

Filipino Martial Arts

Asked & Answered

Digest

Special Issue
2009

*Grandmasters, Masters and Punong Guro's
of the Philippines
Give Their Opinions*

**Martial Arts Schools
Quality vs. Quantity**



Thoughts on Bashing Different FMA Systems

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Grandmaster Frank Aycocho - LAKAS 8
Grandmaster Meliton Geronimo - Sikaran
Grandmaster Ibarra E. Lopez - Golden Kamagong
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Grandmaster Vincente Sanchez - Kali Arnis International
Grandmaster Frank Sobrino - WEDO
Master Oliver Bersabal - Koredas Obra Mano
Master Alex Ercia - A.R.M.A.S.
Master Tony Diego - Kalis Ilustrisimo
Master Jaime Geronimo - Sikaran
Master Romeo Macapagal - Kalis Ilustrisimo
Master Dannie H. San Joaquin - Arnis Bicol Style
Punong Guro Galo Lalic - Kalintaw
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RJ Rivera

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8. There are a lot of different Organizations, Federations, Associations etc in the Filipino martial arts, of course personal ones like LESKAS, Modern Arnis, LASI, Serrada, Ilustrisimo, Doce Pares to name just a few. And then there are Organizations which are made up of the different Organizations such as NFMA (National Filipino Martial Arts), PCKEAM (Philippine Counsel of Kali Eskrima Arnis Masters), etc. Do you ever think the Filipino martial arts will come under just one banner?
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Schools that Participated

Thoughts on Bashing Different FMA Systems

Martial Arts Schools: Quality vs. Quantity

Schools That Did Not Participate

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The ideas and opinions expressed in this digest are those of the authors or instructors being interviewed and are not necessarily the views of the publisher or editor.

We solicit comments and/or suggestions. Articles are also welcome.

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From the Publishers Desk

Kumusta

First I would like to thank Peachie Baron-Saguin for her assistance in helping to inform Grandmasters, Masters and Punong Guros in the Philippines about this questionnaire.

The FMA Digest thought it would be interesting to talk to Grandmasters, Masters and Punong Guros of the Filipino martial arts in the Philippines and ask some questions. All the school listed in the FMA Digest schools database Philippines and some others that were not listed were contacted and asked these questions, some refused to answer any of the questions, some would give an opinion but did not want it printed, some I guess were too busy, and some answered some of the questions, and finally some answered all the questions. The answers to the questions are the thoughts and feelings of the practitioners that answered them. But the listed Grandmasters, Masters and Punong Guros did not mind saying what was on their mind.

In the interview they are added in the order that they responded to the questionnaire. All Grandmasters, Masters and Punong Guros are living and teaching in the Philippines. The FMA Digest would like to thank them for participating.

You may ask why, did the FMA Digest not ask these questions of the Grandmasters, Masters and Punong Guros outside of the Philippines. Being outside the Philippines I have found most still have their thoughts on the way they taught or promoted their art while they were still in the Philippines, but have adapted their teaching style and promotion to their environment of the country they are now teaching in and promoting their art.

So take it for what you will. Some of the answers might surprise you and yet they may not. Anyway you will know how some feel about their art and what their beliefs are. And you will know who will be up front and honest with their students and others.

Also included in this Special Issue is an article by RJ Rivera which the FMA Digest thought is appropriate for this issue called "Thoughts on Bashing Different FMA Systems," and finally an article that was printed in Martial Arts Masters, CFW Enterprises: November issue 1995. The pictures and article have been updated.

Maraming Salamat Po

FMA Digest: *In your opinion what makes your Filipino martial art style different from other Filipino martial arts styles?*

Grandmaster Aycoco: Basically every Arnisador holds Arnis stick on the same manner with the short end of the cane is down on the small finger while Lakas 8 is inverted.

Master Ercia: There is no difference in our style. Our group wants to preserve the teachings of our teachers to keep their legacy alive. This is our goal.

Grandmaster Geronimo: My martial art style is called Sikaran. Technically, there are only two Filipino martial arts styles: The unarmed martial arts style is Sikaran and the armed martial arts style is Arnis de Mano. In my opinion these are the only two original and authentic Filipino martial arts that are as old as the country itself.

These martial arts existed even before the Spaniards came. What we now call Arnis de Mano has been known under various names such as Kali, Eskrima, Estokada and others. Sikaran, on the other hand has always just been called Sikaran. It is an art of fighting that emphasizes the use of the feet. It also uses the hands for striking, throwing and take-downs.

In competition, however, the hands are used only for blocking and only kicking techniques are allowed.

Master San Joaquin: In my opinion, the basic difference the Filipino martial arts is the nomenclature wherein the same execution is called differently or given a different number. Basic movements are the same, however due to personal gains for claims of originality instructors adhere to how they want the movement named. Sometimes the difference in the nomenclature is due to the local dialect from where the style is practiced. Similarities in nomenclature were brought about by the Spanish spies who tried to get deeper into the martial arts that were instrumental to the defeat of some Spanish forces engaged in combat with the natives, armed with their natural instruments of trade converted into weapons for defense.

Master Diego and Master Macapagal: Ilustrisimo's blade orientation makes it different from most of the other Filipino martial arts. Although almost all of these other Filipino martial arts came from blade work and shifted to the stick as a matter of convenience.

Master Geronimo: Sikaran is different because it is traditionally Filipino. Among the many so called Filipino Martial Arts Sikaran is the only martial art with a history that goes back to the 1500's. Sikaran was developed by farmers while engaged in their work in the fields. They strengthened their legs doing fieldwork. To while away their time, they developed the "kicking game" which was a contest of strength using the legs for kicking and the hands for blocking. Sikaran's techniques are adaptable. Our style can adjust to the challenges and compete under different rules of engagement. For example in the 60's we adjusted and competed against Karate and competed in the Asian and World Karate tournaments.



Grandmaster Frank Aycoco



Master Jaime Geronimo



Master Oliver Bersabal

Master Bersabal: The Koredas Obra Mano is a traditional way of learning and fighting and not academic and it is more on defense and counter distraction as defense on stick or empty hand.

Punong Guro Lalic: My Filipino martial art Kalintaw; differs in that we both use single and double sticks plus we emphasizing the Anyo and its applications.

Grandmaster Lopez: In my opinion, my Filipino martial art or style is different from other Filipino

martial art or style to wit:

a.) I organized my own club little by little, bit by bit, teaching my own style as taught by my forefathers. It might have included styles that are similar to some arts or styles in some aspect. As time goes we developed our own style and practiced and honed it. Then I named the Golden Kamagong; unique in the sense that there is no Golden Kamagong but black. It is a hardwood whose fruit we called “mabolo” and fed me after the Japanese occupation. So my life and kamagong is inter-related it is an exotic fruit and good to eat. It was the only available food at that time.

b.) That is the uniqueness of my art and my style. The name, the style and art is purely Filipino.

Grandmaster Sobrino: Every martial art is different in their own way, it maybe with the techniques, beliefs, principles, discipline, method of teaching, and many more. What’s important is that we never close our minds to learning because when that happens we become stagnant, always remember that life is a continuous cycle of learning and we should never stop learning. Don’t think that you already know everything.

Grandmaster Sanchez: Well for one reason, I have four styles or four techniques in my institution. Namely,

- a. Cinco teros- palis palis
- b. Kasilagan- direct counter strike
- c. Modern Arnis- close quarter combat
- d. Lightning (LSAI)- Largo Mano

Unlike others they have one or two techniques

Grandmaster Presas: Kombatan is different because it includes combat at all ranges from long to medium to short distances, whether standing, kneeling, sitting or on the ground. Kombatan uses a number of weapons and weapons applications unique to our art, like the dulo dulo, bangkaw, dos puntas and tres puntas. Kombatan’s empty-hand component features punches and hand strikes and kicks, as well as throwing and grappling. The Kombatan practitioner is thus able to address any possibility he or she might encounter in a real-world fighting situation.

Grandmaster Magdaraog: The difference of our Filipino martial arts is that we in the Magdaraog Martial Arts System have a unique system that has been kept very secretly by my father the use of the Aikido/Aikijutsu principles and



Grandmaster Ernesto A. Presas Sr.



Grandmaster Roy B. Magdaraog

incorporated the Filipino arts of Arnis, Eskrima and Kali; or the Stick and Knife weapons. And it has been used in Magdaraog Martial Arts System. The Magdaraog Martial Arts System is a principle of martial discipline that only a few can survive the brutal training and only some can have the privileged to be trained one-on-one in the Zeta theory and principles that the late Reynaldo A. Magdaraog had developed. And me as the son “Grandmaster Roy B Magdraog” has improved the zeta that my father trained me in with the true meaning and theory principles of it. The Alpha-

Omega and Alpha techniques have been added and improved with more powerful techniques. The Magdaraog Martial Arts System is a martial discipline that has been here for many years; a martial art that has survived many trials, and this is not only concerned with the physical, mental and spiritual unity of each practitioners.

FMAdigest: *And what makes your style unique or different from other styles?*

Grandmaster Aycocho: The artistic application and flow of motion of techniques. The inverted holding position of stick emphasize a defensive situation that opponent would not think of any smashing strikes because the cane is hidden at the back of the arm parallel to the elbow like a splint of a fractured arm.

