THE FILIPINO MARTIAL ARTS

as taught by Dan Inosanto

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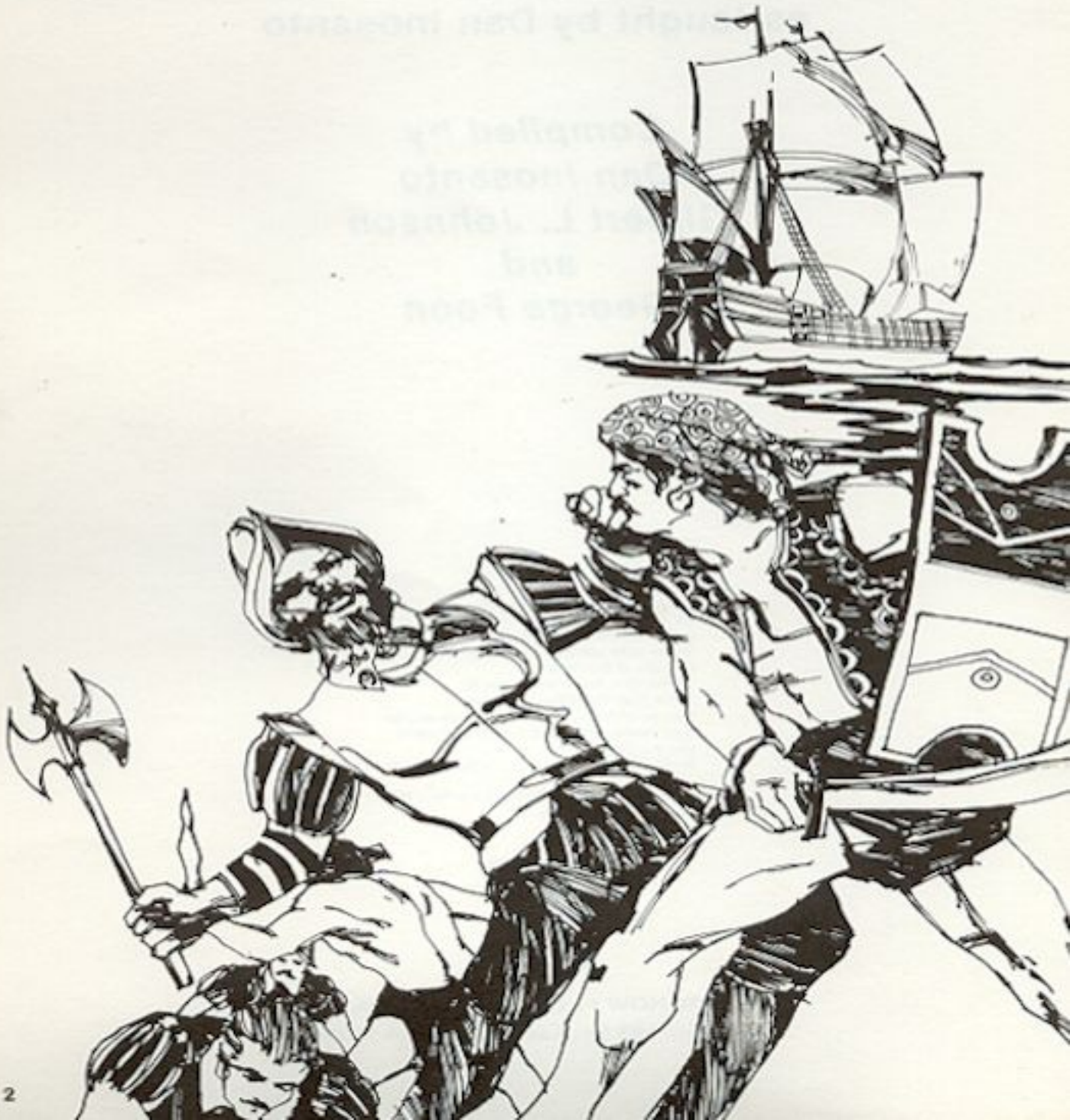
The spirit of the Southern Philippines epitomizes the unconquerable spirit of the Philippine Islands. Men of all creeds and colors have scrambled for a foothold in the Southern Philippines. Their bones still lie there, and only the spirit of these intrepid men remains. The Spaniards had not envisioned and could not perceive the courage they were to meet from the defenders of this land.



Contents

Introduction	4
Forward	5
On Dan Inosanto	6
History	10
Styles	14
Lineage	15
The Masters	21
Basic Striking Angles	37
Numbering System	38
Striking Motions	41
The Figure Eight	48
Torque	50
Specifics of Striking Motions	55
Triangulations of Footwork and Striking	63
Basic Defenses	76
The Alive Hand	100
Locks and Disarms	116
Weapon Characteristics	128
The Empty Hand	130
Solo Training	138
Training Drills	140
The Flow	142
Environmental Training	148
The Path Toward Truth	152
Epilogue	170

Foreword

One of the biggest changes in martial arts today is the switchover from traditionalism to exploration. Ten years ago, the instructor's word was law and the closer a student could mimic his instructor's moves, the better the student. Today, fortunately, students are encouraged sooner to explore beyond their basic instruction and to tailor what they've learned to suit themselves.

As the outlook of martial arts changes, so changes the scope of martial arts books, though books are inevitably behind.

Until recently, most martial arts technical books have struggled with laborious descriptions of martial arts poses and Oriental terms. They were "technique" books, "terminology" books, "form" books. And as chronicles of "style" they served a purpose.

But now, with a freer attitude prevalent toward martial arts movement, a new kind of book is possible—the "concept" book. *Movement* concepts that follow physical laws of motion aren't confined to styles or systems. Consequently, anyone can benefit from them.

Bruce Lee's "Tao of Jeet Kune Do" was a concept book. It presented Bruce's observations of combat attitudes and motions. It did not pretend to teach the ultimate way of fighting; it only hoped to give perspective.

This is another *concept* book. Its observations of Escrima and Kali as Danny Inosanto practices them, begin with generalizations and narrow to specifics. The specifics only serve as examples of the concepts involved and don't pretend to teach ultimate anything. As a matter of fact, many of the movements photographed in the book are exaggerated to better illustrate the concepts behind them.

Used with an open mind, the concepts of Escrima and Kali add perspective to any martial art and perspective is a tool of Jeet Kune Do, Bruce's term for totality in combat. Perhaps that's why Danny Inosanto has added Escrima and Kali to his Jeet Kune Do. Certainly, it's the reason I helped write this book. By explaining some of the concepts of Escrima and Kali and by presenting a little insight into Danny Inosanto and the people who influenced him, perhaps I can add just a shade more perspective on Jeet Kune Do as it stands today.

GILBERT L. JOHNSON

Introduction

One of the things that captivated audiences in Bruce Lee's ENTER THE DRAGON and GAME OF DEATH was his use of weapons, two specifically - the nunchaku and the double sticks. Since the movies, the popularity of the nunchaku and martial arts weapons has grown enormously.

Still, very few people know the origin of "Bruce Lee's weapon prowess. It was taught as weapons of the Filipino art of combat.

The Filipino martial arts so fascinated the late Bruce Lee that he featured it in his movie, GAME OF DEATH, as the martial art second only to "The Unknown Style." It was thought by some of his students to symbolize the style of the individual.

"Bruce could perform the Filipino martial arts naturally, because he had already reached that level on his own," says Dan Inosanto. The level he speaks of is one of understanding where all the martial arts flow into one and principles of efficiency become the only basics. The Filipino martial arts begins with those principles that simplify all combat movement, weaponed or empty hand, and develops from there. This simpler path to understanding, the adaptability and the foundations of the art rooted in combative movement are perhaps the things Bruce Lee admired most about the Filipino martial arts.

So where has the Filipino martial arts been? Why isn't it a well known art? Like Kung-Fu before Bruce Lee's time, it was practiced in secret. The Filipino people saw it as their protection in an America filled with prejudice and suspicion against "foreigners." But that time has ended and now with Dan Inosanto's help we present the Filipino art to our readers.

THE PUBLISHERS

On Dan Inosanto

Martial art people travel around the world to meet him. They arrive with expectation; with desire for enlightenment. Some leave disappointed, like an enthusiastic prospect for the mile run, hoping to be another Jim Ryan and then finding out that becoming a Jim Ryan is a long, hard, difficult road to follow. They soon become disillusioned. These students leave disappointed. They leave disappointed due to the lack of understanding and level of awareness and perseverance in the martial arts. There is nothing to give those people, the ones who come with Bruce Lee in their minds, chasing his memory, looking for his afterglow.

True, Danny is the conservator of Bruce Lee's Jeet Kune Do philosophies and training. He names the late Jimmy Lee and Taky Kimura as his seniors, but no one was closer to the late Oriental miracle than was Danny, Bruce's friend and student.

But Danny Inosanto is not Bruce Lee; he's entirely different. Bruce Lee was a thoroughbred of constant, insistent, dynamic energy. He spoke with energy, he walked with energy, he filled every moment of his waking life with pending explosiveness. Danny, though not lacking dynamism, is quiet, shy and more contained. Probably the reason Bruce and Danny became such friends was because Danny was the opposite of Bruce's nature, the yin to Bruce's yang. Around people he respects and around people he doesn't know, he's totally passive, giving *them* voice and confidence.

Prior to receiving notoriety as a martial artist, Dan was well known in the sports pages as a 9.5 sprinter and the leading ground gainer for Whitworth College in 1957.

If they talk, he listens; if they push, he gives. "Whatever you want," he'll say. If it's a situation where he's working to be tolerant, he'll smile a slight, one-sided smile. But more often, his giving attitude is a genuine effort to please, an open door. This is the way he learned from Bruce and this is the way he continues to learn from sources that most people would never see.

Learning from Danny is a similar process. Nothing is forced. He casts lessons to them when they're least expected and, though they're usually meant for a specific person if that person cares to listen, they fall as indiscriminately as rain upon everyone around him. The ones who meet the level of the lesson can pick it up and from the rest it falls as harmlessly as water.

In a room full of students, he stands one up to demonstrate a move. His hands are always quick, fluid, full of subtleties.

"This little movement, the important stuff, just disappears in a demonstration," he says. "They never see it. Maybe for demonstrations we should use wider movements, because they miss it if you do it realistically."

He turns to a guy sitting by the coke machine, tying his shoelace.

"You know why *sinawalli* drills are good? So you can develop the left hand by relating it to the movements of your right hand. It's reversed if you're left-handed."

The guy at the coke machine nods. He's just visiting and doesn't know what *sinawalli* is, but nodding seems polite. Sometimes Danny directs his mental work toward bystanders who don't understand what he's saying. It doesn't matter. During times like this, Danny is using them for sounding boards. Sometimes he's talking to himself, honing and reshaping the principles of his art, defining them verbally to set them in his mind. If you're one of his students, though, you stand in front of him and let him talk, hoping to catch bits and pieces of information that might have taken you years to learn on your own. Danny's years of inward seeking and personal observation are reinforced by what he's received from all his past instructors and most of them are recognized as "masters."

Danny's introduction to the martial arts was at the age of ten. In his hometown of Stockton, California, a man the people called Uncle Vincent Evangelista tried to spark his interest in Okinawa Te and Jiu-Jitsu. Danny didn't know at the time that his "uncle" was also an Escrimador.

The summer of martial arts with Uncle Evangelista left a favorable impression that would develop in later years. But for the next ten years, young Danny engrossed himself in sports, primarily football and track. Football was his favorite sport in high school and he was the leading ground gainer in his junior and senior years. Later, at Whitworth College in Spokane, Washington, he put his running abilities to work on the cinders and won a college track conference with 9.5 seconds in the 100-yard dash. In his senior year in Whitworth College he was the leading ground gainer for the football team. Today, he supplements his martial arts career by teaching Jr. High School physical education. Track times and football plays are always in the back of his mind. Several times he's explained difficult concepts to his martial arts students by comparing them to football maneuvers. "If it works, use it," Bruce used to say.

Ten years after Danny's first experience with the martial arts, he returned to stay. When he came home from college, about 1957, he wasn't running track or playing football so he took up Judo with a man named Duke Yoshimura. He continued lessons with Yoshimura until 1959, when he entered the service to ultimately become a paratrooper in the 101st Airborne Division. He was looking for Judo at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, when he met Henry Slomansky.

Slomansky was a Chito-Ryu instructor and, though Danny didn't know what that was, he remembered seeing Karate kicks done by Uncle Vincent (Evangelista). The tour at Fort Campbell gave Danny a look at various styles in Karate since the base was a melting pot of Navy, Marine, Air Force and Army personnel and a potpourri of martial arts styles from all over the globe.

An extremely rare photograph at Bruce Lee's famous College street school in 1969. Included are Bruce Lee's mother - Mrs. Grace Lee, Linda Lee, Brandon Lee and Robert Lee with some of the beginning and senior students.

This was Ed Parker's 1965 Kenpo Karate team after a tournament in Salt Lake City. Bob Cook (left) was the Grand Champion. Steve Sanders (right) was the white belt champion. Steve will later gain international recognition as one of the founders of the Black Karate Federation (BKF).

Jump school at Fort Campbell introduced Dan to Karate via Hank Slomansky in 1960. Slomansky was later to be killed on duty in Viet Nam.

"We had many instructors," says Danny, "and some were pretty good for that time. Even Slomansky had a mixture of styles. When we were on the mat, we did what he said to do but during free time, other instructors had their say."

That kind of arrangement sometimes leads to problems, but it worked out to Danny's advantage. It gave him the opportunity to see different styles and judge for himself what suited him best.

"At that time," he remembers, "there was a guy from Hawaii. He was only a brown belt and he was knocking the hell out of second and third-degree black belts. While he was sparring with all the different black belts, somebody said that it was Kenpo. I liked the way he moved around and I said, 'Gee, that's something I'd like because I'm small; that's the thing for me.'"

Kenpo. When Danny was discharged and moved to Los Angeles in 1961, his interest in Kenpo led him to Ed Parker, a man who would change his life considerably and send him on the path he walks today.

Parker has become known as the "Father of American Karate" for his efforts to put the martial arts before the public. Through his International Karate Championships, the oldest major competition on the American tournament scene, he has worked with men like Matsuoka, Chow, Ohshima, Wong, Uyeshiba, Oyama, Yamaguchi, Choy and Tohei. Danny came to Parker as a kicking specialist and by the time he earned a black belt under the Kenpo founder, Parker had infused his own brand of deceptive hand work to Danny's movements to round him out. One day he touched a special cord in Danny with just a few words:

"Have you ever seen the art of Escrima?"

"Stickfighting," Danny replied.

"No, there's more."

And that's where Danny's enlightenment began. He went to his father in Stockton, California, where Escrima was practiced only among Filipinos. Sebastian Inosanto was the first Filipino farm labor contractor in California and knew most of the Escrimadors by name. The first three he introduced Danny to were Max Sarmiento, Angel Cabales and Johnny Lacoste. While still training with Ed Parker, Danny gained a reputation among the Filipino community as a man who, besides having ability, was willing to listen and learn. In time, doors began to open all around him.

In 1964 Ed Parker made arrangements for Bruce Lee to make his first major public appearance at the International Karate Championships. Danny, an elimination chairman at the time, was asked to escort Bruce around town. The meeting began a second major change in Danny's martial arts career.

"When I first met Bruce Lee, I couldn't sleep that night," says Danny. "I was really bothered because it was something that I'd never seen. It was like having learned an occupation for five years, and then having someone say, 'We no longer have any use for your occupation.' But in this case, I'd studied all these different arts—I won't say that they were worthless—but what he did was counter everything without really trying. It was very frustrating."

In the next nine years of training with Bruce Lee, Danny learned the reasons for his frustrations and began to see the relationships of what he had previously learned to Bruce's philosophy of combative efficiency. Mists cleared and curtains lifted as he began to apply the principles of what would become known as Jeet Kune Do to the Judo, Karate and Escrima that were a part of him already. While he was studying with Bruce, he continued to work with other instructors, Ark Wong among them. He could study different arts at the same time because, as Bruce taught him, the basis of his own personal "style" came from *within*. With the background he had in the martial arts and with Bruce Lee as a sounding board, he was able to "take that which is useful and discard the rest."

With perhaps the exception of modified versions of Western boxing and Chinese Wing Chun, Kali was the art he adhered to most. Perhaps he favored Kali because the principles involved were so closely aligned or easily adaptable to the principles in Jeet Kune Do.

When Bruce Lee died in 1973, Danny was still working with a small group of martial artists that Bruce was teaching before he went to Hong Kong in 1970. Men from the group, Daniel Lee, Richard Bustillo and Jerry Poteet among them, gave Danny the opportunity to continue his Escrima, Kali, Arnis and JKD training and develop a personal "style" of movement found nowhere else in the world. Since one teaches from what one knows, Danny's JKD students today study Kali as part of their regular training, but the principles they are taught don't confine them to any martial art or style. Any one of them may choose another way and Danny will smile in the middle of a conversation and say, "If it works, use it; whatever you want."

History

The history of any fighting art is a reflection of the society and culture from which it was formed. The Filipino arts are no different. Consequently, in order to develop a fuller understanding of this unique martial art, it is a good idea to take a brief look at the history of the Filipino people.

Despite decades of research and study, historians and anthropologists have failed to solve the migratory mystery of the multi-racial society that has developed over the last several thousand years. One theory postulates that the ancient Filipinos came from India and Persia and worked their way down through the Indonesian islands into the Philippines.

Another theory claims that the earliest inhabitants migrated from ancient Egypt in reed boats.

One of the most interesting theories, however, contends that the beautiful and sprawling island chain was once a part of the Asian mainland. The Anthropologists from this school of thought claim an early pygmy tribe called Negritos journeyed west in search of food and game and eventually settled in the Philippines before the Pacific Ocean swallowed up the earthen umbilical cord that tied the islands to the mainland.

The next group of people who found a home in the lush mountain slopes were called the Proto Malay. Their origins are still unclear but their features were said to have tied them to the Mongol race. Their preference for mountain living would seem to add credence to that belief.

The tall, burly and sea-loving Indonesians were said to be the next group of people to settle and they are believed to be the first to arrive by boat. The forerunners of the various Polynesian tribes (people of many islands), the Indonesians, were fearless sailors who took wives and interbred with the cultures already established.

The next immigrants were also Indonesians but they were shorter and darker skinned than the Indo-Aryan group that preceeded them. They too, interbred with the established cultures and relied on farming and fishing for their existence.

Around the fifth century, one of the earliest of the great Asian empires began to form. A group called the Brahins came from India to Sumatra and created the famous Hindu-Malayan empire of Sri Vishaya. They conquered and colonized many lands and their fame and influence were felt all over Asia, and the Pacific.

After colonizing Borneo, the Sri Vishaya invaded the Philippines. Superior weaponry and organization enabled them to conquer the early Filipinos and many of them fled to more distant islands. Others moved deeper into the mountains and forests to escape the invaders. Yet many stayed, made friends with their new rulers and eventually the two cultures merged.

The Sri Vishaya had a great impact on the development of the Filipino culture. Aside from being skilled warriors, farmers and seamen, they brought a more advanced civilization to the islands by introducing new laws, the calendar, a written alphabet, a new religion and the use of weights and measures. The people from Sri-Vishaya became the Visayan people of the central Philippines.

Still another great empire formed in Java around the 12th century and it was called the Madjapahit empire. Influenced by Arab missionaries who were spreading the Moslem faith and who conquered them in the latter part of the fifteenth century, the Madjapahit empire took over the Sri Vishayan empire and spread the Moslem religion into the Philippines. They settled most heavily in the Southern part of the islands and became known as the Moro (Muslim) Filipinos. Fiercely independent and proud, they still exist as a distinct culture.

The Chinese also had a tremendous influence on the development of the Filipino culture. Thousands immigrated to the Philippines as peaceful traders and merchants following the Manchurian invasion in the 12th century in their homeland. The Chinese had been involved in trading with the Filipino people for over 400 years by this time and they were easily assimilated into the culture.

In the early part of the 16th century, the Spanish conquistadores invaded the Philippines. The first famous foreigner to encounter Filipino sticks was Magellan. According to Filipino history, Magellan was a pirate. He burned their homes and tried to enslave their people as part of the great Spanish conquest. It was on the small island of Mactan in what is now the province of Cebu, several hundred miles south of Manila, where he was finally stopped by the fiery chieftain Lapu Lapu and his men.

Lapu Lapu and his men stopped the first Spanish invasion with rattan and hardwood sticks on the island of Mactan. Magellan paid with his life.

Villagers in cotton cloth fought the armoured Spaniards to the beach. They battled Spain's finest steel with pieces of rattan, homemade lances and fire hardened sticks with points. Magellan died there and a statue of Lapu Lapu on Mactan credits the chieftan for his death.

The old Filipinos who made stick fighting an art preferred to hit the bone and preferred a stick to a blade. Instead of a clean cut, the stick left shattered bone. The business end of a stick can travel many times the speed of the empty hand. And it feels nothing, whether it hits hard bone or soft flesh.

Little wonder the vicious, swift, elusive sticks of the Filipinos were feared. Their elliptical motions, reversals, fluctuating angles and constant motion made the Filipinos very tough to deal with. It was the savage art of a savage land, cultured over a thousand years of bloodshed that continues even today.

The encounter was only the beginning of a 400-year struggle. Magellan's men sailed home without him, but the spanish would return. The Filipinos were impressed with the Spanish sword and dagger system of fighting, imitated it and soon found the weaknesses of the Spanish style. Their new method that employed a long and short stick eventually assumed the Spanish name of "espada y daga," meaning sword and dagger.

The Filipinos were a clever people. As more invaders came, their fighting styles were studied by the islanders who developed new styles and methods to combat them. Some of the methods took names that described their tactics such as "repeticion" (repeating attacks) or "riterada (retreating style) or "largo mano" (long hand) or "abanico," which means fan. Others took the names of their inventors such as "Toledo" or "Bergonia." Some were named after locations where they were developed. "Bohol" and "Pangasinan" were two. And some, such as "Etaliano," were named after the enemy. There are probably over 100 styles in the Filipino martial arts but they can be divided into three main groups: the Northern styles, the Southern styles and the Central style of the Philippines. A common misconception is that the Filipino martial arts are only a sword, stick or dagger art. Rather it is a complete self-defense system of empty hands, using swords, various types of sticks, clubs, staffs, lances, knives and projectile weapons. It includes the cane art, newspaper art, shoe art, chair, fan arts and various other hand weapons.

There are an uncountable number of styles in the Filipino arts, but they all have one common denominator that gives them an adaptability far surpassing most martial arts today. Their principles of combat are based on a pattern of angles that all attacks must fall into, regardless of the style regardless of the weapon. With the angles of attack understood, all fighting styles are familiar and adjustments need only be made for peculiarities of footwork or striking characteristics. A light weapon, for instance, may change angles several times in the midst of a single strike, yet it takes very little to deflect it. A heavier weapon must complete its motion on a single angle before returning, so it needs only a single defensive motion, but that motion must generally include getting out of the way.

All of this from a primitive but sophisticated ancient art. With this kind of understanding, the Filipinos possessed an inbred knowledge of the Spanish fencing that they had never seen before. Little wonder they gave the Spaniards so much trouble.

When the Spaniards returned, they came with reinforcements and firearms. Though the Filipinos understood combat with empty hands and with the stick and bladed weapons, they had little chance against the Spanish guns and their practiced tactics of conquest.

The islanders themselves seldom crossed the boundaries of their own regions and often fought civil battles with neighboring regions. The large Spanish forces found this weakness and conquered each small area as individual nations. With such tactics they used the people of one region to quell uprisings in another, pitting the fighting skills of the Filipinos against each other. The Filipino people eventually conquered themselves and elements of the Spanish language, arts and religion crept into their culture.

Once Spanish rule was secured, the Filipino martial arts were outlawed. Skirmish, a translation of the Latin word escrima, was not something the Spanish wanted their conquered people practicing.

Escrima became a clandestine art, hidden from Spanish eyes. Meanwhile, the lace and steel clad Spanish nobles developed a new interest in some of the quaint island dances. In one particular dance, the performers wore decorated wristlets made of leather to accentuate their hands. This became a favorite of the Spaniards who commissioned the dancers to perform at special functions

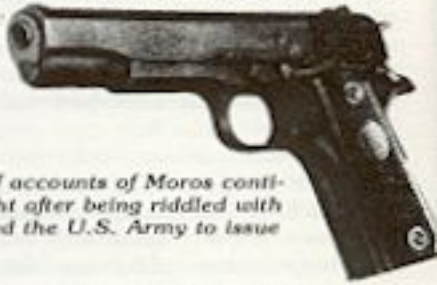
and even to entertain in Spain. They were amused by the Villagers, dancing in their island costumes, rolling their outstretched hands to the beat of native drums. The Filipinos must have been amused as well. The native dances employed many combative Kali moves. This was the way they practiced and preserved the outlawed martial arts - right under the noses of the Spanish. The decorative ornamental designs on their person also preserved the alphabet after the Spanish burned all their books.

Spanish rule was followed by American domination in the early 1900s. After more civil strife, the Filipino people subsided into a reluctant acceptance of foreign rule. They had fought for hundreds of years against foreigners from many lands and found that every form of resistance only left another opening. Most of the Filipinos laid down their arms and enjoyed a short period of complacency. All except the Moros!

It should be remembered that the Spanish conquest was also a religious one, bent on imposing the rule of the Roman Catholic Church. Apart form the main of Filipino people who accepted the Catholic religion, the Moros of the South maintained their sovereignty and preserved their culture and religion to the end of the Spanish regime. They were Muslims and they opposed the Roman Catholic form of Christianity with hot, flowing bloodshed. The raiding Muslims were pure hate, cloaked and mounted on horseback, brandishing death dealing blades. Their hoofbeats and their fast ships terrorized Spaniards and Filipinos alike.

With the encroachment of American rule, the Moros continued to oppose foreigners on their native soil. Under fire from United States armaments, they became fanatic warriors. "Juramentado!" was a new cry that meant the bloodthirsty Muslims were running amuck!

In religious fervent, a single Muslim would stride trancelike down the mainstreet of a town, blade in hand, killing everything in his path. Any Christians he killed -supposedly assured him a place in heaven. Often, he wore a red headband shaved head, that meant he would not stop killing until he too was killed - not an easy task. One historical source describes an American captain who stood before a Muslim juramentado and emptied the slugs of a .38 calibre pistol into him. The Muslim decapitated the Christian before he died. According to the account, that incident prompted the American servicemen to request a weapon with more stopping power, resulting in the design of the .45 calibre pistol.



Hundreds of accounts of Moros continuing to fight after being riddled with bullets forced the U.S. Army to issue the .45.

If a single Muslim juramentado caused terror, a handful sent into a military encampment brought utter chaos. But it wasn't just their religious fervor that made them so effective. The art behind their bladed weapons was "Kali," (silat) the oldest form of weaponry on the islands and mother to Escrima. Older than Escrima, Kali comes form the word kalis, which implies a blade, and it dates back to a time before Chinese from the Ming Dynasty infiltrated the islands. Kali, also a stick, empty hand or multi-weaponed art, defended the islanders for centuries before the Spanish invasions.

