to be practised in each session. The staff exercises provide a good warm up while developing the skills needed for advanced staff and spear training. The other weapons are the axe and cudgel.

Axe training: The axe, in its most basic form is simply a staff reaching from the student's navel to the floor. There is a design of training axe which is based on the 17th century Norwegian fighting axe. These axes can be obtained from Ice and Fire Ltd or can be constructed according to available designs and instructions.

The axe training syllabus covers the following:

- Centring exercises
- Straight down cut
- ✕ Hagl line angle cuts
- Hip cut
- Hip cut and down cut combination
- Hip cut and thrust combination
- Three Trel responses to hip cut and the combinations
- Two Karl responses to down cut, prepared and unprepared
- Two Herse responses to down cut
- Two Jarl responses to down cut
- Konge response to down cut

The ten drills described above are a complete training system in their own right. However, the axe is also the attacking weapon for training in advanced staff training, spear and cudgel.

Certification of competence with the axe is in two stages


Advanced staff training: Advanced training with the staff is built on the staff exercises. The first stage of advanced staff training is defending against the axe using the nine guard positions. These guards are:

- Low left
- Low right
- Rat tail left
- Rat tail right
- Middle left
- Middle right
- High right
- High left
- High centre

Principles are explored through working with each guard. In some cases more than one principle can be worked with in a particular guard.

The second stage of advanced staff training uses the five original drills which Ivar Hafskjold learned from his family. These five drills begin with the staff carried in the right hand so that the deployment into each drill is from an unprepared position. Each drill applies one of the five principles of Stav. It is my opinion that these drills are not suitable for anyone without a high degree of competence in handling weapons. The attack needs to be of a high standard too so we do not usually teach these drills to anyone who is not fully familiar and reasonably competent with the nine guards training.

Spear training: The spear is effectively a staff which is long enough to reach from the

student's eyebrow to the floor. The spear may be shaped from wood so that it has a head with blunt point and edges. Again, instructions for making a wooden training spear are available. The staff exercises can be practised with the spear with only very small variations. So, the staff exercises provide the basic training drills with the spear. Ivar Hafskjold taught five drills expressing the five principles. These drills are incorporated into nine guards training with the spear. This means some variations between the staff and the spear nine guards training. The middle guards with the staff hold the spear retracted as in the  Ar staff exercise. The staff is too easily grabbed if extended. This is not such a problem with a spear which will have head with a point and edges. Thus the right middle guard has the spear held horizontal from the right hip. The left middle guard extends the spear from left to right in a classic guard position.

The original staff drills also work very well with the spear. Staff and spear training is largely interchangeable.

Cudgel training: The cudgel is basically a stick long enough to reach from the hand to the floor. It may be a walking stick although training with this weapon can be applied to almost any one handed weapon, sax, sword, cutlass, machete etc. There is a particular design which I favour for training and instructions for making are available.

Training with the cudgel begins with nine simple exercises:


- Striking low right to high left and back again, step with each strike
- Striking low left to high right and back again
- Striking from above the head straight down
- Striking from a right guard to a left guard and back
- Striking horizontally around the head
- Striking low to the legs
- Horizontal thrust
- From a hanging guard, intercept and thrust to throat
- Raising to the head and short thrust to the face

There are five exercises using the five principles to defend against an axe cut. There are also training drills using the nine strikes and thrusts as attacks and counters.

The most important lesson to take from cudgel training is AIM, the balance of Action, Intention and Movement. This can be effectively practised using a simple cutting attack from high right to low left and a counter of raising cudgel from low left to high right.

Training with the cudgel brings us to the interface between two handed weapon training and Close Quarter Combat training. The cudgel can be used to defend against a two handed weapon such as an axe or sword. The cudgel can also be used to defend against another cudgel or weapon such as a machete or knife.

Tein/Dagger training: The fifth weapon is the Tein. For training purposes the tein is a stick long enough to reach from the elbow to the base of the fingers. The tein itself is an effective weapon but it can also represent a dagger or similar lethal device. Training with the Tein/dagger is a very effective way of developing Close Quarter Combat (CQC) skills. The tein training is quite simple and involves the following:

- Six stabs using the  Hagl lines as a guide. The three downward stabs and from low left are applied from a reverse (icepick) grip. The low right and low centre stab from a hammer grip.

- First drill involves preventing the attacker from drawing their weapon by neutralising the attacker first.
- Second, both parties trap each other's weapons and how to control the situation
- Intercepts and counters to attacks from each of the six directions using the tein.
- Intercepts and counters to same six attacks unarmed.

If students are experienced in the weapon training then the tein/dagger will be an excellent introduction to the postures, distancing and body mechanics needed for CQC training. If the student has trained only in the CQC syllabus then the tein/dagger training should be introduced only when the instructor is confident that the student has sufficient judgement and control to be safe.

Self-defence Training: When teaching practical self-defence the first priority is to cultivate awareness and a sense of safe distancing. Assuming that self-defence and fighting are one and the same is dangerously misleading. People can be taught self-defence without necessarily knowing martial arts. Even martial arts experts need to remember that self-defence begins with the avoidance of conflict.

