

Filipino Martial Arts

SIKARAN

Digest

Special Edition
2009



*Grandmaster Geronimo
with Senior Practitioners*



Grandmaster Milton Geronimo



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From the Publishers Desk

Kumusta

It was an honor and privilege to meet Grandmaster Meliton Geronimo and Master Jaime Geronimo and some of the senior students of Sikaran while in the Philippines. And I truly have to thank Emmanuel Querubin, known to friends as Emmy.

Though Grandmaster Geronimo had a stroke a while back, he still has the dynamic personality and is constantly building strength physically.

Visiting Grandmaster Geronimo at his home was an experience, seeing the history of Sikaran all around his home. I even had the privilege to see his student's roster, which he has kept since he became Grandmaster of Sikaran. There was quite a few eye opening entries of past students.

In this Special Edition Emmanuel Querubin shares some of the history of Sikaran. Emmanuel Querubin was appointed as the recorder by Grandmaster Geronimo to document the history of Sikaran and Grandmaster Geronimo. And he did an excellent job in doing so. His book is a "Must-Have" if you really want to know about the true history of Sikaran, plus the concept and Philosophy.

It is satisfying to see senior students that have been with Grandmaster Geronimo and Sikaran, still dedicated and promoting the art. And the Organization continues to grow and prosper even today and one can see that it will most definitely continue on into the future.

Sikaran has dealt with the changes of the martial arts throughout the years and has adapted to today's knowledge and skills demanded of a martial artist. Yet it has kept its values and professionalism of the original art of Sikaran.

Well let me shut-up so you can read and enjoy the art of Sikaran.

Maraming Salamat Po

History of Early Sikaran

The confiscation and outlawing of weapons created a fertile environment for the development and propagation of an ancient system of physical activity using the empty hands and the bare feet in offensive and defensive maneuvers. This physical activity was eventually called **SIKARAN**. The Spanish authorities viewed the system as a pastime and recreational activity, rather than an unarmed system of fighting that could very well be lethal. The Spaniards, being armed with muskets and swords, did not consider it a threat.

There is no written history or record of Sikaran. What is known about Sikaran was passed on by word of mouth from generation to generation. In fact, it is unequivocally believed that this is the first authoritative and only complete written account about Sikaran. This written account is based, not on history books or official archives. It is the unimpeachable recollection of the people who were part of Sikaran from its inception.

The following is a verbatim chronicle of an interview in 1960, with the last Hari (champion) of Sikaran, Cipriano Geronimo, (father of Meliton and Jaime Geronimo). Cipriano Geronimo's knowledge of the history of Sikaran was how he remembered it as told by his father Bonifacio Geronimo, a Hari ng mga Hari (Champion of champions) and Bonifacio's mentor, a man who was simply remembered as Ka Rumagit (Ka is a Filipino term of respect for an elder).

Ka Rumagit and Bonifacio Geronimo's Sikaran bond lasted all through their lives. Ka Rumagit was also Bonifacio Geronimo's alalay (second) and tagasanay (coach), during the latter's competitive years, as a Sikaran fighter.

Melencio Bigasin and Manuel Ocampo, two elder contemporaries of Cipriano Geronimo who were Haris (champions) turned Guros (teachers), helped in clarification and confirmation of information and events that time had shrouded with confusion, even doubts.

Ka Rumagit was a kaingnero (clearing the forest by fire) farmer in the mountains bordering the towns of Baras and Tanay, in Rizal province. He was soft spoken, to the point of being an introvert. He did not say where he was from or who his parents were. Nobody even knew what his real name was. However, he volunteered the fact that he learned the fighting systems out of sheer necessity. It was suspected that he is the son of an Ita (mountain people called Negrito) due to his physiognomy.

Standing no more than five-feet tall, Ka Rumagit was built like a rock, massive and hard. His size camouflaged his agility. He favored a maneuver called the daluhong ng unggoy (monkey attack), where he jumps on his opponent's hips preventing the opponent from drawing his itak at the same time gouging off the eyes. He is also partial to Sibasib ng Tamaraw (head-butt to the nose). Ka Rumagit claims that he learned these tactics from his Ita (mountain tribe in the Philippines, called Negrito) friends. Another technique he favors is attacking the knee to break it in order to "bring the opponent down to his size." He called the technique pangbali ng tuhod (breaking the knee). If he does not want to seriously injure his opponent, he just grabs the testicles and squeezes it hard. He said that the pain is intensified by the fact that most mountain people have salt deficiency and develops what he calls bayag ng kabayo (horse testicles) where the testicles are swollen and very sensitive to the touch.

Ka Rumagit said he spent a good deal of his young life in the mountainsides, where Tulisan (bandits), roam freely and prey on innocent farmers. The fighting system popular at the time was Arnis de Mano. However, even as a child Ka Rumagit's favorite physical activity was the "kicking game." The "kicking game" was a favorite pastime of farmers. However, Ka Rumagit regarded this activity in a more serious manner. By combining kicking with Arnis de Mano in combat situations, the opponent may be easily caught off guard. Ka Rumagit was an expert on both systems. He used his fighting skill to successfully defend his life.

The "kicking game" originated from animal behavior. By imitating the horse, they developed the damba (horse kick with the front legs) and the sipang kabayo (horse kick with the rear legs). By emulating the carabao (water buffalo) the padyak ng kalabaw was developed. A carabao, by nature is a very docile animal. However, it has the habit of stomping the rear foot and swaying its tail when annoyed with the birds that feed on the insects on the carabao. They also mimicked the agila (eagle), the labuyo (wild fowl), and the bulik or panabong (fighting cock).

In order to gain speed and height, they jump up to kick from a running start, just as an eagle swoops down on its prey and called the kick dagit ng agila or dinagit.

Imitating the pagaspas (flapping) of the wings of the labuyo (wild fowl) to repulse and get away from threats, allowed them to refine the movement for open hand blocking and slapping techniques. These hand techniques were incorporated with the kicking techniques, making the system a more exciting game and a more effective fighting system.

The direct frontal attack of the panabong (fighting cock) inspired techniques they called salpok ng bulik (frontal assault of a type of fighting cock).

Sikaran (then referred to as kicking game) was widely practiced by the farmers and it became a favorite past time. The term Sikaran was derived from the challenge "magpanikaran tayo" (let's play the "kicking game") when they want to enjoy that physical activity.

"Nagsikaran kami" (we played the "kicking game") became a favorite verbalization of the activity by people after they played the game. Parents scolded their sons for playing the "kicking game" with the term "nagsikaran ka na naman maghapon" (you played the "kicking game" again all day long).

With the constant repetition of the term, the activity or the game became known formally as Sikaran. For centuries, Sikaran was an informal unorganized game.

In the 1800's, rules governing "official" matches were established. Offensive techniques, other than foot kicking maneuvers were drastically restricted. Use of hand techniques was limited to blocking, pushing, and pulling. Sikaran became a methodized foot-fighting system. The term Hari (king) was adopted as the title for the champion. This resulted in a wider acceptance and more accelerated propagation of Sikaran. Every Sikaranista coveted the title Hari and the glory associated with the title.

Unlike Arnis de Mano, Sikaran was not used in an organized manner of fighting the foreign aggressors. Arnis de Mano was developed by warriors, for warfare. On the other hand, Sikaran was developed by farmers more for amusement. It was used for personal defense only in extreme circumstances. The first choice of defense of the farmer, then and now, is his utilitarian tool used for farming and harvesting, the itak

(straight-edged machete-like long knife), the karit (sickle), the dulos (reaper), and the palakol (axe).

Techniques of Sikaran

Sikaran is a term derived from sikad (kick). In the active form of the Tagalog language, when the consonant is between two vowels the D is replaced with R, hence the term Sikaran (instead of Sikadan). The term was used because the system relied heavily on using the feet for kicking. Farmers having well developed legs favored and emphasized the use of the feet. By imitating animal behavior, they developed kicking techniques that were given colorful and descriptive names.

However, maneuvers using the hands for striking, joint reversals, takedowns and throws are much a part of Sikaran as kicking.

There were originally three Sikaran kicks. Each kick had a particular target and a particular classification.

The first kick was the padyak ng kalabaw (carabao stomp to the knee to break it). The kick was classified as pangbalda (disabling) also known as pangbali (breaking). The rationale to this kick was if the opponent “cannot stand he is helpless and as good as dead.”

The second basic kick was sipang kabayo (horse kick with the hind legs). The kick was classified as panglumpo (paralyzing) or panghilo (stunning). Any part of the body below the head, but above the knee was the target. The terms panglumpo and panghilo were used interchangeably when the sipang kabayo was used.

The third kick was called the pamatay (killing) or kick to the head. The original head kick was the biyakid (Spinning heel kick). Sikaran fighters found out that by spinning the body they can kick with the heel, targeting the side of the head and even the back of the head. The spin creates more energy and with the element of linlang (deception) by turning the back to the opponent, greater effectiveness of the kick was achieved. They called the spinning heel kick Biyakid, the gerund (verbal noun) for Biyakin (to split).

Biyakid became the favorite kick of most Sikaran fighters because it was a very effective technique at any fighting range. The favorite target was the head (temple and back of the head) comparing it to a coconut. The temple is a fused joint in the skull and theoretically, applying sufficient force against it may cause it to crack (like a coconut). The back of the head houses the cerebellum and the joint that connects the spine to the skull. Adequate force on these targets, or any part of the head for that matter, may instantly knockout or “kill” the opponent.

By controlling the intensity and force of the kick, it was possible to produce any of the desired effect of pangbalda / pangbali (disabling / breaking), panglumpo / panghilo (paralyzing / stunning), or pamatay (killing).

Sikaran fighters always maintain that: If a person is baldado (disabled) he cannot fight and is therefore as good as “dead;” if a person is lumpo (paralyzed) he is as good as “dead”. If a person is patay (dead), he remains dead.

Biyakid, Sikaran's Signature Kick



Manuel Ocampo delivering a Biyakid against Melencio Bigasin

However, this does not mean that a particular kick was limited to a specific outcome or a blow to an explicit target will have a definite result. Any of the kicks may disable, or may paralyze or may even kill the opponent. The intention in the application and not the technique, determined the consequence.

From these kicks, other kicks evolved. Characteristics and mechanics of different kicks were mixed and matched to develop other kicks.

With the increase of participation in Sikaran contests, other parts of the foot, such as the bilogan or ball of the foot; the balantok or instep; the limpyak or edge of the foot; and even the talampakan or sole of the foot were used. Likewise different kicks

which were less deceptive but equally effective, were developed and became part of Sikaran.

A modification of the biyakid (spinning heel kick) is the sipawit, which uses the back of the heel in a hooking motion without the 180 degrees spin.

From the sipang kabayo (back thrust heel kick), the sipawid (diagonal thrust heel kick) and later on the sipalid (side kick) were developed.

The pilatik (front snap kick) came about from the paltik (snap) of a whip. The jumping kicks were a development from the damba (horse kick with the front legs).

The Sipa ng Lulod (shin kick), used to attack the knee is now called Sipakot (roundhouse kick). From the Sipakot ng lulod (roundhouse shin kick), the roundhouse kick using the ball of the foot and the roundhouse kick using the instep came about. From the Sipakot (roundhouse kick) Sipakan (crescent kick) was added both as an offensive and defensive kick. From this kick, the Sipang baliswa (reverse crescent kick or twisting kick) emerged.

Borrowing kinetics from sipang Baliswa (reverse crescent kick) and mixing it with Padyak ng kalabaw (carabao stomp), the Sipang alanganin (oblique front thrust kick) was developed.

Of the original kicks of Sikaran, biyakid and sipang kabayo are the original terms still being widely used to describe the kicks. The term “flying kick” is now the



Grandmaster Meliton Geronimo delivering a Biyakid against Emmanuel Querubin

accepted term for dagit ng agila. With the acceptance of Taglish (Tagalog-English), some of the kicks are called by their English names.

First generation students of Meliton Geronimo (Grandmaster of Sikaran), however, still use dinagit (the act of swooping down) for “flying kick.”

To avoid confusing one kick with another, kicks used in present day Sikaran have now specific and definitive Filipino names.

In present day Sikaran contests and competitions, as in the olden days, the use of hand techniques is limited to blocks and parries. This led to the mistaken notion that Sikaran only uses the feet, which started the term “foot-fighting art of the Philippines.” This erroneous idea was brought about by the emphasis on foot techniques by the Sikaranistas of old.

Hand techniques, however, are used extensively and are integral parts of Sikaran in self-defense applications, where there are no rules except to survive and win the fight. Aside from the use of the hands for thrusting and striking, the hands are also used for takedowns and throwing.

It is not very common to use the hands as an initial attack in Sikaran. A Sikaran fighter normally attacks with the legs. Hand techniques are used mostly as a follow-up to leg techniques or as a continuation technique of a block or as a counter-attack.