Whether the Muslims were ever beaten is a matter of debate. In wars culminating with General John J. Pershing, many thousands of Muslim men, women and children were slaughtered by American guns and mortars. Except for occasional incidents, Muslim raids ceased but today the people still retain both their religion and their fierce independence.

For a time after American rule, the Philippines became a commonwealth. Then, World War II broke out. Suddenly, the Filipino people were fighting with sticks and blades and guns against the Japanese. American intervention was welcomed this time and Filipinos eagerly enlisted into the American services.

The young Filipino enlistees were soon disenchanted. In the inimitable way of military services, they were required to conform to the armed forces' methods of close-quarter combat. When they were finally given the chance to demonstrate their native arts, the order was remanded. Their demonstrations included bettering the self-defense bayonet instructors with long leafed-shaped bolo knives and sticks. Thereafter, all platoons of Filipinos were issued bolo knives and they practiced their own arts in basic training.

Filipinos were frequently used for guerilla warfare on the islands. On patrol, they maneuvered through the brush in a triangle formation with their best man walking point. The point man encountered the enemy first, disabled him (or them) and kept walking, leaving the man in the rear to finish the job.

After and during the war, the more adventurous Escrimadors and Kali men left their homes and immigrated to Hawaii and California. Alone in a strange land, they tended to group together and soon became a major source of farm laborers. In Hawaii they wielded machetes to cut sugar cane and in California they handled long shanked tools with square blades on the ends to cut asparagus. Digging potatoes, hoeing fields, the warriors of the Philippines resigned themselves to domestic labor.

Even their children knew little of their fathers' arts. The clack, clack of sticks or ring of steel near sunrise and late at night invited curious youngsters' eyes, but they were always sent away. The new generations had to live peacefully. Yet, the elders couldn't forget the arts that had helped them survive.

Finally it happened: some of the children found out. Young, strong youths bred of hot Malayan blood were captured by the excitement of flashing weapons. In ways only their fathers could understand, they demanded what was rightfully theirs. And the art began to flourish again.

Now Escrimadors say the majority of Filipinos have at least a rudimentary knowledge of Kali or Escrima. The older "masters" who have proven themselves in combat are revered and treated with the utmost respect. Escrima in the Philippines is dead, they say. The proven fighters, the adventurous ones, have all left. If what they say is true, then America is the new home of the Escrimador -or Kali - of the ancient savage and sophisticated arts of the Filipino people.

The knowledge we possess in the Filipino arts, we owe to these elderly Escrimadors and Kali men who were willing to pass their arts on to us the younger generation.

The 1st Filipino Infantry's favorite weapon - the bolo.

"Always first," was the saying on the regiment's coat of arms. The crossed Kris and Igorot war shield represented the two dominant war-like pagan tribes and the 3 stars symbolize the 3 principal islands - Luzon, Visaya and Mindanao.

Asparagus knives (left) were used by the Filipinos to practice their art in secret while working in the fields cutting asparagus. A typical bolo (right) that was used in WW II, its blade was about 24" long.

Styles

There are many styles in Escrima, Arnis and Kali and they can all be divided into northern, central and southern styles of the Philippines. But it's interesting to note that two students coming from, say, the *Toledo style*, descending from the same man named Santiago Toledo, can be completely different in their movement, approach and training methods.

Styles borrow from each other, expand and contract like the universe, but each student makes a style workable by individualizing it for himself.

Instructors remove and add their own elements to the style they teach and students, likewise, may add things to a style that were thrown out by their instructors. So in my opinion, there are no styles. I prefer to use the terms "methods" or "systems" of training. Style is something individualized.

With that in mind, the following are just some of the facets found in the Filipino martial arts.

Methods (Styles/Systems of Training)

1. Abecedario style
2. Doublecado style
3. Trisello or Crosses style
4. Redondo style
5. Disalon style
6. Herada Bantanqueno style
7. Abanico style
8. Etalanio style
9. Largada Pesada style
10. Sumkeate style
11. Precia Punialada style
12. Rompipan Cempiapa Etalonia style
13. Abierta style
14. Serada style
15. Dos Manos style
16. Fondo Puerta style
17. Reterida style
18. Lastico style
19. Toledo style
20. Bergonia style
21. Magalaya style
22. Toledo-Collado style
23. Doce Pares style
24. Bohol style
25. Moro style (many types Muslim styles)
26. Tagalog style
27. Pampango style
28. Illonga style
29. Taosug style or Sulu style
30. Cebuano style
31. Waray style
32. Ilocano style
33. Pangasinan style
34. Samar style
35. Mountain style (Northern type)
36. Largo Mano style
37. Derobio style
38. Repeticion style
39. Numerado style
40. Literada style
41. Cabisedario style
42. Sumbrada style
43. Villabrille system (composite of styles)

All systems regardless of their country's origin have their beauty with their good points as well as their bad points. All of them have the capability to let the practitioner grow physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually using the Martial Arts as vehicle to grow by. This is in my opinion the martial art's greatest gift. The system or style or vehicle you choose to grow by **matters only if you grow.**

Bruce Lee, my instructor in Jeet Kune Do, influenced me to appreciate all styles without being bound to it and to appreciate all methods regardless of their country's origin. Style like food, is according to your personal taste; when you try to impose your taste on others, it may or may not be the "taste" for them. Arguing whether the Chinese styles are better than the Japanese styles is futile. It is like saying Chinese food is always better than the Japanese food. Each person has his personal taste for food and he alone knows if it tastes good for him. A good martial artist like a

true connoisseur of food can appreciate all the foods of different countries and still have his dislikes and likes in each category. A true martial artist like a true connoisseur of food does not label himself as a Greek food eater, or a Mexican food eater, or Italian food eater for he knows that labeling himself, can only limit his horizon in "taste".

I believe in the premise that no style or system or race or nationality can have a monopoly on all that is functional and worthy in the martial arts. If this premise is true than the Filipino Martial Arts has more than its share to offer to the Martial Art World.

Lineage

First of all I am not a master in the Filipino Martial Arts just a Guro (instructor). I have been very fortunate to have studied under many of these masters. It's very difficult to say whether one instructor was better than another. For that matter, one's best instructor might have been another student or training partner or opponent. I have had many instructors in the Filipino martial arts and some have obviously given me more knowledge than others, but each instructor has taught me something unique. To quote an ancient Zen saying, "In the landscape of Spring there is neither better nor worse; the flowering branches grow, some short and some long." **In other words, I would never compare my instructors to determine who was better or smarter, who was faster or had more knowledge. How do you compare the beauty of an ocean to the majesty of a forest; how do you compare a desert to the mountains? I owe a debt to all my instrutors.**

Yet, it's also my belief that one learns from himself. An instructor gives mostly of his love and his experience. He can teach technique, but the ability to use that technique comes from within oneself.

There are four stages: (1) You must be aware of the truth; (2) you must understand the truth; (3) you must function in the truth and, (4) you must maintain the truth. Of these four stages, the instructor can help you partially in (1) becoming aware of the technique and (2) understanding the technique. To function in the technique and to maintain it is without doubt the student's responsibility.

Once you have learned the basics from any instructor, you must seek elsewhere. This elsewhere is *"within yourself."* Truth is in being yourself, *totally* and *alively*.

The following are a list of my instructors in the Filipino martial arts who warrant special recognition. I dedicate this book to them and to the following people (in alphabetical order) that have greatly influenced my life.

MASTER PEDRO APILADO

Master Apilado was known as one of the top fighters and head referees in the Hawaiian Islands in the days when escrima stick fighting matches were full contact competition without the aid of armor. It was a brutal art then and only the swiftest and strongest survived or remained in practice. Master Apilado was fortunate to have trained under the great Santiago Toledo and his son Pedro Toledo in the Pangasinan Province of the Philippines. Santiago was the First Champion of the Northern Philippines who remained undefeated until he was an old man and a younger man named Bergonia challenged him and won. The Toledo and Bergonia styles were named after these two great escrimadors.

During the two years I studied with Master Apilado, he taught me the Toledo and Dos Manos styles and familiarized me with principles of the "checking hand" and "counter for counter" moves in empty hands and with weapons. Through him I learned the importance of stick and body positioning. Without him the escrima world has lost a great deal.

PEPE MONTANO ARCA

VINCENT ARCA

My Grandfather Pepe Montano Arca was an Escrima instructor. He came to the Hawaiian Islands with his missionary brother Vincent Arca. They accompanied the first Filipino immigrants and kept the art alive.

RICHARD BUSTILLO

Richard Bustillo is my training partner and has really helped me to promote and preserve the dying Filipino Martial Arts and Jeet Kune Do.

ATTY. DIONISIO CANETE

Atty. Dionisio Canete and his six famous Uncles The Canete Brothers have given me the inspiration to further research the Filipino Martial Arts.

MR. & MRS.
SEBASTIAN INOSANTO

My Mother and Father have given me pride in being a Filipino. They also taught me that being a good human being is more important than being a Filipino.

SUE, DIANA &
LANCE INOSANTO

My family, I hope they treasure this book as I treasure them.

LILIA INOSANTO

My sister who helped me up the path of my Spiritual growth.

MASTER ANGEL CABALES

I feel that Master Cabales, more than any other, is responsible for the emergence of Escrima in the United States. By familiarizing me with the twelve ways of attack and the many defenses for each, he has provided me with the bulk of my escrima basics. I consider him highly effective with the short stick (21 to 24 inches in length) and very adept in close-range fighting. He's a true master of the physical art and a man with a wealth of knowledge.

THE STOCKTON ESCRIMA GROUP

The future of the art is in their capable hands — Mary Tovar, Mike Inay, Al Conception and Remy Estrellia.

MASTER REGINO ELLUSTRISIMO

From Master Ellustrisimo I learned, in addition to his Bohol method of escrima, the historical background of different escrimadors and their arts.

MASTER LEO GIRON

Master Giron taught me the combative use of escrima (arnis) with the long stick and live Largo Mano blade. His environmental training showed me the use of escrima in different real situations and his invaluable perspective and personal knowledge has given more to my art as a whole than I could ever repay. I am constantly learning from Master Giron. It is from him that I learned to use my basic Escrima for combat. I was granted permission to teach his method in December 1973.

MASTER JUANITO (JOHN) LACOSTE

Able with the stick, daggar, long bla and empty hands, I feel that Master LaCoste is one of the most well-round escrimadors. From Master LaCoste I learned the versatility of the Filipino martial arts and the use of trapping ar checking hands. I also learned from hi the inner achievements of the martial such as love and peace toward all mankind and proper morality. Master LaCoste was brutally murdered in

MASTER BEN LARGUSA

I consider Master Ben Largusa to be the most all-around Filipino martial artist, next to Grand Master Floro Villabrille, and through Master Largusa I have realized the brilliant mind and skill of Master Villabrille. Master Largusa has taught me the theories and applications of the various weapons and empty hand techniques of kali and convinced me that the ancient skill is a complete, unique self-defense art that goes beyond the sword and stick.

THE SAN FRANCISCO KALI GROUP

A dedicated group that will keep the art alive for future generations — Greg Lontanyao, Tony Lamadora and Lindsey Largusa.

MASTER PASQUAL OVALES

Master Ovales is now residing in the Philippines in retirement. He is the

ED PARKER

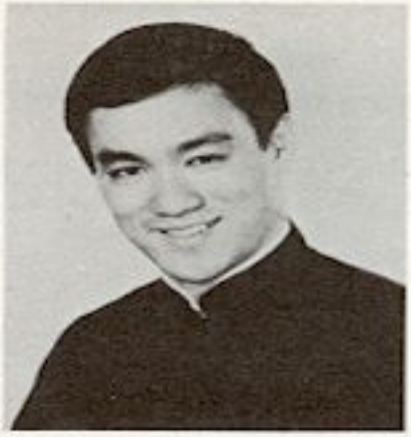
Ed Parker was my instructor in Kenpo karate. He started me on the correct path

MASTER BRAULIO PEDOY

Through Master Pedoy I became m aware of the history of the Filipino

GURO NARRIE BABAO

Narrie Babao, an Arnis practitioner in San Diego, holds the title of champion in the first weapons sparring tournament held in the United States. Using two rattan sticks, he fought and defeated contestants using nunchaku, bo and shinai. His son Kris is my God-Son.



BRUCE LEE

Bruce Lee instructed and guided me in the art of Jeet Kune Do, a style that is no style. Under his tutelage I gained the educated eye in finding that which was functional.

GURO LUCKY LUCAY LUCAY

Mr. Lucky Lucay Lucay is our advisor in the Filipino Kali Academy. He gave us a background in Sikaran (Filipino Foot Fighting) and Panatukan (Filipino Boxing).

GURO DENTOY REVILLAR

Mr. Revillar is the top senior student of Master Cabales and a man highly creative in his own right and without doubt one of the top instructors in Escrima in the Serado and Largo Mano systems.

MASTER JACK SANTOS

Jack Santos at 93 is the oldest living Escrima Master in the United States. He serves in the capacity of Advisor to the Filipino Kali Academy in Torrance.

GURO MAX SARMIENTO

Mr. Sarmiento taught me the proper use of the empty hand skills of escrima and to appreciate all the systems of escrima. I consider him especially adept with empty hands, dagger, knives and counter staff attacks. Mr. Sarmiento is also responsible for helping Master Cabales form the first escrima academy in the United States.

MASTER TELESPORO SUBING SUBING

Master Subing Subing taught me the beauty of the Moro style with the double stick. My stay in Hawaii was very short and I wish I could have stayed longer to train under this man.

MASTER SAM TENDENCIA

Sam Tendencia is one of the leading exponents of Arnis in the United States. And trained under the Great Deogracias Tipace in the Philippines. He is the man that healed my pinched nerves with the ancient Filipino Art of Hilot when western doctors could not. Hilot is a Filipino healing art similar to a combination of massage, Acupressure, Shiatsu and the Chiropractic arts.

GURO GILBERT TENIO

Gilbert Tenio has trained in a number of Escrima styles and is proficient in disarms. He has a great deal of knowledge to offer if he chooses to give it out to the general public.

GRANDMASTER FLORO VILLABRILLE

Kali Grand Master Floro Villabrille of Hawaii is the undefeated champion in Countless Escrima and Kali matches in the Philippines and Hawaii. He heads our Kali organization and without a doubt, one of the greatest living exponents of the art.

NARAPHIL/CEA

I would also like to dedicate this book to the **NATIONAL ARNIS ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES (NARAPHIL)** and the **CEBU ESCRIMA ASSOCIATION (CEA)** for their efforts in preserving and promoting the Filipino Martial Arts. I hope that some day I will be able to study the art in the Philippines.

The Masters

When this book was written, not all of the people Danny Inosanto trained with were available for comment. The following excerpts, by Gilbert Johnson, of some of the masters who influenced Danny's development are included here to give the reader an insight to the source of Danny Inosanto's Escrima and Kali.

Angel Cabales

Winter. Christmas in Alaska. The men in the fish packing house accept the extra holiday pay because they need the money. Cabales is one of them. Outside, the ground is gray with muddy, trodden snow. The cold, damp smell of sea water and fish soaks into everything—the wood of the docks and fishing boats, the metal clamps and gaffs, even the people.

It's cold inside too and the smell of fish is the same. Everything's the same, another working day. The men aren't happy, but these are the kind of men who look for sport when they're unhappy, sport that happens at someone else's expense. They spot Cabales working on the line and size him up. He's not much more than five feet tall and doesn't weigh over 120 pounds—skinny. The men know him. He lives in the Filipino bunkhouse and he's got a temper.

They ease around him and start with subtle wisecracks. The Filipino man mumbles something and they goad him on. Wisecracks turn to ugly insults. The Filipino man stops working and looks around at the big Alaskan workers. He moves at one and they all close in slowly like a pack of wolves. Cabales backs off and walks away with their laughter following him out the door.

In the bunkhouse he unsheaths his knife. The bunkhouse superintendent, another Filipino, runs to his side.

"No! No killing here! Please, no killing!" He knows about the trouble in the packing house. It's trouble that's been brewing for a long time and he knows it will only get worse with a knifing.

Instead of rushing out, Cabales pulls down the little Christmas tree in the bunkhouse and uses his knife to cut away the branches. When he finishes, he has a smooth, tapered stick of supple pine.

He moves outside with the stick and the men are waiting. There are seven now, lined around the Filipino shack, and six have large clubs of driftwood. The first comes at him and swings, grazing Cabales as he angles beneath it. Before the large man can retract his swing, Cabales hits him on the back of the head, dropping him in the snow. One after another and several at a time, they rush Cabales who dodges and sways between their blows. Each time, he returns with snapping motions that crack a knee or an elbow or rebounds off a man's face. With a couple lying in the mud and snow, the rest back off and start throwing rocks. Cabales picks up the rocks and throws them back and the ones that can run.

Two of the men are carried to the hospital with broken jaws and concussions. One is nearly dead. The authorities keep Cabales in custody, pending a trial if the worker dies. But the man pulls through and to avoid further trouble Cabales is deported to California.

That was a long time ago. Today, at age 57, Cabales remembers the incident casually, just one of many. He isn't any larger than he was then. His sinewed body and small round face are leathery tanned and some of his front teeth are missing. He's seen a lot of fights. With a stick in his hand and a cigarette in his mouth, he squares off with one of his students and gives the signal to begin. He smiles and blinks against the smoke. His hands churn the sticks, cutting the ribbon of smoke to nothing and his body seems to float amidst a blur of movement. Nothing is rehearsed. Blows are instantly deflected and countered with one, two, three strikes, feints and redoublements, all whipping so fast there's only a vague impression of staccato popping within the flowing action.

The close fighting system Cabales teaches is "Serada," lock and thrust. Each stroke is met with a block or deflection, a check with the stick hand to lock the opponent's position and a thrust with the free hand that will often carry a dagger. Between the block and final thrust there may be any number of counterstrikes.

Most of Cabales' training took place in the Philippines. Born in Barrio Igania, in the Visayan province of Antique, Cabales gained some of his "street" experience as a laborer in Manila. He was at various times a cement mixer, dockworker, a bodyguard and he served for two years as a special industry policeman. While in the Philippines, he was challenged on separate occasions by five other Escrimadors. Challenges are a common practice in the islands when a man gains a reputation with his sticks. Only one, Cabales remembers, gave him any trouble. That one, whose abilities equaled Cabales' own, was the only one of the five whom he really hurt. Stick fights never last very long and this one ended when Cabales broke open the man's knuckle. The blow lacerated an artery and the blood pumping out of the man's hand kept him from continuing.

Cabales left the Philippines in 1939 and joined a crew of a cargo ship that took him to distant ports of the world. Each port, each foreign dock brought a new set of adventures and with them, a knowledge of survival.

After working in Alaska, Cabales wandered from county to county in California. He ultimately joined the Filipino farm laborers around Stockton where he now lives. Around other Filipinos who recognize Escrima when they see it, Angel Cabales quickly regained his reputation, and with it the threat of challenge. That alone, the idea of being challenged, has kept many of the stick fighters in seclusion, but Cabales was the first Escrimador to open instruction to the public. His main concern, he says, is that Escrima isn't taught to the wrong kinds of people, people who would cause trouble, make challenges. But, if that should happen someday, Cabales will probably be waiting, a cigarette in his mouth and a stick in his hand.

Regino Ellustrisimo

A prayer in latin was tattoed on Ellustrisimo's leg by his brother. It is thought to have "magical" powers to protect him from harm and is known by the Filipino's as "anting anting."

Just off the freeway into Stockton sits Ellustrisimo's small green wooden house. A green wooden plank fence partitions it off from the world.

Ellustrisimo, a native of Bentuayen Island in the province of Cebu, is a former merchant marine turned immigrant farm laborer, turned merchant marine again. He is also an Escrima master, 81 years old. Ellustrisimo, a man who once in Hawaii fought six men off with two sticks, stands grayed, bowed and smiling at his gate. He's a small, rounded man now, slowed by arthritis and near blinded by cataracts. He lives in a smaller world of family and friends and no longer travels the sea and strange city streets. Nothing shows of his past—except tattoos that decorate his arms.

He offers a warm greeting, opens the gate and shuffles down a row of wooden planks dividing two vegetable gardens. Once in the house and past preliminaries, he picks up two sticks and backs against the wall.

"They were cheating at dice," he says in hobbled English. Dice is the word he uses for a Filipino gambling game of three coins. They throw the coins down beneath a cup and bet on the odds and evens. Three of the same, heads or tails, and the bank wins. The bank was winning too much.

"I picked up the dice. All the same on both sides. It was crooked dice, you know. I grabbed the dice and throw away. Now, they get their stick; they want to fight me. I go home and I call my wife and say, 'Give me stick!' I come back with two sticks and I back against the wall so no one can get behind me and I fight them. I hit them in the head and legs and sometimes I hit their nose."

He describes the motions with his sticks. His memory grows and his hands turn the sticks faster, faster. They wobble, click and fly from his hands and onto the floor. Cataracts. He smiles, picks them up and turns them again, more smoothly.

"I beat them," he says and then he laughs. That was 1924.

Ellustrisimo's fighting style is called "Repeticion" and originates on Bohol Island near the island of Cebu. One of its characteristics is its continuous and repeating attacks that don't let up on the

Measuring the heat from the top of Sebastian Inosanto's head, Ellustrisimo says he can tell if a person is cool natured or hot tempered. A hot tempered person will not be taught the deadly art of escrima.

opponent, multiple attacks that are continually moving forward. No retreating.

He learned stick fighting from his brothers, one of whom was an officer in the force that fought against the Spaniards invading the Philippines. After he had progressed sufficiently, the brothers tattooed a kind of prayer in Latin on his leg. That was to be part of his magic to keep him safe from all harm. "Oracion," meditation or spiritual communication, and "anting anting," the magic of the Escrimadors were both powers that some swear kept them from being killed in World War II. They're a part of the Philippines that the Escrimadors of old brought to America. Anting anting is a token or a good luck charm. Some will stake their lives on its powers of protection, some smile in good humor and others, particularly in the younger generation, acknowledge it as "something" that they don't understand.

Most of Ellustrisimo's stick fighting is behind him now. He teaches some young boys who come to the house once in a while, but for the most part he's content to let the "younger generation" carry on the art. His nephew, Floro Villabrille, is the undisputed master of Kali and Escrima in Hawaii and there aren't many Escrimadors in the United States who don't know Villabrille's name. Before 1944, Ellustrisimo says he watched one of the death matches his nephew won when competition was legal and common among the Escrimadors in Hawaii.

Now with his nephew's fame and the memories of his past, Ellustrisimo is content to live quietly in his little house.

In another part of Stockton, Ellustrisimo's name came up in conversation with a younger "fighting" Escrimador. He had heard the name but had never actually seen the man. When he was shown a picture of Ellustrisimo, he laughed and clapped his hands.

"I saw him once," he said. "He was leaning on his cane. A gang of teenagers walked up and started harassing him. I was in my car and started to pull over, but by that time he had hit one of them with his cane. The rest backed off and were trying to get at him but he fended them off, hitting them on the head and legs. He kept coming after them until they all ran off. He didn't need any help from me; you could see he was an Escrimador."

Many years ago?

"No, that was just last year!"

Leo Giron

Jungle Warfare. That was Giron's proving ground. He walked as point man in World War II guerrilla warfare in the Philippines. As lead man in a triangular formation of guerrilla soldiers patroling through the brush, he encountered the enemy first, disabled him (or them) and kept walking, leaving his men in the rear to finish the job.

Born in Bayambang, in the Philippine province of Pangasinan, Giron's first boyhood experience with Escrima was a secret adventure.

"Every time we heard the 'click, click, click' of knives, we would be playing under the mango trees and the trail would be guarded. I sneaked away to watch. Later, we paid so many bundles of straw and rice for our lessons. My family didn't know. I was carrying a bundle of rice when my father asked me about it and I told him I was going to take it to my uncle; we were going to make cakes."

At age 15 when Giron and his family moved to California, Giron found himself in a world of Escrimadors in the farming labor camps. One of his instructors, a man the people called Mr. Delgado, used to travel from camp to camp to fight their best Escrimadors. He was good, Giron remembers, and he could fight with either hand. Mr. Delgado died in a dynamite explosion in World War II.

Though the war took away one of his instructors, it gave him others, men who depended on Escrima to stay alive. Guerrilla units in the Philippines were made up mainly of Filipinos, issued leaf-shaped bolo knives for their jungle fighting. When Giron was first assigned to a unit one of the men, an Escrimador, was appointed his bodyguard until Giron could take care of himself. Giron recalls one of his training sessions with the sergeant, following a near fatal incident in a Japanese ambush.

"When he saw I was nervous he said, 'Take your bolo knife and we'll do some training. Don't worry about hurting me because I've been fighting for a long time. Cut me anytime you can. If you touch me, you'll get a month's pay.' That was the way you learned in those days."

Now 65, Giron talks about the old days in a more guarded way than many of his contemporaries. All the stick fighting styles are good in different situations, he says, but when it comes down to saving your life—keep it simple.

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

An example of simplifying the art is "Cinco Teros" or what Giron calls the five cardinal blows. Patterned around the four areas divided by an "X" with a dot in the center for thrusts, Cinco Teros is designed for strikes to the large fleshy areas of the body, not directly protected by bones.

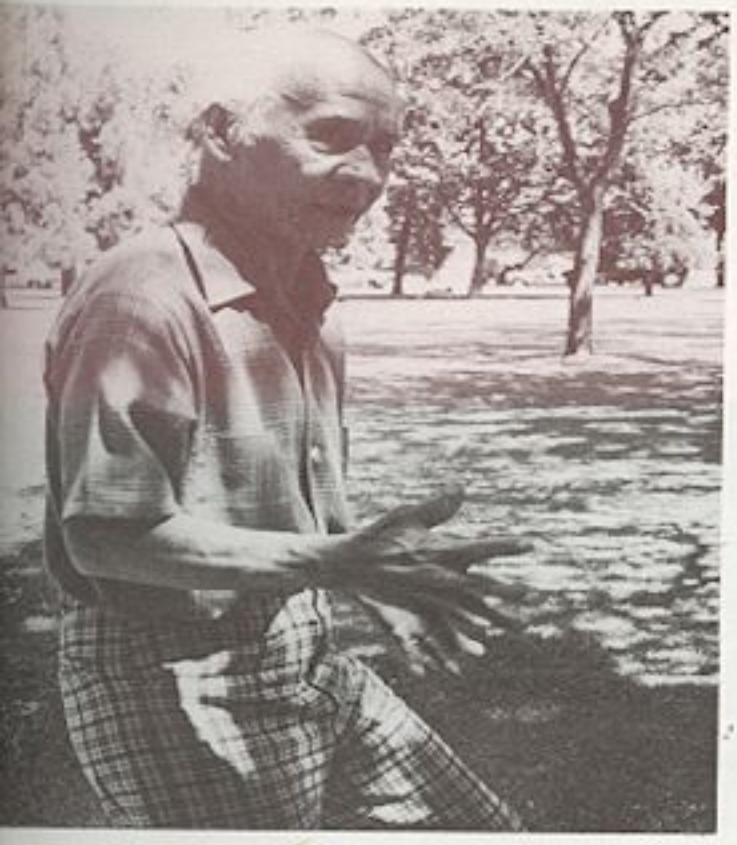
He's primarily a "Largo Mano" or long hand fighter, using the reach of his 30-inch stick or blade to hold his opponent at bay. He supplements the characteristic Largo Mano movements with what some would recognize as different styles and others would call tactics.