Master Ercia: We don't have our own style. We practice different Filipino martial arts systems that we have along the way learned from their source or Founders. We practice Great Grandmaster Ernesto Presas Modern Arnis/Kombatan, Ilustrisimo of Great Grandmaster Antonio Ilustrisimo, Paete arts as taught to us by Maestro Doy Baldemor, Grandmaster Moody Madrigal, Baet Arnis of Maestro Goyo Baet and Abon Baet (Garimot Arnis/only a small fraction of it), and Tabimina Balintawak taught to us by Master Jojo Ygay, Grandmaster Bob Silver Tabimina and Master Flint Tabimina.



Master Alex Ercia



Grandmaster
Meliton Geronimo

Grandmaster Geronimo: Sikaran is a, martial arts with a history that is as old as the country. This in itself makes it unique. Karate compared to Sikaran is just an infant art. Sikaran was developed in the Philippines, making it a truly Filipino art and different than the other unarmed fighting styles.

Master San Joaquin: It is not something unique as movements are similar if at all not different from the others. Recently however it has differed in most proclaimed traditional or ingenious once on the

sense that most have adopted norms from other fighting disciplines (like Karate, kata, belting, etc.)

Master Diego and Master Macapagal: Ilustrisimo's emphasis on efficiency rather than on form or artistic presentation. Of course, there are other styles that also emphasize combative efficiency.

Master Bersabal: The Korewdas has protection needed in a test sparring we don't have armor or body protection but we can do even open strikes.

Punong Guro Lalic: My style differs from other styles by emphasizing the anyo disarming, anyo and other techniques.

Punong Lakan Nicolas: The uniqueness of our style starts with the teaching. A lot of the styles out there follow the rigid and traditional way of teaching martial arts which sometimes is highly ritual. We are already in the computer age and a lot of the traditional methods of instruction are no longer applicable to the behavior of present practitioners. Before, practitioners are being forced into a specific system. But in our style, the approach is being tailor fit to the needs of each student while maintaining the attitude of respect towards the art.

Another point of difference is that we allow are students to be creative in using the techniques we teach them. We start of by teaching them the standard and proper way of delivering the techniques. Once they've learned to execute them properly, we let them use them in a way that it will be effective for them. They are not bounded by "hard and fast" rules but we let them explore the countless possibilities there are in what they've learned.

Grandmaster Lopez: In my opinion, my style is different from other style. It might be unique from other style as we developed the style, basing on the human behavior and anatomy. The movement, the habit, is all taken into consideration, although our pattern is somewhat similar to those of our forefathers and handed from generation to generations.

Grandmaster Sobrino: The same with styles, we believe that every individual is unique, we teach a variety of proficiency techniques to students and we require them to memorize all of those techniques however as to what I said "*we believe that every individual is unique*" so in all of those techniques, we give the option to the student to specialize in the techniques or field that they think is the most appropriate for them. For example, if the student is skillful with the use of knives then I would suggest for him to specialize in that field however he is still required to study the other techniques of our system and still try to improve the use of those techniques.

In WEDO we believe that everybody has their own WEDO (from the word OIDO) or natural movement, WEDO is a method on how we could further understand and enhance our own natural capabilities. WEDO is natural movements that focus on enhancing the individuals' hidden talents, skills, and capabilities through the techniques and proficiency training.

Grandmaster Sanchez: I can reach and tackle you through close quarter, distant fighting or Largo Mano, or just evade you through palis palis. The combination of the four different styles makes it unique.

Grandmaster Presas: Kombatan is different for the reasons I previously mentioned. Also, in contrast with other arts like karate, kung fu or taekwondo, which teach empty hands first and then maybe weapons, the Kombatan program teaches the use of weapons first before empty hands. However, the universal lines of attack in our training are

structured so that there is a smooth transition from weapons to empty hand fighting and vice-versa. All movements directly translate to various categories of technique.

Grandmaster Magdaraog: Besides what I stated for the answer in the first question, the training is different, we train in a place that is available and the environmental matter whether rain or shine. Each of our practitioners will be trained for years; if they can survive the training which it must be a training of dedication, determination, and so on... the Armas Y Mano Magdaraog System.

FMAdigest: *What makes the Filipino martial arts in general different from other martial arts throughout the world?*

Grandmaster Aycocho: It has a multiple combination from ancient art to modern generation; it does not show a brutal and barbaric attitude in competition that ends up with cutting and bleeding faces of contestant.

Master Ercia: Filipino martial arts deal with the present situations. It evolves as time and people evolve. We may preserve the arts of our instructors but we still evolve as time goes by.

Grandmaster Geronimo: Martial arts around the world, whether armed or unarmed are similar in the sense that they were all developed to defend against a hostile force or threat. There may be superficial similarities in techniques and maneuvers because they all have a similar purpose - self defense. But the similarity ends there. Filipino martial arts are homegrown and born in the Philippines guided by the Filipino's character and culture.

Master San Joaquin: When it comes to other foreign martial arts especially those using same or similar weapons (long stick, short stick, bladed weapons, etc), there is not much difference, except in nomenclature and method of developing practitioners.

Master Diego and Master Macapagal: Well, today, the use of the rattan sticks in lieu of a sword so that it is now called stick fighting, and the barehanded against weapons techniques, also, the ability to fight at close or very close ranges.

Master Bersabal: The difference of our martial art is the stick fighting Eskrima that all use rattan woods for it in all kind or style of Eskrima.

Punong Guro Lalic: The Filipino Martial Arts differs from other martial arts throughout the world by starting weapons first instead of empty hand.



Master Tony Diego



Punong Lakan

Garitony "Pet" Nicolas

Punong Lakan Nicolas: The Filipino martial arts, is able to adapt to any given situation. To further understand the uniqueness of the art, we have to go back to the reason why it was created by our forefathers. It was used to fight oppression of foreign races and their sophisticated culture. In line with this, the techniques had to be simple for the users to be able to make it functional at a limited amount of time. This is one of the evidence of adaptability of Filipino martial arts. Now in the modern era, Filipino martial arts, is able to blend with other arts (E.G. BJJ, Wushu, etc.) without any problems. One of the Grandmasters said that Filipino martial arts, is "*An Art Within An Art*" which really holds true.

Grandmaster Lopez: The Filipino martial in general differed from other martial arts, to wit:

- a.) The Filipino society is a weapon culture. It uses vast array of weapons.
- b.) We have used it against the Spaniards, the Americans and the Japanese
- c.) It is an indigenous art that the style varies from one tribe to another, from one province to another and one region to another. However, with the migration of our forefathers to other provinces they taught the art there. That's why there was the similarity of some style.

Grandmaster Sobrino: Every martial arts system has its own beauty and uniqueness depending upon the person that created it, practices, and propagate it.

Grandmaster Sanchez: Well for one reason that they start training empty hand to weaponry, while us from weaponry to empty hand.

Grandmaster Presas: I would say that the Filipino martial arts are combat-oriented rather than emphasizing performance, artistic or sportive qualities. Filipino arts are for defending ourselves, our families and our motherland, as our ancestors did for generations. The movements are simple and direct. For this reason, people looking for more visually attractive styles may be more inclined to follow other Eastern martial arts that are more eye-pleasing to observe. The Filipino martial arts nonetheless remain a vital source of effective self-defense and fighting skills.

Grandmaster Magdaraog: The difference of our Filipino martial arts in general is the unique principles and theories in it. A simple stick or knife that can make a very sophisticated move in the arts of Filipino martial art; that is what makes it so different from other martial arts. Simple but unique and deadly when used by trained practitioners.

FMA Digest: *In your opinion what is a Master?*

Grandmaster Aycocho: Master, refers to instructor of certain level who has acquired knowledge in at least 3 different styles of other country with a degree and knows the mechanics of officiating in competition.

Master Ercia: I don't like titles. I believe in the persons skills as he applies his knowledge.

Grandmaster Geronimo: A Master is a person who has achieved exceptional ability both mentally and physically in all the aspects of the particular art. Additionally, a person must have contributed in the development and propagation of the art. In Sikaran, the title master is vested only by the grandmaster. Physical expertise alone is not enough for a

person to be bestowed the title “Master”. Naming of a master takes a great deal of thinking and consideration because a master is next in line in being the Grandmaster.

High grade alone does not qualify a person to be called a master. In Sikaran, I have only given the title of master to one person, Jaime Geronimo, 9th Degree Black Belt Chief Instructor.

Master San Joaquin: A Master is a disciplined practitioner who has reached a certain level of expertise in the discipline being practiced, and recognized by a group usually the same group where he belongs and was recognized as such by the persons who have propagated the same discipline especially his Senior Instructor or Masters.

Master Diego and Master Macapagal: A Master is a person who can execute and evolve his art without having to think while in a fight or sparring at full speed and strength.

Master Geronimo: A Master must have trained his mind and his body, competed in tournaments, and must have proven to be the best. No matter what age, whether young or old, a Master must prove himself constantly.

Master Bersabal: A Master of martial arts in my discipline is show the art and guides the followers to have them correctly and guide them the way to have it for good and satisfaction of the art.

Punong Guro Lalic: In my opinion a Master is the one who expertise the techniques very well.

Punong Lakan Nicolas: A Master has gained full knowledge of his art. He is able to understand the physical and philosophical aspects of his craft. He is like an older brother to his students, guiding them to wider learning. He actively participates in the endeavors of his group and always at the frontline to spearhead the goals which have been set.

Grandmaster Lopez: A Master is a practitioner that has mastered the art and style of his club, as taught by the Grandmaster. However not all aspect of the art and style was taught by some Grandmasters to students, but to relatives.