The main open-hand weapons are the Dalibat (spear-hand), Kamayga (knife-hand), Kamaylid (ridge-hand), Palad (palm), Sakong-lad (palm heel), the Kamayri (fore-knuckles), also sometimes called Kobra (cobra) and the Panipit (pincher formed by the thumb and fingers).

The main closed-fist weapons are the Kamao (fore-fist), the Kamaypok (bottom-fist) and the Kamaykod (back-fist).

The preferred Sikaran closed fist technique is the suntamay (vertical punch), where the thumb side of the fist is facing up or turned just a few degrees inwards, at the completion of the punch. Due to the position of the fist in relation to the wrist, the forearm and the elbow, it is possible to deliver a powerful punch with less chance of injury to the hand or the wrist. Power is generated by the snap of the elbow, the twist of the hips, the forward momentum of the body and the follow through in one imperceptible motion.

Present day exponents of Sikaran have adopted the suntribuson (“corkscrew punch” where the fist is pulled to the side of the body and delivered turning the fist 180 degrees inwards).

The Bisig (forearm) is also used, not just for blocking but also for striking and so is the Siko (elbow).

Joint reversal techniques in Sikaran are applied against the fingers, the wrists, the elbows the knees and the ankles. They are applied to disarm, to control or to break the joints. Joint reversal techniques, although a very important part of Sikaran as an art of self-defense, were allowed in competitions and contests of Sikaran of old, only if they were a legitimate part of leg techniques. In present day Sikaran competition, joint reversal techniques are not allowed.

Throws and takedowns are an important part of Sikaran as an art of self-defense. They were allowed in contests in Sikaran of old, but only if they were a legitimate part of leg techniques. In present day Sikaran competition, throws and takedowns are not allowed.

There are three main throwing techniques in Sikaran. They are the Hagsi Pasang Araro (over the shoulder throw), the Hampas sa Lupa (body slam) and the Hagsi Pasang Bigas (hip throw).

Likewise, there are several takedown techniques in Sikaran. The most common are the Pawalis (leg sweeping), the Pagapas (leg reaping), the Patid (leg tripping), the Sipa sa Alak-alakan (kick against the back of the knee), the hilang pababa (pull down) and the tulak pababa (push down).

There are several Sikaran techniques no longer allowed in contests and competitions and are therefore becoming obsolescent. The two most popular techniques of Sikaran rarely seen today and unknown to most new practitioners are the suwag ng tamaraw also known as sibasib ng tamaraw (head butt) and the daluhong ng unggoy (monkey attack). Ka Rumagit explained that these two techniques were actually “contributions” to Sikaran by the indigenous mountain people of Luzon who were shorter in physical stature than regular Filipinos.

One variation of the sibasib ng tamaraw is by jumping forward and with the forehead strike the opponent’s nose. This technique effectively disrupts the breathing. Another variation is by hitting the underside of the chin with the top of the head. When grabbed from behind, the back of the head is also utilized.

Tamaraw is a type of wild buffalo that can only be found in the Philippines. It is smaller and leaner than the carabao (water buffalo), its domesticated relative. A Tamaraw is very ferocious by nature. Unfortunately, it is also almost extinct and now can only be found in the island of Mindoro in the Philippines.

The daluhong ng unggoy is delivered by jumping and kicking the opponent’s hips with both legs at the same time poking the opponent’s eyes with the thumbs as you grab the sides of the heads with your fingers. Another variation of this maneuver is the dukit ng mata (gouging off the eye). As the kick immobilizes the opponent, one arm securely holds the opponent in a headlock while a forceful penetrating thrust of the forefinger of the other hand is applied in the corner of the eye socket to gouge it out.

Unggoy is a small wild monkey that is known to attack people viciously without cause or warning. It cannot be tamed like the tsonggo its domesticated cousin, which some people keep as a pet.

The basis for the Sikaran blocks is the pagaspas ng labuyo (flapping of the wings of a wild fowl). All downward motion blocks were called salag buhat araw (blocks from the sun) and all upward motion blocks were referred to as salag pamayong (umbrella blocks).

Sikaran’s Old Training Method

Farming in the Philippines is not an occupation for the faint-hearted or the weak in spirit. Even in this age of space travel and computer technology, farming in the Philippines is still much the same as it was centuries ago. Only the big corporations in the agri-business use mechanized farming. It is still the farmer, relying on his trustworthy beast of burden, who cultivates the land of the small family owned or leased farm. The farmer, using his bare hands does all the physical labor from plowing the fields, to harvesting the crop. Very little has changed in farming since the discovery of the Philippines. To exemplify the labor required in farming, one only has to look at the Banaue rice terraces, where the natives carved the mountainside with their bare hands to

create a field that looks like a stairway to heaven. The grandeur that is the Banaue rice terraces is considered one of the wonders of the modern world.

A Filipino farmer is a strong, well built, and persevering example of manhood. Due to the very nature of the job, a farmer has the strength and physique that puts to shame those who develop their body in the confines of a gymnasium. Farming involves anaerobic and aerobic physical exertion that gives a farmer over-all fitness.

A farmer's hands and feet are rough and calloused but strong and tough. From sunrise to sunset, a farmer works the field barefooted and without protection from the elements. Walking the field after it was plowed develops not only strong legs and sturdy feet but also flexible footwork. It also develops a stable center of gravity, enabling the Sikaranista to push, pull, takedown or throw down someone while keeping his own balance. Working in the field gives him a vise-like grip. The callous on his hands and feet can literally peel off anybody's skin even through clothing. A farmer is naturally groomed to be a formidable fighter.

Even with his natural exercise, to be a good Sikaran fighter, a farmer engaged in supplemental training. Training was mostly kept secret to ensure advantage during contests. Although austere and harsh, the training was very effective. This training separated the fighter farmer from the ordinary farmer and the Hari from the ordinary Sikaran fighter.

The most common training in Sikaran started with hitting banana plants. Hand strikes include hitting with the open hands, the fists, the fingertips, the forearms, and the elbows. Foot techniques included kicking with the knees, the shins, the insteps, the balls of the feet, the edges of the feet, the heels, the soles of the feet and even the toes.

Banana plant was the first choice because it was pliable and less likely to cause injury until such time that the Sikaranista moves to another medium.

From the banana plant, the training progressed to the use of clusters of bamboos tied together with rice stalks or banana fibers in between to absorb the shock at the same time offer a harder surface.

Hitting the trunk of the coconut tree was the last and final toughening training. Sometimes, Talahib (a type of long wild grass normally used for roofs), rice stalks or banana fibers were tied around the trunk of the coconut tree to absorb the impact. However, this practice was considered milksop by some fighters.

The tree was struck in the same method as one will strike a heavy bag. Every part of the hand from the fingertips to the knuckles was used to hit the tree. The forearms and the elbows were trained the same way. The knees and the shin were conditioned in similar fashion. Every part of the foot from the instep, the heel and the toes were trained. What was interesting was how they hit the tree. The tree was hit not from a stationary position but while moving forward, while moving sideward and even while jumping. Sometimes it was hit from a non-stop clockwise direction and sometimes in a counter-clockwise direction using all the natural weapons such as the hands (both open and close), the elbows, the feet, the shins, the knees, the hips, shoulders and for some even the head for suwag (head-butt) techniques.

The most unique characteristic of the old Sikaran training was doing "isang galaw isang libong beses" (one technique one thousand times) until it became a natural reflexive action or what they called "likas na galaw" (natural movement or reaction). They trained until their techniques were "kasing lakas ng kulog - kasing bilis ng kidlat" (as strong as

thunder - as fast as lightning). Somehow, the old masters knew that a fighter always fall back to his level of training.

This type of training explained how some Sikaran fighters were able to break coconuts with the shin or even down a carabao with a biyakid and hit with equal force from any angle.

To develop speed and timing in blocking and striking, both with the hands and feet, they used the pabitin, a bamboo pole, about 8 feet long tied in the middle and suspended from a tree branch. One end of the pole was kicked or struck while the other end was blocked or also kicked or struck. As the Sikaranista got faster and better, the pole got shorter and shorter.

Another variation of the pabitin was placing a small rock in a piece of cloth fashioned as a bag and suspended from a tree branch. This type of pabitin was used for training in accuracy of a technique rather than power.

When one felt he was fast enough, he tried the pusa (cat) training. Although this training was more of a sideshow, it developed speed and good timing. A cat was thrown up in the air and before it can land, it had to be caught and thrown back up in the air without being bitten, clawed or scratched. This type of training may sound inhumane but it rarely hurt the cat. More often than not, it hurt the practitioner more than it did the cat.

When a Sikaranista had reached this stage of training, it was assumed that he had toughened his hands and feet and sharpened his skill to the point that he was now considered a likely candidate to win twelve “official matches” and eventually be a Hari. This training understandably made a very intimidating, even dangerous fighter.

Sikaran Paligsahan (Contest)

In mid 1800's, Ka Rumagit met Bonifacio Geronimo when he came to the latter's rescue when Bonifacio was attacked by five outlaws. Ka Rumagit came to his aid and they successfully repelled the attackers. Whether they used Sikaran techniques or not, was not clear. However, it was known that Bonifacio Geronimo and Ka Rumagit's fighting systems combined techniques of Arnis de Mano and Sikaran. The meeting marked the start of a long and fruitful relationship as teacher and student and a lasting friendship.

Bonifacio was a natural-born fighter. However, he lacked the adroitness of a champion relying mainly on his size and strength. Ka Rumagit called Bonifacio Geronimo Higante (giant). He was a duwende (dwarf) compared to Bonifacio Geronimo. Bonifacio Geronimo was tall (by Filipino standard) at five foot and ten inches. He was lanky with powerful features. Ka Rumagit on the other hand standing at five feet tall was massive and erect like a tree stump.

Ka Rumagit schooled Bonifacio the old hard way. He did not hold back and instilled in Bonifacio the awareness that Sikaran was not just a game to be played, but a system that may very well save his life.

With the passage of time, farmers found out that Sikaran contest was a very good way of expressing and showing off their skill and strength through friendly competition. Although contests were already being held regularly in the early 1800's, it was not until the mid to the late 1800's when rules were established to determine a champion.

The first rule was how to determine the best fighter. It was agreed that a fighter must win twelve “official matches.” To be classified as official, the match must be

arranged by the alalays (seconds). This insured that only quality fighters be declared as titleholder. The term Hari was adopted to mean champion. Literally, the term means king. There was no second place or runner-up because in the game of life it was always assumed that being second means being dead. Winning twelve official matches was not enough to be named Hari. This was also true in the labanan ng mga Hari. Being the victor was not enough. A lupon (board) must approve the granting of the title Hari. The lupon was made up of the alalays of the victor and the loser and three independent alalays. The personnel may change but the composition was fixed. It was an “unofficial” independent body but has an “official” function, albeit for formality’s sake. The lupon had the authority and must proclaim the champion as a Hari or Hari ng Mga Hari. Without this proclamation, the title cannot be assumed. Sikaran elders explained that there were no written records of the fights and since some fights were not so well publicized, it was necessary for an independent body to verify and authenticate the claims of the fighters.

Rules, particularly the use of the hands, were set without a need for a referee or mediator to enforce them. Breaking any set rule was cause for ridicule and expulsion from the circle of fighters and therefore was unheard of. In the old Sikaran society, a fighter was expected to be a man of honor at all times.

There were unique rules that set Sikaran contests apart from other empty hand fighting competitions. The use of the hands was limited to blocking, parrying, pushing and pulling. However, kicks were not “pulled short of contact.” All kicks were delivered full contact with both the speed and power a fighter can muster.

Hand techniques, were not allowed in contests and competition. In a real life and death struggle, however, Sikaran was an art where everything goes and no technique was prohibited. Hand techniques are used extensively and effectively not only for strikes but also for takedowns and throws.

In Sikaran contests, the whole body was legal target, except for the groin and the eyes, which were primary targets in Sikaran as an art of self-defense. Despite the large target area, Sikaran fighters prefer direct attacks to vulnerable parts that will immediately incapacitate, prompting a fighter to give up. The shorter it took to dispose of an opponent, the better it was for a fighter’s reputation. Sikaran action was always fast, furious and sometimes bloody. They were like fighting cocks on a non-stop frontal confrontation. Fighters never stood still so they do not absorb the shock of the blow. By constantly moving they do not present a clear target and they can roll with the blow easier and faster. It was very rare for an accomplished Sikaran fighter to move backwards from an attack. They move directly forward neutralizing the force of the attack or to the sides maintaining an effective counter-attacking distance.

There was no set venue for a Sikaran contest. It may be held at the town plaza where they make a circle about 12 to 25 feet in diameter or the middle of the pitak (rice paddy) where they place markers. This size varied in accordance with the level of skill of the contestants. The more advance in skill, the smaller the circle so the action was non-stop and continuous until a winner was declared. Determining the winner was the easiest part of the contest. The first fighter who stepped out of the fight area, or who gave up was declared the loser. Sometimes when it was really almost impossible to fight in the rice paddy, the contest was held on the pilapil (levee). The edge of the levee and an agreed marker served as the borders and whoever fell off or stepped out of the marker was declared the loser.