One such is "Abierta" or open style where the fighter dances about and evades his opponent's strikes without blocking. Another is "Riterada" or retreating style, designed for wary encounters where the fighter has time and room to keep backing away in order to study his opponent's movements. "Fondo Fuerte" or the non-retreating style is the opposite tactic used when the fighter is forced to take a stand. Fondo fuerte may have been a tactic Giron used in the jungle when closed off by terrain or rushed for time with more of the enemy closing in.

Probably the most unique is "Lastico" or what Giron describes as the rubber band style. It's characterized by a forward sway and backward snap that accompanies each strike. Lastico is a method he used often during the war since it gives the fighter the ability to strike out between intertwined branches and snap back again for protection.

Much of the training Giron describes gives special consideration to terrain. The environmental training situations described later in this book came largely from his notes. In simulated combat, training in the environments Giron describes can be fun, but in real life a knowledge of such common situations could easily mean the difference between life or death. That Giron is still alive is strong testimony to the effectiveness of his fighting tactics in such terrain.

Today Giron looks, talks and carries himself upright and quietly like a college professor. His metal-rimmed glasses and hair, now graying on the sides, helps the illusion. But something about the way he listens, his careful movements and the casual way he watches the periphery around him without turning his head or eyes, says a lot about him. He grips a stick differently too—the



John LaCoste

Of all the Escrima masters in Stockton, John LaCoste at 88 years of age is probably the most unique. He's also the most difficult to draw concrete information from, partially because of his limited English and mainly because he won't hold still.

We are talking in a small park in the middle of South Stockton. A handful of Escrimadors and myself are sitting at a picnic table. There is an empty spot on the bench reserved for LaCoste. LaCoste is dancing in the grass. He grins at each of us separately while entertaining the group with his version of "carenza," Escrima shadow boxing. I'm handling the questions and fussing with a tape recorder.

"Where were you born?" I ask.

"I tell you true," he says, "you train every day; do like this."

He squats down into a half crouch and hops from side to side, back and forth, feet together, feet apart. Then he shakes his head and, still crouched, bobs and weaves like a boxer.

"Three minutes," he says. "Every morning. Then this."

He drops into a pushup position and, supporting himself on one arm, swings his free arm back and twists his chest upward. He alternates arms six or seven times to make sure everyone gets the idea.

"Then this."

He sits on the bench, straightens his legs and holds them horizontally, then turns one leg over the other and vice versa—many times.

"Drink no cold water. Only little warm water. Then breathe."

He jumps up, inhales deeply on tiptoe, holds it, then lets it out.

"Every morning," he says, "and at night."

If anyone would like to know, John LaCoste was born somewhere in the central Philippines.

"What styles of Escrima have you studied?"

side to side, turning like a radar antenna. Both heels turn inward until his feet are parallel, one in front of the other, then they turn outward and twist back and forth independently. At the same time they tap the ground—*heel, toe, heel, toe, tap, tap, tap*. While all this is going on his flat, opened hands stroke and pat the air against imaginary attacks. His hand and elbow do a quick *pat, pat*.

"What's that?" I ask.

"Look," he says and he pulls one of the Escrimadors in front of him, hands him a stick and says, "Number one." The Escrimador delivers a strike with the stick at the angle requested. LaCoste dips beneath it, passing it over his shoulder with one hand. At the end of the strike's extension, he locks it into place with another hand and *pat, pats* it, first with his hand (a double checking move to keep it from swinging back on him) and then with his elbow on a nerve on top of the man's arm. The man rubs his arm.

"Thank you," I say. I still don't know what styles he uses. One of the group tells me that he is familiar with all different styles, but his favorites are "Moro Moro," two methods of "Cebu," "Occidental Negroes" and "one more." *Moro Moro* is named after a religious sect of people in the Philippines, *Cebu* and *Occidental Negroes* are named after islands and *one more* is anybody's guess.

"I tell you true," LaCoste says. "You learn first two numbers, you fight any style and beat him."

I understand what he's saying. Most Escrima styles have 12 numbers or angles that any attack must fall close to. For each of those angles there are about 12 blocks or deflections and another 12 counters to each block. If a person understands all the blocks and counter to the first two angles, he can adapt their motions to defend against any of the other strikes. After studying "many styles," LaCoste knows where all the principles coincide.

"One month I teach you. You fight okay, any style."

What he means, I am told, is that he can teach anyone with a little comprehension how to do the blocks and counters for the first two strikes. Whether or not the person gets good enough with them to actually use them in combat is another matter. It's like his footwork. Danny Inosanto says he's been trying to copy LaCoste's footwork for 14 years. He's finally gotten to where he can describe it, but actually use it the way LaCoste does? No.

I look back at my notes to see what else I can ask him. I know that he moved to Hawaii from the Philippines many years ago. While in Hawaii, he headed a major farm labor strike that the Filipinos in Stockton still talk about today. LaCoste is their hero. The strike itself cost the lives of a dozen farm workers and 22 "policemen," but it put across the idea that farm workers, like anyone else, should be given sufficient wages to live and support a family.

Following the labor strike, LaCoste was deported to the Philippines. He came back into California several years later, enlisted in the military and was decorated for heroism. When he was discharged, he settled down in California, finally making Stockton his home.

Ironically, situations in Stockton weren't exactly peaceful. People have tried to rob the little five-foot-two LaCoste at least twice. The incidents are documented in police records and local talk. Once a man tried to rob him with a knife. LaCoste turned the knife into the man so he "stabbed himself." Another time in a hotel, a man tried to rob LaCoste by placing a gun in his back. The element of surprise may have had something to do with it. Who would expect a little old man to elbow the gun while twisting off to the side and trap the gun downward while backhanding him in the face? The gunman surely didn't and by the time he realized what was going on, LaCoste had him in an armlock and the police were on their way. LaCoste got a commendation for that from the Stockton police department, one of several.

A third incident was two years ago when LaCoste was 86. Three boys had made it a regular game to slink around South Stockton and mug elderly people. LaCoste was an elderly person, so he went for a walk in the vicinity of the muggings. Sure enough, the boys were waiting.

At 89, Master John LaCoste's moves are still youthful and graceful.

"Could you describe what happened when you fought the three boys?" I ask. LaCoste dances further out on the grass.

"First boy, he say, 'Hey old man, you got money?' I tell him no. He say, 'What you think if I throw you in that tree?' I tell him, 'Maybe I throw you in that tree.' He come at me and I throw him down and hold him like this. I look at other boy and I laugh. I say, 'Come boy, you make me happy too.' Other boy, he get stick and run at me; try to hit me. I take stick away and throw him down. I point stick and say, 'You want to die boy?' He say, 'No.' I say, 'Go home boy.' He and other boys, they go home and they no bother anyone no more."

That wasn't one LaCoste received a commendation for, but it did earn him the respect of the boys who may someday be Escrimadors themselves. Perhaps such things make a master.

LaCoste is not the typical stereotype of a brawler. His philosophy, he says, is friendliness and love to everyone. Even as he talks and dances in the grass (far, far away from the tape recorder—too far) he focuses in on each person, individually, until he gets a response, a laugh, a change of expression. He's a fighter, but he's also a lover. He doesn't pass anyone he knows and likes without patting his leg or shoulder or reaching out to grab his arm.

A few days after the interview, Danny Inosanto picked LaCoste up at the Los Angeles Greyhound bus depot. It was a blistering hot day and the two were to appear on an NBC-TV special on Escrima in just a little while. Danny pointed in the direction of the car, but LaCoste grabbed his arm and led him off through the crowd. They marched down the depot for two minutes or so before LaCoste found who he was looking for. It was a Mexican family of six. They couldn't speak English and were lost. LaCoste, who speaks Spanish, discovered their trouble and wouldn't leave until they were on the right bus and headed for their destination.

That's LaCoste. LaCoste is Stockton's oldest and most venerated Escrima master. He teaches the Escrimadors how to fight. He also teaches them how to live and make people happy. If you want to know what style he uses, it's the LaCoste style and he's the only one who can pull it off.

Ben Largusa

Ben Largusa separates himself from the title of Escrima master. He is a man of Kali, the older Filipino art. Kali is the source from which all the Escrima styles developed.

"Escrima, Arnis, Sikaran, Silat, Kuntao, Kaliradman, Kalirongan and Pagkalikali are all phases of Kali," says Largusa, "but Kali is the mother or ancestral art. These phases are all part of our training."

"Ben Largusa is a master because of his skill and knowledge," says Danny Inosanto. "If you don't know him, it's hard to draw anything personal out of him, but movement wise—can't touch him."

Largusa gets his movement from his instructor, Floro Villabrille, the most commonly repeated name among the Escrimadors in Stockton. Villabrille lives in Hawaii and Largusa, who was born on Kauai, studied under him for six unbroken years in the fifties. He has maintained contact with him to become his foremost protege.

The son of a migrant worker, Largusa deports himself in a way that distinguishes him as something more. He chooses his words carefully, listens with his eyes and moves from room to room somehow with very little motion. When he speaks of Kali or the history of the Philippines, he's obviously well read and when he explains and demonstrates the principles of his art, he's just as well practiced.

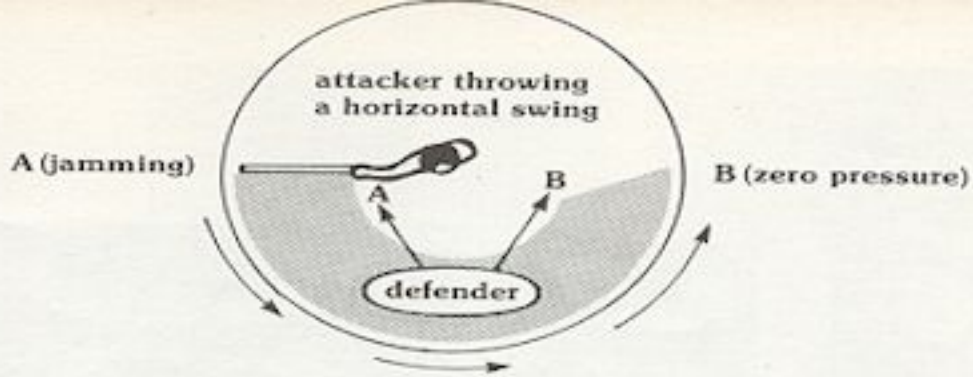
Largusa now has a school in South San Francisco with a system of ranking and a curriculum that is geared to span three years. If the student is active and learns what he is taught, he may then qualify to teach. According to Largusa, it is the first time Kali has been organized commercially and the school has Villabrille's blessings.

A class in Kali at Largusa's school begins with "Orascion" or meditation and a kind of non-partisan prayer. Largusa makes a point of saying that neither the prayer nor the meditation are used to teach any brand of religion.

"I just teach the basics and they communicate whatever they want," he says. "If you're a Christian, then you communicate with the Heavenly Father. If you're not a Christian, then you communicate with whatever you believe, supernatural spirit or spirit of light. It is the spirit of *giving* that is exercised in this meditation. You have to be humble. You have to give before you can take, especially when you train."

After the orascion, beginners learn the 12 basic movements of Kali with a stick in each hand. Then they learn five variations or styles to each of those movements: "Numerado" style for in-fighting, "Literada" (otherwise called riterada or retreating style) for outside fighting, "Sumbrada" which is a fast-paced counter for counter style, and "Fraile" and "Cabisedario" that are combinations of the previous styles. The double sticks may be round or flattened to resemble a sword. The flattened sticks serve as a reminder that Kali is adaptable to any kind of weapon, bladed or blunted, and one edge of the flattened stick is used like a blade. Using a stick in each hand helps the student develop his weak side by immediately relating it to the movements of his strong side. He in effect becomes ambidexterous with his weapons and by shortening his weapon, he soon learns that the art works just as well empty-handed. All in all, the training not only makes the person ambidexterous in terms of hand movements, but in terms of weaponry as well.

The Kali people often use the circle to organize their hand and foot movements. A defending Kali man, for instance, may step around his opponent to position himself in "safety zones." These safety zones are places where the opponent has either not had time to gain momentum in his strike, a zone that would jam his strike before it begins (position "a" in the diagram), or where his strike has reached the end of its motion (position "b").



The end of every movement in Kali is the beginning of another movement. "De Cadena" or *chain-like movement* where each is connected to the next is what gives Kali its fluidity.

According to Largusa's descriptions, the basic concept of defense in Kali has three elements: the parry, the safety factor and the killing blow. The parry is the motion that deflects the opponent's strike. The safety factor is the checking motion that holds the opponent's striking hand in place after the strike has been deflected. The killing blow is the counterstrike, but it may occur after the parry and safety factor or during either one. The Kali men train to be able to insert the killing blow or counterstrike at any time in the clash.

"Killing blow" may be a misnomer because, according to Largusa, the ultimate philosophy in Kali (at least as he practices it) is to discourage, not injure, and to spare life, not take it.

- "If we wanted to kill the person," says Largusa, "if we were convinced that our lives were threatened, then we would go to the vital area, the head, to the mind or its supporters, the lung or heart. But the ultimate in Kali training is when you can spare a man's life. Only then have you learned the purpose of Kali training."

In Largusa's school, the primary target is the hands.

"A rattlesnake can kill, right? If you take off the fangs, it still looks deadly, but it cannot kill. In Kali," says Largusa, "a hand is considered a fang. If you take away the hand, it cannot pick up a gun or a weapon and kill you. People who are not familiar with Kali see us strike to the hands and say it's not deadly, but they don't realize until they learn Kali how deadly it is and why we strike to the hands."

While explaining his concept of training the students to strike to the hand, Largusa also demonstrates how easily the target may be adjusted when necessary. Since the hand is smaller and more elusive than the head or body, it would seem that training against the hand for a target would only sharpen a student's accuracy. In incidents such as defending against a nunchaku with a stick, the hands actually move much slower than the weapon and, therefore, are easier to hit. Seeing the kind of speed possible in both Escrima and Kali, some might wonder if trying to follow the hand wouldn't be a dangerous thing to do in any kind of combat. How do you follow five strikes that take place almost simultaneously if you're trying to follow the hand each time? This is where Largusa brings out the concept of the rhythm triangles in Kali.

"It has been proven in boxing," he says, "that the hands are faster than the eye. If you shoot six darts at me at once, I can't defend against each one, so I treat them as one dart. If you throw three or four punches at me very fast, I treat them as one punch. They are only one point of your rhythm triangle. Once you understand the theory of the rhythm triangle, you can understand these movements."

The triangle, like the circle, is a key to understanding Kali. The rhythm triangle is pictured with the mind at the top of the triangle and the hands and feet at the other two corners. Knock out any one of them and you've seriously hampered, if not completely negated the opponent's ability to fight. The mind here is at the top because it affects both the hands and feet.

Another example of the triangle explaining a principle of Kali is the "internal triangle."

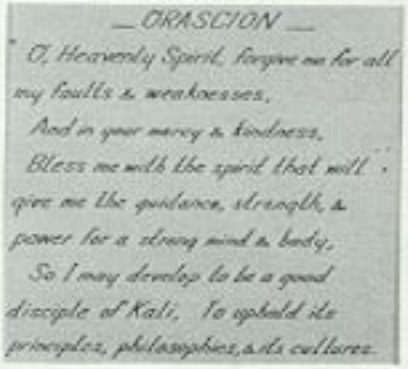
"The internal triangle is pictured like the rhythm triangle," says Largusa. "The mind is at the top. On one side is the 'ki,' the seat of internal strength, and on the other side is the point of contact. If you hit the back or the feet, the ki will weaken. Like the old saying, kill the bark and the tree will die. This is the same process.

"Without this spiritual and mental aspect one moves mechanically, like a robot, no feeling and no meaning. Orascion (meditation) is very important because it makes the mind stronger. It develops the fighting spirit, what we call plain old 'guts'. For this everybody has a different degree of guts. You're either born with guts or without guts. Now with Kali spiritual training, one doesn't have to be born with guts, it can be developed."

The highest level of Kali training then would be the universal triangle. Here the supernatural spirit is at the top, communicated with by orascion. The practitioner and his opponent are on the bottom corners.

Supernatural spirits, sticks and blades, fighting with weapons and empty hands—all of this leads to the inevitable question, always asked off to the side. Does anyone ever get hurt? Largusa says he has never received an injury in all his years of training. They keep injuries at a minimum in his school by teaching "slow training," a theory related to the yin and yang of Kung-Fu or karate.

"Our philosophy," he says, "is soft but hard, hard but soft. When you train slowly, speed comes automatically. With soft training, hardness comes automatically. We have very slow training in the beginning so they can correct the fine points and develop finesse. When we go fast, we use either the light rattan stick or the plastic baseball bat and go to the non-vital areas such as the trunk and between the joints to prevent injuries."



This is the "Orascion", a non-partisan prayer used at the beginning of each class.

Largusa's school now has just under 40 students who are slowly working their way up the ladder of his ranks. When they're ready for a promotion, Largusa gives them a test. The test includes "sayaw," the dance form that kept Escrima and Kali hidden from the Spaniards in the Philippines. Largusa teaches 20 or more sayaws that the students are supposed to be able to do at random either to the beat of a drum or with their own imagined rhythms. Within the sayaws are the 12 basic movements of Kali as well as all the defensive movements, counters, strikes and footwork patterns.

He also teaches sets, similar to Kata in Karate but labels them in two categories: planned and freestyle. The planned set is as it sounds with the movements planned in sequence, mainly for the beginners. The freestyle set, however, employs anything the student has learned and is more similar to shadowboxing.

All considered, Largusa's school is probably the most organized and commercial Filipino arts academy found anywhere in the United States. To some Escrimadors, commercializing a school for public use means that the art is being watered down and "frozen" to keep it organized and palpable to public consumption. But people who have seen Largusa's students work and particularly Largusa himself, always seem to come to the same conclusion: "You can't hit 'em with a 10-foot pole." That's got to say something.

Floro Villabrille

Villabrille at 17 (above) and with President Marcos of the Philippines.

In all of the Filipino martial arts, one name keeps surfacing with great reverence and awe. That name is Floro Villabrille. He is the undefeated champion in countless Escrima and Kali matches in the Philippines and in Hawaii. Escrima stick fighting matches were full-contact bouts without the aid of armor, which resulted in death or permanent injury to the participants. They usually used the stick in the right hand and punched with the left hand. The use of the elbow, knee and head were common at close range combat. Combat grappling like techniques (standing or on the ground) were applied. These included throws, trips, sweeps, take-downs, chokes, strangulation, dislocations and locks on the fingers, wrists, elbows, shoulders, ankles and knees. The feet were used for kicking at the low level. It was a brutal art and only the swiftest, the strongest and the most courageous survived or remained in practice. The rounds were two minutes with one minute rests in between.

One instructor said, "I am very good, but Floro Villabrille is way out of my class; but then again he is way out of everyone's class. Floro can beat you with his brain and guts."

In December of 1977 my Publisher visited Mr. Villabrille at his home on Kaui, Hawaii where he spoke of his special training. "Before a fight I go to mountains alone. I pretend my enemy is there. I imagine being attacked and in my imagination I fight for real. I keep this up until my mind is ready for the kill. I can't lose. When I enter the ring nobody can beat me already. I already know that man is beaten. In 1948 my wife was at the fight. I tell her 'no worry, I can't lose.' Anything you do, even go to school or find a job. . . . in the morning you make a prayer. I want to do this. I got to do it. I got to do it. Walk around and work on your mind. And you will do it." Some people feel his life is charmed and that he has the power of Anting-Anting - a magical charm that gives a person super natural strength.

Floro Villabrille started his training at the age of 14. He traveled the length and width of the Philippines researching the art of Kali and studied under many different instructors. His favorite instructor was a female; a blind princess named Josephina. To reach this blind princess, he had to travel many unaccessible trails, finally reaching a village called Gundari on the island of Samar. He stayed in this village for a long time not learning any Kali but just doing menial tasks as cleaning up. Finally he was allowed to practice the art. He states that he doesn't know how the princess saw the blows, but he contends that she was one of his best instructors. After training there for some time, he comes down from the village and competes. While competing in a match and winning, he is approached by a man who asks him where he learned that style. Villabrille tells him that he learned it in the village of Gundari on the Island of Samar. The man tells him that is impossible for the village is unaccessible to travel and that he couldn't possibly have reached the village because he was from there. When Villabrille tells him about the blind princess, he realizes that he is telling the truth and starts to cry and embraces him.

At the age 18 Villabrille was working on a ship when his training partner, Dison, telegramed him to fight a young Moro stick fighter. Dison was a great stick fighter in his own right, but had previously lost to the Moro stick fighter. When Villabrille arrived in the Philippines he was met by his friends. They told him that the Moro fighter was just too fast and too good and that he should cancel out. Villabrille stubbornly refused to back out of the match. According to Villabrille, the Moro was much faster than he was and probably the fastest man he ever met. On sheer guts and determination, Villabrille trades blow for blow and finally wins the match in the fifth round. For several weeks after the match, Villabrille couldn't raise his arms above his head because of the blows he had received while trying to block. Villabrille now feels that if the combat had been with swords, the Moro fighter would have probably won. He competed in 1933, 34, 35, 36 and then the matches were stopped until 1948 when his last match took place.

Villabrille pooled all the knowledge from all the sources he came across and developed his own system of combat. That is the Villabrille System of Kali which is a composite of all the styles of the Islands.

Villabrille has an award, a certificate and diploma signed by General Frank Murphy, then Governor of the Philippines. The certificate states that he had won the Grand Championship of the Philippines, thus making him the Grandmaster of that country. In the Cebu municipal Museum they have a giant picture of Lapu-Lapu, the man who killed Magellan. Next in size is the certificate and picture of Grandmaster Floro Villabrille.

What is learning?	A journey and process, not a destination and conclusion.
What is an instructor?	A guide, not a guard or dictator.
What is discovery?	A constant process of questioning the answers, not answering the questions.
What is the goal?	Open minds so that you can "be," not closed issues so that you have to "do" and follow to achieve the goal.
What is the test?	Being and becoming, not just remembering and reviewing.
What do we teach?	Individuals; not lessons, not styles, not systems, and not methods or techniques.
What is the school?	Whatever we choose to make it.
Where is the school?	Anywhere, not a four cornered classroom, wherever we are!

Basic Striking Angles

There are an uncountable number of styles in Filipino stick fighting, but they all have one common denominator that gives them adaptability. Their principles of combat are based on a pattern of angles that all attacks must fall into, regardless of the style, regardless of the weapon, discounting of course the use of firearms. The pattern takes the form of a combination of what may be recognized today as mathematic symbols. (See drawings.)

With the addition sign (+) and the multiplication sign (X) and dot (•), a pattern forms that any thrusting attack, such as a jab with the fist or a stab with a knife, or any arcing attack, such as the wide swinging blow of a club, must follow. The pattern of angles is the same whether the attacker is jabbing and swinging with a weapon or kicking and punching.

The addition sign stands for the vertical and horizontal strikes and the multiplication sign stands for the diagonal strikes. The dot in the center of the pattern represents all thrusting or jabbing motions, as opposed to the wide, swinging blows. Though the dot only appears in the center of the pattern, representing primarily the centerthrust that comes right down the middle, thrusts may actually occur at any of the angles. The defenses, described later, remain about the same.

Within some stick fighting styles, the angles of attack are treated as the pie-shaped areas between the lines of the mathematic symbols. Any attack, for instance, between the top vertical line of the pattern and the next diagonal line to it is treated as one angle. Escrimadors from other styles direct their attention to the lines themselves and practice their defenses against each line that represents an angle of attack. The important thing is that you keep the defenses you will learn flexible enough to blend either way with the attack. Even more important is that you remain flexible enough to flow with sudden changes in angle.

The infinity sign (∞) that completes our drawings is the standard motion of the stick to keep the Escrimador's movement fluid. This figure-eight motion is used in its complete form or partially. The use of the figure eight will become clearer when you study the section on *Striking Motions*.

Numbering System

The 12 angles of attack

3
4
5 Thrust
6 Thru
9
10
11
12

Numbering System

The numbering system used in this book is Danny Inosanto's own. A "number one" angle for a right hander follows a motion much like a baseball throw. A "number two" angle, then, for the same right hander would be a backhand strike. All the numbers on your right (1, 3, 6 and 9) are blows that *begin* with your weapon turned away from your body to the right. The numbers on your left (2, 4, 7, 8 and 10) are backhand strikes that *begin* with your right arm crossed in front of your body and out to the left.

"Number six" is a thrust into the body on the "number one" angle and "number seven" is a backhand thrust into the body on the "number two" angle. Any of the angles may include thrusts, but these two are given their own numbers because they supposedly occur more often in combat.

Numbers five, eight, eleven and twelve lie on the same vertical plane. "Number five" is a commonly occurring thrust to the center of the body. "Number eight" and "eleven" are both descending blows, but "eleven" is overhand and "eight" is backhand. "Number twelve" is any rising blow along the centerline. A snap kick would be a good example.

Pick up a stick and execute the blows in sequence as they are numbered and you'll see how well they flow together, one after another. By throwing two or three in quick succession, you'll understand how basic body dynamics limit your follow-up blows to some extent and give the Escrimador a good idea of what blows are coming up next. A knowledge of these basic striking angles and how they often follow each other naturally gives the Escrimador an almost psychic appearance in battle.

VARIATIONS

An important point to remember is that the numbers given in the previous illustrations are for training purposes. If you are delivering strikes to a training partner, the numbers give you a way to remember all the more common angles that occur in combat. They do not necessarily follow each other in order, although a backhand strike usually follows an overhand or underhand strike and vice versa **—body dynamics.**

A good example of the variations possible in the basic pattern is the *level* of the angle. A number one angle, for instance, may occur across the fighter's shoulder, at waist level, at knee level or at any level. (See illustrations.)