Grandmaster Sobrino: A Master is the 2nd Head of the Family, besides from Mastery of techniques, I believe that it is also very important for a Master to understand and cope up with the different personalities of his students, a Master is someone that you could depend on and lean on for guidance. We serve as a father model for our students. We are responsible steward that guides students not just to become great fighters but also responsible members of the society. A Master also had achieved a certain level of serenity way of thinking that an ordinary practitioner has yet to achieve. He has achieved a high level of competency both mentally and physically.

Grandmaster Sanchez: A Master is the one who can execute movements without catching his breath. To become a master one needs to continuously teach, propagate and continuously participate in all Arnis activities and development program for fifteen years.

Grandmaster Presas: A Master, in my opinion, is someone who has grasped the technical aspects of his chosen art and can then teach his skills effectively to others and pass on the art.

FMA Digest: *In your opinion what is a Grandmaster?*

Grandmaster Ayccho: He is an active instructor in certain level with overseas exposure, had a remarkable achievement in the field and at least has 25 years of martial arts experience. He has reached the level required for his title and possesses a special

skill. He must have at least 72 units in college if not a college graduate or academic degree holder.

Grandmaster Geronimo: Grandmaster is a title that denotes the highest authority in a particular martial art. Since there are only two genuine Filipino martial arts styles there should only be two grandmasters in the Philippines. I cannot talk about who the grandmaster of Arnis de Mano should be because unlike Sikaran, there is no particular school which can claim being the one and only original school where all the other schools came from. To me the title grandmaster cannot and must not be assumed. It must be awarded by a competent authority. I was awarded the title of grandmaster of Sikaran by the Asian Karate Association because I am the highest authority in Sikaran also known as Philippine Karate (by the Asian Karate Association over 50 years ago). Cipriano Geronimo, Melencio Bigasin and Manuel Ocampo, the last highest Sikaran authority charged me in the preservation of Sikaran. In fact it is our family (Geronimo) lineage that is the last surviving lineage in Sikaran genealogy.

Master San Joaquin: A Grandmaster is a Senior Instructor or Master who, during his tenure of practicing the discipline has in return produced Junior Instructors, Senior Instructors, or Masters, with or without deviation from the original form. He may occasionally bring forth an idea that applies better to his particular group. This is a style derived from the original but slightly different and still carries substantiated semblance to the basically accepted original.

Master Diego and Master Macapagal: The title grandmaster was used to give respect to the old Escrimadores who had made a reputation for themselves, typically as real fighters. They are simply Masters who are old, wiser, and more mature.

Master Geronimo: The Grandmaster is the highest authority in a particular art or style. There must only be one Grandmaster. Aside from his mental and physical capability, the Grandmaster must have developed and propagated his particular martial art. In Sikaran there is only one Grandmaster. He is Supremo Meliton Geronimo, 10th Degree Black Belt.

Master Bersabal: A Grandmaster has to know all his styles in his own art and capable giving and solving all problems in this kind of art so in short a Grandmaster is general expert of his art that can handle everything.



Punong Guro Galo D. Lalic

Punong Guro Lalic: While a Grandmaster expertise the techniques plus it is put in the mind, body and spirit to the system. “It is a way of life for him.”

Punong Lakan Nicolas: When somebody has been bestowed the title “Grandmaster”, as the term implies, it is already grand - meaning the ultimate, the supreme, being on top of all the Masters and students. It means that you've reached that point wherein you have realized your full potential and you were able to share it already with a lot of people. Being a “grand” master means you were able to lay the foundations of the art and growth of the art flourishes through you. It means you were able to define, and redefine the art. It means you set the standards in your chosen field.

Grandmaster Lopez: The Grandmaster as we say is the Founder of the club he has organized, or he was the elder of the family. In some aspect the age criteria of 45 years up

was considered plus the number of membership. That it is the title given to him by his peers and acknowledge by the Organization he belong.

Grandmaster Sobrino: A Grandmaster is the 1st Head of the Family, same with a Master; a Grandmaster is fully recognized as a role model for the students. He also serve as a motivator for the students to train well and hard. Same with a Master he also has achieved a level of serenity and wisdom that he shares with younger members of the group. He is also someone who had contributed to the growth of the group as a whole.

For question 4 and 5, I believe both are almost the same however it would depend upon the years of service and not only that, of course with the contribution that you have given to the group in recognition of your level. It can also depend upon the “Pamana System” with the blessing of the original founder of the group. For example, For a Master to be a Grandmaster, the Grandmaster could pass on his legacy or title to the Master.

To make it simple and short I would say that a Master and a Grandmaster are both role models that students look up to.

Grandmaster Sanchez: A Grandmaster same as a Master needs to continuously teach, propagate and continuously participate in all Arnis activities and program except a grandmaster doing it for 30 years. I have been teaching Arnis for 50 years already.



Grandmaster Ernesto A. Presas Sr.

Grandmaster Presas: A Grandmaster, on the other hand, is someone who would have spent considerably more time honing and perfecting his skills. He will have mastered all aspects of his art and taught many students, some to Master level themselves. A Grandmaster virtually lives the martial arts and exhibits the positive virtues of one who follows the martial path.

Grandmaster Magdaraog: In my opinion a Grandmaster is a direct descendant of the family or a practitioner-student that has trained in so many years in the said arts. The Grandmaster is a practitioner of the art of discipline and guides by the theories and principles of the style and the system. The one who has trained, taught and guides in the art with great discipline and all the aspects of the physical, mental and spiritual level.

FMA Digest: *What do you think of styles that use titles such as Great Grandmaster, Supreme Grandmaster? And since this has become a title which is being use do you think the next step is something like Ultimate, Supreme Great Grandmaster?*

Grandmaster Aycocho: That all depends and I respect that, it is one way to honor him or her of his title in their organization like king and queen and down to lower echelon.

Master Ercia: I respect the Masters and their efforts to spread and teach the Filipino martial arts systems or arts they have. Their title is just superficial as long as they teach from the heart.

Grandmaster Geronimo: People being people, they will try to outdo each other in every which way they can. I do not waste any time in titles and ranks. I have been called by different titles by different people. People who knew me as a military officer call me by my rank which is “Lieutenant Colonel”. People who knew me as a politician call me “Mayor”. People who knew me as a movie actor call me by my alias “latigo.” Some members of Sikaran call me “Supremo.” Do not mistake this word for Supreme Being (God). In Filipino “Supremo” means leader or head of a group. Andres Bonifacio, leader of the Katipunan was called Supremo (highest rank or leader in the Katipunan). Luis Taruc was called Supremo as the leader of the infamous Hukbalahap (Hukbo ng bayan laban sa hapon). I am called Sikaran Supremo because I am the leader and the highest authority in Sikaran.

Master San Joaquin: Each group emanating from a single discipline ramifies in different directions and different ultimate reasons. The use terms such as Great Grandmaster etc is used to suit the individual egoistic needs of the organizer. Terms are unlimited therefore whatever suits the group leader may be applied.

Master Macapagal: This is a politically loaded question. At this point in time and exposure of the Filipino martial arts, it is a marketing tool.

Master Geronimo: In my opinion Supreme Grandmaster Great Grandmaster and Ultimate Supreme Great Grandmaster do not mean anything except as a title. The more important thing is who gave them the title. What have they done to deserve the title? How good are they in their art or style? Many of these so-called



Master Romy Macapagal

Grandmasters promoted themselves and assumed the title. There are some grandmasters that exchanged promotions and called each other grandmaster. In Sikaran there is only one Grandmaster, Supremo Meliton Geronimo and one Master.

I have been promoted to Sikaran Master by Grandmaster Meliton Geronimo, with the rank of 9th Degree Black Belt and Chief Instructor of the Kapatirang Sikaran ng Pilipinas. I am the next in line as successor of our Supremo Meliton Geronimo 10th Degree Black Belt. My duties as Chief Instructor are to upgrade the skill of the members, standardize the teaching of Sikaran and organize the different branches throughout the world. There is now a house bill in Congress to recognize Sikaran as the National Filipino martial arts. When approved, maybe that would bring together all the Sikaran schools under one strong organization under the leadership of Meliton Geronimo, the only legitimate Grandmaster of Sikaran.

Master Bersabal: For me as a respect I personally stay Grandmaster and no more supreme cinema acting words.

Punong Guro Lalic: Well most Filipino martial arts styles they use titles for formality and respect to the highest ranking.

Punong Lakan Nicolas: It would be their own right if these styles would promote their Grandmasters to “Great” Grandmasters. But then, we always have to go back to that question, “What is a Grandmaster?” As we defined it earlier, it is a title that defines the culmination of everything that individual has done. If there would be such a title as “great” or “supreme” Grandmaster, what could have they done different compared to the other Grandmasters? The great or ultimate Grandmasters might have trained the next

generation but the title “grand” basically is something earned by the student master and not just a promotion.

Grandmaster Lopez: For me, the title of a Grandmaster is enough. That is the highest title given to a practitioner who spent decades in practicing Arnis. All those Grandmasters that were gone were never called great or ultimate. They were Grandmasters in their own rights. By nature Grandmasters are jealous of their art and everyone wants to be called great but until now none was called as such. As good Grandmaster will always be a Grandmaster.

