

## HANBO 1 and 2 Review

The hanbo (half stick) is a formidable weapon. In this series titled “Hanbo 1” and “Hanbo 2”, Master Peter Brusso delivers a comprehensive overview of this weapon as well as presenting the techniques in a way that anyone can easily grasp and become very proficient in its use as a self-defense tool if diligently practiced.

In my law enforcement days the thirty six inch baton was used exclusively for crowd control and riots. There was never a history lesson on how the baton (short or long) came about being used in American law enforcement and the techniques taught were quite crude and rudimentary at best. More time was spent on formations and the psychological “stomp and drag” aspects of the training. This has its place, but when it came to needing to use the baton it turned out being quite similar to trying to hit the proverbial home run on every swing and swing was all there was!

There are as many opinions as to what type of wood makes the best hanbo as there are martial artists. What I found refreshing on the part of Master Brusso was that he didn't spend most of the DVD presentation time going over history of the weapon and all the types of woods and finishes that can be used to make it look “pretty” -- pretty is for display cases and special ceremonial presentations in honor of an individual. My Special Operations amigos use a thirty six inch piece of rebar and many carry that with them in their vehicle – opinions abound! Quite honestly, getting hit with wood, plastic or rebar is not one of those things I put on my list of daily things to have done to me! If one is looking for lengthy and good presentations on the history and technical design of the hanbo the Internet has a plethora of information on this for you.

I personally find the teaching style of Master Brusso in this series much to my liking. His approach is that of a true “Master” in every sense of the word. It's quite apparent he knows the material he is instructing to his students and does it in a way that I found to be missing in many instructors. The students appeared to be *enjoying* what was being instructed – I would interpret it to mean *having fun*! Yet, there was a high level of respect for their Sensei during the instruction of the hanbo throughout this series.

What you will not see is the typical “right hand” and “left hand” techniques being demonstrated throughout the instruction – THANK YOU Master Brusso! What you will see is the technique thoroughly explained, demonstrated several times (half speed and slow motion) by Master Brusso and then practiced by his students. And what you are going to find in this series is truly the missing piece to many of our martial arts schools – there’s a small segment where Master Brusso questions each of his students at the conclusion of the training for the day (in this case the hanbo) at to what they learned in their training for the day and what technique was particularly important to them and why.

What’s so very unique about this particular series on the hanbo is that you will learn many effective self-defense techniques that are street applicable and easily to apply – not true in many such training seminars and DVD instructional series. Some of these techniques were new to me and after some practice myself I found some very effective tools to add to my arsenal. You are going to also get a lesson on how to teach. So, Master Brusso, my “Lesson Summary” of “Hanbo 1” and Hanbo 2” is this – I learned that there is some very effective techniques with the hanbo that I was totally unaware of (always much more to learn from another Master) and was given a lesson on what it takes to be a “Legendary Sensei”.