High Angle #1

Middle Angle #1

Low Angle #1

Striking Motions

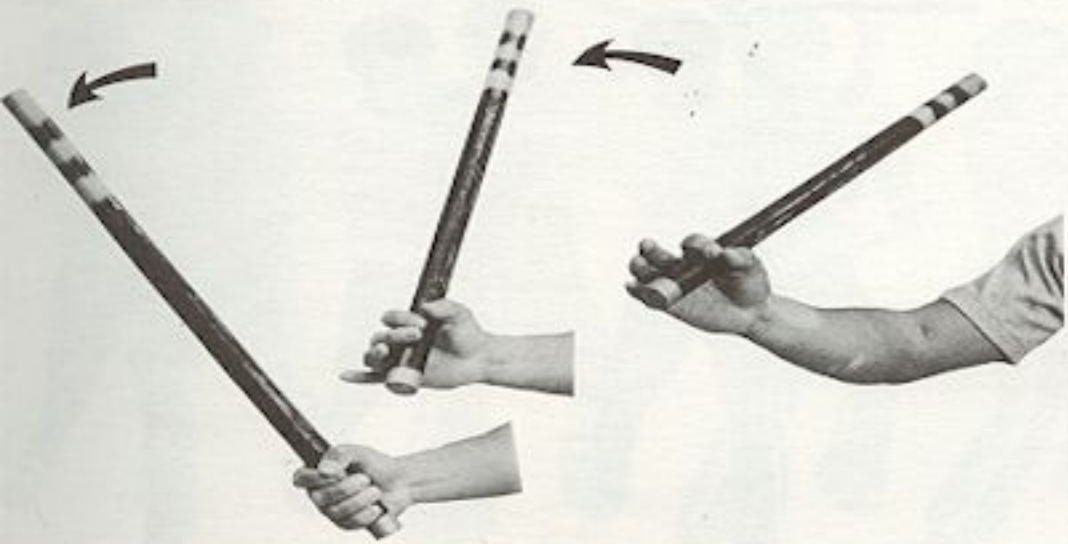
Selecting the most basic striking motion in Escrima to begin this section is like finding the most basic part of a circle or figure eight. The circle and the figure eight *are* the most basic patterns in Escrima, but often only portions of these figures are used.

The Circle: Hold one end of a stick and twirl the whole thing at your side, forward or backward, like a lariat rope. That's the circle. It usually occurs at your side.

The Figure Eight: Wave the stick in front of you in the pattern of a figure eight that's lying on its side. Reverse the motion. Either one is the figure eight and it usually occurs in front of you.

THE CIRCLE (ARKO)

The basic Escrima twirl is nothing more than a circle of the stick or several circles in continuous succession. When twirling for dexterity exercise or a single hit, grip the stick tightly between your thumb and index finger while letting the stick ride freely within your remaining three fingers. If you need to, grip the stick with your second finger as well. The remaining fingers should tighten around the stick as it descends or nears its target.



Double and triple hits can be done with circular twirls by starting with a small circle and enlarging it after each downward stroke, so that the striking motions extend forward in overlapping loops.

These multiple circular strikes may be thrown overhand (Figure A) or backhand (Figure B).

A

B

Multiple circular strikes can also be changed from overhead to backhand or vice versa,

Multiple circular strikes thrown underhand are less common, but may be practiced as exercise in the same way as the overhand strikes.

Keep a tight grip on your weapon during multiple circular strikes. This is a slightly different motion than the straight twirling for dexterity exercise and single hits. Three good multiple circular strikes may turn so fast that they look like a single descending stroke, hence the tighter grip.

Abaniko or Fan

"Flicking the weapon" is one of the lightest, fastest moves possible with a stick. The term "Abaniko or Fan" refers to quick turns of the wrist, usually 180 degrees, that whip the weapon around like a propeller. Keep a tight grip on the weapon and simply rotate your wrist. To change the angle of the flick, move your entire arm and keep your wrist straight.

The following illustrations show a flicking motion that fans directly in front of the fighter's body (above right).

This second set of illustrations shows an overhead flick that uses body torque to turn the weapon from 180 to 360 degrees. The body torque also adds power. The following section shows how body torque may be used to add power to any blow. The overhead flick should take less than .4/10 of a second (below).

By varying the "Abaniko" motion, continuous hits can be made on both sides of any target if you pull the weapon. The Figure 8 pattern should take less than 2/10 of a second.

(1)

(2A)*

(1)

(2A)

** The techniques are numbered (2A), (2B), etc. because it is one continuous move, not step one, two, etc. The whole sequence will take less than less than 2/10 of a second.*

(2B)

(2C)

(2B)

(2C)

The more common use of the abanico is its abbreviated form. Done with a lighter weapon, most of the action takes place in the wrist. (See the angled hits in the Figure 8 section.) The main difference between small Figure 8 hits and abanico movement is the wrist snap. With a bladed weapon, for instance, you might want to *draw* the weapon across the target.

As with an Escrima motion, the vertical and horizontal abanicos can be made to flow together.

(1A)

(1C)

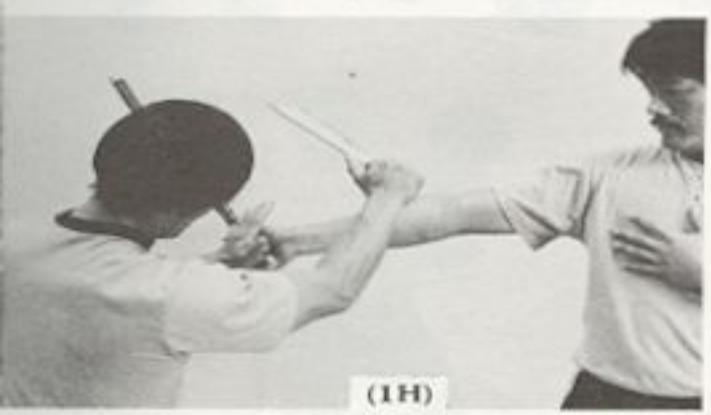
(1D)

(1F)

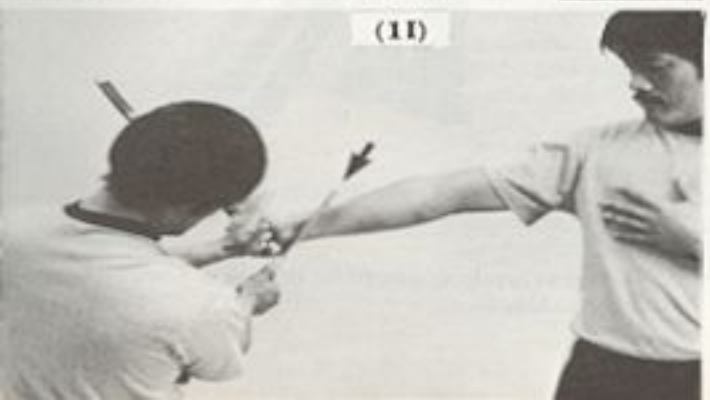
(1G)

(1B)

(1E)



(1H)



(1I)

VERTICAL ABANICO

The Figure Eight

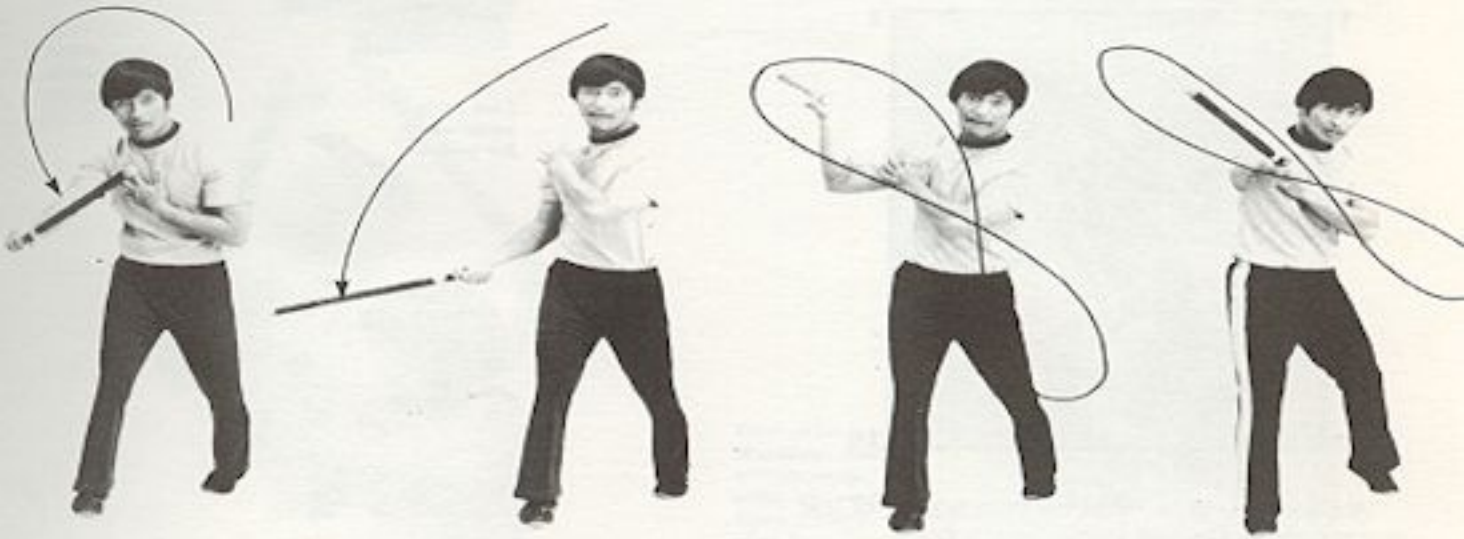
The ways the figure eight can be used to vary the angles of attack are endless and will be covered in more detail later. For now, we'll look at some basic exercises that give an idea to what can happen when the shape or the angle of the entire figure is changed only slightly.

Twirl the stick in the figure-eight motion in front of you, allowing it to wrap around you slightly.

Concentrate on the overhead motion and you will have your basic overhand strike.

Concentrate on the descending backhand motion and you will have your basic backhand strike.

Reverse your motion to practice your upward strokes.



The upward strokes will give you your number nine and ten angled strikes and slight variations on either the descending or ascending strokes will give you your vertical strikes, up and down.

Now elongate the motion so that the arcs on either side of you are smaller and the strokes in front of you are more horizontal. Your cross strokes should increase in speed and you will have a continuous side to side striking motion that does not pause after each stroke.

Torque

I'm going to use the four ends of the "X" to explain torque, which is something you should try to add to your motion at any time in the circle or figure eight when your weapon is about to hit something. The ends of the "X" represent the location of your hand in relation to your body as you prepare to throw a "number one" strike, a "number two" strike, a "number nine" strike and a "number ten" strike.

We'll start with a exercise that is part of the warm-ups at Danny Inosanto's school.

Hold the stick in your right hand about one inch from the bottom. Some Escrimadors hold their stick close to or flush with the bottom, because anything projecting, they say, can be used by the opponent to disarm or take the weapon away. Others leave several inches exposed at the bottom so they can hit with the butt of the weapon. You can take your pick.

Bring your weaponed hand to the top right of the "X" in preparation for an overhand (#1) strike. Keep your elbow bent. Grip the stick mainly with your thumb and forefinger and let the weight of the stick lift the other three fingers. Without moving your arm, jerk your hand into a tight fist, then let the three fingers go loose again. The motion should pop the end of your stick upward, then let it drop back again. Repeat that many times and listen for the stick to make a whipping noise in the air.

Combine wrist snap, shoulder and elbow snap for power.

Use wrist, shoulder and elbow snap with hip and knee torque plus foot pivot for power.

Next, execute the first motion simultaneously with dropping your arm in front of your right shoulder. Repeat that entire motion many times.

Execute the first two simultaneous motions, but as you do, twist your entire body to the left, allowing your right heel to raise off the ground and shifting most of your weight to your left foot. You may also drop the level of your body slightly during the motion to put weight into the blow.

Remember, your right arm is striking at an angle now instead of dropping straight down. Repeat the motion, trying to synchronize all three movements into one snappy strike. That extra body twist is the *torque*. You can emphasize it even more by dropping your lead (right) shoulder as you twist downward.

In other words, using your entire body for more power rather than any isolated part.

At the end of your downward strike (#1), you are in position to execute an upward backhand strike (#9), a backhand stroke that will travel up the same line of the "X". Turn the bottom of your stick toward the top right of the "X" and execute a simple upward backhand strike with a twist, leaving the first step of your original exercise out. As you twist to the right in the swing, lift your left heel and your right shoulder, rocking most of your weight onto the ball of your left foot. Repeat the #9 strike several times.

Now we're back to a three count exercise because you've got gravity to pull the end of your stick down and lift the three fingers up. Execute the snapping motion without moving your arm. Next, add the arm motion so the stick is following a path from the top left of the "X" to the bottom right. Finally, add the torque by twisting your whole body to the right, raising your left heel and dropping most of your weight on your right foot. Again, dropping your lead (left) shoulder will add emphasis.

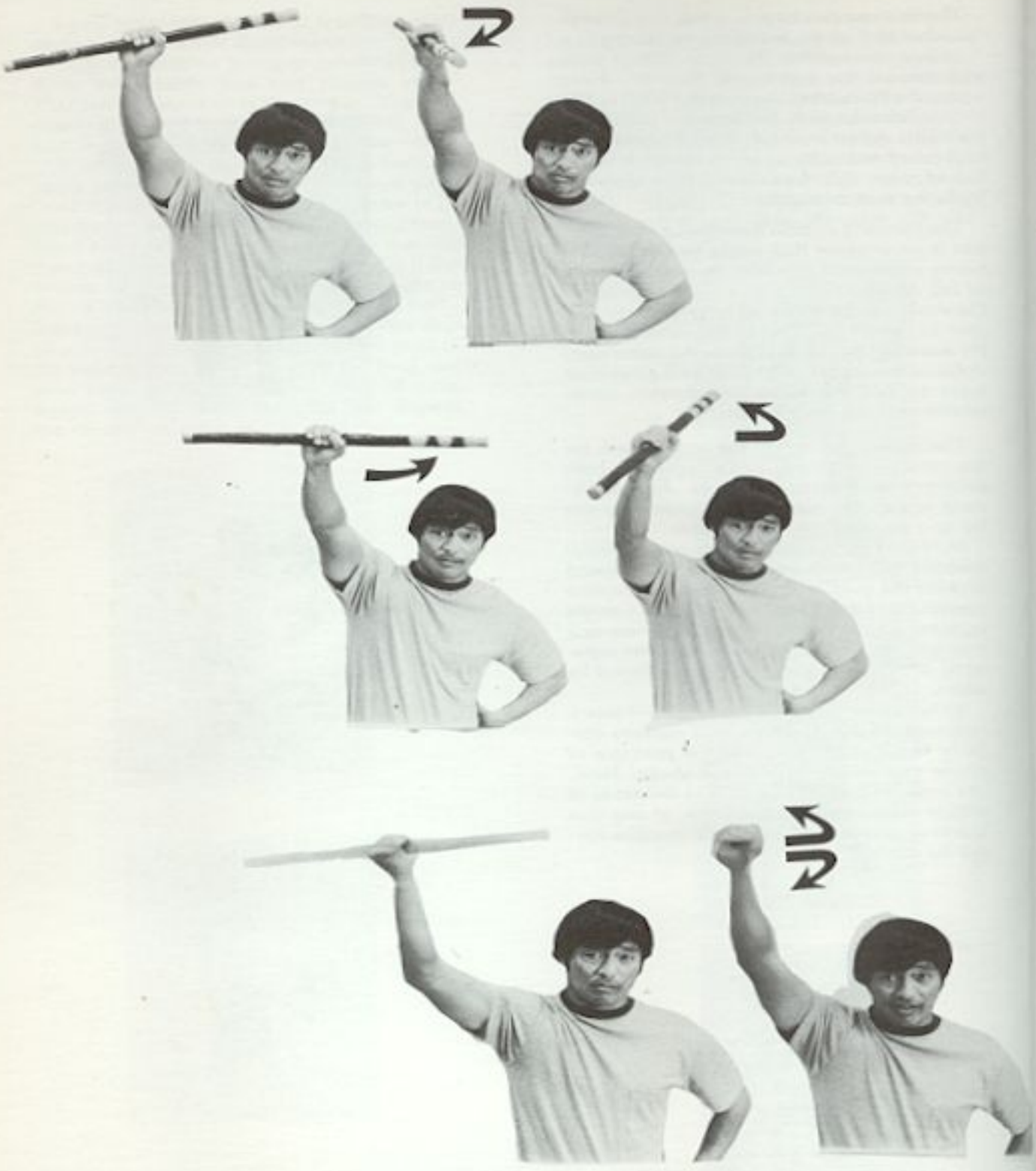
The last exercise begins at the end of your "number two" strike and is the beginning of a "number nine" strike. Turn the butt of your stick toward the top left of the "X." Here again, the first part of the exercise is left out so your syncronize only the upward swing and the twist. As you twist to the left, your right heel raises and your weight rocks back to the ball of your right foot. Your right shoulder leads the motion slightly.

The torquing motion described in this exercise is an extreme that might be used with a heavy weapon or as a final committed stroke to fell an opponent with a lighter weapon. Generally, a fighter wouldn't have enough time to deliver the kind of full strike used in the exercise. So, he would use the same principles of the torquing exercise and abbreviate them to add power to the shorter, faster movements used in combat.

Throughout the rest of the book, watch for this *principle of torque* as it's applied to both defensive and offensive moves. Any movement in Escrima may be emphasized by this hip and shoulder turn, *the torque*.

NOTE: The specifics in these technical chapters will necessarily narrow and expand to cover the overlapping principles of Escrima movement. I can't separate them as I might separate simple techniques because no one principle, no one movement, happens separately without affecting and being affected by others.

So far we've discussed the *angles* of attack (previous chapters), the *general motions* (circle or figure eight) used and the *principle of torque* that adds power to the stroke. Now, let's broaden it again and look at the kinds of strokes possible in any one angle, in any one attacking motion, and watch the specifics narrow by themselves.



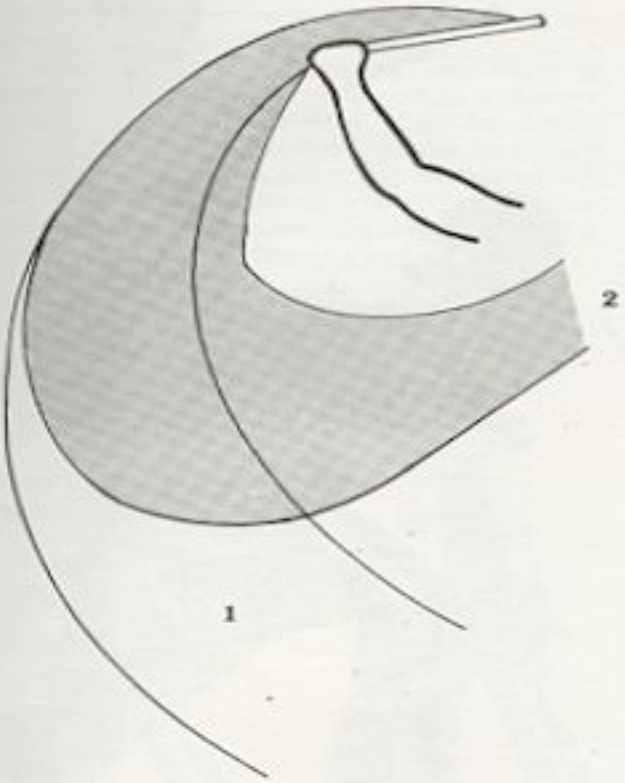
Exercise for developing a flexible and strong wrist for fan motions.

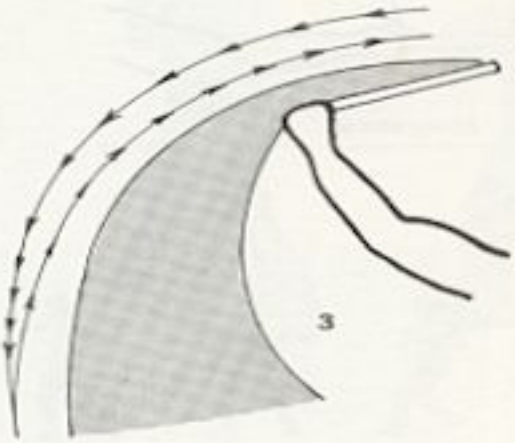
Specifics of Striking Motions

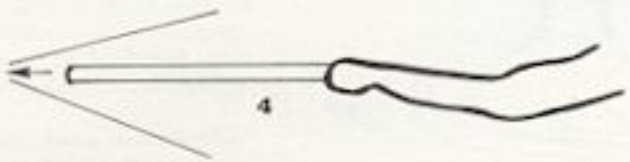
Basically, there are four striking motions that may occur in any attack:

1. The long arc or stemmed blow.
2. The shortened arc or stemless blow that is pulled inward halfway through the swing.
3. The rap which is a blow that returns along the same path that it went out.
4. The thrust or jab.

A strike should be less than 2/10ths of a second.

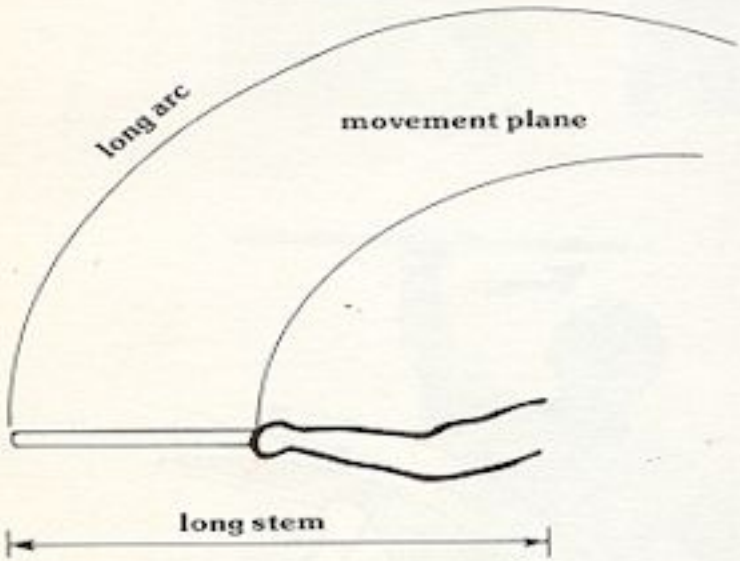


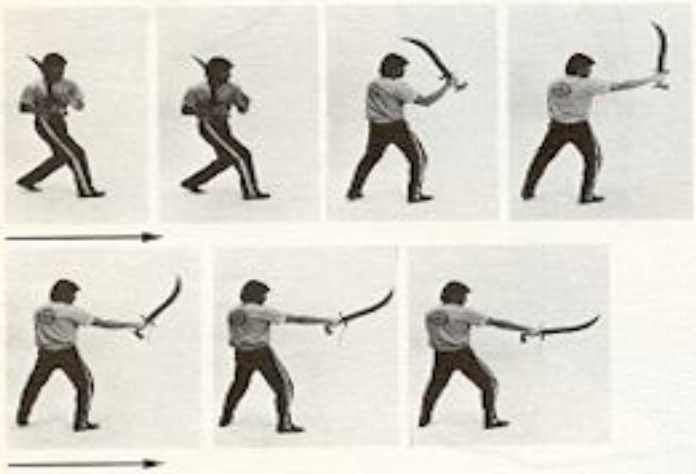




THE LONG ARC

The long arc is a simple elliptical swing that keeps about the same diameter from beginning to end. In combat, the long arc occurs most frequently with the long and/or heavy weapon. The elliptical path of an especially heavy weapon may elongate even more as the weight and the centrifugal force of the moving weapon unbends the arm.



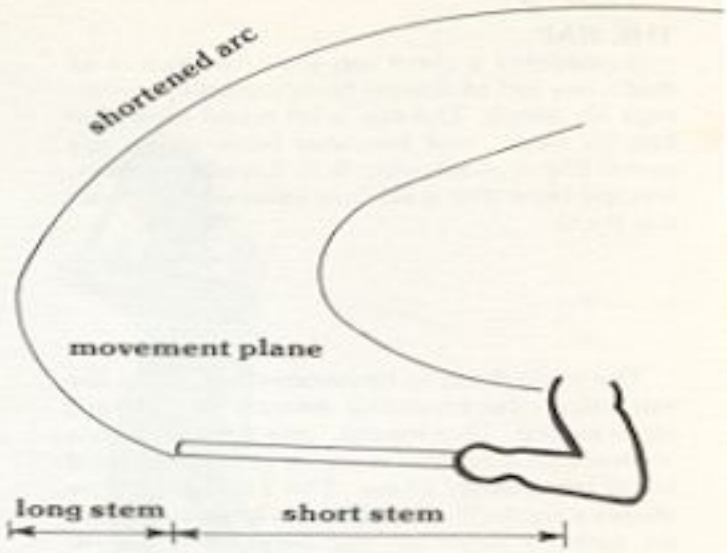


The long arc is the slowest of the blows and probably the easiest to defend against because defensive movements may occur anywhere on its elongated stem. (See diagrams.) It's also the blow used most often in training to develop proper body angling on the part of the defender and to give him time to practice his techniques.

THE SHORTENED ARC

The shortened arc is probably the most common and yet versatile stroke in combat. It begins much like the stemmed blow but as it continues the arm is pulled inward so that just past the intended impact, the arm and the weapon return to the body. This stemless blow serves two purposes: (1) it offers less of your weapon or arm to the opponent as a target for his defensive moves, and (2) it increases the speed of the stroke.

Velocity in the shortened arc blow is achieved much the same way a figure skater's spinning speed is increased when he slowly pulls his arms into his body. Bruce Lee used the whip as an example of the *shortened arc principle*. When cracking a whip, the reversing motion or *counter torquing* causes the radius of the full swing to shorten.



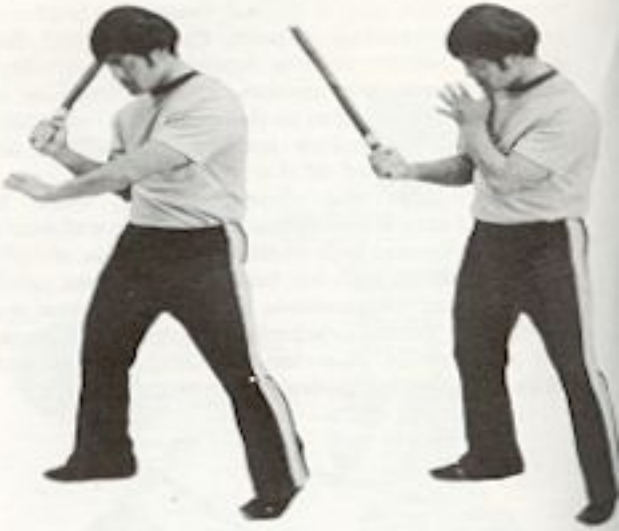
(1) (1A) (1B) (1C)

The initial force behind the motion hasn't changed and the mass remains the same. Since the arc that the mass is flowing through or around gets smaller, the speed increases to get the same amount of mass around according to that amount of force. (Physicists call this process the "conservation of angular momentum.")

The shortened arc stroke uses a counter torquing or reversing motion much the same as a whip.

(whip diagram)

THE RAP

Sometimes a short rap with the stick is all that's needed to disarm an opponent or interrupt his attack. The rap is an arced blow that hits its target and bounces back along the same line it went out. It is usually a short, snappy blow that is seldom extended far from the body.