Grandmaster Sobrino: I respect the way they want to call themselves based from their rank. Every system has different beliefs and origins so we should respect those beliefs; I just want to remind people that titles are titles however without the supporting knowledge and skills it will only be a title. Just like with a certificate or diploma printed out just to say that you’ve finished a certain degree. It would still be best that we acquire skills first before the title.



Grandmaster Frank Sobrino



Grandmaster
Vincente Sanchez

Grandmaster Sanchez: The real terminology should be:

1. Pinakamataas na Guro - Grandmaster
2. Mataas na Guro - Master
3. Punong Guro - head teacher (or principal in school) and two or more guro under him.
4. Taga Turo - assistant instructor.

There is no Supreme Grand master here on Earth, (the only one supreme Guro or Rabi is our Lord Jesus Christ).

Grandmaster Presas: Titles such as what you mention may be useful for identifying the top teacher or head of a particular school and are a more modern innovation in the Filipino martial arts. I don’t see anything objectionable to this if certain

groups want to use them. In the end, only skill and ability represent the true measure of a man’s standing in the Filipino martial arts community at large, and not the titles he goes by.

Grandmaster Magdaraog: In my opinion there is no such thing... it is only a title, the more title the more complicated it will be for the practitioners. Why use too many titles if it can only be the one that has already existed. The title in my opinion is only an addition to the purpose of commercialism and in short money. A martial arts is not because of titles or how many trophies, it is about discipline.



Grandmaster
Roy B. Magdaraog

FMA Digest: *In your opinion what is the difference between Kali, Escrima and Arnis? And why is Escrima and Eskrima spelled different?*

Grandmaster Aycocho: Kali is describe as a fighting art of countries origin that deals with weaponry in martial arts as well as Escrima an artistic waving play of fighting adopted from Spain, Eskrima is a local Filipino translation, Arnis is a common term of Filipino martial arts that deals with different kinds of sticks in both combat street fighting or sports competition.

Master Ercia: It's just a preference of usage. That's all.

Master San Joaquin: Basically Kali, as Escrima, pertains to the art using bladed weapons whereas Arnis, Baston etc. pertain to martial arts using sticks long and short as main weapons. Spelling may vary but the meaning of the word remains the same both are one and the same.

Master Diego and Master Macapagal: Kali was coined around the time of Yambao (who by the way was a Zarsuelista or a stage actor) and he used it in his book “Karunungan sa Larong Arnis”. Research in linguistic and etymologic roots in Philippine dialects does not come up with the word “Kali” except in Ilocano to mean a hawk/eagle or a hole in the ground. In Visayan it is also a hole in the ground. There is no reference to fighting systems, techniques, etc. Kalis is a Filipino pronunciation of the Malayan “keris” or kris and means a sword; without the “s” it cannot mean a sword.

Escrima is a corruption of the Spanish word “esgrima” to mean sword fighting. The use of “k” is an attempt to Filipinize as there is no “c” in the Filipino alphabet.

Arnis is again a corruption of the Spanish word “arnes” which means harness, in this case the suit of armor worn by Zarsuelistas or stage players denoting the fights between the Moors and the Christians in southern Spain and North Africa which naturally involved sword play. Arnis evolved to mean sword play and later on stick fighting.

Master Bersabal: It’s because of the different regional dialects, here in the Philippines.

Punong Guro Lalic: In my system Kalintaw KALI is a bladed weapon and ARNIS is a stick weapon and ESCRIMA the southern Masters of the Filipino martial arts they used it both bladed and stick and it sounds like a Spanish word.

Punong Lakan Nicolas: There are no differences in these terms. They are under the big umbrella of the Filipino martial arts. The only reason for the different spellings and wordings is due to the fact that the Philippines are composed of more than 7100 islands and countless dialects. Not to mention the colonialization period that the country went through the past centuries this, drastically changed our language. But if you look at the techniques, they are all the same. The difference lies in how the art is taught. At the end of the day, we are sharing our experiences and no matter what we do; Filipino martial arts will be Filipino martial arts. We can debate all we can about the terms but we will get nowhere. The country has been a melting pot of different cultures.

Grandmaster Lopez: It is an art rolled into one

a.) Although it uses different style it is still one martial art - ARNIS. Dissect it and it is still the same. Spaniards called it ARNIS or ESCRIMA. In other Asian countries they called it KALI. In some Region they called it “OLISI” In some “GAROTE” In the Ilonggo speaking region where I belonged we called it “BASTON” See?

b.) Escrima - Spanish Word



Punong Lakan
Garitony “Pet” Nicolas

Eskrima - Filipino Word

So what is the problem? The Spelling is different, but the meaning is still the same. Eskrima is Filipino term using “K” to make it real Filipino.

Grandmaster Sobrino: There are lots of systems that interchangeably use those terms, and it really depends upon the practitioners of a specific system.

Grandmaster Sanchez: Kali, Escrima and Arnis are one; only Kali is any long bladed weapon longer than a knife. Escrima is fencing in English or bolo fighting and Arnis is a wooden version of kali:

Escrima written in Spanish

Eskrima written in Tagalog or Filipino

Grandmaster Presas: Kali, Escrima and Arnis are terms signifying a singular art, the fighting art of the Philippines. Different systems of the Filipino martial arts share a common bond in simple and combat- applicable techniques and training methods. As for the different spellings Escrima and Eskrima, they also mean the same thing. It’s just that in the Filipino language, there is no letter “c.” Eskrima would be the more proper spelling, although Escrima is also acceptable and in fact is pronounced the same way. Many other names are actually used on a regional basis in the Philippines, like Baston, Garote, Fraile, Estokada and so on.

FMAdigest: *There are a lot of different Organizations, Federations, Associations etc in the Filipino martial arts, of course personal ones like LESKAS, Modern Arnis, LASI, Serrada, Ilustrisimo, Doce Pares to name just a few. And then there are Organizations which are made up of the different Organizations such as NFMA (National Filipino Martial Arts), PCKEAM (Philippine Counsel of Kali Eskrima Arnis Masters), etc. Do you ever think the Filipino martial arts will come under just one banner?*

Grandmaster Aycocho: The names of every organization are an identity who has each own officers and members it is a legacy for some. In my point of view they organize certain provisions for competition that if your group is not a sanction member you are excluded in participation specially in national and international competition and we don’t belong to one banner except using Philippine flag maybe if the Philippine sports commission has the power to mandate all related Filipino martial arts sports then be it, it shall be under one umbrella having different banner for identity of the group.

Master Ercia: With the new generation hopefully we can unite under one banner.

Grandmaster Geronimo: There is only one legitimate Sikaran Organization and that is the Pandaigdig Kapatirang Sikaran (World Sikaran Brotherhood). Any other group claiming to be a Sikaran Organization, which is not affiliated with the Pandaigdig Kapatirang Sikaran, is fraudulent. I have heard about other people claiming to be Masters, even Grandmasters of Sikaran. You can check their credentials and you will find out they are dubious. The practice of Sikaran as it is known today started in the 1950’s in Baras, Rizal, under my leadership. In 1958 the Sikaran Brotherhood of the Philippines was formed. The Pandaigdig Kapatirang Sikaran has a master roster of every member of the World Sikaran Brotherhood from the day it was established. If you check you will see that some of these people claiming to be Masters and Grandmasters were at one time our student but were expelled for one reason or another, but mainly for conduct unbecoming. Then there are those who take advantage of people’s gullibility and to validate whatever

they are teaching call it Sikaran. As far as Arnis de Mano is concerned, President Ray Velayo must take the initiative to bring together all the Arnis groups under the banner of Arnis Philippines.

Master San Joaquin: The unification of all Filipino martial arts associations and organizations not only in the Philippines but worldwide will only be possible if the practitioners would adhere to the true inherent disciplines of humility as a product of excellence. Excellence is applied and observed.

Master Macapagal: Simply the fact that today we can have a party involving different associations without challenges to duels is already a major accomplishment, much of it owed to the late Roland Dantes. The Filipinos are tribal and can think of nationhood only when faced with a common enemy, reverting to factionalism as soon as that threat is gone. It is said that when two Filipinos come together, three organizations form immediately: one for each of them and one that they form together. It's just that the need for identity is so strong.

Master Bersabal: Well I think it's their right to name their group whatever they want, but yes we are all the same "Eskrimadors".

Punong Guro Lalic: I hope the Filipino martial arts will come under one banner someday but it's very hard to happen; because Grandmasters and Masters they have they owned pride and different beliefs.

Punong Lakan Nicolas: Yes, if everybody humbles themselves and tries to help each other, instead of bringing each other down. It is a long, winding, bumpy, rocky, and dirty road. But if we set aside our differences and stand by each other, we can do this.

Grandmaster Lopez: With some practitioners trying to lead the Organization or Association the idea is remote. Unless all Grandmasters joined and meet in a convention formed one unified organization setting aside their organization retaining their art and styles, set up one miles and one governing body that is possible but with motives, intent and desires, the road toward that goal is hard and rough.

Grandmaster Sobrino: That would be really nice, being Filipinos particularly propagating the same culture of martial arts it would really be great if we could centralized the recognition of each groups by one banner because it will symbolize unity and camaraderie amongst the practitioners. If It was for me I would



Grandmaster
Ibarra E. Lopez



Grandmaster Vincente Sanchez
and young practitioners

suggest each group should be given equal treatment when this happen so that no conflict may arise.