Contests in rice paddies presented difficulties more than in the town plaza. In the town plaza, the ground was even and most of the time free from debris. However, the rice paddy was uneven after it had been plowed. It may be knee-deep in mud after the rain. Due to the unevenness of the terrain, it was quite difficult to keep one's balance, making it more difficult to execute or evade a kick. Fighters who favored jumping kicks insisted on this type of arena because they have an advantage over fighters who cannot jump.

There was no regulation attire in Sikaran. Fighters square off bare-chested and bare-footed. They usually wear loose fitting red trousers rolled up just below the knees. This was considered a normal farmer's work pants.

Normal play may be held anytime, anywhere. Only the challenge "magpanikaran tayo" (let us play Sikaran) was needed to start a contest. In order for fights to be "official," they must be accomplished through alalays (seconds) where an alalay pitted his fighter against another fighter. Although no monetary consideration was awarded the winner, side bets were common. There was no time limit in a match. A match may last a minute or a day. There was also no height or weight classification in Sikaran. Inter-gender contest was never allowed. It was very seldom for a woman to engage in Sikaran.

A fighter who won 12 "official" matches was eligible to be declared a Hari (king or champion) by the lupon (board). It was up to the Sikaranista and his alalay to keep an accurate record of his "official" fights and convene the lupon. Combatants may come from different towns and provinces. Once declared a Hari, he carried the name of his town; i.e. Hari ng Baras, Hari ng Morong, Hari ng Pillilla and other towns. Although possible, it was very unlikely to have more than one active Hari in a town at any single time. The 12th "official" match of a contender must be against the Hari of his town if there is one. If there is no Hari in his own town, he can challenge the Hari of another town. If he wins, he will be called Hari of his own town.

There were three ways a Hari may be dethroned. The first was losing an "official" match to a non-Hari. The second was by turning down the challenge of a worthy opponent in an "official" match for the crown of the Hari. The third is by being inactive without "sanction" from a lupon.

Losing a match to a non-Hari was considered degrading. Refusing a challenge of a worthy opponent was considered cowardice and shameful. In both cases, the title of Hari was withdrawn. A Hari, who does not avail of the classification as a Haring tulog, but has remained inactive, sometimes assumed the role of a guro, alalay, tagasanay or sometimes he just faded away in obscurity.

Worthiness of an opponent was determined by the alalays of the different fighters. Their decision was based on a majority vote determined by the number of victories and the reputation of the fighters the contender defeated.

A Hari who was inactive or failed to fight for at least 12 months due to injury was not dethroned but was called a Haring Tulog (inactive champion). This allowed the Hari an opportunity to fight when he can without losing his status of Hari. The classification of a Haring tulog must be verified and approved by a lupon of five independent alalays. It was up to the prospective Haring tulog to convene a lupon for this purpose. Injuries sustained in a fight, which prevent a fighter to work in the field was the most common cause of inactivity.

A Hari must be able and willing (but not required) to accept "partida" (handicapped) challenges. One type of partida was to remain in a small circle while the

opponent was free to move about outside the circle. Another was to engage multiple opponents while inside the circle. Still another was to keep the feet tied together to limit the ability to attack or counter-attack. If the Hari steps out of the circle, he was declared the loser. In a partida match, although the Hari loses face his stature as Hari was not affected.

Some Sikaranistas have developed blocking and pushing techniques to such a degree that they do not have to kick or strike to win a match in a partida match. All they apply were blocks and pushing or pulling techniques. Sometimes a bigger fighter will rush his opponent, grab, and throw him out of the match area. A Hari was allowed a teasing slap on the opponent's face that equated to "how dare you fight me." This was a common partida (handicap) match between friends. In contests where reputation was at stake, this kind of match was non-existent. It was always taken for granted that when a fighter issued or accepted a challenge, he was good and capable of fighting in an even match.

A favorite partida by a more accomplished fighter although not necessarily a Hari, was to draw a line and dare another fighter to cross the line.

During the town fiesta, of any town that chose to host a Sikaran contest, a challenge was issued to all Haris of the different towns to a Labanan ng mga Hari (contest among champions). Labanan ng mga Hari was not an automatic annual event. Several years may pass by without a contest of champions. The cost involved in this formal affair was sometimes too much for a host. All the invited participants together with their alalay (second) tagasanay (coach) and everybody involved in the event must be dined and wined separate from the other regular fiesta guests. Although there was no monetary compensation to the victor, alalays (seconds), tagasanay (coach) and the followers of the different Hari spent a considerable amount of money for pustahan (bets).

Lots were drawn to determine which fighter fought which. Several Hari's and wannabe Haris held exhibitions, such as breaking coconut with the lulod (shin) or with biyakid (spinning heel kick), "flying" over obstacles as in high jumps and other feats of strength and skill. A Hari was not required to fight in a labanan ng mga Hari but was expected to do so.

The victor of the Labanan ng mga Hari was called the Hari ng mga Hari (champion of champions). For formality's sake, the title of Hari ng mga Hari had to be confirmed by a lupon. A Hari ng mga Hari was feted in a manner befitting a royalty. He was given the silangngang kabisera (east head of the dining table – denoting sunrise) and given the honor of making the first cut of the litson (roast pig) and give the toast of tuba (palm wine). Being a Hari ng mga Hari was an honor. Aside from the glory associated with the title of best fighter, it carries social standing and was appointed escort of the town's beauty queen.

Labanan ng mga Hari was an all-out fight where the only two prohibited techniques were attacks to the eyes and the groin. Extensive use of the hands for parrying, grabbing, pushing or takedowns was allowed as long as it was a direct part of a legitimate foot technique.

The labanan ng mga Hari was always attended by a "medical person" called hilot (bone setter) who was also an arbularyo (herbalist). This type of hilot (bone setter), must not be mistaken for another type of hilot (midwife) who attends to giving birth. This "medical person" can stop the fight if both of the fighters were unable to continue but

nobody wanted to give up and there was no clear winner. In such a case, both fighters retain their titles until such time that they can fight again. They usually do, being very anxious to prove who the better fighter was. Sometimes they do not wait for a town fiesta and just hold the fight as a special event as long as there was a sponsor willing to host the match.

A Hari ng mga Hari may be dethroned two ways. First was by losing in the Labanan ng mga Hari. Second was by refusing to defend his “title.” If for some reason the Labanan ng mga Hari was postponed or cancelled, the last Hari ng mga Hari kept the title until such time that he was defeated in a Labanan ng mga Hari or he passed away before he can defend his title. There was only one Hari ng mga Hari at any given time.

As a consolation, a losing Hari in a Labanan ng mga Hari kept his title as Hari of the town he came from and was eligible to fight in any subsequent Labanan ng mga Hari. A Hari ng mga Hari who refused to defend his “title,” was allowed to keep the title of Hari of the town he hailed from, but was not allowed to fight in any subsequent labanan ng mga Hari.

The title Hari was not transferable and cannot be passed on to a successor. The title has to be earned and won in the “battlefield of combat.”

Ka Rumagit never fought to be a Hari. His training in Sikaran was geared towards self-defense and his techniques were designed for survival. However, Ka Rumagit narrated how Bonifacio beat a fighter from the town of Tanay (but originally from Laguna) who was deridingly called, Kastila (Spaniard), because he was said to be the illegitimate son of a prayle (Spanish friar). It only took Bonifacio a biyakid to win the bout. According to Ka Rumagit and Cipriano Geronimo, this feat of winning a match with the first kick was never duplicated. It was not clear whether this was the bout that won the title Hari ng mga Hari for Bonifacio Geronimo. Bonifacio Geronimo also defeated a certain Juan Diego who was allegedly Hari ng Tanay. It was not clear whether it was a title bout or not. Nobody also seemed to remember if Kastila and Juan Diego are the same person.

Due to memory lapse that may have been time-induced, nobody was able to shed any light on how many times Bonifacio Geronimo defended his “title” if he ever did. Likewise, none of the three living Sikaran experts can remember the Hari ng mga Hari before and after Bonifacio Geronimo or if he was the first or the last or the only Hari ng mga Hari. They attested, however, that Bonifacio Geronimo passed away unbeaten Hari ng mga Hari (champion of champions).

Bonifacio Geronimo was said to have downed a carabao with a single biyakid. Pedro Castaneda, a contemporary of Geronimo, was said to have performed the same incredible feat. Another feat attributed to Bonifacio Geronimo, was his ability to break a coconut with a biyakid. A coconut will be thrown up in the air and Geronimo will jump up and with a biyakid break the coconut in half while in mid-air. Meliton Geronimo (grandson of Bonifacio Geronimo) however, exceeded this latter feat. Instead of coconut, Meliton Geronimo kicked and broke concrete tiles and blocks.

There were no different styles or schools of Sikaran to contend for supremacy. There was, however, genealogical order that identifies the family origin or fighting influence of a fighter.

In the late 1800's to the early 1900's, the last five Sikaran progenitors left were the Geronimo, the Ballesteros, the Tesoro, the Castaneda and the Llagas lineages. It was the Rumagit genealogy that was the precursor of the Geronimo Sikaran lineage.

Cipriano Geronimo was the heir to the Geronimo and Ballesteros Sikaran lineage. The Tesoro genealogy ended with Melencio Bigasin, while that of the Castaneda genealogy ended with Manuel Ocampo. Both Bigasin and Ocampo have passed on their skill to Meliton Geronimo. They also elected to pass on their genealogical heritage to Meliton Geronimo. The Llagas ancestry ended without a progeny.

It was a tradition in Filipino fighting arts for a master to pass on his skill and legacy to a chosen successor. Ka Rumagit passed his skill and his legacy to Bonifacio Geronimo. It was so with Bonifacio to his son Cipriano. It was only natural that Cipriano continued the tradition and passed on his skill in Sikaran (but not his title of Hari) to his sons Meliton and Jaime Geronimo.

The only lineage that has survived to be the foundation of Sikaran as it is practiced today is the Geronimo lineage.

There was no ranking or grading system in Sikaran. However, there were four classifications: Hari (champion), Guro (teacher), manlalaro (player) and a nagaaral (student).

Manlalaro (player) was a fighter who has not achieved the status of Hari (champion).

A Hari (champion) was always a sought after guro (teacher), but a guro (teacher) was not necessarily a Hari (champion) but may have been one.

A Guro (teacher) was also a manlalaro (player) who has not achieved the status of hari and has thereafter chosen the sedentary position of training a nagaaral (student) to be a fighter. The Guro (teacher) also takes on the task of being an alalay (second) and a tagasanay (coach).

There were Guros who do not fight regularly to become a Hari, so as not to risk being injured preventing them from performing their regular occupation. There were also manlalaros who do not fight regularly or win regularly to become a Hari. There were those who are willing to demonstrate their feat of strength or skill but not fight.

Unless and until one becomes a Sikaran Hari (champion) or a Guro, one was not taken seriously as qualified to pass on the art.

Sikaran enjoyed its golden age as a sport, in the mid 1800's to the early 1900's. In the 1920's, Sikaran went into a rapid decline. Exposure to American ideas and the ingress of American culture brought new interests. Younger men moved away leaving only the older men to carry on the tradition of the system. In the province of Batangas, birthplace of the balisong (fan knife), baseball replaced the fighting arts. Western boxing became the craze in the Visayas (Central Philippines). The onslaught of foreign domination in the psyche of the Filipino was such that the only place where Sikaran was still being played was the town of Baras in the province of Rizal.

Melencio Bigasin and Manuel Ocampo became Sikaran Hari before Cipriano Geronimo. At the age of 35, Cipriano Geronimo became the last Hari of Baras. Even before he was named Hari, interest in Sikaran had started to wane. There were no more labanan ng mga Hari (contest of champions) contests. Contests were still held, but only as an entertainment.

Even in their advance age, the three Sikaranistas were still spry and full of combative energy as they recall their fighting days. The tales they told bordered the realm of exaggeration and fiction that stretches the imagination.



Manuel Ocampo takes the initial move before the biyakid.

Manuel Ocampo, also known as Maning Kabayo (Manuel the horse) claims to have downed a carabao (water buffalo) with a single sipang kabayo (back thrust heel kick) to the head.

Melencio Bigasin, who in his fighting days was known as lulod na bakal (shin of steel) claims the scars on his shin were marks of the many coconuts that he broke with his shin. A coconut will be thrown up in the air and Bigasin will jump and with a Dambang sipa-kot (jumping roundhouse kick) break the coconut in mid-air with his shin. Bigasin attributes this remarkable skill to his predecessor Alfonso Tesoro.

Cipriano Geronimo, known as Agila (Eagle) a moniker he shared with Perfecto Ballesteros, claims to be able to jump and kick the hat off the head of a person standing on the back of a carabao, a feat duplicated by his sons Meliton and Jaime Geronimo.



Meliton Geronimo displaying his form of Dagitng Agila

When the Philippines, was drawn in the war against Japan, several Sikaran masters who were also masters of Arnis de Mano, joined the guerilla movement in defense of the

Philippines. The hostilities further decimated the already dwindling number of Sikaran practitioners.