The main thing to remember is to keep the retraction, the returning motion of the rap, *open ended. That means, give it the freedom to flow into a second strike* or to *whip around to hit on another plane*. The example below shows a rap to the hand that is lifted to deliver an upward strike to the hand. There's no pause between the retraction and the strike to the head.

(1A)

(1B)

(1C)

(1D)

(1E)

THE THRUST

There are two kinds of energy that go into a thrusting motion. The first is much like a jab with the end of the weapon. With the jab, equal emphasis is given to the striking and retracting motions. The motion of the jabbing thrust is much like that of the rap where the retraction flows directly into the next strike which is usually an arcing one. Multiple jabs are possible, however.

(1A)

(1E)

(1F)

The second kind of energy is more of a stab that suggests a weapon with a pointed tip such as a sword or dagger. The stabbing thrust is a fully committed killing move, delivered as a *coup de grace*. The only place it might be used otherwise is as a body shot with a long or heavy blunted weapon. Remember, though, as a committed thrust if the opponent has the slightest chance to evade the long or heavy, blunted blow, you've just given your weapon away.

To deliver a thrust, the weapon can be brought into line at the end of an arc or it can be arced into line like a boxer's hook.

A combination of the two takes place when, after delivering a stemless blow, the pullback is redirected to hit out again with a thrust on the same or another line. The first blow might actually be a feint or false attack, but the entire movement is done in a single corkscrew motion.

As a feint: *A* feints a "number one" strike that is pulled back as *B* attempts to block it. Without stopping his motion, *A* curves forward again for a thrust as *B*'s weapon passes by.

(1B)

(1C)

(1D)

A B

(1A)

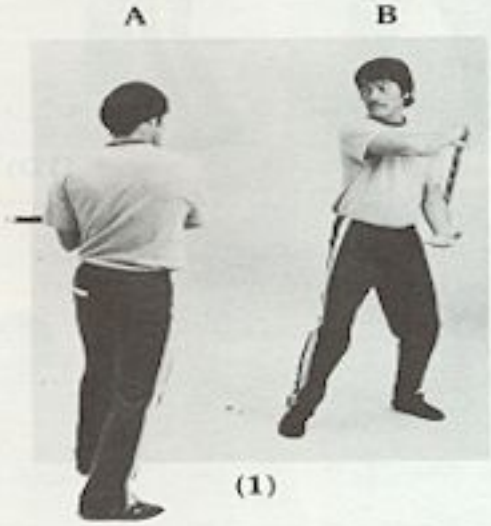
(1B)

(1C)

(1D)

(1E)

As a double hit: When *B* attempts a "number two" strike, *A* meets the attack with another "number two" strike, hitting his opponent on the hand. Without stopping his motion, *A* uses his free hand to lower the opponent's weaponed arm while curving his own weapon into a thrust to the throat.



(1)

(1A)

(1B)

(1C)

Try a combination of a shortened arc and a thrust with each of the 12 angles. A helpful hint is to keep the weapon pointed inward, toward the target, and let the hand make the arcing motion to drive it home. The end of the weapon should make just enough of a curve to clear the opponent's arm, wherever it may be.

Triangulations of Footwork and Striking

Escrima and particularly Kali use the symbol of the triangle to explain many of their combative principles. The ones we are concerned with at this moment are those principles that deal with foundation. *There are no stances in Danny Inosanto's Escrima and Kali, but there is a lot of footwork.* **Footwork can be accomplished without learning formalized stances by simply understanding the principles of foundation.**

To explain those principles, let's pretend a man's feet are glued to the top of a bench as pictured below. His head and the two bench supports form a triangle.

The main concern in martial arts is supporting the movement that runs, vaguely, parallel to the floor. Any upward motion is supported against the floor and downward motion uses gravity as a support. If one or both feet are off the ground, momentum is the mainstay. Since most Escrima action occurs with both feet on the ground, that kind of momentum doesn't concern us right now.

Returning to the picture, if we push against the man's chest we will topple our triangle because there is no support behind it. If we turn our man and the bench sideways, however, and push against the man's shoulder, the triangle will slide before it will topple. That's because one of the two bottom points of the triangle is acting as a support.

Now let's turn the man to a slight angle. Pushing into the man from this point of view (below), he still has about 80 percent of his rear support, but reserves 20 percent support on either side of him as well.

If he were thrusting at us from this angle, he might turn his feet to be more comfortable and bend his knees so he would be less rigid.

Basically, that's all there is. Keep your knees bent to retain that flexible readiness and keep one foot slightly out and to the rear to act as the supporting point of your triangle while giving you support on either side as well. Bruce Lee taught Danny to keep the rear heel raised whenever possible to make better use of that leg's thrusting capabilities.

Notice how, during the attacking motion, the two points of the triangle, particularly the raised rear heel, support the man, not so much in relation to his opponent's whereabouts but more in relation to the direction of his thrust or swing.

The distance your rear foot should be set back will vary according to your size and the amount of support you need at the moment. In general, keep it comfortable and never extend yourself so far that you can't shift around easily.

As Danny puts it, "Like the stances in Jeet Kune Do, stances in Escrima and Kali are transitional positions. There's no need to pose them statically. **Balance is constant losing and gaining, is constantly being adjusted, so the stance should relate to the circumstance."**

DEFENSIVE FOOTWORK

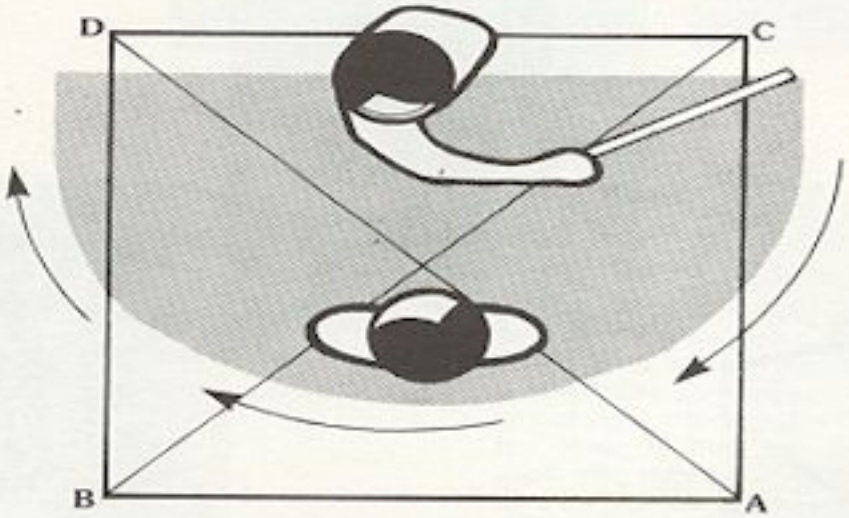
Defensive footwork is a bit more complicated since it's related more to the force and angle of the oncoming attack. There are several ways you can move in relation to an oncoming force. If you have time you can move out of its reach entirely. If you know approximately where the strike is coming from, you can move into it and stop it or deflect it before it picks up momentum. If you are caught too suddenly to avoid the blow entirely, you can ride with it while deflecting it slightly or, given a little more time, you can stay just ahead of it until its energy dissipates. Sometimes two tactics such as these are used simultaneously.

The easiest way to explain these tactics is to use the triangle again. Imagine four triangles on the floor, placed such that they form a square.

You've already stepped to the side of your opponent, defending from another attack. He's about to return with a horizontal backhand swing ("number four"). You must get out of the main path of the weapon. Stepping directly to one side or the other would tend to leave you still in the striking plane. Stepping straight back or straight in is sometimes used, depending on your foot placement or your distance from the opponent, but by doing so you remain on a line where his striking power is at its maximum, should your step be the slightest bit slow.

If you follow the *b* line, moving slightly away from the strike, you give yourself enough time to get beyond its reach. In the illustration below, the defender leans *over* the opponent's strike to hit his hand.

If you *see* the attack coming, you can move in on the *c* line and stop it before it begins.



D

C

B

A

One of the safest places to move is along the *d* line to what Ben Largusa and the Kali people refer to as the "zero pressure area." This places you at the end of the arc where the opponent's shoulder has neared its maximum extension and the force of his swing has diminished to nothing. This route also gives you extra time because it is the shortest distance to the end of his longer, arcing motion and zones you away from his rear hand.

(1A)

(1B)

(1C)

(1D)

The *a* line in this case would be the least favorable choice since it moves you directly into the tip of the oncoming weapon. Your momentum, your position or the speed of the opponent's attack might dictate that you take the blow on that line, however. In such a case, you might use a defensive move, such as a hit into the opponent's oncoming arm to slow it down, then pass it through with your free hand and hit again as his arm goes by.

Before going into replacements, however, let's look at how one change of angle can affect the direction you might want to take. If the strike were coming in at an angle like a "number two" strike, the *a* line might be a favorable one to take. Then it would be the fastest route out of the path of the weapon.

Learn how stepping into one of the four directions affects each of the twelve strikes by having someone deliver them to you in slow motion.

REPLACEMENTS

The readjustment or "replacement" is used to regain your basic foundation for a strike after you've stepped off for defensive reasons or to gain better positioning. A replacement may occur at any time when you need to readjust your footing to deliver a strong strike and when you have the time to do so. Generally, however, the stepoff takes place during the initial defensive move and the replacement occurs just prior to or while you are delivering your counterstrike.

The illustrations below show the four basic stepoffs, two retreating and two advancing. Picture *a* shows how you may readjust your footing after advancing to your right. Picture *b* is the same kind of replacement that might take place after advancing to your left. The first foot steps off and the second foot slides into place as you strike.

If you remember the simple rule to step off first with the foot nearest the direction you are moving, then replacements with the other

foot should slide into place as you deliver your strike.

It helps also to incline your body in the direction you are stepping prior to your step and keep your feet close to the ground during the step. Again, keep your steps small. Don't overextend.

The following illustrations show how step-offs occur with the defensive motions (blocks and deflections) and replacements occur just prior to or during the counterstrikes. For now, just study the pictures for footwork. After you've read the sections on "Blocks and Deflections" and "The Alive Hand," the defensive motions in these pictures will be clearer.

Remember, these are only a few examples or replacements in ideal patterns. If you turn your body (torque) with your strikes or counterstrikes and allow the supporting point of your triangle, usually your rear foot, to slide into place, you'll have the replacements without thinking about them.

BODY ANGLING

Body angling is used as a complement to your footwork or when you don't have time to step. Inclining your body in the direction you are stepping just prior to your step aids the actual footwork by getting you there faster. The same kind of incline may be used when you don't have time to actually step. If you use the two together, body angle into the step, you will always have the maximum amount of body evasion that the circumstance allows.

When using footwork, you generally choose one of three tactics: retreat by stepping out and away from the strike, step in to jam the strike, step in to the zero pressure area at the end of the arc.

When angling your body, you have a fourth consideration: getting beneath the movement plane of the angled strike. Generally, to get beneath the movement plane of a descending blow you must angle your body on the side of the opponent *from* which the blow is traveling.

For example, to get out of the movement plane of a "number one" strike, aimed at your neck, you may (a) angle forward and to the left, or (b) angle back and to the left. Some fighters prefer (c) to face the weapon when angling beneath it.

These are not techniques, but illustrate angling

A

B

"NUMBER ONE" STRIKE

C

Likewise, to get out of the movement plane of a "number two" strike aimed at your neck, you may (a) angle forward and to the right, or (b) angle back and to the right. Again, you may want to (c) face the weapon as you angle.

The examples of angling here would normally be supported by defensive moves you will learn later in the book.

"NUMBER TWO" STRIKE

A

B

C

To get beneath the movement plane of a rising blow you must angle your body to the *opposite side* from which the blow is traveling. The safest path is toward the end of the arc to the opponent's zero pressure area.

For example, you may get clear of a "number nine" strike, aimed at your legs, by angling forward and to your right. Likewise, you may get clear of a "number ten" strike by angling forward and to your left.

"NUMBER NINE" STRIKE

(1)

(2)

(3)

"NUMBER TEN" STRIKE

(1)

(2)

(3)

There is one other consideration in body angling. That is, getting out of the line of the deflected force. This will be covered in the section on "Basic Defenses." For now, try just angling your body for each of the twelve strikes thrown in slow motion. You'll note that some angles will give you complete evasion without blocking or deflecting the weapon. These "clearing" angles are ones that would allow you to deliver a simultaneous counterstrike on the opponent without first warding off his blow. Many of the other angles will diminish the force of the opponent's strike enough to block or deflect it. At least one angle for every strike will take you into the tip of the opponent's moving weapon. That is the one angle you want to *avoid* for that strike.

A helpful hint when angling your body is to lead with *one* of your shoulders while turning the other to the rear. When defending (photos *a* and *b*), the shoulder closest to the opponent's weapon is *generally* the one you turn to the rear. When striking (photo *c*), the shoulder on the side from which your weapon is moving is the one you *generally* turn forward. If you twist your body slightly *into* your strikes, your shoulders will turn naturally in the right direction for your striking motion.

(A)

(B)

(C)

THE TUCK

Most body angling inclines the upper torso in one direction or another. The tuck is an evasive motion that leaves the upper torso where it is or inclines it slightly forward as the stomach is pulled back. When performed on the edge of the movement plane against a horizontal strike or thrust to the midsection, it still leaves the Escrimador within range to counterstrike.

Basic Defenses

The main keynote in all defensive moves is *adaptability*. After learning some of the basic defenses, you may become partial to one kind of defense over another because some will fit your particular muscle development better than others. You'll be surprised how adaptable your favorite defensive moves will be and how, say, two defensive moves will easily handle any of the twelve strikes when they are thrown singularly. A point to remember, however, is that in combat or even in more advanced training where one strike quickly follows another, *your weapon will not always be in a favorable position to apply your favorite moves. Often, you'll find that your weapon is pointed in the wrong direction and there just isn't time.* The solution to this is to try to learn the *concepts* of all the defenses that follow—why they work. Then, when it's necessary to vary your movement to *adapt* to some "off angled" strike, you'll be able to do so.

MEET AND FOLLOWS

Meets and follows are the most basic defensive moves in Escrima and Kali against the arced attacks. They are both defensive and offensive in that *they strike the arm or hand that wields the opponent's weapon in the midst of its attacking motion.* In their most basic use, they occur when the defender evades his opponent's weapon by footwork or body angling or both. During meets, the defender's striking motion and *generally* his body motion travel against the attacker's striking motion. During follows, the defender's striking motion travels with or in the same general direction as the attacker's strike.

THE MEET

The meet occurs when the fighter strikes directly into his opponent's movement plane. A more defined term is "pass and meet" because the hit is delivered as the attacker's arm and weapon pass by. When the meet is thrown against a rising or descending strike thrown at an angle, the fighter's body is generally moving in the opposite direction of the opponent's swing and somewhere outside of or beyond the movement plane.

Below are examples of long-range *Largo Mano* meets against the main "angled" strikes, numbers one, two, nine and ten.

This is the simplest and most effective way to counter an attack. A direct

THE FOLLOW

The follow occurs when the fighter's weapon overtakes the opponent's strike at a slight angle to hit or cut the trailing side of the opponent's arm or hand. When the follow is thrown against a rising or descending strike thrown at an angle, the fighter's body simply takes the fastest route out of the movement plane of the opponent's swing.

Below are examples of long-range *Largo Mano* follows against the main "angled" strikes.

BLOCKS AND DEFLECTIONS

There is sometimes a very fine line between what is a block and what is a deflection. Defined, a block occurs when the opponent's strike is met force against force and stopped. It is a movement that hits directly into the movement plane of the opponent's strike.

The illustrations below show how a block with a heavier weapon may stop the opponent's strike completely, even bounce it back slightly.

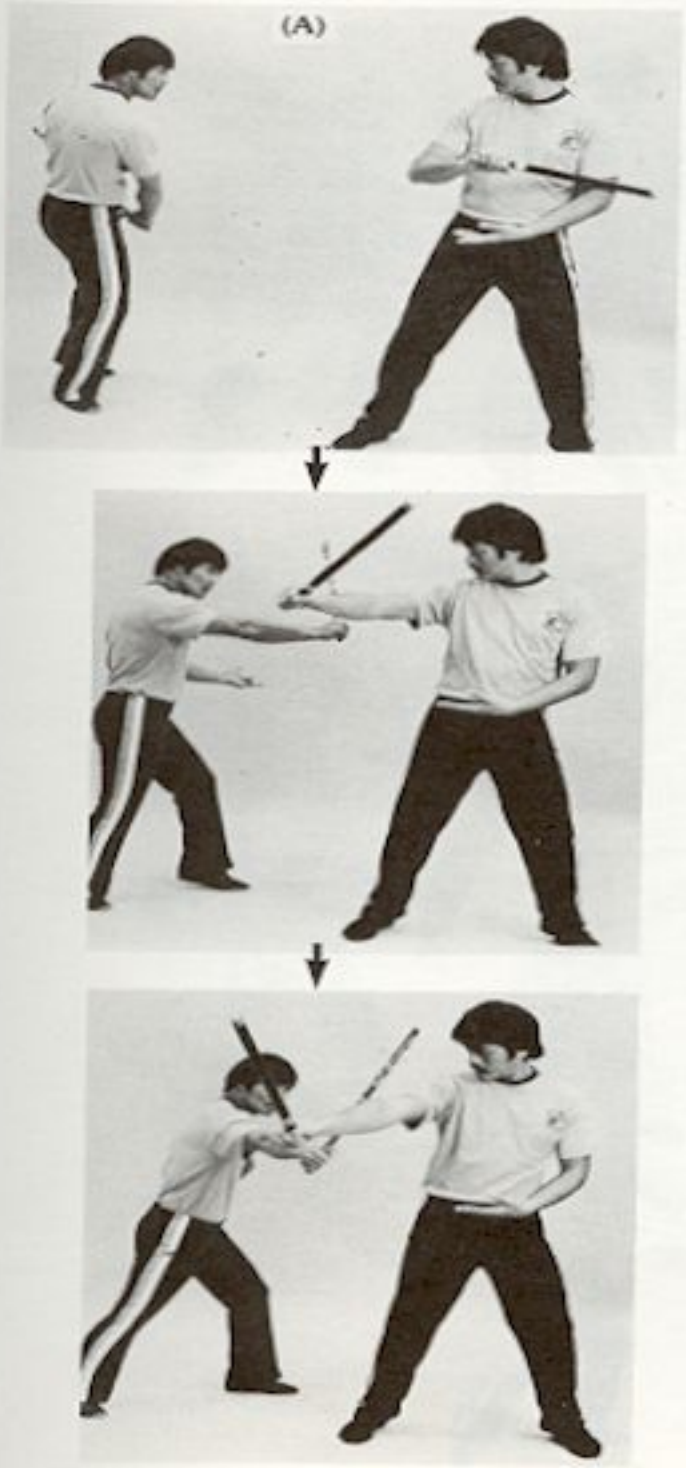
1

2

3

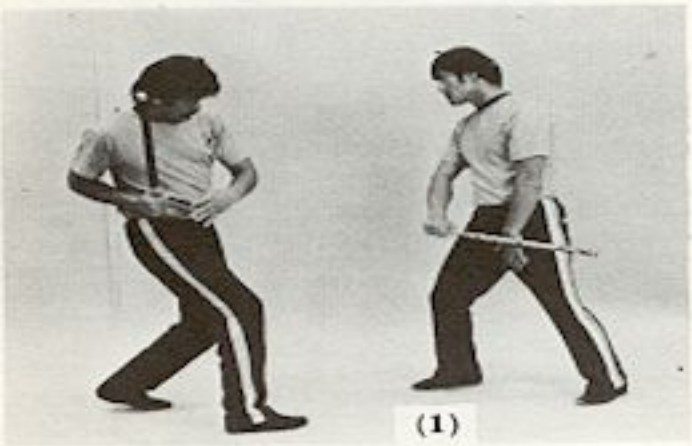
4

A block is safest when carrying a weapon heavier than that of the opponent's. The timing on a block is best when (a) executed at the beginning of the opponent's strike (jamming), or (b) executed near the zero pressure area.



A deflection cuts into the opponent's movement plane at an angle. It does not stop the opponent's motion, but merely alters its course. Because the opponent's weapon is still moving, a deflection even more than a block should flow directly into a counterstrike before the opponent has time to turn his weapon inward again.

The diagram below shows how both the opponent's motion and the defender's motion are affected in a deflection. The pictures illustrate ways a deflection may flow instantly into a strike.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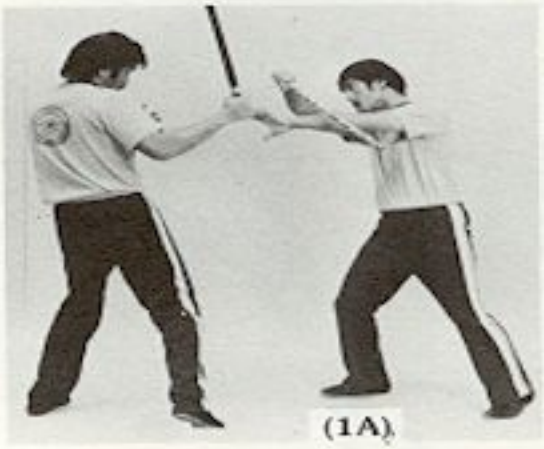
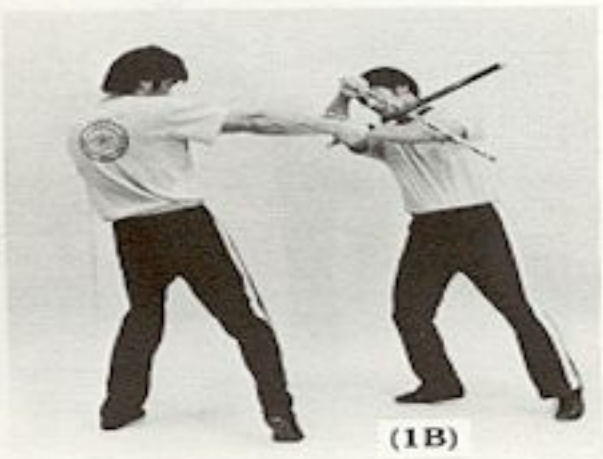
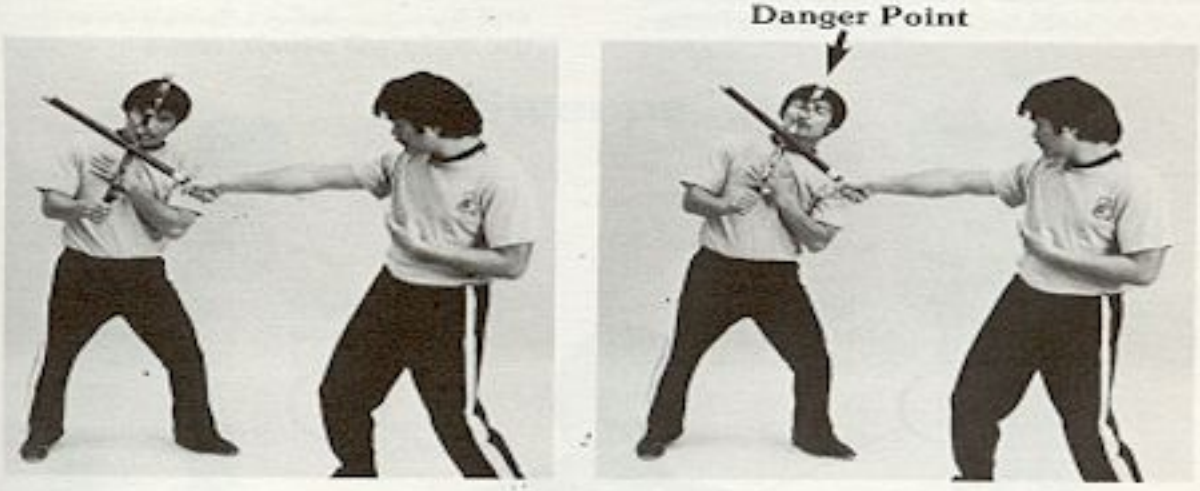

(1A)


(1B)

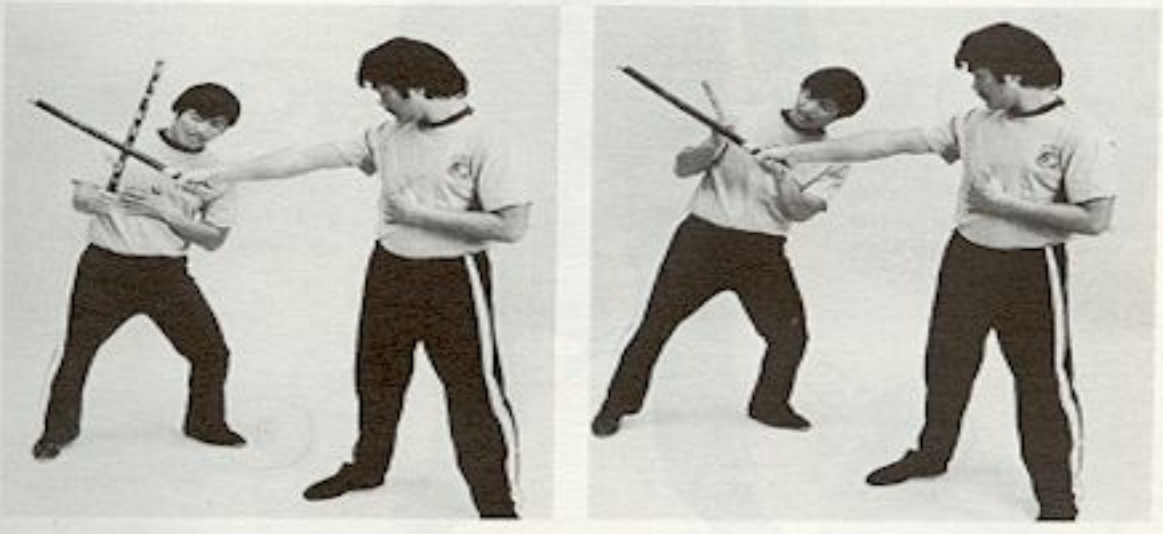
(1C)

REVERBERATION LINES

When blocking or deflecting a blow, especially with a lighter weapon, part of the force of the blow will transfer to your weapon. When blocking, this means that your weapon will bounce straight back or *reverberate* from your opponent's weapon. Likewise, when deflecting a blow, your weapon will bounce off at an angle. An important thing to remember whi angling your body and positioning you weapon for a block or deflection is to sta clear of the reverberation line. As you lear more specific blocks and deflections, look fo a way to pass the reverberation line over you shoulder or off to the side.



