

Summary:

Yannaba Thang is an organised system that has been practiced for years. It is a time tested practice that has been refined by successive generations of masters of Thang-ta out of their practical knowledge in the field informed by a rich experience earned from combat situations.

Here, the primary motto of the swordsman is 'not to get hurt, but to hurt the opponent at will'. For this, the swordsman strictly follows two guiding principles. It is not simply a matter of following the principle as a rule but it is something that has to be inculcated by the artiste to become an inseparable part of his body and mind, and it is something inbuilt within the system of practice. The first principle is that the performer should protect his body from any cut, thrust, or blow from any angle that may come from the opponent, and for this he has to master the technique. Secondly, the technique itself provides ample opportunity for the artiste to launch counter attacks and hurt the opponent at will.

There are sixteen vital parts of the human body selected and targeted for attack and the system of practice is so regulated that there is also, simultaneously on the reverse, another system of protecting these parts of the body of the artiste. This technique is called *Thangbi tarataruk*. The two fold technique of attacking and defending is the unique feature of Thang-ta. The attacking formula is called *Yanbagi Thangbi* and the defending formula is called *Ngakpagi Thangbi*.

Thanglon or the practicing language of thang begins with strokes rendered at six vital parts of the body of the opponent. This is commonly known as the 'Six count system'. The sword strokes are made at left neck, right neck, left waist, right waist, head, and the heart of the opponent. This is done along with a coordinated movement of the hand, foot, body trunk, and the eye. After this four more additional strokes are added. With this it is now called 'Ten count system.' The system is further enhanced to what is known as 'Ten count system.' Here, two spots are hurt by the sword in one stroke.

In Yannaba Thang practice it is not only the thanglon but use of the shield is also taught following a structure of its own. This called chungoi marol, which literally means language of the shield.