Grandmaster Sanchez: The Philippine is composed of three major island Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao:

- Mindanao- East and Western Mindanao consist of Muslim and Christian
- Visayas- East and West consist of Cebuanos, Ilongos, Waray, Boholanoz
- Luzon- Ilocano, Pampanga, tagalong Bicol etc.

That's why we cannot act as one, or move along together in one banner. Arnis Philippines ,

NARAPHIL, WEKAF, WASA and Philippine council makes us together, and the only one banner that makes us all in the Philippine Flag.

Grandmaster Presas: I don't believe this would be practical. You see, Filipinos are freedom-loving by nature. This love of freedom extends not only against foreign rule but also against rule by one another in the martial arts. If this type of endeavor were to be undertaken, there would be endless disagreements on who would be tasked with the role of leader. Rather than try to "unite" under one person, a more positive and constructive course of action would be just too mutually acknowledge each other's existence and legitimacy. This is going on now, in that most legitimate Filipino martial art Masters and Grandmasters in the Philippines recognize each other.

Grandmaster Magdaraog: In my opinion I have been in the martial arts for almost 29 years. I have no comments on the Organizations but if it can be on one banner only. Why it is? Because too many wants to be the head of Filipino martial arts, for some reasons. For me I don't think it can be on one banner, if it can be done then much better. But the one who has established their names in the Filipino martial arts community aboard they must unite themselves for a one banner Filipino martial arts.

FMAdigest: *Now it seems that some of the Filipino martial arts are claiming to become a hybrid art. What is the reason or the feeling of this?*

Grandmaster Aycocho: Hybrid as it's a deadly punishing fighting art if done without safety and has no limits; we have reached a high level which is proven worldwide in any fighting arena. We showed Filipino courage and bravery, how effective we are to face challenges against others even our ancestors during the past world war. We are proud that it is in our blood and culture.

Master Ercia: Maybe they need this to evolve. Every art does this even the Japanese, Chinese, etc are good examples of this.

Grandmaster Geronimo: Most who are claiming that theirs is a hybrid art are those whose art do not have an authentic and legitimate origin. Their art has no verifiable source and that is why they say they "combine" the different arts into a hybrid art. Sikaran is a complete art. As an art of fighting, kicks are emphasized because the legs are more powerful and have a longer reach. However, the hands are also used for striking and thrusting. Submission techniques, take downs and throws are all part of Sikaran. In contests and competitions, however, there are rules prohibiting certain techniques for the sake of safety. If you practice an authentic and complete fighting art, such as Sikaran, and you do it well, you will not have to practice a "hybrid" art.

Master San Joaquin: It was brought about by some practitioners who really don't know that the original Filipino martial arts as practiced by the aborigines can exist and excel even if practiced without adulterations and mixture of foreign elements. While it is true that most of the existing Filipino martial arts are now practiced in an adulterated form, the Filipino martial arts in its pure form may still be extracted and restored into its original form.

Master Macapagal: Balintawak is claimed to have come from Saavedra with his native fighting know-how combined with a Frenchman's fighting style alleged to be that of the 12 pairs of knights of Charlemagne (Doce Pares). This was a hybridization. The needs of a period dictate the evolution of anything to be used for any such needs. Today, there is the UFC whose fighters are hybrids of various striking and grappling arts. The Filipino martial arts are also subject to the same influences. In Ilustrisimo there has been an attempt to maintain the original system as taught by Antonio "Tatang" Ilustrisimo. But without such rigorous adherence there would be a natural and unnoticed hybridization simply to survive against competitors who may have grappling foreign to dumog (Filipino jujitsu or wrestling) to their stick work.

Master Bersabal: My opinion personally is I don't need to claim or whatever as a hybrid; I don't need to show it. It's the people who know what s this kind of martial art, I only control and claim my own art but we must stay in our area of expertise.

Punong Guro Lalic: Well I have never felt that way because I just wanna be simple and humble.

Punong Lakan Nicolas: The word hybrid means to integrate and evolve. Now, we have to look into the reason why certain groups are trying to "hybridize" their art. Most of these groups try to fill the "gaps" in their art to make it better and stronger. Most of the time, they compete in tournaments and adjustment to the competition is a big reason why the need to hybrid came about. In this sense, we have to ask ourselves, have we learned and discovered enough of our own art? Have we really come to understand the deeper essence of our art? Have tried reaching deep down inside and search the answers within before we look outside? There's this saying, "Know yourself, love yourself, be happy". If we do this to our art, then the potential is enormous.

Grandmaster Lopez: The Filipino martial art becomes hybrid only if foreign art is infused in it, perhaps to make it unique or different from other Filipino martial art. Some conservative Grandmaster may frown at that.



Grandmaster Frank Sobrino with Lakan Robert Rodriguez

Grandmaster Sobrino: Filipino martial art is a military art, I would just say that change is something inevitable, we should be innovative and adapt to changes positively.

Grandmaster Sanchez: Each and every one of us wants to be the best and wants to out-smart each other.

Grandmaster Presas: The Filipino martial arts were, in fact, developed against the backdrop of bloody conflict with enemies from different countries. They were not created in a vacuum. As a

result, techniques were developed to counter those of the enemy. At times, it was inevitable that maneuvers would have also been adopted from the fighting arts of other nations. As far as the term "hybrid art" itself, it might just be a selling point to recruit students.

Grandmaster Magdaraog: A hybrid martial arts especially the Filipino martial arts, I don't know why, but there is no sure thing in my many years of training, but for sure it is



Punong Guro Galo D. Lalic

only for commercialism and commercialized martial arts training. I have trained in my system for many years but it is not about what you add on the name of the martial arts, it about the training and discipline you gain in it.

FMAdigest: *Personally what you think of the state of Filipino martial arts today and what do you think would bring the Filipino martial arts to greater recognition throughout the world?*

Grandmaster Aycocho: Filipinos enjoys challenges and some opportunistic hikers move forward to be recognized on their skills. Those observers overseas are adopting the same path as they admire the Filipino culture and tradition as well as the morals, physical and spiritual aspects. The artistic combinations of techniques would bring our martial arts forward to a greater recognition worldwide as we are not a kind of barbaric and brutal type. In Arnis sports competition we are aware of injury, safety vest are worn, blood spell during fights is a disqualification depending on its cause. The Philippines is a religious country although we are divided by two kinds of law of God we are united by one law of the land, The Philippines having a different tribal culture with 700,101 Islands.



Master Alex Ercia

Master Ercia: Like I said Filipino martial arts evolves as time evolves in how they deal with the different situations. But to me all martial arts have something good to offer. We just have to find what fits our taste. Even in the Filipino martial arts we have a thousand styles. But we just pick what we like. I just wish we could get rid of money makers that try to pose as real martial arts teachers. Then steal peoples hard earn money. This is what gives any martial art a bad reputation.

Grandmaster Geronimo: I can only talk about Sikaran. There are several Sikaran schools in the Philippines and all over the world, some are legitimate and some are not. Almost all the legitimate schools are affiliated with the Pandaigdig Kapatirang Sikaran (World Sikaran Brotherhood). We are trying to get all schools who claim to be teaching Sikaran to affiliate with us and take advantage of training, legitimize and upgrade their skill in Sikaran. We have training facilities in Baras, Rizal for this purpose. Your magazine is in a very advantageous position to fulfill this dream.

In the national level, there is presently a bill in congress (that has passed the first reading) authored by Congresswoman Adelina Rodriguez-Zaldriagga naming Sikaran the national martial art of the Philippines sand a bill in the senate (to go on the first reading) prepared by Jessie Rocales, Chief of Staff of Senator Lito Lapid, making Sikaran a mandatory Physical Education curriculum and providing the necessary funding for its implementation by the Department of Education.

Master San Joaquin: As I said earlier the Filipino martial arts usually exist in its adulterated form, which made it able to catch up with globalization as it is recognized as a similar discipline, however it is my belief that our Filipino martial arts may be purely extracted in its uniqueness is established through excellent performance and that would need the unity of all practitioners, meaning disregarding personal aggrandizement, in

favor of the martial arts we profess to love so much. I advocate that we all go by the battle cry, “**United We Stand, Divided We Fall!**”

Master Macapagal: There are very few of the Filipino martial arts that maintain the strict battle capability of their systems. The formation of sports groupings and competitions has forced the softening of attitudes and techniques for less violent expressions. Perhaps a more serious approach to battle capability will bring more recognition. The UFC and similar organizations have forced the less effective fighting systems out and condensed the more efficient, effective techniques in their fighters for them to win in the increasingly true-to-life intense competitions in which they participate.

Master Bersabal: The Filipino martial arts are still introducing the Eskrima to share around the world, our style of martial arts. The martial art of Eskrima in tradition has no ending. Filipino Grandmasters and Masters are open to share and welcome whoever is interested to know our traditional martial arts. Thank you very much.

Punong Guro Lalic: Gradually the Filipino martial arts is getting the recognition throughout the world is simply because they used it in Hollywood movies like Bruce Lee ‘Enter the Dragon’ Steven Seagal ‘Under Siege II’ Tommy Lee Jones ‘The Hunted’ and many more. Plus in Special Forces they use it for self defense, for its simple but effective techniques.

Punong Lakan Nicolas: At this point, Filipino martial arts, is in a state of divisiveness. One group tries to bring down another. One group keeps on bragging they have the “ultimate” art. One group keeps their art “exclusive” to a specific band of people. To get greater recognition, we have to learn to accept each other that we are brothers and sisters in the art. In this way, Filipinos would be at the forefront of promoting the art and show to the whole world that we are the true authority in Filipino martial arts.