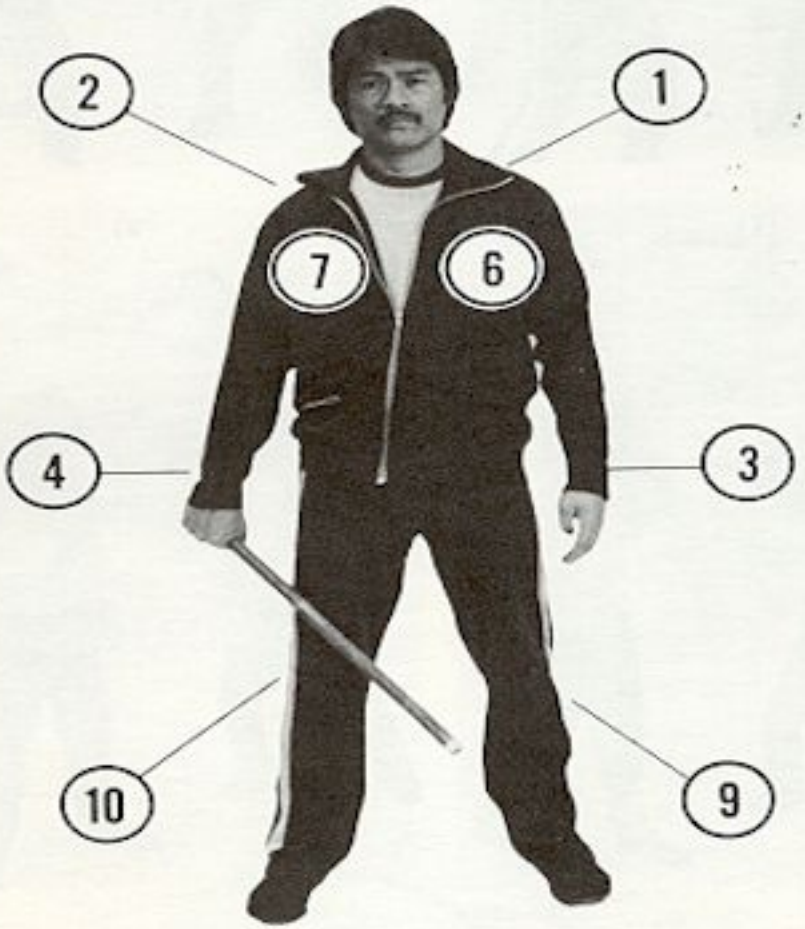
(1) incorrect (2)



(1) correct (2)

For now, we'll call all the blocks and deflections simply "defenses," because in Escrima whether a defensive move is a block or a deflection often depends on how the force of the strike reacts. If it stops cold or bounces straight back it was blocked. If it continues to move forward but the defense causes it to veer off slightly, then it was deflected and often the Escrimador himself doesn't know which it will be until he actually feels the force of the strike.

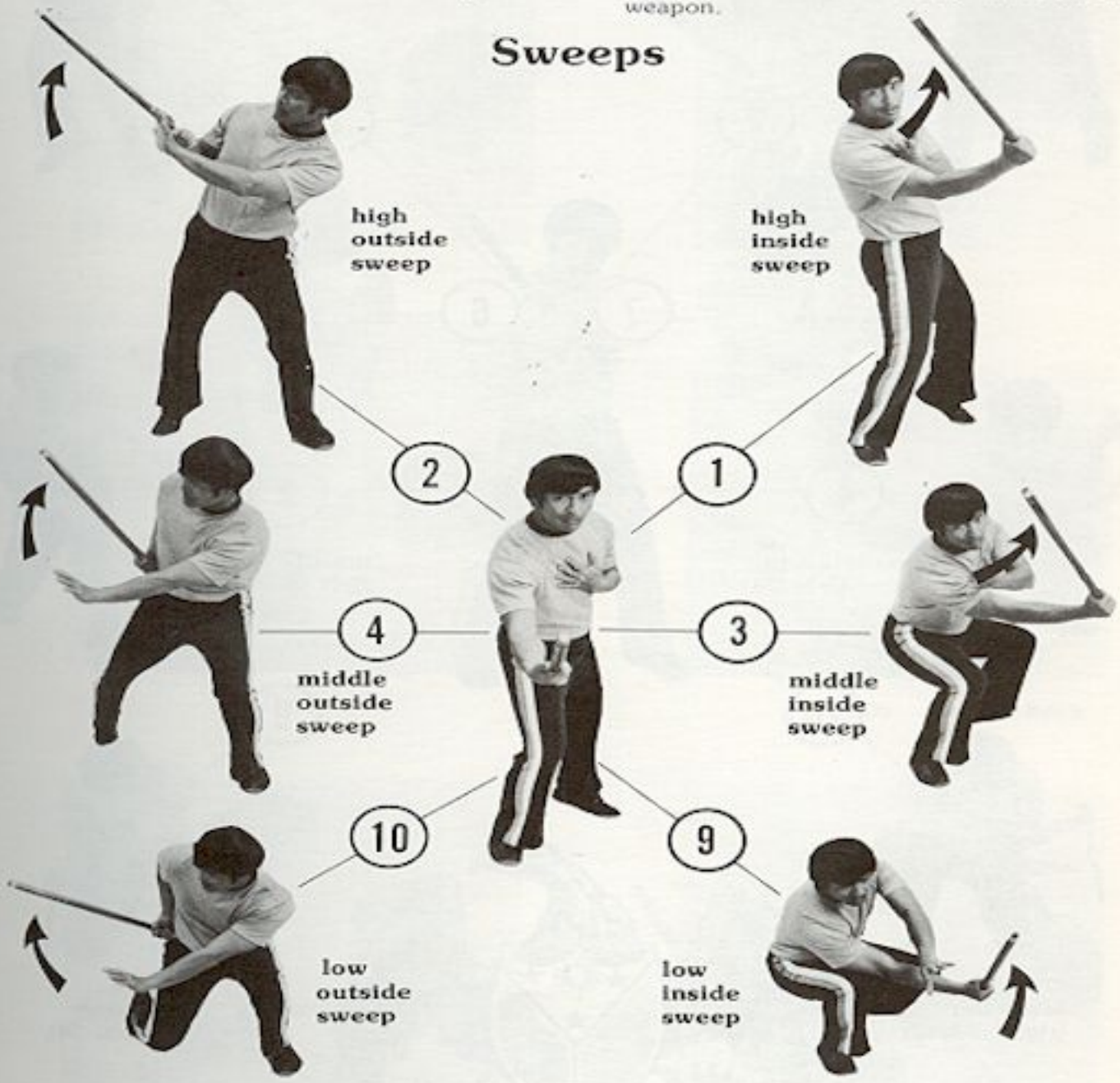
For the sake of organization, we'll first consider just the defenses for strikes coming in from either side. These would be the angles one, two, three, four, six, seven, nine and ten. Angles six and seven are treated about the same as angles one and two, but the defender must be more conscious of deflecting these thrusts *outward* on the side that each occurs. Six and seven are fast moves and trying to deflect them across the center of the body will usually result in being hit.



SWEEPS AND WINGS

Against any strike coming in from a side angle, there are basically two ways to handle it—with your weapon pointing upward and with your weapon pointing downward. Again, for the sake of organization, we'll call the defenses with your weapon pointing upward "sweeps," because they are performed with the same kind of motions you might use to sweep from side to side the inside of a giant round fish bowl. The defenses with your weapon pointing downward we'll call "wings." Like a bird's wings in a defensive posture, they point downward or parallel with the ground.

Inside sweeps and wings are those that cross in front of the body before connecting and *outside* sweeps and wings are those executed on the side of the body that holds the weapon.



Wings

high wing
(right shield)

2

4

middle wing
(right shield)

10

low wing
(right shield)

7

6

1

high wing
(left shield)

3

middle wing
(left shield)

9

low wing
(left shield)

Again, sweeps and wings may either block or deflect. When purposely blocking, they will move along a plane that hits perpendicular to the opponent's striking motion. When deflecting, they cross the striking plane at an angle, then deflect off. The entire motion of a deflecting wing or sweep is a curve that slides off toward the tip of the opponent's weapon.

(1A)

(1B)

(1C)

(1D) **Safety check**

(1E)

(1F)

and the force is too great to stop, the defense should curve off naturally into a deflection.

The illustrations below show the same outside defense against a "number two" strike.

The first defense, executed with a heavier weapon, blocks the opponent's strike. The second defense, executed with a lighter weapon, starts out as a block then slides back as a deflection.

Heavy weapon

(1) **(2A)**

Light weapon

(1) **(2A)** **(2B)**

(2B)

(2C)

(2C)

(2D)

REVERSE SWEEPS

Reverse sweeps curve forward into the opponent's hand instead of toward the tip of his weapon. They are more difficult to pull off, but when done properly provide a near simultaneous defense (deflection or block) and hit. Below are some examples.

(1)

(2A)

(2B)

(1)

(2A)

(2B)

(2C)

(2D)

(2E)

(2C)

(2D)

ROOF BLOCK AND UMBRELLA

Any descending blow, such as angles one, two, eight and eleven, may be taken with a "roof block," which is a form of reverse wing, or an "umbrella." A roof *block*, as its name implies, often meets the descending strike force against force to stop its motion, then uses the opposite hand that crosses in front and below the blocking weapon to pull the opponent's hand off to the side.

ROOF BLOCK

(1A)

(1B)

If the strike comes in at an angle and can be deflected, all the better. Follow through with an immediate counterstrike.

SLIDING ROOF BLOCK

(1A)

(1B)

(1C)

(1D)

(1C)

(1D)

The main consideration here is that the fighter get his head out of the way. He must angle his head off the reverberation line unless he's certain that his block will have enough force to completely overpower the opponent's strike. A step to the direction of the fighter's own weapon hand (to the right in the pictures above) will add an extra safety factor.

Like all defenses, the roof block may occur at various levels to accommodate different attacks.

A TAGALO BUNGALOW IN LUZON.

High roof

Middle roof

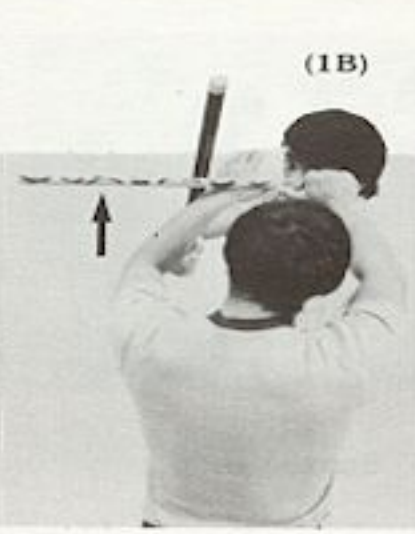
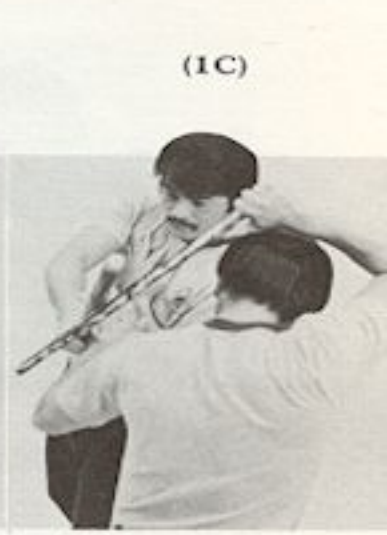
Low roof

The umbrella begins exactly like the roof block but is designed to deflect a stronger strike or heavier weapon. As the fighter's head angles to the side, the tip of his weapon drops behind his left shoulder (for a right hander) and his left hand acts as an assist to slide the opponent's strike outward and downward. At the same time, the fighter's right hand drops and his weapon curves around the back of his neck into position for a strike.

Because the umbrella takes longer, it is usually reserved for emergencies where the roof block is insufficient. A hint in developing the ability to flow quickly from a roof block to an umbrella is to learn to dip your head off to the side quickly.

(1)

(1A)


(1B)

(1C)

(1D)

(1E)

(1F)

(1G)

Defenses Against Center Thrusts

Any thrust or upward swing to the centerline, such as a "number five" or a "number twelve," may be deflected to either side of the body with a sweep or a wing. Because the centerline thrusts are quick and direct, special emphasis should be given to angling the body in the opposite direction of the defense as a double safety.

Start

Start of deflection

Start

Start of deflection

Low wing
deflection

Safety check
followed by hit

safety
check

Safety check remains
until hit to face

Scissor Block

Scissor blocks may also be used to deflect the thrusts upward (for high thrusts) or downward (for low thrusts). Thrusts about waist level can be deflected with a scissor block to either side.

(1)

(2A)

(1)

(2A)

(2B)

(2C)

(2B)

(2C)

Outside direct hit to the wrist. Why block when you can hit.

Sometimes a thrust comes too suddenly to move the body or execute a conventional block or deflection against the bulk of the opponent's weapon. In this case, deflect the tip of the opponent's weapon with a quick *flick*, then counter.

This series should take about 4 / 10 of a second.

(1A)

(1B)

You may use your free hand to hold his arm in place while you counterstrike.

(1)

(2A)

(2B)

(1C)

(1D)

(2C)

(2D)

(2E)

The Alive Hand

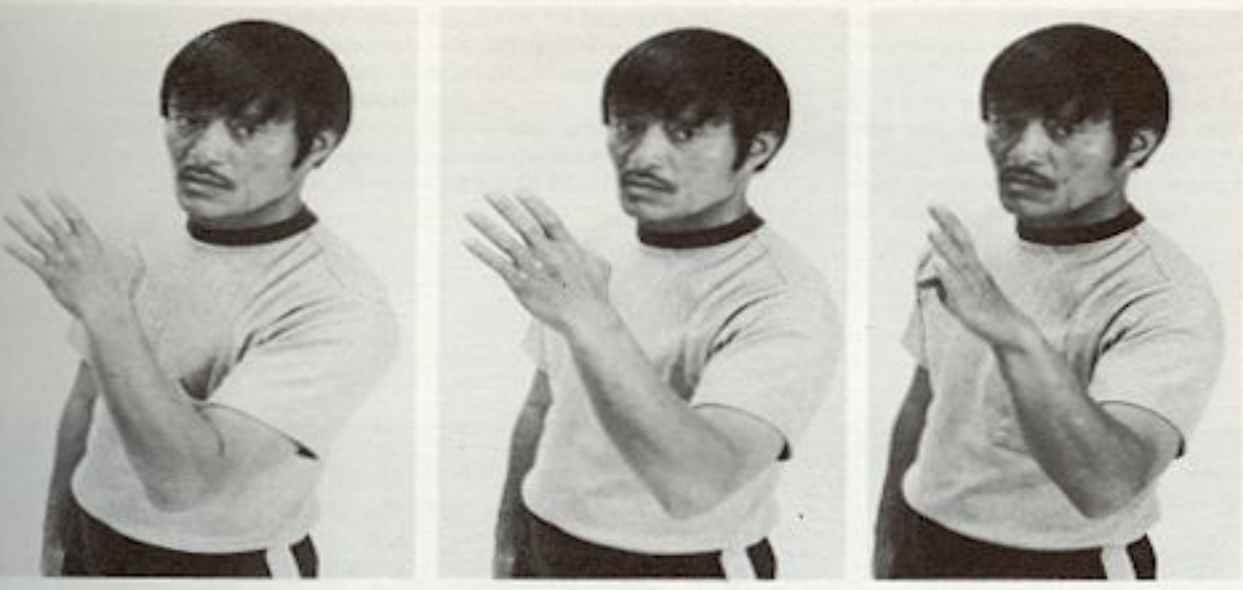
If a good escrimador were asked to point out the singlemost important aspect that makes his fighting work, chances are he would refer to the use of the "alive hand." If he were wielding a single weapon, the alive hand would be the one that didn't have a weapon. If he were wielding a long and a short weapon, the alive hand would be the one with the shorter weapon. If he were empty-handed or wielding two equal-sized weapons, the alive hand would generally be the one that came into play second.

Most often, the alive hand is the one that holds the opponent's weapon hand or arm in place after the defensive motion has stopped or diverted the blow and is, therefore, a close-quarter tool. It is the transition between the fighter's defensive motion and his counterstrike. Without the alive hand holding the opponent's hand in place, his weapon might easily return again before the fighter has time to make his counterstrike.

Used properly, your alive hand will put a pause in the opponent's motion while you move into the attack. During the Spanish reign in the Philippines, and in combat situations where the ancient Filipinos fought against the Spanish in swordplay, the "alive hand" played an important part in confusing the Spanish swordplay. This was especially true in the southern Philippines where they were unconquered for 366 years.

Using the Alive Hand

When the alive hand is not being used it is generally kept near the center of your chest. Many escrimadors like to turn the edge of the hand toward the chest so when they push or pat the opponent's weapon hand or arm with the palm, the alive hand moves forward with a turn. This turn adds torque to the motion, giving it more authority.

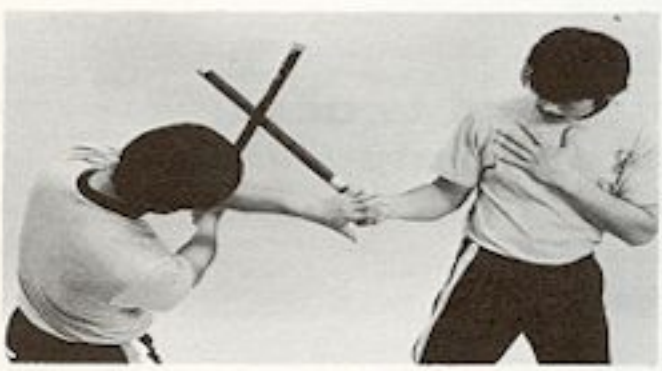


The Alive hand is used for infighting only and not for long range fighting.

When a single weapon is being used, a basic rule of thumb is that the alive hand should be touching or patting the opponent's weapon hand or arm anytime the fighter's weapon is withdrawing from it for a strike. In order to reach the opponent's arm, the alive hand must dart beneath or above the fighter's own weaponed arm. Whether the alive hand crosses above or beneath depends on the direction the fighter's weapon is traveling and the target of his follow-up strike.

If, for instance, the defense is angling slightly downward, then the quickest counterstrike would be one of the lower targets. To avoid obstructing the weapon's downward motion, the alive hand crosses above the descending arm to hold the opponent's arm in place.

Start of attack



Inside deflection with safety factor check

Start of deflection

Inside deflection with
left hand safety
factor at midway point

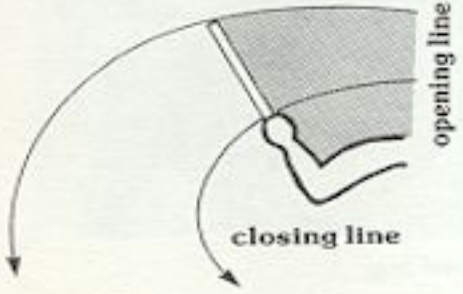
Safety factor check remains with strike to leg

Likewise, if the defense is angling upward, the alive hand crosses beneath.

Start of high wing deflection

Safety check remains while striking

Generally, the alive hand darts out through the fighter's own "opening line." That means, through the area *from which* the fighter's defensive arm is traveling.



(1A)

The following examples demonstrate the location of the opening line and the use of the alive hand in several situations. Remember, the follow-ups or counterstrikes may be single or multiple but *should follow immediately.*

(1B)

Wing deflection with safety check

(1A)

(1A)

(1B)

(1B)

(1A)

(1B)

(1A)

(1B)

(1A)

(1B)

Safety factor check always follows deflections

A

(1A)

Sometimes the alive hand will actually come into play before the weaponed hand. This happens when the fighter's weapon is turned or moving in the wrong direction to catch the opponent's strike in time. Then, the alive hand (a) blocks or deflects the strike by itself while the weaponed hand hits on another line. Or, the alive hand will (b) simply slow the opponent's strike enough to bring the weaponed hand to the defense.

(1B)

(1C)

B

(1A)

(1B)

(1C)

(1D)

In the second example, after the defense is executed, the alive hand will pat or check the opponent's arm again while the counterstrike is being made.

Alive Hand Specifics

When the alive hand is used to hold the opponent's position, it's referred to as a "check." Sometimes the opponent's arm is maneuvered during the check or the check itself will have a double purpose (i.e., defense and offense). Some of these more *specific* uses of the alive hand are described below.

Retaining Check

Just enough pressure is applied with the checking hand to hold the position of the opponent's arm in place while a hit is being made. A retaining check may occur (a) a short pat, otherwise called a "beat," (b) a sustained push, or (c) on rare occasions even a grab. The amount of force needed will depend on the opponent's energy. Arm and wrist locks are technically a form of retaining check, but will be treated separately in this book.

Descending Check

The opponent's hand is lowered (a) into the strike or (b) to make way for a hit on a higher line.

A

Retaining check

retaining check

Weapon hand hit with descending check

Ascending Check

The opponent's hand is lifted (a) into the strike or (b) to make way for a hit on a lower line.

A

B

Ascending check with flip hit

Hit with descending hand check

B

Pushing Check

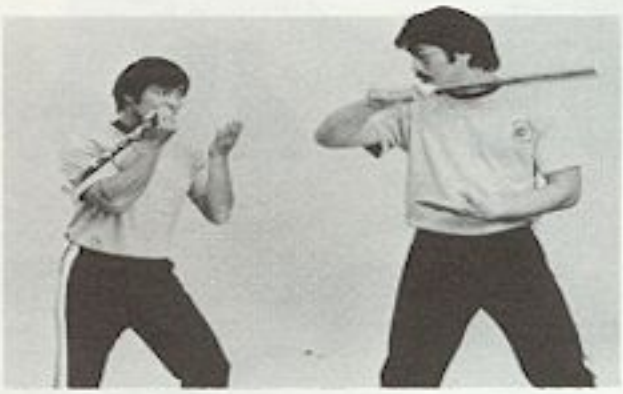
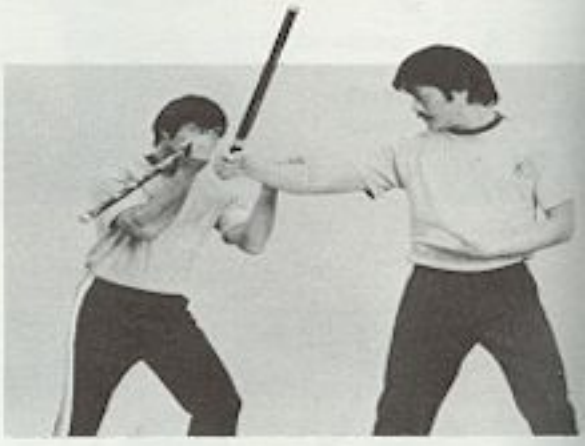
This is a quick pat or a sustained push, usually with enough energy to send the opponent's arm away from the patting hand, giving the fighter the time and clearance he needs to deliver a strike.

A sustained pushing check may also be used to jam the opponent's arm, stopping his strike before it begins.

Important to check before he strikes

Sustained pushing check

Pat and Slide Check

The alive hand delivers a quick *beat* on the opponent's arm to check or lower it, then continues toward the opponent to make a hit. The *emphasis is on a continuous forward energy that deflects* off the opponent's arm and into the hit. The pat and slide may be performed palm up or palm down, open hand or closed fist, with or without a weapon.

Beginning of pat check

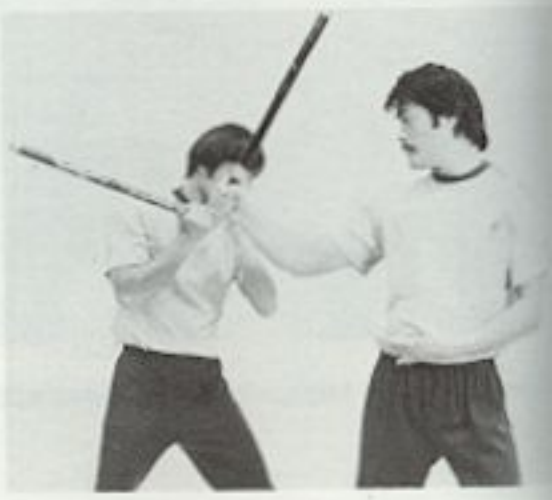
Beginning of pat check

Palm up slides with wing block deflection

Palm up slides to a finger jab

Palm down with wing block deflection

Palm down slides to a finger jab

(1)

(2A)

(1)

(2A)

Wing block deflection

(2B)

Deflection with high hit.

(2C)

(2B)

Wing block deflection

(2C)

Deflection with low hit.

Locks and Disarms

Locks and disarms, also categorized as retaining checks, are as numerous and continuous as blocks and hits. A lock or disarm may occur at any time in combat when the opponent's weapon has been slowed or halted.

Instead of showing all the locks and disarms possible, I'll try to explain the *principle* of both and let you experiment on your own.

A lock occurs when the opponent is immobilized by placing a fulcrum across one of his joints, causing pressure in a direction that the joint isn't intended to bend, preferably where the joint is weakest. Though a lock can be applied to the leg, we're more concerned with arm and wrist locks right now.

The fulcrum of a lock is made up with a triangle again. The first side is a part of the opponent's arm that is between the joint you plan to work on and his body, making it the stable side of your lock. The second side is the movable part of the opponent's arm. This side could be the entire arm (for a shoulder lock), the lower arm (for an elbow lock) or just the hand (for a wrist lock). It is the side that will be manipulated against the natural function of the joint. You are the third side. By forming a link with your hand or forearm or both, you pry the movable part of the opponent's arm against the stable part. The stable side of the triangle is where the point of the fulcrum is located.

Bent arm locks bend the joint sideways while straight arm locks bend the joint exactly opposite its natural bend. With a straight arm lock, both ends of the opponent's arm become fairly stable while pressure is applied to the joint in the middle.

Most disarms are simply some form of wrist lock where the weapon is used as the movable side of the triangle and instead of breaking the opponent's wrist, the weapon breaks away from the opponent's grip.

(1A)

(1B)

(1C)

(1D)

(1E)

(1F)

Most often, the locks and disarms are reduced to brief wrenches that wouldn't be noticed by anyone but the opponent. Just coming close to a bent or straight arm lock is sufficient for a wrench.