Sikaran was becoming obsolescent had it not been with the seeming intervention of divine providence.

Sikaran Masters and practitioners, out of patriotism and love of adventure joined the resistance and almost all became statistical part of the Second World War. It was probably only because it was a part of a “grand plan” that three of the survivors of the Second World War were Cipriano Geronimo, Melencio Bigasin and Manuel Ocampo.

After the Second World War, the Filipinos were busy rebuilding their lives. Non-essential activities, such as sport was set aside, in favor of patching up shattered lives. Even Sikaran was on the brink of death and extinction.



Melencio Bigasin applies knee and forearm block.

Sikaran Grandmaster Meliton Geronimo *(The Fighting Art of the Filipino Farmer)*



The greatness he achieved rendered him to be a living legend in his time.

All fighting arts have one common beginning. Defensive and offensive techniques were all born of man's natural reflex actions. Dictated by the need for a means to defend oneself, these reflexive actions were developed to techniques and then to systems of fighting. This instinctive common origin explains the similarity of the different fighting systems.

The Filipino fighting arts, a higher level physical manifestation of pure survival instinct, have a parallel but independent origin from arts of other countries and have a history that dates back before the Spanish colonization of the Philippines that started in 1521.

Scholars and historians suggested that what is now the Philippines has a history that goes back to 900 A.D. This came about with the discovery in 1989 of an artifact made of copper with Baybayin or Tagalog character on it and is now known as the Laguna Copperplate Inscription.

This discovery confirmed that the Filipinos had a written language, long before the coming of the Spaniards and can therefore rightfully push back the history by at least another 600 plus years.

Questions were asked, however, why there is no written history of the country, much less the fighting arts. Dr. H. Otley Beyer, prominent anthropologist and scientist (Teknites and Moon Stones) who made Philippines his home and married a native princess from the Mountain Province, in a book entitled "The Philippines before Magellan" wrote that "an overzealous Spanish friar boasted of having destroyed more than 300 scrolls written in the native character". It is possible that the Christian Spaniards tried to eradicate all traces of pre-Hispanic history because of their disdain for Philippine culture, which was based on paganism.

The history of Filipino fighting arts, both armed and unarmed, and the existence of schools where these arts were taught was mentioned, albeit too briefly, by the Spaniard Pigafetta in his chronicles of the exploits of Ferdinand Magellan. Word of mouth, which was passed on by the masters to their students and down the line to the present, filled in the missing parts to make up a loosely, sometimes even iffy, but generally accepted history of the Filipino fighting arts.

With commerce in the early history of the Philippines, the Sino-Japanese traders brought the fighting art of Kuntaw. Silat, an Indo Malayan art of Arabic origin, found its way to the country at about the same time and the same manner. Sometimes the arts were referred to in the active form as Kuntawan and Silatan. Both Kuntaw and Silat were a

mixture of armed and unarmed techniques. These arts further influenced and enriched the native arts of fighting.

Centuries before the Europeans were even aware of the existence of the island chain, later to be known as Philippines, the inhabitants were already adept in the combative arts, both armed and unarmed.

With the widespread Spanish domination of the Philippines, training in the armed fighting arts was banned. Possession of blades, customarily used for fighting, such as the *kalis*, *kampilan*, *bangkantuli*, *barong* and other curved blades, were strictly prohibited. But possession of limited types of implements used for food production purpose such as the straight edge *itak* or *gulok* was allowed with strict restrictions.

The confiscation and outlawing of weapons created a fertile environment for the development and propagation of *Sikaran*. The “Spanish authorities” viewed *Sikaran* as a pastime, using the empty hands and the bare feet rather than an armed system of fighting.

In the predominantly Muslim section of the country, in the island of Mindanao, the art of *Silat* continued to flourish as a secret form of combat exclusive to the royalty and virtually did not undergo any change.

Fanned by the trade winds, the art of *Kuntaw* found its way to the other trading centers around the country and was passed on to the proletariat of the country, disguised more as a pastime than a fighting system.

Kuntaw; greatly influenced the native system of *Buno* and *Sikaran*. *Buno*, a native form of wrestling, laid emphasis on the use of the hands and was popular among the fishermen of the coastal towns in the Visayan region. *Sikaran*, a foot-fighting system was popular among farmers of the big island of Luzon, particularly the province of Rizal.

This division was brought about by physiological and geographical influences. Fishermen, because of the very nature of their occupation, have greater upper body strength and therefore favored a physical activity that utilizes more upper body strength. Farmers, due to their more developed lower body, favored foot-fighting maneuvers. *Buno*, was never elevated into a formalized art. It became accepted more as a pastime rather than a sport or art. Interestingly, however, most Filipino wrestlers have their start from *Buno*. Another vernacular term for *Buno* is *Dumog* or *Barog*.

But *Sikaran* followed a different path. Using the bare hands and the feet, it adopted the striking, parrying, blocking and disarming techniques of *Arnis de Mano* and adding them to the off-balancing techniques of *Kuntaw*, *Sikaran* became a formalized unarmed fighting system.

But *Sikaran*, unlike *Arnis de Mano*, was not used in an organized manner of fighting the occupying forces of the Spaniards, the Americans and the Japanese. *Sikaran*, being an empty hand system of fighting developed by farmers, was utilized more for personal defense. On the other hand, *Arnis de Mano* was developed by warriors for warfare.

The Spanish authorities, armed with muskets and swords, did not consider *Sikaran* a threat because it was an unarmed system.

In the early 1900's, the art of *Ju-jitsu* was introduced by the Japanese military class, who started infiltrating the Philippines as part of Japan's long term plan of the Asian Co-prosperity Sphere. The art was *Pilipinized* and the term *ditso* became part of the Filipino language.

Having also been developed from natural reflex action, Ju-jitsu techniques had similarity with the two Filipino fighting systems; Arnis de Mano, the armed system of fighting and Sikaran, the unarmed system of fighting.

Sikaran is a fighting art developed by farmers for their own personal defense. Farmers, having well developed legs, favored and emphasized the use of the feet. They developed kicking techniques that were given descriptive and colorful names, such as biyakid (spinning heel kick), sipang kabayo (horse kick), tadyak ng kalabaw (carabao stomp), salpok ng bulik (jumping strike of a fighting cock), and dagit ng agila (an eagle swooping down on a prey).

Sikaran is a term derived from sikad (kick). In the active form of the Tagalog language, when the consonant is between two vowels the D is replaced with R, hence the term Sikaran. The term was used because the system relied heavily on using the feet for kicking. However, maneuvers using the hands for striking, joint reversals, take-downs and throws are much a part of Sikaran as kicking.

In present day Sikaran contests and competitions as in the olden days, the use of hand techniques is limited to blocks and parries. This led to the mistaken notion that Sikaran only uses the feet. This erroneous idea was brought about by the emphasis on foot techniques by the Hari's (champions) of old. However, in self-defense applications, where there are no rules, except to survive and win the fight, the hands are used extensively and form an integral part of Sikaran.

In Sikaran as an art of self-defense, the hands are used extensively for thrusting, punching and striking. The hands are also used for take-downs and throwing. But the use of the hands as an initial attack in Sikaran is not very common. A Sikaran fighter normally attacks with the legs. Hand techniques, are used mostly as a follow-up to leg techniques or as a continuation technique of a block.

Sikaran, as a sport enjoyed its golden age in the late 1800's and early 1900's. In the 1920's, Sikaran went into a decline. Exposure to western ideas and culture brought new interests. Younger men moved away leaving only the older men to carry on the tradition of the system.

When the Philippines were drawn in the war against Japan, several Masters of Sikaran who were also masters of Arnis de Mano joined the guerilla movement in defense of the Philippines. The hostilities further decimated the already dwindling number of Sikaran practitioners.

After the Second World War, the Filipinos were busy rebuilding their lives. American culture was replacing the Spanish and Japanese influences. Even in the Southern Tagalog Region, baseball was replacing the fighting arts. In the Visayan Region (Central Philippines) western boxing became the craze. Even now, most boxing champions come from the Visayan region. The onslaught of foreign domination in the psyche of the Filipino was such that the only place where Sikaran was still practiced was the town of Baras in the province of Rizal.

Present Day Sikaran

Sikaran was becoming obsolescent had it not been with the seeming intervention of divine providence.

Sikaran Masters and practitioners, out of patriotism and love of adventure joined the resistance and almost all became statistical part of the Second World War. It was probably only because it was a part of a grand plan that three of the survivors of the

Second World War were Cipriano Geronimo, Melencio Bigasin and Manuel Ocampo, all Sikaran Hari's of the 1930's.

Cipriano Geronimo came from a long line of Hari's and was the son of Hari ng mga Hari (Champion of Champions) Bonifacio Geronimo. Bonifacio Geronimo was said to have killed a carabao with a single biyakid. Pedro Castaneda, a contemporary of Geronimo, was said to have performed the same incredible feat. Another feat attributed to Bonifacio Geronimo, was his ability to break a coconut with a biyakid. A coconut will be thrown up in the air and Geronimo will jump up and with a biyakid break the coconut in half while in mid-air. Both feats, however, were passed on by word of mouth and can not be confirmed by an eye witness. Meliton Geronimo, however, had exceeded the latter feat. Instead of coconuts he kicked and broke concrete tiles and blocks.

But, the fact that Bonifacio Geronimo passed away unbeaten was attested to by his son Cipriano Geronimo and former Sikaran Hari's Manuel Ocampo and Meroncio Bigasin. It was a tradition in Filipino fighting arts to pass on his skill to a chosen successor and so it was with Bonifacio to Cipriano. It was only natural that Cipriano passed on his skill in Sikaran to his son Meliton Geronimo.

At a very young age, Meliton Geronimo displayed exceptional fortitude and courage by serving with distinction in the resistance movement with the Marking Guerillas during the Second World War.

In 1958, I met Meliton Geronimo and learned about Sikaran. Intrigued about the art I undertook a search for other practitioners as part of my duties as Director for Research and Standards of the Kapatirang Sikaran Pilipinas. After a painstaking search that took me up as far north as Batanes and as far south as Jolo, I ended back up in the town of Baras in the province of Rizal, hotbed of Sikaran. There I met octogenarians Cipriano Geronimo, Manuel Ocampo and Melencio Bigasin, all survivors of the Second World War and at one time Hari in Sikaran.

Further search for more Sikaran Masters or teachers proved fruitless. I was convinced that Cipriano Geronimo, Manuel Ocampo and Melencio Bigasin were the last three legitimate masters. However, I met some practitioners in the towns of Baras, Morong and Tanay, who trained in Sikaran at one time or another, but for one reason or another have not attained the status of Hari and therefore were not considered valid and legitimate teachers who can pass on Sikaran.

Cipriano Geronimo, Manuel Ocampo and Melencio Bigasin, who at one time were all Hari, were determined to resurrect the interest in Sikaran. They found a protégé in Meliton Geronimo, elder son of Cipriano Geronimo.

The three Hari's showed me Sikaran techniques. Even in their advance age, the trio, were still spry and full of fighting energy. The tales they told bordered the realm of exaggeration and fiction.

Manuel Ocampo also known as Maning Kabayo (Manuel the horse) claims to have downed a carabao (water buffalo) with a single sipang kabayo (back thrust heel kick) to the head.

Melencio Bigasin, who in his fighting days was known as lulod na bakal (shin of steel) showed me scars on his shin which he claims were marks of the many coconut husks that he broke with his shin. A coconut will be thrown up in the air and Bigasin will jump and with a Dambang sipa-kot (jumping roundhouse kick) break the coconut with

his shin in mid-air. Bigasin attributes this remarkable skill to his predecessor Alfonso Tesoro.

Cipriano Geronimo, known as Agila (Eagle) a moniker he shared with Perfecto Ballesteros, claims to be able to jump and kick the hat off the head of a person standing on the back of a carabao.

Although such feats seems too incredible to believe, especially in their twilight years and unable to perform such feats, I have no choice but to believe them after learning how they trained. Having seen Meliton Geronimo and his younger brother Jaime Geronimo "fly", I have no doubt that their father did what he claims he did.

Born on March 10, 1927, Meliton Geronimo is a man for all seasons. Aside from being Grandmaster of Sikaran, Geronimo is a military man, a movie actor and a politician.

In the 1950's Meliton Geronimo, already a budding Master of Sikaran and a non-commissioned officer in the Philippine Air Force, was sent to Japan and the United States as part of the Reparations Treaty Contingent from the Philippine Air Force. While in Japan, he met and became good friends with Master Koichi Kondo of the All Japan Karate Association. Meliton Geronimo, because of his skill in Sikaran, made black belt in Karate in a very short while. While in the United States, he was called Chief Geronimo, (the Native American chieftain of the infamous Little Bighorn massacre of George Custer and his troop) as a sign of awe and respect because of his fighting prowess.

Karate was gaining popularity, not only in the Philippines but in the whole world as well. In order for Sikaran to gain international acceptance, Geronimo found it advisable to use the subtitle Philippine Karate in reference to Sikaran.

