

Bo Staff

The Bo staff is believed to have been developed from the tenbin, a pole balanced on the shoulders, used to carry buckets hanging from each end with water or grain. When having nothing else, the tenbin served as a very good weapon.

The Bo is a well known weapon used in many styles of martial arts practiced around the world. It is one of the five weapons included into a style by the early Okinawan founders of karate. In feudal Japan, it was part of early Japanese martial arts. Nobles and peasants used it in a similar way.

Bo staffs tend to be long pieces of well polished hardwood like redwood, or of rattan, that has good flexibility for snap techniques or even bamboo. The Bo varies in length ranging anywhere between 3 to 9 feet long. The length of the Bo depends on the style of the martial art. Its length makes it an excellent weapon, allowing the user to strike from a distance. Thickness of the Bo varies depending on the particular martial art one trains in. The average diameter is 1 ¼ inches. They can be round (maru-bo), four-sided (kaku-bo), six-sided (rokkaku-bo), or eight-sided (hakkaku-bo) and either be straight or tapered at the ends. The Bo must be made so that the fighter can comfortably make a fist around it in order to block and counter an attack.

In a fight, the Bo staff acts as an extension of martial artist's limbs. All techniques are executed as one would without the weapon in your hands. An accurate jab to an enemy's vulnerable areas could easily disable them without requiring too much effort from the person using the staff. The Bo is also able to block and parry an opponent who may be fighting with the same weapon. Other tricks that a person can use include sweeping the legs out from underneath an opponent, breaking the knees, and sweeping dust into the opponent's eyes.

It is easy to find a good staff in a time of need. A good stick, broom handle or other long pole can be found almost anywhere at nearly all times. Physical conditioning with the staff improves one's balance, coordination, and upper body strength, among other benefits.