(1A)

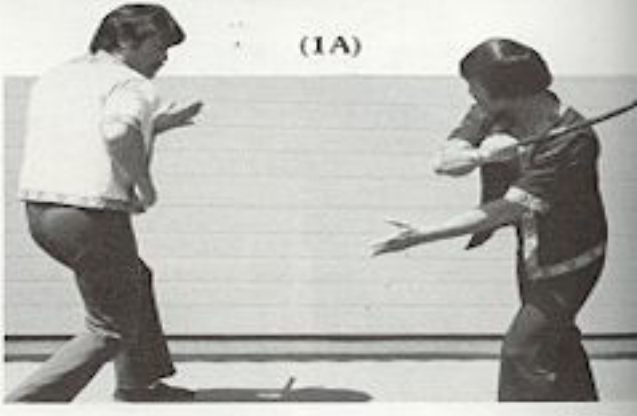
(1B)

(1C)

(1D)

(1E)

Disarms work better after an initial strike



Straight elbow and wrist lock

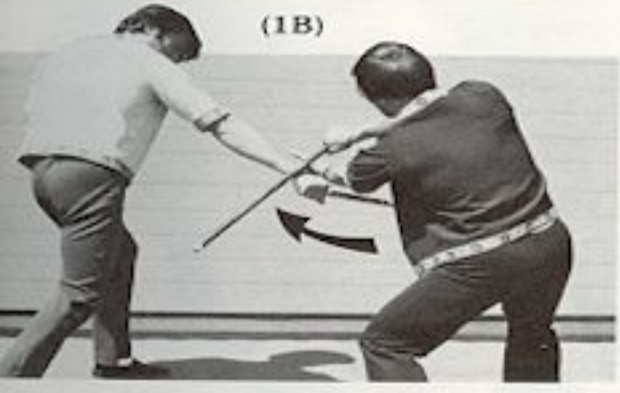
(1B)

(1C)

(1F)

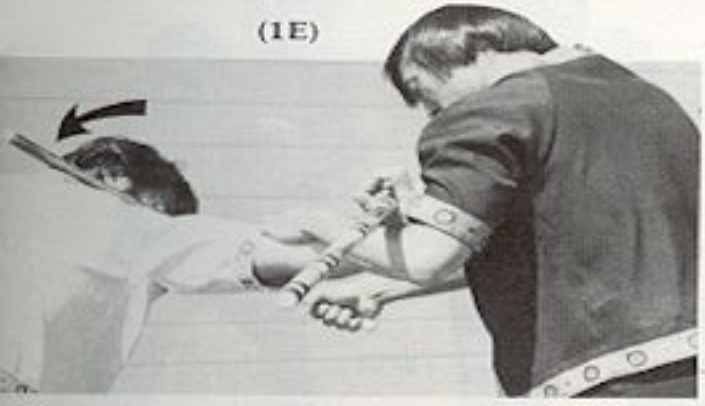
(1G)

(1B)

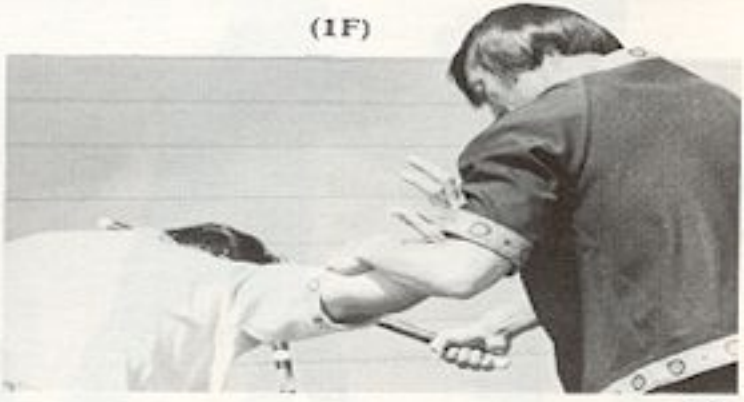


(1C)

(1E)



(1F)



Disarming an armed assailant

Angle away from strike (1B),
Check weaponed hand and strike (1C),
Disarm (1D), (1E), Use attackers weapon (1G).

(1A)

(1E)

A typical Filipino knife fight.

(1A)

Trap and slice up.

(1D)

Trap and disarm.

(1E)

(1B)

(1C)

(1D)

(1F)

(1G)

(1H)

Slip right and slice.

(1B)

(1C)

(1F)

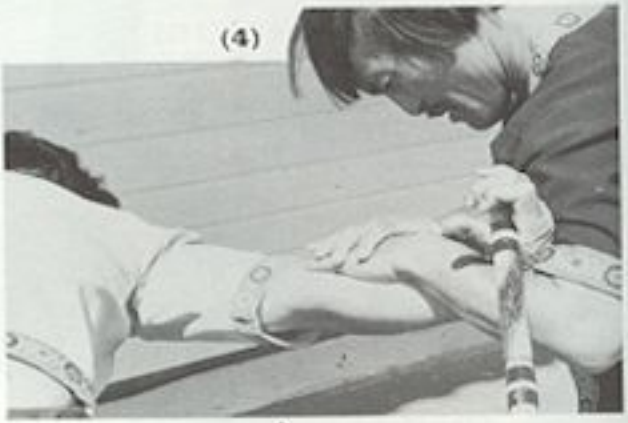
(1G)

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)



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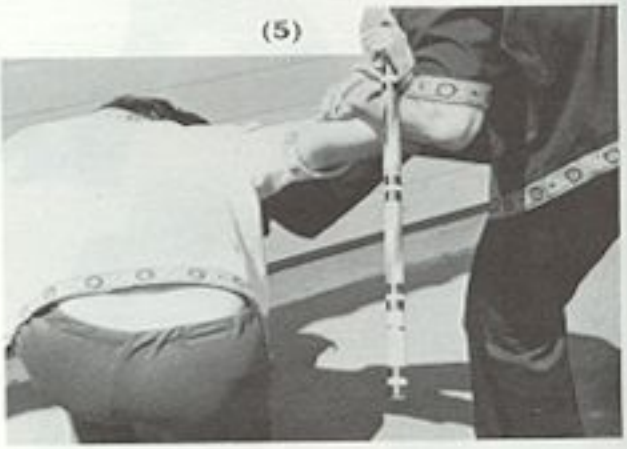


This series shows a hitting arm wrench (1) (2), followed by a wrist and elbow lock (3) (4) and finishes off with a kick to the head (5).

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

The beauty of the Filipino arts lies in th freedom for creativity. This technique is similar to the disarm on the previous page, but the opponent is encouraged to counter. He does so by quickly switching hands and striking to the head. This interchange continues with both parties gaining knowledge. The end result is not a technique or a counter but a working solution.

Remember, all defensive moves are only the first half of a total move. Each defense acts as the initiation of the counterattack. There should be no pause between the initiation (the defensive move) and the attack.

The simplest example of "offensive defense" is the roof block that doesn't stop in combat until it hits, in this example, the head.

(1)

(2A)

(2B)

(2C)

(2D)

But in *real* combat, even the defensive move itself is offensive because, providing there is time and the fighter is close enough, the initial defensive movement strikes the arm or hand carrying the weapon and *not the weapon*. Then, in the case of our example, it travels on to the head before the movement is complete.

(1)

(2A

(2B)

Use butt of weapon or stick itself.

(2C

(2D)

In training, to avoid injury students at Danny Inosanto's school first make contact on the opponent's weapon. They then make several counterstrikes to the opponent's arm or hand to emphasize removal of his weapon. The sequence of movements used in the example below is one commonly found in the De Fondo system.

(1A) (1B) (1C)

(1D) (1E) (1F)

(1G) (1H) (1I)

The same motions combatively would look more like the following sequence. These series of movements, when done properly, will take less than 7/10 of a second.

(1A)

(1B)

(1C)

(1D)

(1E)

(1F)

(1G)

(1H)

(1I)

Remember: defenses are strikes, strikes are defenses, and the most valuable element when learning to use them is your own creativity.

Weapon Characteristics

Escrimadors claim the ability to pick up any hand-wielded weapon, regardless of its shape, and use it effectively. To someone unfamiliar with Escrima principles, that sounds presumptuous, but consider the pattern of angles again. *There's only so many ways to hit an opponent.*

If you're already familiar with one or more weapons, all the better. Swing the weapon, jab the weapon, hit anything with the weapon and see if you don't use some form of that pattern. The angles of Danny Inosanto's Escrima and Kali are *principles. They have nothing to do with style or faction.*

Instead of thinking of a weapon as belonging to the Chinese or the Japanese or the Filipinos or any particular martial art, instead of thinking of a weapon by its exotic name, *look* at the weapon. The performance of a weapon is affected by its characteristics, not by its origin or its name.

Some characteristics to look for are: length, weight, shape and flexibility. Below are common combinations of these characteristics and a few ways they might affect a fighter's tactics. You should be able to expand these ideas on your own. Remember, the characteristics of a weapon affect some of the tactics you would emphasize in its use, but they don't change the principles.

Balisong daggers (Butterfly knives)

Tabak Mallit (pocket stick)

Short/Light Weapon

1. Capable of quick turns and multiple hits.
2. Emphasis on in-fighting to include:
   a. short, quick body angling
   b. staying to zero pressure area
   c. jamming
   d. staying away from opponent's alive hand hits
   e. own active use of alive hand for defense and offense

A short, *heavy* weapon retains about the same maneuverability as a short, light weapon.

Sibat (staff)

Long/Heavy Weapon

1. Mainly single hits, must follow through to redirect weapon's momentum.
2. Emphasis on long-range fighting to include:
   a. accentuated body angling
   b. meets and follows
   c. less use of alive hand

A long, *light* weapon is treated about the same as a long, heavy weapon (i.e., long-range fighting) but the light weapon may be retracted for repeated hits on the same line or a different line and for multiple jabs.

Bangkow (spear)

Pointed Weapon

1. Emphasis on jabs and thrusts.

Tabak toyok
(nunchaku)

De Cadena
(chain)

Flexible Weapon

1. Can bend over or around opponent's block to hit.
2. Forces opponent to commit his blocks.
3. Hits must follow through, no quick retractions.

Double Dagas
(Daggers)

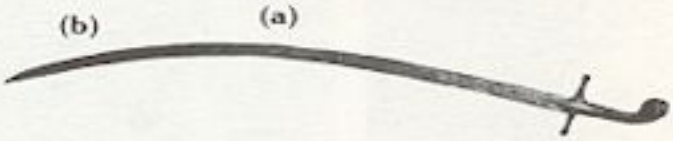
Double Kris
(swords)

Bladed Weapon

1. Emphasis on *drawing* the weapon over the target (shortening arcs) to cut.

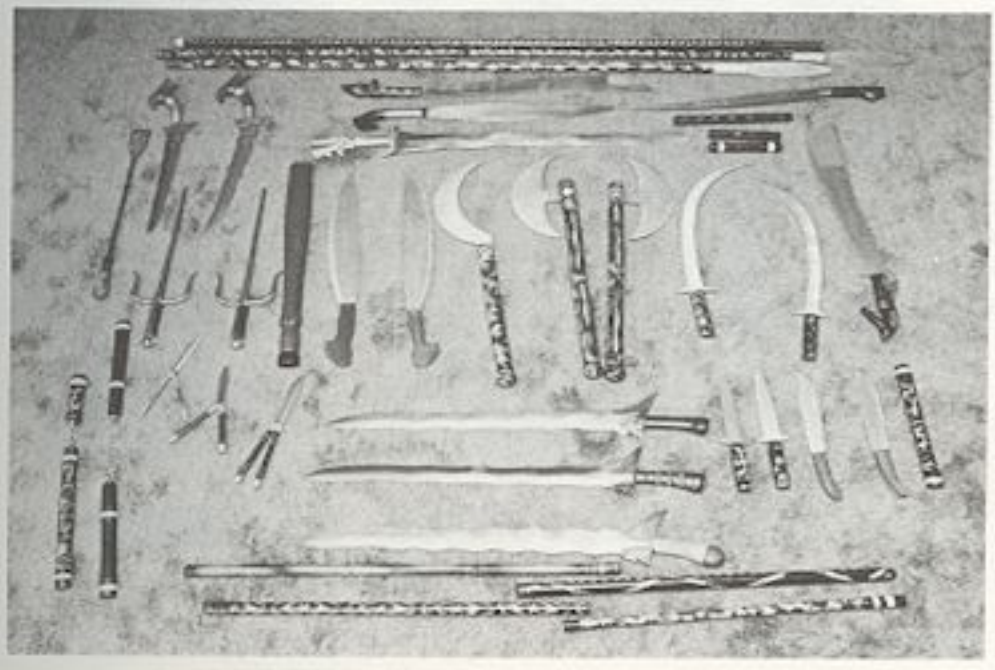
Curved Blade (Concave Edge)

1. Can reach over or around opponent's block.
2. Cutting mainly occurs on (a) the side of the curve nearest your hand, (b) hacking in the center, (c) hooking and stabbing toward the end of the weapon.



Curved Blade (Convex Edge)

1. Hits must be placed (a) near center of the blade or (b) slightly forward for cutting. Hence, treat it like a shorter bladed weapon.
2. Thrusts are out.



Some of Dan Inosanto's weapons are pictured here. Notice the tips of some weapons are taped over with yellow tape. Dan and Bruce Lee found that this created "retina-retention" during demonstrations or during motion picture filming.

The Empty Hand

One of the most important aspects of Escrima and Kali is that the principles involved are not restricted to weaponry. All the principles that have been described so far can be applied to empty hand movement. The illustrations below show some *examples* of how the angles remain unchanged.

These photos ALL show a #1 angle strike with:

Sibat (staff)

Stick

Barong (sword)

Dagger

Diagonal Overhead punch

Tabak toyok (nunchaku)

Sibat with backhand strike

Right palm or claw

Knife hand

Hammer fist

Dagger pointed down

Backfist

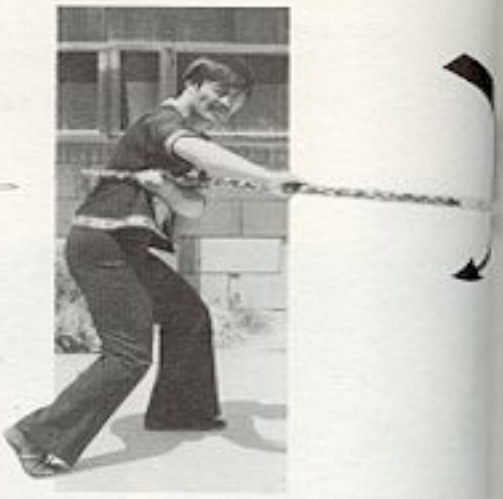
Backhand with hammer fist

When I first started training in Escrima and Kali, Master John LaCoste said, "If you want to learn how to use your fist - you must first learn how to use the weapon." In Escrima and Kali training you learn the weapon first and then move on to empty hand training.

These photos ALL show a #4 angle strike with:

Stick with right hand

Bangkow (spear)



Bangkow with backhand strike

Dagger with Thrust

Stick with left hand

Dagger with Slice

Low body hook

Low body hammer

Kick

Dagger in reverse position

Tabak toyok (nunchaku)

RELATE TO THE ANGLE OF ATTACK AND NOT THE WEAPON!
VISUALIZE ALL ANGLES WITH ALL WEAPONS ON YOUR OWN.

Defenses, likewise, are the same though often abbreviated. The examples below show how a defensive move and counter may go from the weaponed form, to the exaggerated empty hand form, to the abbreviated empty hand form for combat. In the abbreviated form, the alive hand does most of the defensive work, leaving the other hand free for direct hitting.

NUMBER 1 STRIKE inside sweep to #2 counter

(1A)

(1B)

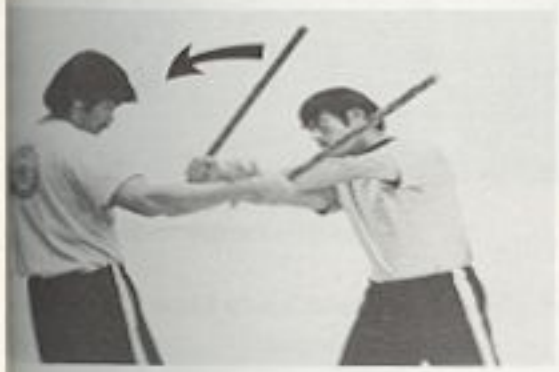
NUMBER 1 STRIKE inside sweep with right hand to backfist

(1A)

(1B)

NUMBER 1 STRIKE left hand outside parry with right punch

(1A)

(1B)

(1C)

(1D)

(1C)

(1D)

(1C)

(1D)

NUMBER 2 STRIKE outside sweep to #5 counter

(1A)

(1B)

(1C) Strike to hand

NUMBER 2 STRIKE outside sweep with right hand (left hand check) to right body blow

(1A) .Hit if possible

(1B) Second option deflect blow

NUMBER 2 STRIKE slip to left, parry with simultaneous right body blow

(1A)

(1B) Slip and follow up on one of these routes

(1D) Safety check with left hand

(1E)

(1F) Thrust

(1C)

(1D) Left hand check with upper cut

(1E)

(1C)

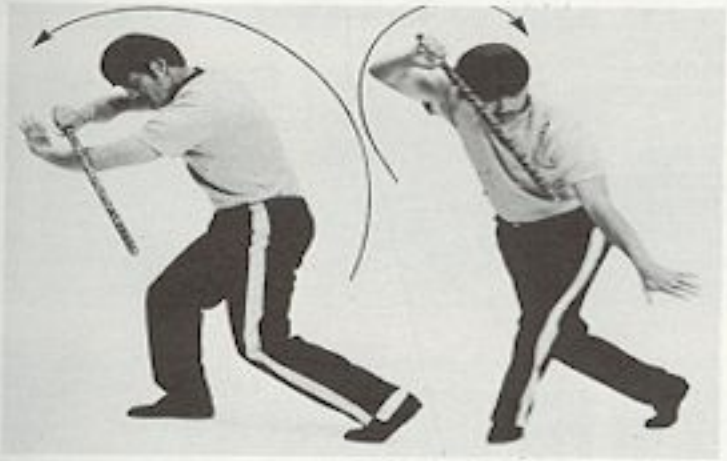
(1D)

Solo Training

More often than not an escrimador will have only himself to practice with. The woods are a good place for solo practice. You can work all the blocks and counters against tree branches, selecting one or two to develop counters for a particular angle or walking along and working against the branches as they come to you. Working against solid branches provides a good concept of reverberation lines and how you must angle your body to avoid them.

The closest thing to practicing in the woods would be to practice against a long pole set up either horizontal to the floor so you can get beneath it, slipping from side to side, or set at a slant (see illustrations). Setting the pole at a slant allows you to practice high angles by working from beneath the pole or low angles by working in front of it, again slipping from side to side.

Shadow boxing is another good solo exercise. You can use two weapons, one weapon or do it empty-handed. Just imagine a strike coming at you from any angle and run through your defensive move and counter-strike, then flow with the next imaginary strike. Keep moving. Variety! You can include the twirling exercises too. The key to any solo practice is imagination.



Training Drills

De Cadena

"De Cadena" is considered by some escrimadors as a fourth stage of training. The first stage is "Huego y Retirada" or hit and run. The second stage is "Abecedario," which amounts to blocking first, then hitting. The third stage, "Alto y Baho," is characterized by high and low hitting, some of which may be light movements to set up more damaging hits. Alto y Baho can be performed with or without blocking.

De Cadena is an exercise where the opponent delivers a continuous series (chain) of medium or slow motion strikes at different angles with one or two weapons, while the fighter defends and counters with a constant barrage of controlled multiple hits.

The defender tries to defend from and counter all the opponent's hits in constant fluid motion, in rhythm. At the same time, he uses his footwork to angle to his opponent's zero pressure areas or to areas where only the opponent's weapon is in position to attack next.

The opponent, meanwhile, does not defend against the counterstrikes, but tries to break the fighter's rhythm by varying his own and tries to confuse the fighter's defensive angling by varying the angles of his strikes.

The following photos show some of the De Cadena movement. Note the defender's cross stepping and sudden changes in head level to accommodate his striking. Besides angling, the footwork should be synchronized with the counterstrikes to put body weight behind them or add to the torque of the hits.

When you first try this exercise, you may want to have the attacker throw his strikes in numerical order (one to twelve), pausing after each strike, until you develop a rhythm. Next, have the attacker break up his rhythm by shortening or lengthening the pauses between each strike. Either way, the counterstrikes should be constant, unceasing, until you are forced to *flow* into a defensive motion for the next strike. Once you've got the idea of constant and broken rhythm, then have the attacker vary the angle of his strikes at random.

Start with one weapon each, then mix them. Below are some suggestions.

ATTACKER	DEFENDER
1. 24" to 30" stick	1. 24" to 30" stick
2. staff	2. 24" to 30" stick
3. 24" stick & 12" stick	3. 18" to 32" stick
4. 24" stick & 12" stick	4. 24" stick & 12"
5. staff	5. 24" stick & 12"
6. staff	6. staff
7. sword	7. sword

The attacker may also want to employ kicks.

8. 2 swords	8. 2 swords
9. sword & dagger	9. sword & dagger
10. 2 swords	10. sword & dagger
11. sword & dagger	11. 2 swords
12. 5-inch stick	12. 5-inch stick
13. empty hands	13. Two 5-inch sticks
14. 1 dagger	14. 1 dagger
15. 2 daggers	15. 2 daggers

The Flow

Flowing properly is something that a book can't even pretend to teach. Defined, flowing means redirecting one's own energy to stay in constant motion while moving with the opponent's energy. Combatively, the flow is like a flash flood in the desert. It moves to the places of least resistance and overwhelms them with sheer unchallenged momentum. In Escrima and Kali, the body moves like that while the weapon, particularly the stick, ricochets from hit to hit, accentuated whenever possible by the momentum of the fighter's body.

In beginning training, the flow is more complementary. Both fighters will hold back their energy, one giving the other just enough to react to it and work with it. Like two players rallying in tennis to get practice and not trying to make each other miss the ball.

A two-man exercise to develop the flow can be done by cutting all the movements down to one-quarter or one-half speed. The first man delivers a strike and the second man blocks or deflects it. Without stopping his motion, the second man directs a single counterstrike to his partner's *head, legs or body*. The first man defends and returns with his own counterstrike, which the second man defends against. And so on. Passes can also be used as well as gentle *largo mano* meets and follows, but the person using the pass, meet or follow must then direct a strike to his partner's head, legs or body to continue the motion. In reality, any hit such as a meet or follow or a counterstrike delivered while simultaneously passing the opponent's weapon would end the opponent's ability to continue. Remember, this is just a drill to develop the flow, nothing more. The reason for hitting to the head, legs or body is to give the fighters time and incentive to practice their body angling.

For sheer reaction training, the speed can be increased with feints (false moves) thrown in. Body angling will decrease, as will the amount of motion for each defense or counterstrike, as the overall speed of the exercise increases. Counterstrikes to the hand or arm should be avoided in this exercise. They are the hardest moves to defend against and could very likely result in injury.

This series shows a direct hitting drill. You continue back and forth without a pause. This drill teaches flow, timing, distance and you learn to lean away from your opponents weapon.

1

2

3

4

7

8

This is one of the many double stick drills (Sinawalli) used in Kali. In the drill you make contact on the stick but in actual combat you would try to hit the hand instead. The 10 movements should be done in less than 4 seconds. When done right it is exciting to watch. Sinawalli drills can be done on the ground as well as standing.

5

6

9

10

Environmental Training

Whether one style of fighting is better than another depends on the opponent's tactics and the situation. You may like to fight long range, but if your opponent is a close-in fighter and he gets within a couple feet of you, you'd better change your preferences. Likewise, you may prefer a lot of footwork and body angling, but if you're fighting on ice you might want to start out by sitting down.

It's easy to develop preferences, especially when all your training is done in ideal situations where you can select whatever method suits you, but when the real thing occurs chances are the ideal situations won't be present. Training with different people or with a partner who can change his tactics readily will cover one aspect of the variables you may encounter. Environmental training, where your movement is hampered by your surroundings will cover the other. The following are a few examples that LEO GIRON suggested that Danny and his students practice. Most of the suggested tactics are his as well. Try the tactics described first, then work on your own ideas.

At the Door

You make a stand against attackers trying to break into your house by meeting them at the door. Horizontal strikes are useless because of the limited space. Vertical strikes and strikes along the "X" pattern are the most practical. Thrusts may be used as well.

Over the Wall

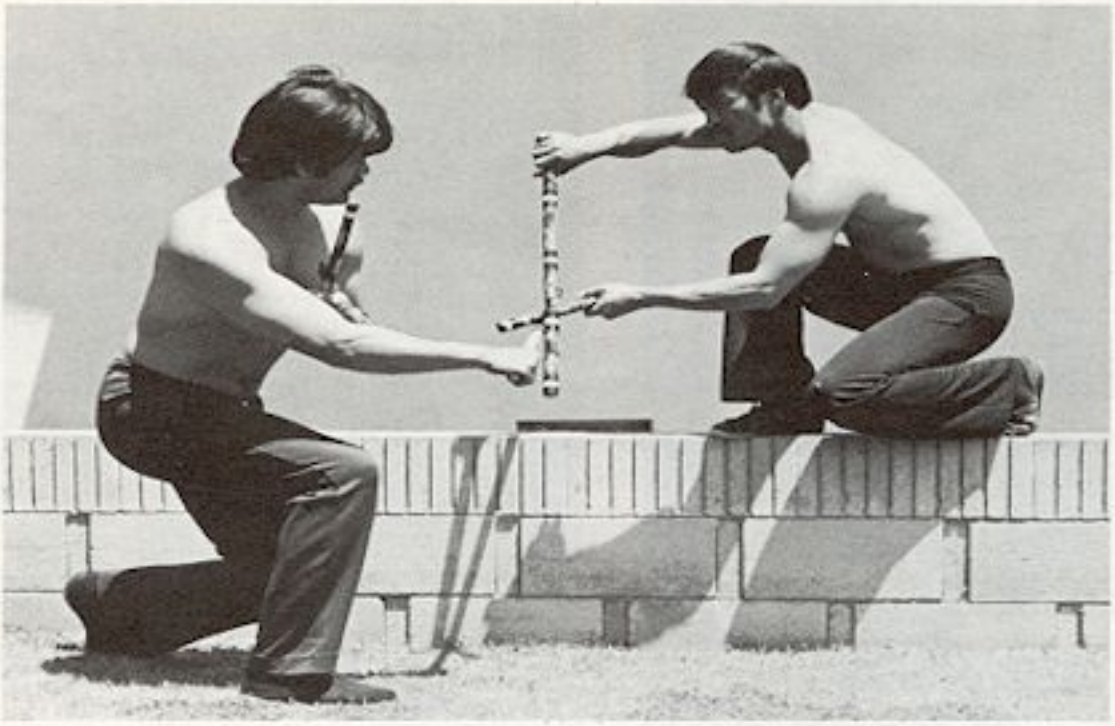
You are trying to keep the opponent from coming over a waist or chest high wall. Vertical strikes are out. Horizontal strikes and numbers "one" and "two" are the most useful. You have to control any downward strikes to keep from breaking your weapon or getting it trapped on the top of the wall, especially if it's chest high. Your best thrusts are numbers "six" and "seven." "Number five" will work if the wall is low enough. The *Lastico* technique of swaying into the strikes and snapping back in the defense will allow you to use the wall as a shield against the opponent's strikes.

At Levels

Fighting on different levels such as on a stairway, from a low boat to a high dock or on raised cement blocks is an exercise that limits you to high or low attacks.

If you're on the upper level you can pass many of your opponent's strikes without blocking them directly. Low thrusts, horizontal strikes and the horizontal figure eight are good attacking tactics. Lead with your right foot unless you have some obstacle for protection on your left side.

If you're on the lower level, you'll be using a lot of overhead blocks and horizontal strikes to your opponent's legs. If you're fighting on raised cement blocks where there's a wall edge between you (see photo), close-in Serada fighting or Lastico are good tactics to keep your opponent away from the edge of the wall so you can use it for your defense and perhaps climb to the upper level.