Geronimo also realized that to gain recognition, it was expedient to make adjustments and modernize his approach to the practice of Sikaran.

Sikaran of old was a pure, exciting and effective fighting system. Techniques, both offensive and defensive were executed exactly how they were used in actual fighting. There are no "hidden techniques" concealed in Balangkas or pre-arranged patterns or formal exercises.

There were no formal exercises needed to advance in rank or standing. In fact there was no ranking or grading system in Sikaran. But there were four classifications: Hari (champion), Guro (teacher), manlalaro (player), and nagaaral (student).

Manlalaro (player) and nagaaral (student) may be used interchangeably and most of the time synonymously.

A Hari (champion) may also be a Guro (teacher), but a Guro (teacher) is not necessarily a Hari (champion).

There are teachers who do not fight regularly to become a champion, so as not to risk being injured preventing them from performing their regular occupation. There are also players who do not fight regularly to become a champion for one reason or another.



Col. Meliton Geronimo
Philippine Air Force
(Retired)

And then there are those who are willing to demonstrate their feat of strength or skill but not fight.

Unless and until one becomes a Hari (champion) one is not taken seriously as a Sikaran fighter.

Filipinos' indifference and apathy to rituals and ceremonials, which they always associate with religion, carried over to Sikaran, hence the lack of formal exercises or pre-arranged patterns.

To make adjustments for purposes of International competition, Geronimo adopted the required choreographed formal exercises from Japan and Korea. However, to retain the distinctive origin of Sikaran, he also created and developed Sikaran's own personalized formal exercises.

He instituted in the curriculum of Sikaran the Batayang Balangkas (Basic form), the balangkas ng kampana (4-Direction pattern), the intermediate forms which were called Pani-langkas or Panimulang Balangkas, and the progressive forms called Maulangkas or Maunlad sa Balangkas, or Balangkas ng Sikaran.

Part of this adjustment was adopting other techniques, such as other stances and blocks. Ranking and belt system, as well as official white karate-gi (uniform), salutation and other protocols were also made part in the modern practice of Sikaran.

Meliton Geronimo's systematizing and organizing the techniques of Sikaran, effectively elevated Sikaran from a "foot-fighting system" to the "fighting art of the Filipino farmer."

While a non-commissioned officer in the Philippine Air Force, Meliton Geronimo formed the Eagle Sikaran (Karate) Club, which some say is in honor of his father Anong Agila. It was his by design that Meliton Geronimo will later be awarded the Order of the Eagle (Agila). It is not coincidental that his favorite technique is the dagit ng agila. The group was later renamed Sikaran (Karate) Brotherhood of the Philippines in 1958.

In early 1961, Geronimo communicated with Master Koichi Kondo of the All Japan Karate Association in an effort to join the Asian Karate Association. On 8 February 1961, affixing his seal on his response, Master Koichi Kondo acknowledged Geronimo's letter. Again, on 5 May 1961, Master Koichi Kondo sent a hand written response from Korea, to Meliton Geronimo.

In 1962, Master Koichi Kondo of the All Japan Federation, as a prelude for acceptance of Sikaran as a distinct Filipino empty-hand fighting art, named Meliton Geronimo, now a captain in the Philippine Air Force, Japanese Karate Grades Commissioner for the Philippines. Korean Karate Grandmasters Hwang Kee and Kwai Byung Yun of the Moo Doo Kwan and Jee Doo Kwan, respectively, accorded Meliton Geronimo the same reciprocal authority. This commission qualified that whatever grade or promotion Meliton Geronimo issues will be recognized and honored by the All Japan Karate Association and the Korean Karate Association.

Although it took a while, on 06 March 1963, Master Koichi Kondo confirmed his support for Meliton Geronimo and the Kapatiran Sikaran ng Pilipinas for membership in the Asian Karate Association and extended an invitation for the Philippines to participate in the Asian Karate Championship.

In an attempt to make it a regular part of the Asian Games, a uniform name for the sport was necessary. The original four member countries, Japan, China, Korea and the Philippines all agreed to use the collective name of Asian Karate Association.

In 1964, Meliton Geronimo led a team of Sikaran players in the First Asian Karate Championships held in Tokyo, Japan. It was the first time that Japanese Karate, Chinese Karate, Korean Tang Soo Doo, called Korean Karate and Sikaran referred to as Philippine Karate competed in an international tournament using a standard uniform rule of contest. The rules were almost made-to-order for Sikaran fighters. They were the matira ang matibay (survival of the fittest) kind of rules, the forte of Sikaran.

Meliton Geronimo's skill in Sikaran paid off when he was named "Most Courageous Fighter." It was his first international competition and the first honor for the Philippines in the field of empty-hand fighting. It also proved the flexibility and ability of Sikaran practitioners to adapt to different fight situations under a different set of rules of engagement.

In 1968, Jimmy Geronimo, younger brother of Meliton Geronimo, won a similar award as "Most Courageous Fighter", during the 5th Asian Karate Championship held in Seoul, Korea.

In subsequent Asian Karate Championships, several other honors were won under the leadership of Meliton Geronimo.

In the Second Asian Karate Championship held in Seoul, Korea, Bernard Belleza won the heavyweight Gold Medal, while Emilio Galicinao won the middleweight Gold Medal.

In the Third Asian Karate Championship held in Manila, Philippines, Jimmy Magbanua won the heavyweight Gold Medal while Ariston Bautista won the lightweight Gold Medal.

In the Fourth Asian Karate Championships held in Tokyo, Japan, Amando Diaz won the lightweight Gold Medal.

In the Fifth Asian Karate Championships held in Seoul, Korea, Antonio Ganiela won the heavyweight Gold Medal and Amando Diaz, now a bit bigger and heavier won the middleweight Gold Medal.

In 1966, on the occasion of the Third Asian Karate Championship, with the concurrence of the Asian Karate Association headed by Korea's Dr. Kwai Byeung Yun, Master Koichi Kondo of the All Japan Karate Association and Master Hwang Kee of the Korean Tan Soo Doo, Sikaran, as it is known and practiced presently, was accepted as a Filipino style of fighting with a distinct origin. Meliton Geronimo, who codified, organized and elevated Sikaran from a system to an art was awarded the rank of 10th Degree Red Belt as the Grandmaster of Sikaran. He was vested the Order of the Eagle (Agila), the highest award in the martial arts. Coincidentally, the largest breed of eagle, the monkey-eating eagle (an almost extinct species) can only be found in the Philippines.

In deference to the Asian Karate Association, Sikaran was still referred to as Philippine Karate as Tang Soo Doo was called Korean Karate.

Working with Meliton Geronimo and his younger brother Jaime Geronimo, with encouragement and wisdom of Sikaran Hari's Cipriano Geronimo, Melencio Bigasin and Manuel Ocampo and Arnis de Mano Grandmaster Daniel Rendal, Emmanuel del Espiritu Santo Querubin, formalized the techniques, terminology and teaching curriculum of Sikaran.

In 1969 Emmanuel del Espiritu Santo Querubin received the approval of the Institute of National Language and the Department of Education, bolstering the identity of Sikaran as an indigenous empty-hand fighting art of the Philippines.

From 1969 to 1975, Meliton Geronimo and his senior instructors, Jimmy Geronimo, Emmanuel del Espiritu Santo Querubin, Angeles Sanchez, Rodrigo Espiritu, Ramon Valdenor and Serafin Pangilinan, were assigned to train Republic of the Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos and the Presidential Security Command in SIKARAN.

In 1970, the Asian Karate Association was disbanded to give way to the creation of the World Union of Karate-do Organizations (WUKO). The Philippines ably represented by Meliton



Grandmaster Meliton Geronimo trains with his senior student Emmanuel Querubin.



Sikaran Grandmaster Geronimo, the only Filipino 10th Degree Red Belt, sanctioned and recognized by the Asian Karate Association.

Geronimo and Emmanuel del Espiritu Santo Querubin, became signatory members as Kapatirang Sikaran ng Pilipinas.

Shortly thereafter, Meliton Geronimo relinquished his position in the World Union of Karate-do Organizations and devoted all his time and energy in the propagation of Sikaran, which he propelled to its rightful place in the international martial arts scene and is now practiced in several countries in at least four continents.

After retiring from the Philippine Air Force, with the rank of Colonel, Meliton Geronimo was elected Mayor of the town of Baras in the province of Rizal. As Mayor, his first official action was to acknowledge Baras as the birthplace of Sikaran. A similar resolution was also

passed by the provincial government of the province of Rizal.

Geronimo also erected a monument of two Sikaran practitioners in a biyakid position, adjacent to the multi-purpose gymnasium that he also constructed to be home of Sikaran.

Sikaran and Meliton Geronimo are synonymous and nobody can rightfully claim to have learned the art unless they learned it from Meliton Geronimo or his students.

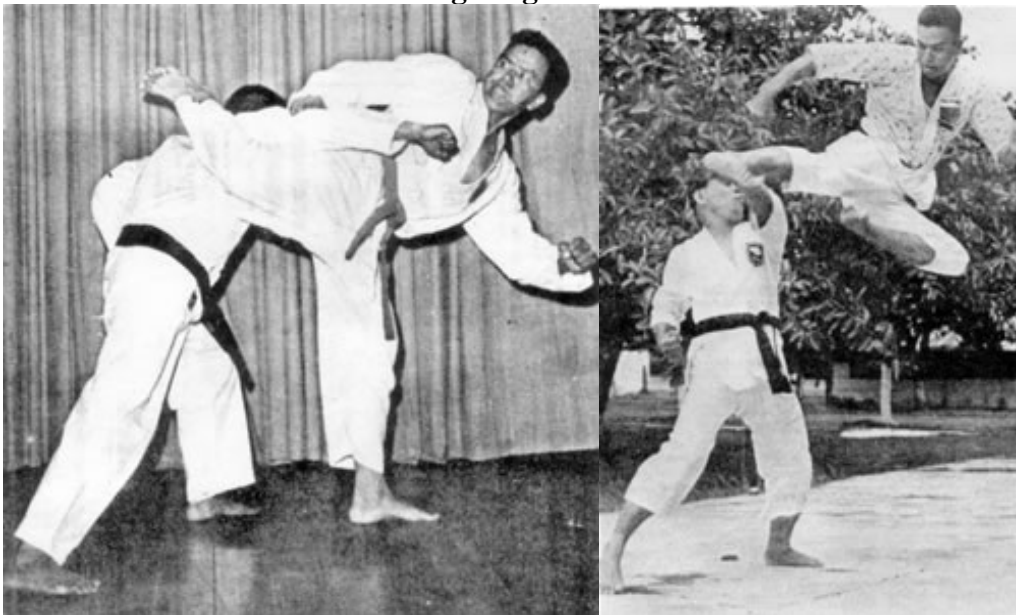
Unfortunately, a lot of unsuspecting people are being bilked by self-proclaimed grandmasters and masters, who after hearing about Sikaran, cleverly put together some hand and foot techniques and call their system Sikaran.

Meliton Geronimo, still actively oversees the affairs of the Kapatirang Sikaran ng Pilipinas (ruling body of Sikaran) and the Kapatirang Sikaran Pandaigdig (World Sikaran Brotherhood), comprised of several affiliates from all over the world.

With Meliton Geronimo at the head his two most senior instructors stand by his side. Jimmy "Kano" Geronimo, his younger brother and second in command and a master in his own right attend to the technical affairs of Sikaran as an international sport and Emmanuel del Espiritu Santo Querubin, continue to research, innovate, propagate and chronicle Sikaran as a fighting art.

There is only one Grandmaster of Sikaran and that is Meliton Geronimo. There is also only one 10th Degree Red Belt sanctioned and recognized by the original Asian Karate Association and that is Meliton Geronimo.

The Fighting Red Belt



Grandmaster Meliton C. Geronimo had revolutionized the whole attitude towards the Red Belt.

He partook in the exhausting and grueling training of his protégés.

Master Jaime Geronimo

9th Degree Black Belt

Chief Instructor, Pandaigdig Kapatirang Sikaran



Jaime Geronimo, also known as “Kano”, because he was born during the American Liberation of the Philippines, is the younger son of Cipriano Geronimo, last Sikaran Hari of Baras, Rizal. He is currently the Chief Instructor of the Pandaigdig Kapatirang Sikaran. At 9th Degree Black Belt, Jaime Geronimo is the only person on whom the title “Master” has been bestowed by Sikaran Grandmaster Meliton Geronimo.

In 1968 Jaime Geronimo competed and was awarded the “Most Courageous Fighter” during the 5th Asian Karate Championships in Seoul, Korea.

From 1969 to 1972, Jaime was a member of the Sikaran team, headed by Grandmaster Meliton Geronimo, which taught Sikaran to the Presidential Security Command. While in Malacanang he was commissioned and became the personal aide of General Singson of the Philippine Air Force.