So, teaching self-defence begins with the four principles of Peacock Kung Fu. These are:

- Awareness, developed using the colour code system
- Safe distances
- Safe roosting (when and where to relax)
- Drastic action when there is no other option

These four principles are explained in detail in the booklet entitled Peacock Kung Fu Or the principles can be quite easily explained in a presentation lasting no more than one hour. If there is an opportunity to practice physical skills with a training partner then the first things to focus on are:

- Managing distance with the five postures
- Breakouts using three of the five principles

If all that is required is basic self-defence then the four principles together with the postures and breakouts will suffice for most people.

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Close Quarter Combat Training: Teaches actual combat skills which require a long period of dedicated training and practice. Classes or courses will include the stances and the following training:

- Nine preparation exercises for loosening up the body and getting ready for training. Originally inspired by Alex Fell-Bowers
- Nine foundation exercises, a series of three balance and movement exercises, then three intercepting exercises and finally three striking exercises. Originally inspired by Nigel Smith.
- Striking and kicking. The emphasis being on generating force with relaxed dropping power. Striking with the forearm, palm heel, straight punch, stomping kick and chopping strike to the jaw and rolling the head. All five are best practised with another person who is holding a suitable pad.
- Take downs. There are three basic take-downs: Pulling down to the front, turning around and taking straight back on over.
- Falling and defence from the ground. Correct falling to the front, side and rear and

- defending yourself from the ground with kicks and movement.
- Five principles knife defence, primarily another way of teaching the five principles but by no means irrelevant to self-defence.
- Animal exercises. Each rune has at least one animal associated with it. The stance and associated creature have inspired a total of 18 exercises which can be used to develop a wide range of CQC skills.

The CQC syllabus is shorter and simpler than the weapons syllabus. However, the emphasis needs to be on experiential learning to develop awareness, sensitivity, coordination and relaxation. A real understanding of body mechanics can only come through practice and experiment with suitable training partners.

Junior Stav Training – Ages 8 to 13 years: It was generally accepted that Stav could not be taught to children. Over the past year I have been experimenting with teaching a slightly simplified version of the CQC syllabus to a small group of 9 to 11 year olds. To what extent they are actually learning Stav is still open to question. However the CQC and self-defence syllabus (not including the Tein/dagger training) does seem to provide a basis for teaching children basic martial arts skills.

During the later part of 2016 a grading system based on a developed form of CQC syllabus. Children like the idea of grading and getting coloured belts. So, two boys graded yellow at the end of 2016 and will grade again in May 2017. There is no plan to bring in coloured belt gradings for adults at the present time.

The Junior grading syllabus can be seen here:

1. White Belt - possibly awarded after 6 to 12 weeks of training.
 - Nine worlds preparation exercises
 - Five basic strikes, forearm, punch, palm, head rolling with edge of hand and front kick
 - The four principles of Peacock Kung Fu
2. Yellow Belt - possibly awarded after another 12 to 20 weeks of training.
 - Trel stances
 - Nine Foundation exercises
 - Managing distance in 4 postures
 - 3 breakouts from clinch using Trel, Karl and Herse principles
3. Red Belt - possibly awarded after another 12 to 20 weeks of training.
 - Falling and rolling
 - Defence on the ground
 - Animal Exercises 𐀀 to 𐀁 and applications
4. Green Belt - possibly awarded after another 12 to 20 weeks of training.
 - 6 wrist exercises
 - Wrist and arm locks and how to counter them
 - Animal Exercises 𐀂 to 𐀃 and applications
5. Blue Belt - possibly awarded after another 12 to 20 weeks of training.
 - Being able to demonstrate sensitivity, relaxation and dropping power.

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- Animal Exercises ↑ to ↓ and applications
- Dagger attacks and counters

6. Brown Belt - possibly awarded after another 20 to 30 weeks of training.

- Karl Stances
- Defence against dagger with tein
- Choice of 9 preferred animal exercises and develop own applications

7. Black Belt - possibly awarded after at least another 30 weeks of training.

- Jarl or Herse Stances
- Demonstrate understanding of AIM (Action, Intention and Movement)
- Demonstrate understanding of Five Principles
- Demonstrate understanding of Chaos Points
- Five Principles Knife Defence
- Safety and organisation in a training environment

Basic First Aid in a training environment

Conclusion: It is important to remember that Stav martial training is based on:

- The sixteen stances
- The lines as represented by the ✕ Hagl rune, basically meaning three strikes and a thrust.
- The five principles of Stav

The instructor should always be looking to simplify the training so that the importance of these three aspects is always emphasised. This syllabus is only valuable in so far as it will enable students to perform the stances, see the lines and understand the five principles.

Resources: There is no substitute for face to face training. Classes and courses are held at Somerset Stav Martial Arts on a regular basis. Please see <http://www.somersetstav.co.uk> for full programme.

Peacock Kung Fu can be downloaded in pdf form from the website listed above

Books and video can be obtained from <http://www.iceandfire.org.uk>

Graham Butcher – May 2017