On a Ledge

You are on a foot-wide ledge with a high embankment or wall on one side and a deep drop on the other. You must control all your strikes to maintain your balance and incline away from the dropoff at all times. Horizontal blows against the wall to "meat cleaver" your opponent may seem like a good idea but are the surest way to throw yourself off the ledge. Likewise, a good tactic to make your opponent lose his balance is to offer him *easily movable* targets where he will hit his weapon against the wall when he misses.

Your striking tactics largely depend on the location of the wall or embankment. The following tactics are explained in terms of a right-hand fighter.

Embankment on the right: Lead with your right foot. Deliver numbers "one, ten," and "five" primarily.

Embankment on the left: Lead with your right foot. Try numbers "nine, two" and "five" for your attacks. If you should get on the ledge with your left foot forward, the tactics change. Your reaching ability becomes limited and you are put into a largely defensive position. When you do attack, your striking combination is the same, but try to lure your opponent into grabbing distance. Then, when his arm is extended, use your left hand with the fingers pointing upward and the palm facing outward to make a grab and a quick, clockwise twist, jerking him to the right and down to throw him off the ledge. Your weapon should be held diagonally in front of your chest to protect your face from a sudden flip during this maneuver. A "number two" behind his neck will help him off the ledge.

Variable Weapons

I said before that an escrimador should be able to pick up any weapon and wield it. Since we're talking about environments, you might remember that when an encounter occurs, chances are you won't have your weapon with you and if your opponent has a weapon, he has an advantage. A good environmental exercise might be, then, to pick up objects around you and practice with them. You never know when a shoe or a rolled-up newspaper may be all you have to stop a knife or a tire iron.

Under a Low Ceiling

This is mainly a leg exercise, where you are forced to fight in a squatting position. Since your mobility is hampered, rely mainly on close-in Defondo tactics and make constant use of the alive hand.

Try the flowing exercise at this level for several minutes at a time.

(1)

(2)

(3)

In the Brush

Fighting in the woods or through thick brush will provide three of the prior exercises. If branches limit you from side to side, your tactics are the same as "At the Door." Low branches will give an "Over the Wall" effect and overgrowth may force you to fight "Under a Low Ceiling." If you have more than one opponent, you should narrow the number of sides you have to defend by putting a tree behind you. Branches that make obstacles when attacking can be used for defense if you adopt Lastico tactics, swaying through the branches to attack and snapping behind them when the opponent tries to counterattack.

Stick vs. Stick

Stick vs. Sword

The Path Toward Truth

What do you notice in this series of photographs?

Stick vs. Chinese Sword

Stick vs. Tjabang (Sai)

Stick vs. Sibat (Staff)

Tabak Maliit (Pocket Sticks)

They illustrate the inside direct hit to the hand. When you get to the root of a technique, it doesn't matter what the hand is holding.

The theory in Kali is to hit the hand so that it can't hold the weapon. If you take the fang from the snake, the snake is harmless. Take the weapon from your opponent and he is harmless. The old Filipino saying is: "Take the fang and you control the body."

The main principle in the Filipino martial arts is: "Hit rather than block whenever possible." This is the test of a highly evolved martial art (any martial art).

Smash hit hand with tabak toyok

At this point I hope you realize that this is not just a stick book, a nunchaku book, a bo book, etc. this is a universal martial arts book were movement concepts follow physical laws, thus can benefit anyone regardless of style.

In the remaining pages do not think of the pictures as techniques. Look at the overall view, the flow, the motion or as Bruce Lee would have said, "Feel the technique." Go beyond the pictured solutions with your own moves. Be Creative!

Smash hit hand with stick

Smash hit with sibat

Draw in your own solutions (1C)

(1D)

(1C)

(1D)

Midpoint as you angle and zone

Smash hand as you zone and angle to his right

STICK VS STICK

Start of outside deflection

SAI VS SWORD

Hand smash

STICK VS STAFF

This series should take 5/10 of a second

Compare these techniques. What do you notice?

Left hand safety check

Strike to head

Left safety factor check

Strike to head

The beauty of the Filipino martial arts or any highly evolved martial art is the simplicity in its usage. This book has hopefully liberated you from the "classical" approach to weaponry. Do not think in terms of "Nunchaku stances," "Sai blocks," or "Bo striking methods." Think Totality!

Compare and see for yourself that no matter what weapon you use or what weapon you go against, it's basically the same. The following action shots show the same techniques using different weapons.

Compare these techniques. What do you notice?

STICK VS SPEAR

Evade to right and smash hand

STICK VS SWORD

DAGGER VS DAGGER

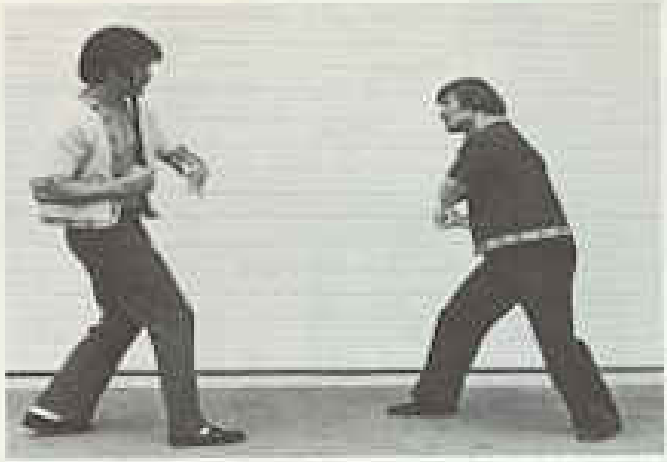
Zone to his outside
and smash hand again

Strike to head

Evade and slice

Slice again

Thrust



STICK VS STICK

Direct hand smash

STICK VS STICK

Left safety check - with simultaneous strike to head

SWORD VS SWORD

Inside direct slice

Compare these techniques. What do you notice?

Safety hand smash

Strike to head

Retaining check to hand

Safety restrike to hand

Restrike to head with safety check

Left hand check

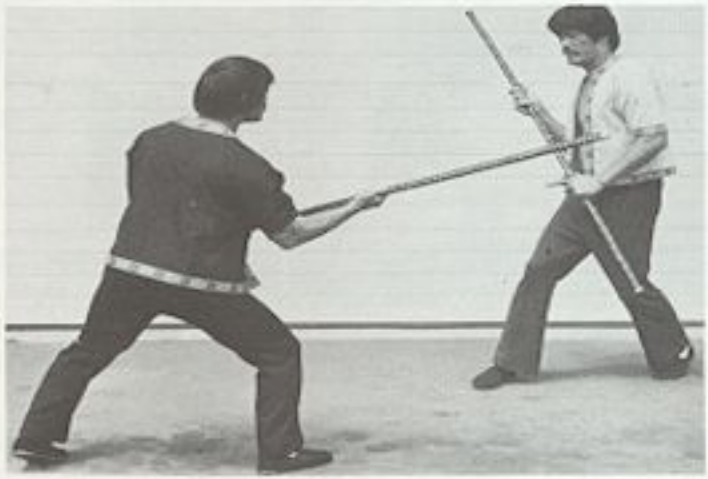
Upward slice to body or arm

Slice to neck

These techniques were used by the Filipino's against the Spanish, Dutch and Japanese invaders. The United States Marines were called "leather necks" because they were forced to wear protective neck covering, to cut down on the immense casualties, when they fought with the Filipinos.

SWORD VS STAFF

Inside slice
to right hand



STAFF VS STAFF

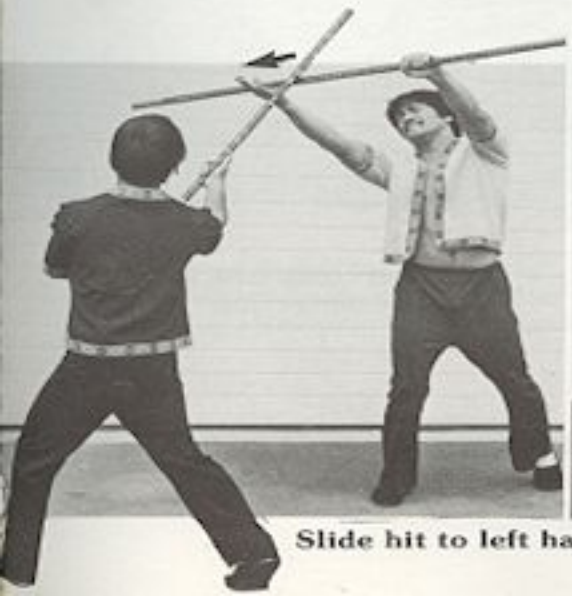
Angle and smash right hand

STAFF VS STAFF

Counter for a block

Slice to left hand

Smash left hand



Slide hit to left hand

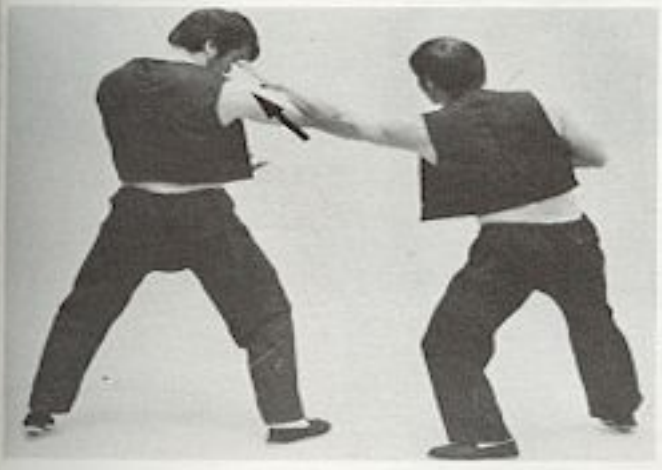
Slide hit to right hand

STICK VS STICK

Outside deflection
directed to arm

EMPTY HANDS

Counter backhand with
outside deflection

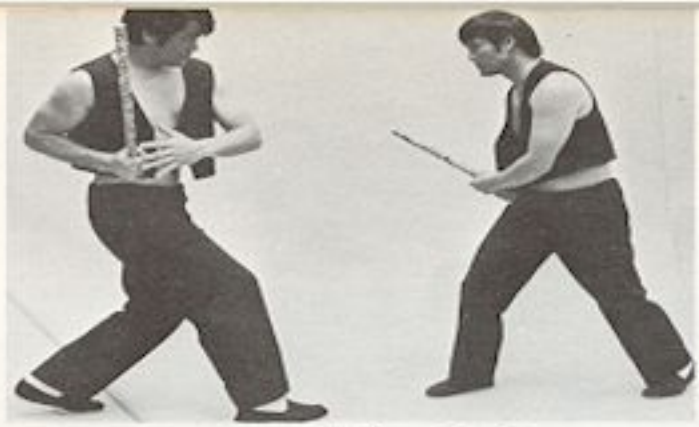


Sliding finger jab as safety factor while right hand also safety checking opponents hand

Strike to face while left hand performs descending safety check

Sliding finger jab as safety factor while right hand also safety checking opponents hand

Palm strike to face while left hand performs descending safety check

COMPARE THESE TECHNIQUES. NOTICE THE SIMILARITIES. HOW MANY MOVEMENTS CAN BE ELIMINATED?

(1A) Hit if possible

(1B)

(1A) Hit if possible

(1B)

COMPARE THESE TECHNIQUES. NOTICE THE SIMILARITIES. HOW MANY MOVEMENTS CAN BE ELIMINATED?

(1C)

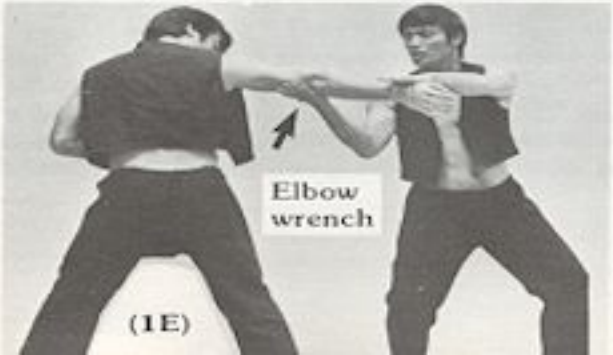
(1D)

(1E)

(1F)

(1C)

(1D)



(1E)

(1F)

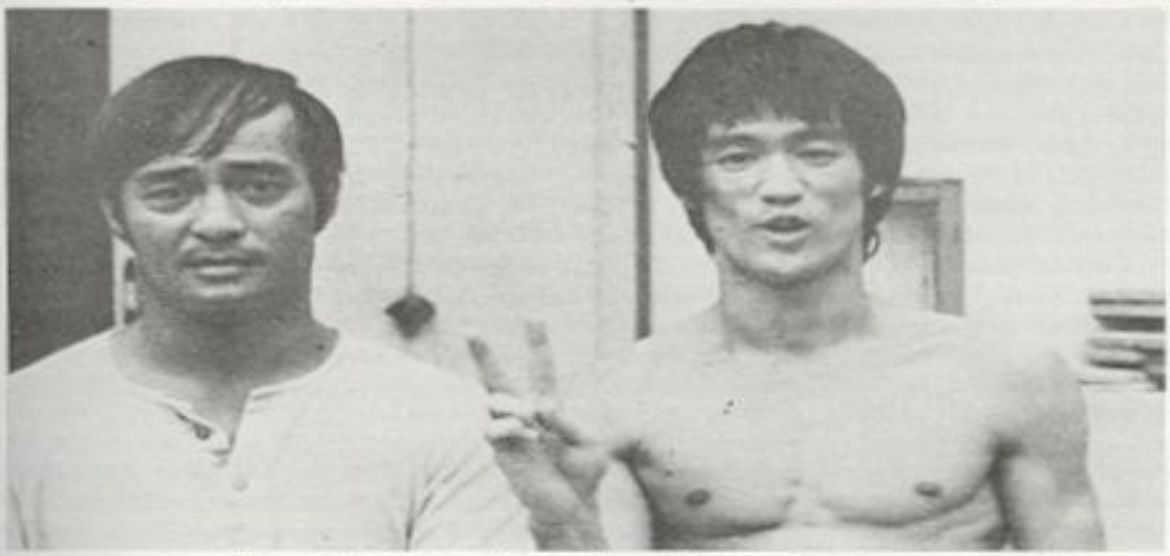
These photos illustrate the beginning of a knife fight, *the backbone of the Filipino martial arts*. In such a fight your entire body is utilized, you can kick with either leg and strike with your free hand. The difference between life or death rests solely on your skill. . . .little wonder why the Filipino martial arts are so effective.

Upon the request of the Publisher and some of the elderly Escrimadors, I have taken out 98% of the dagger techniques from this book. Most of the empty hand skills are taken from the movement of the knife.

There is no excuse for taking a man's life for life is precious. Any man can take a life but no man can give back a life. Killing is then a matter between a man and his own personal conviction and conscience. It is a matter of your own personal belief of right or wrong. It is therefore important to train the mind before training the body.

I personally have mixed emotions about putting any knife techniques in this book. Yet if your life or family's lives depend on it, any bit of knowledge might make the difference between life or death. The dagger then becomes an instrument which can be used for right.

I once asked a close friend, "What can I do to make this world a better place to live?" His answer, "Develop yourself first." the martial arts have been my way of developing myself physically, mentally and spiritually.



This was the last time Dan would see Bruce Lee alive, in Hong Kong, during the filming of THE GAME OF DEATH. The nunchaku battle with Bruce is said to be the best martial arts footage ever recorded. This scene was banned and omitted from the film when it was shown in England.

Bruce Lee once said, while philosophizing on the martial arts, "Dan, before I studied the art, a punch to me was just like a punch, a kick just like a kick. After I learned the art, a punch was no longer a punch, a kick no longer a kick. Now that I've understood the art, a punch is just like a punch, a kick just like a kick."

The height of cultivation is really nothing special. It is merely simplicity, the ability to express the utmost with the minimum.

Epilogue

Many people have asked: "Why are you writing a book about the Filipino martial arts?" What value is it to society? With all the violence and killing in the world, wouldn't a book on the Filipino martial arts only add to the violence?" My answer: "The quest of a true martial artist, in any culture or society, is to preserve life - not destroy it." Sometimes in trying to preserve ourselves, our culture or our beliefs, the taking of life may be necessary; however, the destruction of life must not be the primary objective.

In ancient times a warrior class existed in every society. India had its warrior class. Japan had a warrior class called the *Samurai*. Europe had its knights. The civilizations of Athens and Sparta, in ancient Greece, placed a high regard on military skill and philosophy. The Roman Empire had a professional army to preserve its culture and even the Chinese, though stressing scholarship over warfare, tried to combine martial arts with a sophisticated system of moral ethics in the *Sil-lum* temples.

Fighting skill, whether it's on a national or individual level, should be a part of everyone's education. All the training in the world can't make you secure from all forms of violence. The objective is to train your body, to the best of your ability, to preserve your own life and the lives of your loved ones.

I have discovered the martial arts to be a vehicle in which to grow physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. The Filipino martial arts is merely a vehicle for me to understand myself and others better. It is my hope that this book can somehow bridge the gap of understanding between peoples. Hopefully, if people can appreciate the Filipino martial arts, they can appreciate other aspects of the Filipino culture. If they can appreciate the Filipino culture, it is my hope that they will appreciate things in other cultures as well. This understanding may help to bring the people of the world closer and, hopefully someday, they can live in harmony and peace.

The Filipino people, of all peoples should have an innate understanding of both Eastern and Western cultures. The Philippines have been influenced by five great streams of civilization. They had the Northern European culture, through the United States; The Southern European culture through Spain; the Middle Eastern culture because of the Muslim-Arabic influence; the North Asian culture came from the Chinese and the South Asian culture came from India, Indo-China and Indonesia.

A perceptive person should seek to understand the hypocrisies in all cultures. Let's examine some of the hypocrisies in Filipino history. Most Filipino youths born in the United States were told that Filipinos had no culture, were ignorant-unclothed savages running around with G-strings and spears, knew no form of government, lacked laws and were uneducated. This was the propaganda brought to the United States in the early 1900's. It is safe to say that the majority of photographs in scientific and popular magazines have represented the Filipinos in this manner. They represent the average Filipino as a picture of a *cowboy* represents the average American.

Let's look at some of the accomplishments of these, so called, primitive Malayan, sailors. They sailed over an area approximately 2/3 of the circumference of the earth and there is evidence through oral history that their ships reached the coast of America. The Malayan sailors sailed the Pacific from Africa to the Easter Islands and from China to the Coral Seas. The sailing achievements of these early Malayans were a remarkable achievement in navigation. They understood the reading of the stars as well as chart making. In the ARABIC BOOK OF MIRACLES, a voyage of 300 ships made to Madagascar in 945 A.D. is described.

Marco Polo sailed from Chinchow in 1292 carrying a royal bride from the court of Kubla Khan

to the Khan of Persia. His ship spent many months on the coast of Sumatra, waiting for favorable monsoons. He utilized much of his time exploring the coast of Sulu and Mindinao in the Southern Phillipines. It is from the Malayan sailors that Marco Polo learned of Madagascar, Abyssinia (Ethiopia) and Zanzibar. Marco Polo carried back to Europe this geographical knowledge which was unknown to the European nations of that period. History, whether in oral form, written form or in dance form, is always slanted. According to western history Magellan discovered the Philippines; but many people in the Philippines claim that many unnamed Portuguese sailors landed before Magellan.

What I would like to bring out is that history is often written from the standpoint of the conquerer. In my opinion, there are always three sides to every historical event: their version, your version and the truth. Most of history is prejudicial guessing. According to Will Durant, "Even the historian who thinks the rise above partiality for his country, race, creed, or class betrays his secret predilection in his choice of materials, and in the nuances of his adjectives." A true historian seeks the truth and does not limit his writing, he rises above his own race and writes for mankind.

The United States attitude towards the Philippines in the past can be summed up in President McKinley's speech; when the United States took over the Islands in 1898: ".....nothing left for us to do but....educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them." Let's analyze President McKinley's words. The United States can't really take credit for civilizing the Philippines; for long before the Americans came, the people of the Sri-Vishayan Empire (a famous Hindu-Malayan Empire of Sumatra) had already brought a great civilization (1200 AD) [redacted] brought their civilization. The Arabs brought their civilization and finally, the Spa[redacted]

courage that the name of Zamboanga is spoken with awe. So skillful are these warriors that this area has always been exempt from tribute.

In Michael Hart's book, THE ONE HUNDRED, he lists the 100 most influential people in the history of mankind. The first 25 in order of importance are:

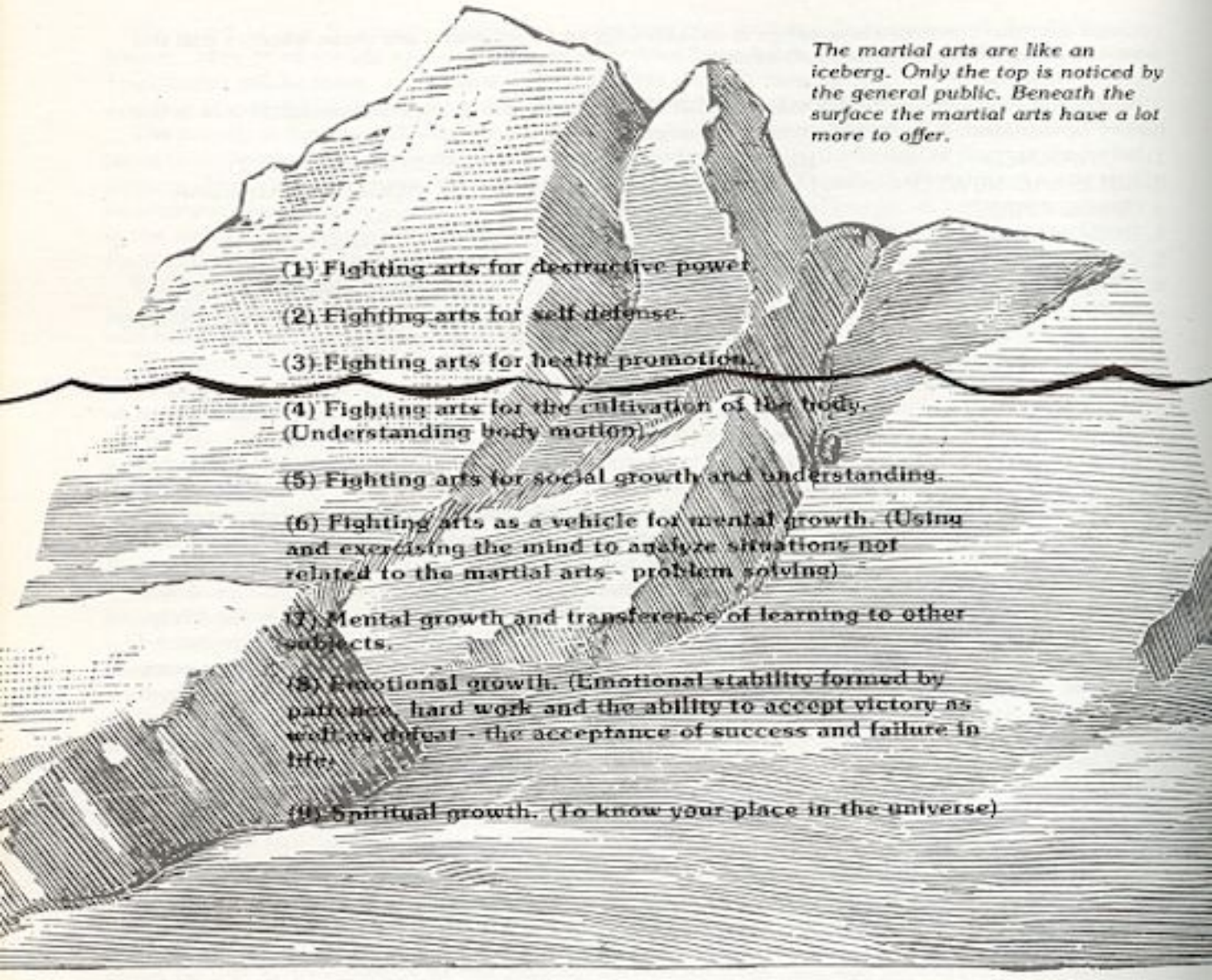
1. MOHAMMED
2. SIR ISAAC NEWTON
3. JESUS CHRIST
4. BUDDHA
5. CONFUCIUS
6. ST. PAUL
7. TSAI LUN
8. JOHANNE GUTENBERG
9. CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS
10. ALBERT EINSTEIN
11. KARL MARX
12. LOUIS PASTEUR
13. GALILEO GALILEI
14. ARISTOTLE
15. NIKOLAI LENIN
16. MOSES
17. CHARLES DARWIN
18. SHIH HUANG TI
19. AUGUSTAS CAESAR
20. MAO TSE-TUNG
21. GENGHIS KHAN
22. EUCLID
23. MARTIN LUTHER
24. NICOLAUS COPERNICUS
25. JAMES WATT

As you can see it's obvious that no race, or nation can claim a monopoly on all things that are good, or for that matter, all the things that are bad.

The Filipinos had women's liberation and sufferage long before it was thought of in the United States. The United States has yet to have a woman President. The Philippines had a "Queen Elizabeth" in the person of Princess Urduja. She was considered the mighty warrior queen of ancient Pangasanan. It is said that she ruled her people wisely and had commercial trade with various countries like Java, China and India. She knew several languages and took part in many battles. Princess Urduja was only one of many female leaders during pre-Spanish times. There was Princess Sima, Princess Pangian Inchi Jamila of Jolo - the best swordswoman in the Philippines, Queen Maniwantiwan, Lela Men Chanei the Princess of Sulu who invaded and conquered Manila in the 15th Century and Josefa Gabriela who took full command of her husband's army during the rebellion against the Spanish. Gabriela was called the Ilocano "Joan of Arc." There were General Agueda Kahabagan, Tuambalocam the Sultana of Jolo who led the Muslim warriors against the famous Spanish General Corcuera in 1637, Teresa Magbanua was a general whose exploits are still remembered by the living survivors of that stormy era from 1896 to 1901. These were but a few names in a long list of heroines in Filipino history. According to the June 1969 issue of PACE magazine, "the Filipino woman has achieved the highest educational level of any woman in America."

It is ironic that I began a journey looking for the implements of war and ended up appreciating the skills of the, so-called, "weaker sex."

As a martial artist I first noticed the fighting arts at the *tip of the iceberg*. I gradually worked my way down, via intensive research, with an open mind. This is a life time journey with out end.



The martial arts are like an iceberg. Only the top is noticed by the general public. Beneath the surface the martial arts have a lot more to offer.

Along the way I regularly step back and draw my own conclusions based on the information I believe to be true. The important thing to remember is: "Believe in your conclusions, but don't be bound by them." As you grow physically, mentally and spiritually these conclusions may change; but they are certainly valid at the time. I believe that in the final stage of our quest we see the whole iceberg and find ourselves in a newer dimension.

I like to conclude with an incident that occured after our Filipino martial arts demonstration last year. Following a 1 minute standing ovation, I heard someone say: "I can't believe this fantastic art came from such a primitive culture!"

To all seekers of the "way"
Knowledge comes from your
instructor. Wisdom comes
from "within".

Dan Inosanto