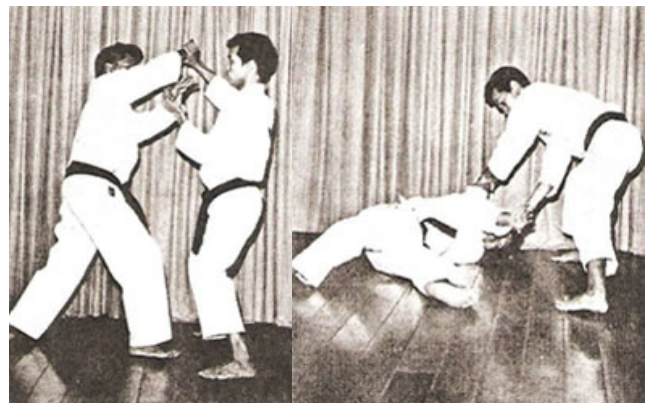
When the Philippine National Police was formed, Jimmy was absorbed into the force where he retired after an illustrious career as a SWAT officer.

His professional career did not deter him from the practice of Sikaran. No matter how busy his schedule may be, he never fails to put in at least 2 hours of training everyday to keep him in top shape. After his retirement from the Philippine National Police he spends hours teaching beginners and training advance students to become Sikaran teachers and tournament officials. He has visited several countries where he conducted seminars and workshops in the different Sikaran affiliates.

Through his initiative the Pandaigdig Kapatirang Sikaran has established a mountain site Sikaran Training Center in his farm (where most of the BBC’s Last Man Standing series was filmed) and a beachside Sikaran Training Center along the shores of Laguna de Bay.



Jaime Geronimo (center) leads the Baras Sikaran Club in a mass hollow-block breaking exhibition during the National Tournament in 1966.



Jaime Geronimo executing a take-down technique.



Jaime Geronimo (top right) leads in the practice of Balangkas (Pattern or formal exercise). Behind Jaime Geronimo is Elpidio Seletaria of the United States' based Seletaria Sikaran School.



Jaime Geronimo delivering a biyakid.



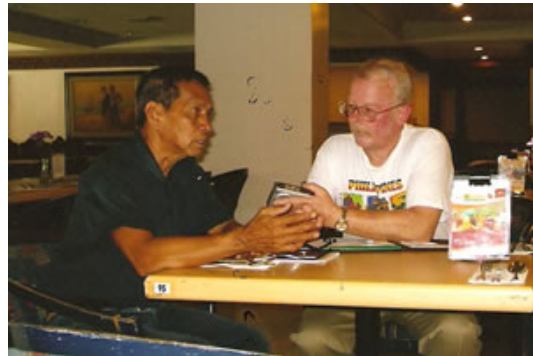
In 1962, Vic Laxamana, 8th Degree Black Belt (left) and Jaime Geronimo, 9th Degree Black Belt (right) posed for the monument which was eventually erected in Baras, Rizal and became the logo of the Pandaigdig Kapatirang Sikaran.

The FMA Digest was honored to be able to talk with Sikaran Master Jaime Geronimo, 9th Degree Black Belt; brother of Grandmaster Geronimo.

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

Jaime 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.



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

Jaime 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.

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

Jaime 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.

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 used, do you think the next step is something like Ultimate, Supreme Great Grandmaster?*

Jaime 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 Grandmasters promoted themselves and assumed the title. There are some grandmasters who 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.

FMAdigest: *What would you say to people that are claiming to be Sikaran? There are practitioners in the United States that are claiming they are the Grandmaster or the Hari of Sikaran?*

Jaime Geronimo: There are some students or practitioners who come to Baras to train a little or even just attend a workshop and when they return to where ever they come from they claim to teach Sikaran and say that Grandmaster Meliton Geronimo recognizes them. There is even an expelled member who claims to be a Hari, not knowing that Hari is a title that must be won in the battlefield of combat and cannot be passed on, not even by Grandmaster Meliton Geronimo (laugh).

There are some who train for a few months or a few years and think they are good and unbeatable. They assume high grade and start teaching commercially. I have been training in Sikaran for 51 years, and I am still training because I know there is still a lot more to learn, probably not just physically but mentally.

Sikaran Seniors Pay Homage to Grandmaster Meliton Geronimo

Emmanuel Querubin led Sikaran Mantas (seniors) in paying homage to Grandmaster Meliton Geronimo who is still suffering the after-effects of a stroke. The seniors, all original members of Sikaran Pilipinas (SIKAP) were directly trained by Emmanuel Querubin.



Grandmaster Meliton Geronimo (**sitting**)

Standing from L-R: Ramon Valdenor (8th Degree Black Belt), Vic Laxamana (8th Degree Black Belt), Emmanuel Querubin (9th Degree Black Belt), Joe Sidlacan (8th Degree Black Belt) and Rodrigo Espiritu (8th Degree Black Belt).

This memorable reunion also marked the official launching of the first and only authoritative book in Sikaran started by the group in the 1960's, which due to unforeseen circumstances was held in abeyance until 2008.

Valdenor, Querubin and Espiritu were members of the Sikaran instructional team, led by Grandmaster Meliton Geronimo, who taught Sikaran to the Presidential Security Command from 1969 to 1972. Of that team, two have passed away, Angeles Sanchez and Serafin Pangilinan. Jaime Geronimo, 9th Degree Black Belt, also a part of the instructional team (not in the picture above), is now the Chief Instructor of the Pandaigdig Kapatirang Sikaran (World Sikaran Brotherhood).

Sikaran at Malacanang Palace (seat of the executive department and official residence of the President), in recognition of Sikaran as a superior combative art, Republic of the Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos commissioned the Kapaturang Sikaran ng Pilipinas to train the Presidential Security Command in this Filipino Fighting art.



Grandmaster
Meliton Geronimo
10th Degree Red Belt



Jaime Geronimo
5th Degree Black Belt



Angeles Sanchez
4th Degree Black Belt



Ramon Valdenor
2nd Degree Black Belt



Emmanuel ES Querubin
5th Degree Black Belt



Rodrigo Espiritu
3rd Degree Black Belt



Serafin Pangilinan
2nd Degree Black Belt

Ramon Valdenor

8th Degree Black Belt
Registration No. 513-8

After his stint as Sikaran Instructor at the Presidential Security Command, Ramon Valdenor became an agent of the City of Manila's Civil Intelligence and Security Unit (CISU), a branch of the National Intelligence Security Agency (NISA). He later became the personal aide of Press Secretary Francisco Tatad, later turned Senator. Valdenor stayed with Tatad until the latter quit political life.



Ramon Valdenor receiving Award from President Ferdinand Marcos as Sikaran Instructor of the Presidential Security Command.



Grandmaster Meliton Geronimo
With Ramon Valdenor
8th Degree Black Belt.



Sipakot ng Bilogan



Balangkas ng Baras



Hampas sa Lupa

Victor Laxamana

8th Degree Black Belt

Registration No. 144-8

Vic, as he is fondly called, is known as “Sikaran’s Man with the Steel hands”. Standing 5’7” and tipping the scale at less than 100 pounds, Vic set an association record smashing 13 concrete tiles with a knife-hand strike, thrusting through a 20 pound watermelon with his spear-hand and other feats of strength. He is currently teaching at Don Bosco in Makati and travels around the country officiating in tournaments and giving seminars to prospective instructors and officials. Vic Laxamana was one time Coordinating Director of the Kapatirang Sikaran ng Pilipinas. A Textile Engineer by education, Vic has spent almost half a century in training and teaching the martial arts.



Vic Laxamana has won the Gold Medal in the breaking competition for 5 straight years until he voluntarily quit competing.



Grandmaster Meliton Geronimo with Victor Laxamana, 8th Degree Black Belt



Vic Laxamana (back turned to camera) exchanging kicks with his student Christian Gloria

Jose N. Sidlacan

8th Degree Black Belt
Registration No. 116-8

Aside from being a professor in criminology, and one time Kapatirang Sikaran ng Pilipinas Director for Educational Institutions, Joe also has a master's degree in Physical Education. He has written several books in Corrections and Penology which now are required textbook in several criminology colleges. He retired from the Philippine College of Criminology after 44 years of teaching Criminalistics and Combative Arts.

He was also Physical Education Instructor at the Feati University where he led the Swimming Team in their first ever Gold Medal in the Manila Universities' Swimming Competition.

In 1978 to 1991 he was a Probation Officer and at the same time was also an instructor at the Philippine National Police Academy in Tagaytay City.

Retirement did not go well with Joe so he went back to teaching Criminal Justice System, Forensics, Corrections and Penology at the Philippine National Police Academy and is working towards a second career in Criminology at the Cavite State University.

Aside from an 8th Degree Black Belt in Sikaran, Joe also holds a 3rd Degree Black Belt in Kodokan Judo and an Instructor's Certificate in Arnis de Mano from Filemon Canete's Doce Pares School and the Viray's School of Pampanga Brokil.



Grandmaster Meliton Geronimo with
Professor Jose N. Sidlacan, 8th Degree Black Belt.



Grandmaster Meliton Geronimo with
Jose Sidlacan, 8th Degree Black Belt



At 79, Joe Sidlacan has not shown any sign of slowing down. He is here performing a technique from Balangkas ng Rumagit.

Rodrigo Espiritu

8th Degree Black Belt

Registration No. 348-8



Grandmaster Meliton Geronimo
and Rodrigo Espiritu
8th Degree Black Belt.



A consistent winner in and out of the services,
Rodrigo Espiritu is shown being congratulated by
an unidentified military officer.

In 2006, Rodrigo Espiritu retired from the Philippine Navy with the rank of Chief Petty Officer. A Naval Intelligence Officer, Rodrigo was the team leader of the Philippine Navy Sikaran Team. He has won several medals and trophies in tournaments in and out of the service. The first one was Greater Manila Regional champion in 1968. He is presently a faculty member at the University of Taguig in Rizal, when he is not traveling giving seminars and workshops around the country.

An alumnus of the National College of Physical Education, Rodrigo is a graduate of several professional courses while in the Philippine Navy, including the Non-Commissioned Officers Academy and Naval Intelligence Academy.



1968 Greater Manila Champion Rodrigo
Espiritu, flanked by Jaime Geronimo (left) and
Meliton Geronimo (right).



Rodrigo Espiritu, team captain of the Southern Tagalog Regional Team in the 1970 National Championships in Davao City.



Kayumanggi Sikaran Club with Head Instructor Rodrigo Espiritu at the center back row.

Sikaran's Dynamic Duo

It was not until the middle of the 20th century that the door to the male oriented and male dominated world of the martial arts in the Philippines was opened to the “other gender,” Gabriela Silang being an exception rather than the rule. American liberation, freed not only the country from foreign aggression, but also “liberated” the Filipina from the traditional “no-touch Maria Clara” mystique. It also changed the Filipino perception of equality.

The male controlled Kapatirang Sikaran ng Pilipinas (Sikaran Brotherhood of the Philippines) was no exception. Among the several female Sikaran practitioners, there were three standouts, Gloria Rapsing, Norma Gonzales and Warlita Jorda. Aside from being charming and good looking they were also deadly. Their instructor, Jimmy Geronimo made it a point that they do not get special preference on account of their gender.

However, Norma Gonzales dropped out of Sikaran early to pursue the more feminine endeavor of keeping house.

Gloria Rapsing and Warlita Jorda stayed on until they reached second degree black belt, attained a status of prominence in Sikaran, before they too finally succumbed to the maternal instinct of raising a family.

Gloria Rapsing

2nd Degree Black Belt

Registration No. 97-2



1968 Greater Manila Regional Champion.



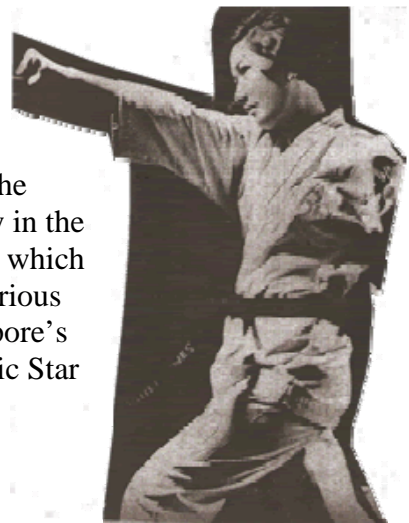
Gloria Rapsing exchanging blows with her instructor Jaime Geronimo.

Warlita Jorda

2nd Degree Black Belt

Registration No. 96-2

In 1968, Warlita joined the Banco Filipino all women branch in Cubao, Quezon City. Aware of her special skill in the arts of self-defense, Warlita became an instant hit and novelty in the bank. The Associated Press picked up this newsworthy scoop which made Warlita an instant banking star and was published in various newspapers, including The Bangkok Post of Thailand, Singapore's Green Streak, The Yomiuri of Japan, the United States' Pacific Star and Stripes, in addition to the mainstream newspapers of the Philippines, like the Manila Times and the Daily Mirror.