Grandmaster Lopez: It is as fragmented as before that is why ARNIS can never joined the Olympics. Although some Organizations tried to join Arnis with one rule still it is a long journey to unify the Filipino martial art will create lots of debate as group tried to outdo each other. Unless all these hindrances set aside sit down on a table and organized into one unified Filipino martial art then I believe the art could be a great success for all Filipino practitioners. - Thank you and God Bless

Grandmaster Sobrino: Unity, humility, mutual respect for every system not just for Filipino martial art systems but also with other martial arts systems in the world.



Master Oliver Bersabal

Grandmaster Sanchez: For me Filipino martial art is already known throughout the world and we could make this better by supporting and engaging in our own Filipino martial art.

Grandmaster Presas: I think the Filipino martial arts are enjoying unprecedented popularity these days. The arts are very popular with the military and police of different countries. Civilians also are joining up for the purpose of learning

practical self-defense skills. I believe we are on the right track toward propagating and forever preserving the arts of our forefathers for generations to come.

Grandmaster Magdaraog: Personally I think the Filipino martial arts, has gained its popularity in the martial arts community globally. But it is only for those who have the access on the global community. But here in the Philippines it is different. It can bring the Filipino martial arts to greater recognition throughout the world by making it a world class that there must be a one banner Filipino martial art and it must be here in this country where it has been born. “The Philippines”.



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Thoughts on Bashing Different FMA Systems

By: RJ Rivera

Since I was a kid, I became very fascinated with martial arts. I envy the kids doing Karate in SM (back in the day, AAK was still there) doing punches and kicks. Unfortunately, my parents could not afford to enroll me there since it was very expensive (It is still expensive to send kids to martial arts school nowadays.). But despite that, my dream of being able to do martial arts did not fade. My martial arts fantasies started to take shape back in 2006 when I started doing Thai boxing. I only lasted for a month since my real interest was on weaponry. I know I can't do Kendo because the lessons cost a fortune and the equipment is VERY expensive. I considered Arnis since it looks cool since you have to weapons (I use to see double stick techniques) and it's Filipino. Working in the call center industry gave me unlimited access to the internet (though it's not allowed, I know everybody does it) so I started looking over the web for possible schools. I realized it was very hard to find a school near my area (Quezon City); it's even harder to find a real school (I guess you guys know what I mean).

At first, I thought that Arnis has one general system, with the same set of rules, techniques, and philosophy. So my mindset was if I go to from one group to another, they're all the same banana. But I was very wrong. I learned that if the country has 7,100 islands in its archipelago, the number of systems and groups are as many (or could be more). I finally found a school where I stayed for 3 years (on and off) and then now I'm in my current group for almost a year. But even though I've settled down, I still stayed online looking into the activities of different groups, studying their opinions about different styles, and as I go along, it turns from sad, to worse, to worst.

Being online and exposed to different Filipino martial arts websites and forums, you will see groups, Masters, and even Grandmasters "advertising" their art/system. I mean, there is nothing wrong with this. The only thing that our forefathers wanted is to make sure that our beloved Filipino martial arts will not just fade like dust in the wind. But as I read through these websites, the sad reality of Filipinos not being united in their own art starts to sink in. A Grandmaster bashing other styles, bragging that their style is the best. A group trying to assume that everybody is doing their style and keeps on forcing that their group's policy should be followed during tournaments. A "Sports Master" mentioned that not all stances are appreciated by everyone so a generic stance should be showed only during tournaments. Some would say we don't block and disarming, doing such means losing in the battle. Some say practitioners should focus only using single stick/weapon since it is not applicable in the real world. Some say you should focus on double weapon techniques since it would develop ambidexterity. I mean, I'm only quoting only a handful of people here. If you try going to the Quezon City Circle on a Sunday morning, how many "styles" and "systems" would you find? The Luneta Park is also a home for countless stick warriors. Don't even start talking about those "McDojos" out there.

What am I trying to say? There are thousands out there wanting to learn the art for different reasons. And when you are dealing with countless individuals, you are also dealing with thousands of different personalities. Haven't we asked ourselves, even mixed martial art practitioners who are suppose to be versed with the different aspects of fighting, they still have their "base" or "main" art which is different from one another. At

the end of the day, it still up to the one who practices the art. If you don't use blocks because you really don't need it, then fine. If I prefer disarming over locking and trappings, that's just ok. If your "prepare" stance for a full contact match looks like a monkey, then eat your hearts out! If somebody wants to fight a CQB, then let him/her be. If another guy wants to fight while keeping distance, let him/her make it work.

Each of these "styles" or "systems" was developed through the traditions and experiences of those who founded them. There is an old quote that says "we are all the sum of our experiences". We pass on to others what we have, and what we have learned. Our joys, sorrows, ups, and downs, all of these, we pass on to our students. But we cannot expect that it will all be the same once you pass on your teachings.

Why? Just for the simple fact that they are different individuals. Their reasons for learning are different. They might even reject most of your teachings because it does not fit their lifestyle or their paradigm of living. Even the so called 'McDojos', you might call them that but they are providing the needs of their students who patronize them. We also have to remember that the students enrolled



and stayed in your schools because they found something that they were looking for. They stayed because it works with the life that they are trying to live. They stayed because they found something that they love to do. And it is very unfair to bash each other's system on the internet because we are disrespecting another's individualism. Yes, this is a free country but we must also learn to appreciate what others do. There is always a room for us to learn from each other. No matter how many tournaments you might have won, no matter how many trophies or medals you've gained, no matter how many students (thousands or millions for that matter), it does not give you the right to tell everyone that his/her art is inferior to yours. Who knows, the "inferior" system might have something that your system might have been looking for all along.

We are all Filipinos. We might have different identities, colors, dialects, personalities, problems, etc. But there is one thing that can unite us - our very own art: our Filipino martial arts. It is the one thing that we can show to the whole world which will say, I am Filipino.

Martial Arts Schools Quality vs. Quantity

Photos from past issues
Special Edition Home Made Training Equipment
Training Targets - By Jeff Finder
Escrima Training Partner - FMAdigest
Special Edition IMB Academy

In the 50's and 60's when the martial arts was not the rage and wasn't known widely by the public, tradition was a major fact and you earned your promotion to the next higher rank based on your demonstration in the knowledge of the art and your capabilities to demonstrate techniques with the explanation of each movement, also the personal presentation of one's self in character and habits. In the 70's it was the fly-by-night martial arts mania school which usually closed as fast as it opened taught by instructors who took a few lessons or learned from a book and believed they were ready to make the easy money with the martial arts fad that was going on, making it very difficult for the reputable martial arts instructors. The 80's were a struggle, for people true to the art were trying to set the record straight and promote the art in the philosophy and true respects due each style.

In the 90's it seems, and I say this without offense to many a martial artist who have attained their rank through training and requirements of their art and are fully qualified, that it isn't what you know but what rank you have attained, everywhere you turn you saw 7th, 8th, 9th, or 10th degrees. Some seem to just have spent a short time in the orient and came back with this status, or so they claimed, or in some way got promoted politically to a high-ranking belt degree. And you had to ask yourself can they really be genuine, can they demonstrate the requirements of that rank or just talk a good story.

At that time you had to wonder, that in the future would some claim to be a 20th degree or a Supreme Ultimate Great Grandmaster. In the past as in the present genuine martial arts schools vary in styles, teaching methods, and stability, and of course the dream of every school owner is success in his or her school, that is to have qualified students who can demonstrate the style with pure poetry in motion and of course make enough money to pay the bills and make a living. But this is not what happens in most cases in today's economy. It is thought that to have a successful school the location, teaching a well known style, or having a large establishment to give the lessons in are the key factors in gaining and being recognized as a success.

But this could not be further from the truth. All or most schools claim to be traditional and a few that are not traditional, say that they have taken only the best techniques and philosophies from their martial arts teachings and studies and have put together what they believe is the best and most practical style, [The Bruce Lee philosophy].

But unfortunately not all schools are run traditionally for the power of the dollar, which makes quantity a necessity over rides, the quality which should be the major concern in any reputable school.

How embarrassing and degrading is it for a student who thinks he is ready to defend himself or herself in any situation whether in the street or at a tournament is in

fact unable too. And who is the one who suffers? Not the school immediately, but the individual, who is the one that gets injured.

The quantity comes into reality when money is the factor and what are some of the ways people are drawn into this kind of establishment?

Examples:

- Sign up and you get a free uniform with your first lesson (usually made with cheap material and in some way your first payment ends up covering the cost of the uniform).
- The promise to make you a Black belt in one year or less.
- Weapons training right from the start, (usually the student doesn't even know the basics, let alone understanding what he or she is doing). An exception to this would be Filipino martial arts, which most times begins with weapons (baston) training.

What about promotions? Some schools promote students rapidly in order to maintain the flow of money coming in whether the student is truly ready or not. What does this do besides keep the money coming in and pay the bills?

- WELL ASK YOURSELF - unless the student is totally gifted, which is a rarity, and then is the person really qualified, to hold that rank? Can he or she defend himself or herself in the street?
- WHAT ABOUT CONTRACTS? This is a big money maker for it insures that a certain amount of money will come in, whether the student continues or quits.

When looking for a school, be on the lookout for the gimmicks of today's society. Do not make your decision on whether or not the school is full of students or there are just a few. If the school is crowded with students this maybe because it is well established and the instructors promote quality, honesty, and genuinely promote the style taught. If the school has just a few students this maybe because it just got established and the instructor is not well known or the style is not well known.

Or the reverse maybe the case where if the school is crowded and has just recently opened, there may be a gimmick and the students have not caught on yet, or if just a few students the public has caught on and are not interested in the gimmick that's offered.

Also some thoughts that the public looks at maybe, is the size of the school, (if large with a lot of weapons on display the belief is, it must be reputable and good). Size of the school should never be a factor, for some schools are taught out of a garage or even in a back yard.



Some Schools



Garage



In the House



At the Park

What are some of the factors in choosing a school? Cleanliness, uniformity, presentation of honesty and sincerity in teaching the style offered. The knowledge put forth from the instructor of the styles history, execution and the reality of the techniques being taught, and the way the class is taught and organized. Also after a time is there a lot of repetition in teaching techniques with no step forward in knowledge or is there a constant repetition in improving your techniques with continuous knowledge being added to upgrade the student.

Besides the history, philosophy, and the execution of techniques, here is a question, which is not usually asked, but should be thought of and approached to fully comprehend the style being taught. When executing a form/kata what are the movements representing? How effective is the movement in the street or a tournament? What is the counter attack to the technique?

Another thought in QUALITY verses QUANTITY is what kind of school are you interested in a traditional school whose values are in tradition and insuring that the student is fully qualified in all aspects before being promoted, or are you interested in the wham bam thank you for your money I'll promote you to pay the bills?

CONCLUSION:

To be skilled in the martial arts is a long arduous path that if pursued is rewarding in building strength and harmony in one's self. The martial art is taught from the heart not from the wallet.

It must be understood that due to today's attitude, adult students and parents must carefully select a school and instructor, which will truly teach the martial arts in the philosophical and traditional ways that it was intended.

How to research a school:

1. Attend a few classes as an observer; see how well the students are disciplined, and how clean is the school.
2. Observe the instructor or instructor's to see how they conduct class. Are they qualified and are the assistants qualified in teaching the art?
3. Do the monthly fees for instruction seem fair for the time involved in learning the art? Is there a



contract and is it unbreakable? These kinds of contracts are generally sold to finance companies.

A last thought is that basic martial art does not originate from the fancy motion picture fantasies. The martial art promotes the culture, training, and philosophies of respect, honor, loyalty and humility in one's life.

When a perspective student enters a school, before going on the floor for the first time a good teacher personally take the individual into his office and the student is made to clearly understand from the beginning what is expected. The guarantee is discipline; building of strength not only of the body but also in character, courage, self-pride, reality in training and sweat, yes a lot of sweat.

Note: There are a lot of good schools, great schools and outstanding schools with good, great and outstanding instructors throughout the world. And on the other hand there are some really bad schools, not just money makers, but with instructors that are out not only for the money, but a reputation, bring about the atmosphere that if you do not want to train in their style or Organization then you suck. And also shows no respect to other systems or styles.

This article will not list the good, great, or outstanding instructors or schools, nor will it mention the instructors or schools out to make a buck or reputation. Each will speak for themselves it is just up to you the practitioner to research and make your own personal decision.

All the following schools were sent the questionnaire to the Grandmasters, Masters and Punong Guros, but did not answer for whatever reason. And also some that are not listed.

To contact them visit the FMAdigest website Schools Philippines

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N P R S T V W Y Z

A

Academia Lightning Scientific Arnis

U.P. Diliman Charter
Donor's Garden
Quezon City, NCR - 1106
928-6973

AKETS Martial Arts

DULAC Martial Arts
Dasmariñas Cavite - 4115
[0921] 572-1353

AKETS Self-Defense

B46 L8 Phase III E2 Kaunlaran Vill. Longos
Malabon - 1472
[632] 410-9377

Anilao Camps Arnis/Escrima/Kali

Anilao East, Mabini
Batangas - 4202
[632] 871-0470
[632] 826-5803

Aquinas University Kuntaw Association

Kuntaw ng Pilipinas
Aquinas University of Legazpi
Rawis, Legaspi City
[052] 482-0542/ 820-8716

ARJUKA

(Arnis Judo Karate) and Tapado
Brgy. Malingin, Bago City
Negros Occidental - 6101
[034] 0926 220-4509

Arjumano Club

Gym Plus Health Fitness
3rdFlr Metropolis
Muntinlupa City, NCR
63 (02) 850-4752 loc.167

Arnis Association International, Inc

108-B Balayong Bauan
Batangas
[043] 403-0166
0919-507-2916
0918-293-4548

Arnis Combat Kiathson System Philippines

Paco
Manila - 1300
[0916] 425-3540

Arnis Defense Silat

2049 Int. Tramo
Pasay City
[0918] 423-6976

Arnis Garrotte Tandang

Domampot Asingan
Urdaneta City, Pangasinan
[0920] 959-2717

Tibker, Dumampot, Asingan, Pangasinan

Urdaneta City
[0920] 959-2717

Arnis Kali Escrima Telebangco System (AKETS)

Block 42 Lot 6 Phase III-E2 Kaunlaran Village
Malabon City
[632] 4109377

Arnis Pasindo Escrima

Luneta, Park
Manila – 1000

Asian Brotherhood of Lethal Defense International

Master Nelson Vargas
Criminology Dept. 4th Floor
University Bohol
Tagbilaran City, Bohol - 6300
63 [917] 426-7690

B

Baritan Martial Arts Club

6 Pescador St. West Baritan
Malabon city
[63] 281-8340

Black Scorpion Arnis International

Tagaytay Chapter
219 Kaybagal Nort
Tagaytay City - 4120
[0919] 699-6518
[046] 413-2872

C

Cauayan National High School

Turayong Cyn.City
Isabela - 3305
[0926] 390-8275

Claro M. Recto High School Chapter

718 San Marcelino St. Ermita
Manila - 1000
[0921] 572-1353

Center for the Promotion of Classical Martial

Gymnastics Hall, Cebu City Sports Complex
Cebu City - 6000
[0929] 735-4913

D

Dekiti Tirsia Siradas

Los Banos, Laguna
63 [920] 727-5983

Manuela Park, Manuela Subd.
Pamplora Tres, Las Pinas City
[0927] 598-0623

Cyflex Fitness Gym 3rd Flr Bumanlag
Bldg Alvarez Ave Las Pinas
Metro.Manila - 0702
874-67-68
Cell: [0917] 499-9113

DULAC - Martial Arts Consanguinity

3rd Floor, Daza Hall
New San Isidro [Galas] Barangay Hall
Galas Mini-Park, Unang Hakbang St.
San Isidro, Galas, Quezon City
[632] 415-4602
[0918] 556-9990

Valley Ministries In Christ
215 Mayfair St. Montevista Park Subdivision
Cainta, Rizal
[632] 240-1041

2/F JFG Bldg., 900 San Marcelino St.
Ermita, Manila - 1000
[632] 404-2185 / 404-2077

Dumaguete Arnis Association

90-A Dr. E. Meciano Road
Dumaguete City, Oriental Negros - 6200
[0928] 772-2874

E

Eskrima De Abanico Ampit System

Bocau, Bulacan - 3018
[0915] 561-6215

F

Filipino Art of Modified Arnis Federation

Block 5, Purok Rosal New Isabela
Tacurong City, Sultan Kudarat - 9800
[0926] 401-1145

Filipino Tactics Combat Judo [FILTACDO]

P-6 Crossing Maygatasan, Bayugan-1
Agusan Del Sur - 0852
63 [910] 652-0211

FMA and Arnis

Ayala Park
Cebu - 6000
[0929] 522-1778

Fuerza Abaniko Filipinas

BF Resort Village
Las Piñas City - 1740
[632] 895-0854
[632] 845-3387

G

Garciano Arnis De Mano

YMCA Building
Tapuac District
Dagupan City, Pangasinan - 2400
522-3494 / 515-4856

Grotto Vista Gym

[Infront of Grotto Vista Swimming Pool]
Hardware 2000, Tungkong Mangga
City of San Jose Bulacan
[0917] 516-9729 / (632) 419-1611

Gen. R. Papa Memorial High School Arnis Club

Tuktukan, Taguig City - 1000
[0906] 411-3771
[02] 549-8930 / [02] 524-2997

Goshin Kai Martial Arts

Tayuman, Manila
[632] 471-2345

H

Hybrid Yaw Yan

5th Flr. Karen Bldg 9 Annapolis St Cubao
Quezon City
[02] 457-9646
[02] 557-0057
[0905] 341-6868
[0923] 860-6399
[0918] 274-6083

I

International Jendo Federation (IJF)

16 Mariveles St.
Mandaluyong City - 1550
[0917] 366-7061

International Kuntaw Federation

City Coliseum
Puerto Princesa City
Palawan - 5300
[0915] 759-9073

International JetComJak Combat Martial Arts

Ilagan, isabela, 3360
[0927] 826-6893

Isabela Arnis Team

#04 Inc Compound District #1
Cauayan City - 3305
[0920] 200-3098

International Judo Arnis Karate Combat Martial Arts

Blk 8 lot 37 Bir Vallage West Fearview
Quezon City
[0908] 381-3220

J

Jack & Jill School Karate Dojo

Homesite
Bacolod City - 6100
434-3094

K

Kali Majapahit

Wildcard Gym 101
Ms Florendo Abanao Rd.
Baguio
63 [910] 590-1987

Kali Silat Arnis Association

California Fitness Gym
Bacolod City - 6100
63 [0915] 676-4844

Kapatirang Doble Olisi Escrima

#64 Jerusalem St.
St. Anthony Village lanang
Davao City - 8000
[82] 221-5297
[082] 221-0421