Japan



United States



The Bangkok Post, Thailand
Warlita Jorda about to break a concrete block with her knife-hand



Singapore



Manila Times and Daily Mirror
Philippines

Fast-Forward 2009



Golden Gate Bridge San Francisco, California
The youth may be gone but the glamour,
the dynamism and the spunk are still there



Warlita Jorda-Berin and Gloria Rapsing-Querubin
enjoying a quiet good Friday afternoon at
a mountain resort in Morong, Bataan

Baras

Birthplace of Sikaran

Baras, is a municipality in the province of Rizal. The two main industries in Baras during the early days of Sikaran were farming and fishing.

Located at the foothills of Sierra Madre Mountains, it is bounded by Antipolo to the north, Tanay to the east, Morong to the west and Laguna de Bay to the south. It is less than 24 square kilometers in area, making it one of the smaller municipalities in the province.

On June 11, 1901, Baras and 26 other municipalities became part of the newly created province named after the Philippine National Hero, Dr. Jose Rizal, by virtue of First Philippine Commission Act. No. 137 headed by United States President William Howard Taft. It was the same commission that named Dr. Jose Rizal the National Hero over Andres Bonifacio.

The composition of the new Province of Rizal came from the political subdivisions formed by the Spaniards in 1853, the old Province of Tondo, later changed to Province of Manila and the Province of Laguna, later changed to Political Military District of Morong and then to Province of Morong.



Evolution of Damit Sikaran

(Sikaran attire or uniform)

In the early ages of Sikaran, there was no official attire. The most accepted was a white **Camisa-tsino** (Chinese t-shirt) and red pull-up trousers rolled up just below the knee. Sometimes the player is bare-chested.



In the early 1950's to the mid 1970's, the white uniform was adopted in accordance with the regulations of the Asian Karate Association and the World Union of Karate-do Organizations (WUKO).





In 1972, Presidential Proclamation No. 2 declared the white upper shirt and red trousers the official Sikaran attire with the corresponding color belt.



2009 Sikaran Festival

On Saturday, March 28 the 2009 Sikaran Festival was hosted by the Municipality of Baras, Rizal, birthplace of Sikaran. On hand were municipal and provincial officials who also donated the medals, trophies, lunch and merienda of the Sikaran officials and the festival participants.

Participants came from all the way north from Mountain Province and all the way south from Aklan in Central Visayas.

The festivities coincided with the 82nd birth anniversary of Grandmaster Meliton Geronimo and the official launching of the first and only authoritative book in Sikaran, entitled “Sikaran, The Fighting Art of the Filipino Farmer.”

The two clubs that stole the show were the Philex Mining Corporation, Philippine Eagle Sikaran which presented a native dance from Benguet. And the all peewee Sikaran Club from Marikina City.



Grandmaster Meliton Geronimo welcomes the participants



Philex Mining Corporation
Philippine Eagle Sikaran



Pee Wee Sikaran Club

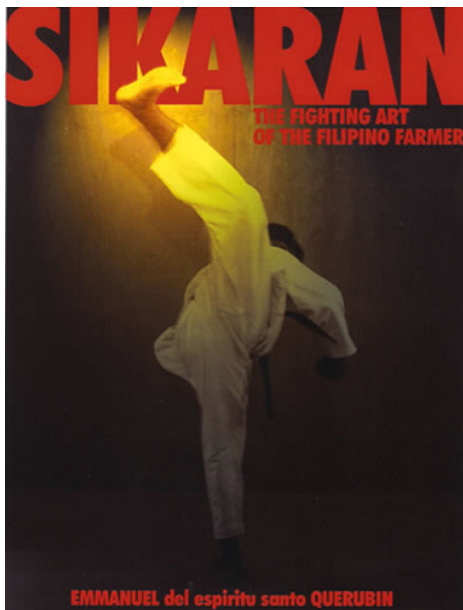


They came from as far north as Baguio City (top left),
as far south as Aklan City (top right) and everywhere in between.





K. Kurihara, 5 year-old entry from Marikina Sikaran club blocks the opponent's roundhouse kick to the head ... and went on to consequently won the Gold Medal in the PeeWee Division.



In Conjunction with the 2009 Sikaran Festival, the first and only authoritative book of Sikaran was officially launched.

The FMA Digest meets Grandmaster Melton Geronimo

The dictionary defines greatness as the virtue of being eminent, distinguished, illustrious superior and having the nobility of mind and purpose. In my over 50 years in the martial arts, I can unequivocally say that I have never met anybody, more qualified and worthy than these two gentlemen, who I will classify as the two greatest men in the Filipino martial arts.

Nature, always finds a way for great minds and great men to cross path, sometimes by design and sometimes by chance.

On Monday, March 23, 2009, the two greatest men in the Filipino martial arts finally met. Both men have known of each other but have never met in person. A luncheon appointment was arranged between Grandmaster Meliton Geronimo of Sikaran (which he was not able to make) and Steven Dowd, Publisher of Filipino Martial Arts Digest.

Steven Dowd, in his magnanimity, took the initiative to motor to Antipolo City to meet Meliton Geronimo who was still suffering the after-effects of a stroke.

Geronimo at 82 years of age came from a long line of Filipino Sikaran Masters. Steven Dowd, whose claim to Filipino-hood are his mastery of the Filipino fighting arts and his lovely Filipina wife Vicky, on the other hand is an American who learned the Filipino martial arts while with the United States Navy stationed in the Philippines in the 1970's.

Grandmaster Meliton Geronimo and Tagapagmana Steven Dowd although as opposite as night and day are bonded by the same desire, dedication and commitment in the development, preservation and propagation of the Filipino martial arts.

Meliton Geronimo through the Pandaigdig Kapatirang Sikaran (World Sikaran Brotherhood) is making the Filipino art of foot-fighting known all over the world. Steven Dowd through the FMA Digest is bringing to the world the Philippines and the Filipino martial arts. The Filipino Martial Arts Digest or simply FMA Digest is an internet magazine in the wide world of the web. It is one of the only internet magazines exclusively dedicated to the Filipino martial arts and everything culturally Filipino.



Sikaran Grandmaster Meliton Geronimo (left) and Steven Dowd, publisher of the FMA Digest (right)

Grandmaster Meliton Geronimo and Sikaran

After the Second World War, Cipriano Geronimo, Manuel Ocampo and Melencio Bigasin, last living masters, out of nationalistic loyalty were determined to resurrect the interest in Sikaran.



Better late than never, last Sikaran Hari Cipriano Geronimo receives certificate of recognition from the personal envoy of Rizal Province Governor Isidro Rodriguez, for his contribution in the advancement preservation and propagation of Sikaran Melencio Bigasin (to Geronimo's right) and Manuel Ocampo (to Geronimo's left). Likewise were honored after this picture was taken. Melencio Bigasin and Manuel Ocampo passed away in their early ninties. Cipriano Geronimo lived to be over 100 years old.



Melencio Bigasin and Manuel Ocampo displaying Sikaran techniques.

They found a protégé in Meliton Geronimo, elder son of Cipriano Geronimo. Even as a young boy, Meliton Geronimo has displayed exceptional proficiency in Sikaran. As a teenager, Meliton Geronimo has shown unusual fortitude and courage by serving with distinction in the resistance movement with the Marking Guerillas during the Second World War in the same outfit as Cipriano Geronimo, Melencio Bigasin and Manuel Ocampo.

Born on March 10, 1927, Meliton Geronimo is a man for all seasons. He is

a Master of Sikaran, a military man, and a politician. Even with his busy schedule, Geronimo finds time to be a movie actor.

In the early 1950's, Meliton Geronimo, already a budding master of Sikaran and a non-commissioned officer in the Philippine Air Force was sent to Japan and the United States as part of the Reparations Treaty Contingent from the Philippine Air Force. Philippine Air Force Captain Domingo Polotan introduced Meliton Geronimo to Master Koichi Kondo of the All Japan Karate Federation. The Sikaran master and the Karate Master became very good friends. Their arts, although similar, had their own differences. Karate was originally developed as a fighting art that doubled as a sport. Sikaran on the other hand was originally a sport that was also utilized for fighting. Mutual respect of the man and art became the basis of their friendship.

While in the United States, Geronimo trained early mornings before the sun was up. The American soldiers who trained with him christened him Chief Geronimo, (the native American chieftain) as a sign of awe and respect of his physical prowess. That was the first time that Sikaran was introduced in the United States.



The Dagit ng Agila (flying side kick) is the favorite Sikaran technique of Meliton Geronimo, which he inherited from his father Cipriano Geronimo, also known as “Agila”.

Karate was gaining popularity in the whole world and in the Philippines as well. In order for Sikaran to gain international acceptance, Meliton Geronimo found it expedient to align the propagation of Sikaran with Karate and also for expediency, allowed the use the subtitle Philippine Karate in reference to Sikaran.

He also realized that to gain recognition, it was essential to make adjustments and modernize his approach to the practice of Sikaran, at the same time preserving the authenticity and identity of the art.

Sikaran was a pure and effective fighting system. Techniques, both offensive and defensive were executed exactly how they were used in actual fighting. There were no “hidden techniques” or “hidden applications” concealed in Balangkas or pre-arranged patterns or formal exercises. There were no Balangkas (pre-arranged forms or drills) to allow one to train alone against imaginary opponent or opponents. There were no formal exercises needed to advance in rank or standing. Training

consisted mainly of rudimentary but exciting actual exchange of blows with a partner.

Filipinos’ indifference and apathy to rituals and ceremonials, which they always associate with religion, carried over to Sikaran, hence the lack of formal exercises or pre-arranged patterns.

Understanding this need, Geronimo, following the example of Korea, adopted the required choreographed formal exercises from Japan for purposes of international competition. However, to retain the distinctive origin of Sikaran Geronimo also created and developed Sikaran’s own personalized formal exercises, again following the example of Korea.

There are five classifications of Balangkas (patterns) in Sikaran. The first is the Batayang Balangkas (Basic Pattern). The second is the Balangkas ng Kampana (Pattern of the Bell or 4-direction pattern). The third is the intermediate pattern or Pani-langkas. The fourth is the progressive pattern or Mau-langkas more popularly known as the Balangkas ng Sikaran. The fifth is the Balangkas na Banyaga (foreign forms).

The Balangkas na Banyaga are forms or patterns of foreign origin given Filipino names and were essential at the time when Sikaran was still referred to as Philippine Karate for acceptance in the Asian Karate Association. Presently, although some Balangkas na Banyaga are still practiced, they are now optional.

Part of this adjustment was adopting other techniques, such as other stances and blocks. Ranking and belt system as well as official white attire, salutation and other protocols were also made part in the modern practice of Sikaran.

Meliton Geronimo’s systematizing and organizing the techniques of Sikaran effectively elevated Sikaran from a “foot-fighting system” to the “fighting art of the Filipino farmer.”

While a non-commissioned officer, in the Philippine Air Force, Meliton Geronimo started teaching military personnel and their dependents the Filipino fighting arts of Sikaran and Arnis de Mano. They formed the Eagle Karate (Sikaran) Club, made up of Philippine Air Force personnel. After the civilian dependents of the PAF joined the club, the name Eagle Karate (Sikaran) Club was retained but the PAF servicemen put up their own group and to distinguish it as a purely military club they called it the Blue Diamond Karate (Sikaran) Club in honor of the acrobatic flying team of the Philippine Air Force.

Upon learning of the existence of this club, several civilians sought instructions from Meliton Geronimo. Since most civilian members have no access to the military base, it was decided to rent a building outside the base to serve as headquarters and central gymnasium. In 1958 the group was renamed the Karate (Sikaran) Brotherhood of the Philippines.

In 1960, Geronimo communicated with Master Koichi Kondo of the All Japan Karate Federation in an effort to join and have the Asian Karate Association recognize Sikaran as a distinct empty-hand fighting art of Filipino origin. On February 8, 1961, affixing his seal on his response, Master Koichi Kondo acknowledged Geronimo's letter. Again, on May 5, 1961, Master Koichi Kondo sent a hand written response from Korea, to Meliton Geronimo.

In 1962, Master Koichi Kondo, Chief Instructor of the All Japan Karate Federation, as a prelude for recognition of Sikaran as a distinct Filipino empty-hand fighting art named Meliton Geronimo, now a captain in the Philippine Air Force, Japanese Karate Grades Commissioner for the Philippines. In recognition of his skill, Meliton Geronimo was awarded the 5th Degree black belt by Kyojiro Furusawa, president of the All Japan Karate Federation. It was at that time, the highest grade in Karate awarded to a non-Japanese. The same reciprocal authority was accorded to Meliton Geronimo by Korean Tang Soo Doo Grandmasters Hwang Kee of the Moo Doo Kwan and Kwai Byung Yun of the Jee Doo Kwan. This commission qualified that whatever grade or promotion Meliton Geronimo issues will be recognized and honored by the All Japan Karate Federation, the Korean Karate Association and eventually by the Asian Karate Association.

Although it took a while, on March 6, 1963, Master Koichi Kondo confirmed his support for Meliton Geronimo and the Karate (Sikaran) Brotherhood of the Philippines for membership in the Asian Karate Association and extended an invitation for the Philippines to participate in the First Asian Karate Championship.