Kenbukan Karatedo

2nd flr., Garcia Commercial Bldg.
Antipolo - 1870
[0927] 517-1070

Koredas Obra Mano Sugbu

Sector 5 Tingub Road
Pagsabungan Mandaue - 6014
[6332] 422-1366

L

Lapu-Lapu Martial Arts Club

Pusok
Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu - 6015
[032] 342-5685

Lapu-Lapu Viñas Arnis Aficionados Association

65 Lacson St.
Bacolod City, Philippines
[034] 708-0912

Kris An-nur Lupah-Sug/Islamia Silat

Barangay 559, Zone 55, Valdez St.
Sampaloc, Manila - 1008
[63922] 612-4230

Krus Baston ng Pilipinas

Brgy. Sico
Lipa City, Batangas - 4217
[43] 757-3525

KSS International

Citadella Exc.Village
Pulang Lupa
Las Pinas - 1740
[632] 871-0470
[632] 826-5803

Kuntaw Ng Pilipinas

Catarman Chapter
Catarman
Northern. Samar - 6400
[0908] 409-6115

Las Piñas Meibukan Karatedo Kobudo Dojo

12 Olive St., Manuela Subdivision
Las Piñas - 1742
[632] 471-2345

Leds Sunsatak Academy

384 I.Jaena St.Binangonan, Rizal
Manila - 1904
[0198] 292-4713

Laraw Martial Arts Training Center

Blk.7, Lot 1,Topland Subd., SAV 13
Paranaque City - 1700
[0917] 836-2433
[0916] 236-2433

Las Pinas Arnis/Escrima/Kali - KSS

Citadella Exc.Village
Pulang Lupa
Las Pinas - 1740
[632] 871-0470
[632] 826-5803

M**Mandirigmang Kaliradman**

[Warrior of Kali]
YMCA Gym, Jacinto Extension
Davao City - 8000

Mantas Daga

605th CDC, 6RCDU (PA)
Bacolod City - 6100
63 [34] 708-9872

MantasDaga International

Fitness California Gym
Bacolod City - 6100
[0926] 478-3350

Martial Arts Training Center of the Philippines

Taguig City - 1000
[0906] 411-3771 / 549-8930

N**Navotas Kali Warrior Club**

San Lorenzo Ruiz
Companion Martyrdom Church
Phase 1-C, Kapitbahayan, Kaunlaran, NBBS.
Navotas, Metro Manila
[0921] 617-6010

P**Paclibar Bicol Arnis**

7 Gulaman st. Cor Duhat,
Western Bicutan
Taguig, Metro Manila - 1630
[0915] 467-9664
[0927] 345-9351

Little Angels Learning School

Aniban Bacoor
Cavite
63 [46] 417-5078

MATCOP - IMAFP

Taguig City Chapter
Taguig City
[0906] 411-3771/549-8930

Mig-Sune-Do Eskrim

Cebu City, Cebu - 6000
Residence 63 [32] 413-44439
Office 63 [32] 256-2620
Cell [0916] 898-8818
[0919] 371-0190

Modern School of Self Defense

Quickshape Fitness Gym
Magsaysay Ave.
Naga City, Camarines Sur - 4418
[054] 473-2433

Email**Website****Negros Kali International Assn' Inc.**

127-K Bat-us Calamba
Bacolod City - 6100
63 [34] 433-6577
Cell: [0918] 322-1679

Philippine Arnis Kuntaw Association

Marikina Polytechnic College
Marikina City

Pasay City Jendo Training Center

Mason Bldg., 3rd Flr. Rm 302, Libertad
(Fronting MRT/LRT Station)
Pasay City, NCR
[632] 717-2782

Pekiti-Tirsia Tactical Training

PNP/AFP National HQS.
Metro Manila
[0920] 241-9320

Petikalis Strategic University

Blk 3 Carmela Valley Homes
Talisay – 6100

Philckaju Club, Inc.

2505 M. dela Cruz St.
Pasay City, Metro Manila - 1300
(632) 473-2631
63 [918] 484-2600

Puerto Galera Chapter

White Beach, San Isidro, Puerto Galera
Oriental Mindoro
63 [926] 272-3248

Calbayog Chapter

Cagmanipis
Calbayog City, Western Samar
63 [927] 415-0477

Naujan Chapter

Kalinisan, Naujan
Oriental Mindoro - 5204
63 [0926] 272-3248 / [02] 473-2631

Makati City Chapter

203 Villa Mercedes 1051 Metropolitan Ave.
Makati City
[02] 473-2631 / [02] 391-7712
[091] 8484-2600

Dapitan Chapter

40 Dapitan St.
Pasay City - 1300
[02] 473-2631 / [02] 391-7712
[091] 8484-2600

Philippine Classical Arnis Abaniko Tres

167 Salaban, Amadeo
Cavite - 4119
63 [927] 907-0965

Philippine Combat Karate Aikido Judo Club

40 Dapitan St.
Pasay City, Metro Manila - 1300
[632] 473-2631
[0918] 484-2600

Philippines Kalis Research Studies

Zone 12A
Talisay - 6100
[0920] 326-9940

Philippine Martial Arts Combat Aikido (PHIMACA)

2nd flr., Felisa Building
Gov. Santiago St., Malinta
Valenzuela City, Philippines
63 [918] 226-5378

Philippine Tourism Authority Arnis Team

T.M. Kalaw Ermita Mla.
Manila - 1000
[02] 524-2997

Philippine Yaw-Yan ArDigma Martial Arts

Hacienda Caretas
San Jose Del Monte
Bulacan - 3023

PIGSSAI

Dot Bldg, Rm 508 PTA TM Kalaw
Manila - 1000
524-2497

R

Rapido Realismo Martial Arts Luneta Group

373 Brgy. Anahaw, P-1A
Silang, Cavite - 46
[6346] 890-2544

Robas Otsotiros Baston Arnis System

64 M.Gregorio St. Canumay West
Valenzuela City, Metro Manila
[0920] 547-0806

Makati City - 1200
[632] 895-0854

S

Salaknib Martial Arts System

3rd flr., Onfeg, Poblacion
Bontoc - 2616
[0909] 609-4715

Sikaran-Arnis Gym

Maghusay St.
Rizal - 1980
011 [632] 653-4229

Sandakan Modern Arnis

4842 Camia St. Marimar Village
Paranaque, Metro Manila - 2100
[0915] 281-0549

Simatukin Institute of Martial Arts

6 Cadena De Amor Street, Roxas District
Quezon City
(632) 410-2853

Scientific Integrated Group of Martial Artist

#19 Pres. Garcia st; Purok 9,
Zone 6, Signal
Taguig City, Manila - 1630
[919] 399-3437
[632] 839-5912

Sistema Birada Martial Arts Center

1654 Piy Margal St., Sampaloc
Manila - 1015
740-9703
63 [920] 602-0895

Senkotiros International

Basdiot, Moal Boal
Cebu
[0916] 358-4304

Sundangan Baneg

Locsin, Luzuriaga St.
(Buddy, Manughilot)
Bacolod City - 6100
034 [0920] 857-3324

Sidekick Martial Arts Dojo

Candida Maria Cor. Berospe, BF Homes
Paranaque City, Metro Manila
842-7203

Brgy. Taculing, Bacolod City -6100
63 [34] 708-9874

T

Teovel Balintawak Self-Defense Club, Inc

Basak
Mandaue City, Cebu - 6000
422-2018

Team Yaw Yan Kampilan

[Near Las Pinas Doctor Hospital]
Las Pinas - 1740
city: Las Pinas
(02) 7741-350, +63 [927] 576-6641

V

Visayan Martial Arts

475-A Peaceville Rd
Kinasang-An, Pardo
Cebu City, Cebu - 6000
[032] 272-2605 or [0917] 391-8265

Vasquez Modified Martial Arts International

No. 42, 13th St. 2nd Floor SEACREST Building
Bacolod City, Philippines 6100
[6334] 433-7232
63 [918] 772-9192

W

Warriors Martial Art

418 Manuel Quezon St.
Lower Bicutan, Taguig City
{0916} 579-4147

World Solefighters Arnis

444 EDSA
c/o Pegasis Bar
Pasay City - 1000
[0928] 735-0865

World Simatukin Union

6 Cadena De Amor St.,
Roxas District,
Quezon City, 1103
[632] 410-2853/410-9377

Y

Yaming

Lt10, Blk3, Cityville Subd.
Fortune Town
Bacolod City - 6100

Yaw-Yan ArDigma Makati

4008 Yague St, Pasong Tamo
[Back of Daily Inquirer office]
Makati, Manila - 1200
[632] 870-4750

Yaw-Yan

108 Sn Nuan Aprit
Pampanga
[0915] 244-1116

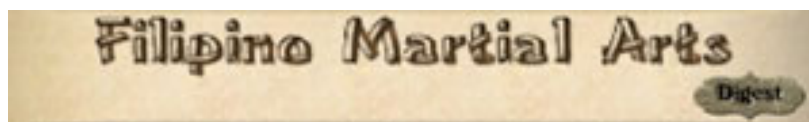
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