In an attempt to make it a regular part of the Asian Games, a uniform name for the sport was necessary. All member countries agreed to use the collective name of Asian Karate Association.

In 1964, Meliton Geronimo led a team of Sikaran players in the First Asian Karate Championships held in Japan. It was the first time that Japanese Karate, Chinese Karate, Korean Tang Soo Doo, called Korean Karate and Sikaran referred to as Philippine Karate, competed in an international tournament using a standard uniform rule



Meliton Geronimo, fresh from the Philippine Air Force Flying School.

of contest. The rules were almost made-to-order for Sikaran fighters. They were the matira ang matibay (knock-out-survival-of-the-fittest) kind of rules, the forte of Sikaran. However, there was a twist. Full-body protective gear was used, the first time Filipinos were introduced to the practice.

Meliton Geronimo's skill in Sikaran paid off when he was named "Most Courageous Fighter". It was his first international competition and the first honor for the Philippines in the martial art field of empty-hand fighting. It also proved the flexibility and ability of Sikaran practitioners to adapt to different fight situations under a different set of rules of engagement.

In subsequent Asian Karate Championships, several other honors (including 7 gold medals) were won under the leadership of Meliton Geronimo.

In the Fifth Asian Karate Championships held in Seoul, Korea, Jaime Geronimo, younger brother of Meliton Geronimo, won the "Most Courageous Fighter Award."

Meliton Geronimo - 10th Degree Red Belt, Grandmaster of Sikaran

On the Third Asian Karate Championship in 1966, held in the Philippines, Sikaran was accepted as a distinct Filipino style of fighting, by the Asian Karate Association headed by Korea's Dr. Kwai Byeung Yun, with the concurrence of Master Koichi Kondo of the All Japan Karate Federation, Master Hwang Kee of the Korean Tang Soo Doo and China's Master Chua Tiong Ki. After several centuries of existence, Sikaran was finally accorded international acceptance and recognition. This once in a lifetime event was witnessed by Philippine Senator Ambrosio Padilla, Antonio delas Alas, president of the Philippine Amateur Athletic Federation, Colonel Jose Lukban, president of the Philippine Amateur Judo Association and several high ranking military officers. Also in attendance were Cipriano Geronimo, last Hari of Baras and several Sikaran elders from Baras and surrounding towns, headed by Melencio Bigasin and Manuel Ocampo.

In recognition of this achievement, the Philippine Sportswriters Association granted on Meliton Geronimo the Sportsman of the Year Award.

Meliton Geronimo, who codified, organized and elevated Sikaran from an ancient system to a modern fighting art was awarded the title of Grandmaster of Sikaran with the rank of 10th Degree Red Belt. He was vested the Order of the Eagle (Agila), the highest award in the Asian Karate Association.

Some people were insistent on calling the art Philippine Karate professing that it has been influenced too much by Karate. Some contend that it should be called Modern Sikaran to differentiate it with ancient Sikaran, because foreign but similar fighting arts have debauched its distinctive style. Meliton Geronimo, maintaining that this is neither a new nor a different art, but a natural evolutionary progression of the centuries-old art of Sikaran, resisted to use a qualifier and



The Order of the Eagle, highest award of the Asian Karate Association, vested on Meliton Geronimo as Grandmaster of Sikaran.

retained the name of the art the way it has always been since the 1800's. It may have seemed an insignificant matter to some, but to Meliton Geronimo, it looms large on the horizon of the future of Sikaran. He strongly declared that the art of Sikaran that he is propagating is the same art his grandfather propagated in the 1800's. He emphatically stressed that nobody can improve on perfection of the centuries-old art of Sikaran. He emphasized that what he improved on is the "packaging" and "presentation" of Sikaran.

Working together, Meliton Geronimo, his younger brother Jaime Geronimo and Emmanuel del Espiritu Santo Querubin, with the encouragement and wisdom of Sikaran Haris Cipriano Geronimo, Melencio Bigasin and Manuel Ocampo and Arnis de Mano Grandmaster Daniel Rendal, formalized the syllabus of the techniques and curriculum of Sikaran. Likewise, terminologies were translated and other words were coined in line with this curriculum.

In 1969, Meliton Geronimo and Emmanuel del Espiritu Santo Querubin's Terminologies of the Filipino Fighting Arts received the approval of the Institute of National Language and the Department of Education, bolstering the identity of Sikaran as an indigenous empty-hand fighting art of the Philippines.

In the same year, Meliton Geronimo and Emmanuel Querubin published two Sikaran Instructional Manuals.

From 1969 to 1972, Meliton Geronimo and his senior instructors, Jaime Geronimo, Emmanuel del Espiritu Santo Querubin, Angeles Sanchez, Rodrigo Espiritu, Ramon Valdenor and Serafin Pangilinan, were assigned to train Republic of the Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos and the Presidential Security Command in Sikaran.

In 1970, the Asian Karate Association was disbanded to give way to the creation of the World Union of Karate-do Organizations (WUKO) the ruling body of Karate in the world. It was unfortunate that Master Koichi Kondo was no longer around to witness the culmination of his dream. Master Koichi Kondo passed away prematurely in 1969. The Sikaran (Karate) Brotherhood of the Philippines became an original signatory member while Meliton Geronimo and Emmanuel del Espiritu Santo Querubin were designated lifetime founding signers of the WUKO charter.

Meliton Geronimo, has gained worldwide recognition as a martial arts leader, and the Philippines, through the Sikaran (Karate) Brotherhood of the Philippines, has emerged as a powerhouse in the international Karate scene. This personal glory was bothersome for Meliton Geronimo. With the formation of WUKO, Sikaran was being identified too much as Karate instead of the distinct Filipino Fighting Art that it is. Apprehensive that Sikaran may lose its identity over the international acceptance of Philippine Karate, Meliton Geronimo, shortly thereafter relinquished his position in the World Union of Karate-do Organizations (WUKO).

Energized by the enthusiasm of the Sikaran elders, Meliton Geronimo devoted all his time and energy in the propagation of Sikaran. Sacrificing his personal stature as a pacesetter in the Karate world, he dropped all reference to Sikaran as Philippine Karate and propelled the Filipino Fighting Art to its rightful place in the international martial arts scene. Adopting the ancient rules of Sikaran competition, Meliton Geronimo set tournament protocol making Sikaran a modern and exciting competitive sport. Sikaran is now practiced in several countries in at least four continents and is universally recognized as the Filipino Martial Art that it is.

After retiring from the Philippine Air Force, with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, Meliton Geronimo was elected Mayor of the town of Baras in the province of Rizal. His first official action as Mayor was to acknowledge Baras as the birthplace of Sikaran. A similar resolution was also passed by the provincial government of the province of Rizal. Geronimo also erected a monument of two Sikaran fighters in a biyakid position, adjacent to the multi-purpose gymnasium that he also constructed to be home of Sikaran.



Mayor Meliton "Latigo" Geronimo with President Fidel Ramos.

Sikaran and Meliton Geronimo are synonymous and nobody can rightfully claim to have learned the art unless they learned it from Meliton Geronimo or his disciples. Unfortunately, unsuspecting people are being bilked by self-proclaimed "Masters" and even "Grandmasters," who after hearing about Sikaran, cleverly put together some hand and foot techniques and call their art Sikaran.



Grandmaster Meliton Geronimo at 80 years old leads the training by the shore of Laguna de Bay.

Meliton Geronimo, still actively oversees the affairs of Kapatirang Sikaran ng Pilipinas (ruling body of Sikaran) and the Pandaigdig Kapatirang Sikaran (World Brotherhood of Sikaran), comprised of several affiliates from all over the world.

With Meliton Geronimo at the head, his two most senior and ardent followers stand by his side. Jaime Geronimo, his younger brother and second in command and a master in his own right, attends to the technical affairs of Sikaran as an international sport and is now the Chief Instructor of the Pandaigdig Kapatirang Sikaran (World Sikaran Brotherhood). Emmanuel del Espiritu Santo Querubin, now based in the United States, continues to propagate Sikaran as a fighting art and has just published "Sikaran, Fighting Art of the Filipino Farmer."



Grandmaster Meliton Geronimo (bare chested back turned to camera) leads black belt class.

There is only one recognized Sikaran genealogy and that is the Geronimo lineage. There is only one Grandmaster of Sikaran accepted by the Sikaran elders and that is Meliton Geronimo. There is only one Filipino Grandmaster sanctioned and recognized by the Asian Karate Association to hold the rank of 10th Degree Red Belt in Sikaran and that is Meliton Geronimo.

Steven Dowd, Publisher, FMAdigest

The FMAdigest was established in 2003. Its mission is the promotion of the Filipino culture, the Filipino heritage and the Filipino martial arts and everything Filipino. It is the only internet magazine solely dedicated to the martial arts and culture in and from the Philippines.

In the words of Steven Dowd: “The FMAdigest is designed to provide access to articles, information, events, news, seminars, techniques, etc. pertinent to the Filipino martial arts and the Philippines. The FMAdigest does not claim to be the authority of the Filipino martial arts and the Philippines, or to know everything about each style, Organization, Federation, and personal disputes within certain styles or the full culture of the Philippines, etc. The FMAdigest does not have a favorite Filipino martial art, and does not support one person, style or Organization. The FMAdigest will not be the middle person in disputes. As far as FMAdigest is concerned it is just letting Filipino martial art practitioners become known and informing others of their view, their thoughts, styles, Organizations, etc. We are trying to bring the culture and heritage of the Philippines throughout the world.”

In response to the many inquiries on who Steven Dowd is and why he does the FMAdigest, here is what he said”

“I am just a practitioner of the Filipino Martial Arts who has been fortunate enough to gain knowledge in the cultural fighting arts of the Philippines along with some of the culture of the Philippines itself. I do not know Karate, Ju-jitsu, Kung-Fu, etc. but I do have to admit that that I had friends that are practitioners in the Japanese, Korean and Chinese martial arts and I have worked out with them and they have shown me a little of their style. I have not been a student of Modern Arnis, Serrada, Inay Eskrima, Kali Ilustrisimo, etc. I do not and did not know such great practitioners and leaders of their styles and systems such as Remy Presas, Angel Cabaes, Filemon Canete, Tatang Ilustrisimo, etc. I claim no ultimate knowledge of these great practitioners or their styles.”

“What I know is Kuntaw from the Lanada family, Arnis Balite from the Aguillon family and TRACMA which was created by Grandmaster Trovador Ramos who was a student of Pundador Manuel Aguillon.”

“One thing is for sure, I respect all and love being a practitioner of the Filipino martial arts and I do enjoy very much the culture of the Philippines.”

In 1995, the son and daughters of the late Manuel Aguillon, appointed Steven Dowd the official Tagapagmana (heir and inheritor) of the Aguillon family art. Additionally it was proposed that the system be named after the Founder’s ring name, Kid Balite, when he was a champion boxer. The art there after became known as Arnis Balite.

Steven Dowd trained under Carlito Lanada, Founder of Maharlika Kuntaw. He has authored several books in Kuntaw and likewise has held numerous prestigious positions in the Kuntaw organization. In 1977 he was appointed Kuntaw ng Pilipinas U.S. Director. From 1979 to 1980, he was the U.S. Director of the International Kuntaw Federation. From 1980 to 1993, Steven Dowd was President of the International Kuntaw Federation.

Several international associations, among them the International Soke-Head Founder Society, the World Martial Arts Council (Europe), the Latin-America Grandmasters and Soke Council, the United States Martial Artist association, the Hawaii Martial Arts International Society and the Society of Filipino Martial Arts International, have recognized the art of Arnis Balite and Steven Dowd as the Grandmaster-Heir of the art of Manuel Aguillon.



Pundador
Manuel M. Aguillon Sr.



Tagapagmana
Steven K. Dowd

An Interview with Grandmaster Meliton Geronimo



FMAdigest: *In your opinion what makes your Filipino Martial Arts style different from other Filipino martial arts style?*

Meliton 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.

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

Meliton Geronimo: Sikaran is a martial art 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.

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

Meliton 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.

FMAdigest: *In your opinion, what is a Master?*

Meliton 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.

FMAdigest: *In your opinion, what is a Grandmaster?*

Meliton 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.

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

Meliton 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.

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

Meliton 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 and 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.

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, Illustrisimo, Doce Pares to name just a few. And then there are organizations which are made up of the different organizations such as National Filipino martial arts, Philippine Counsel of Kali, Eskrima, Arnis Masters), etc. Do you ever think the Filipino martial arts will come under just one banner?*

Meliton 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.

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

Meliton 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.



A meeting of sorts: Grandmaster Meliton Geronimo (sitting front).
Standing from L-R: Jaime Geronimo 9th Degree Black Belt, Steven Dowd, publisher of FMAdigest,
Ramon Valdenor 8th Degree Black belt and Emmanuel Querubin 9th Degree Black Belt.

Emmanuel del Espiritu Santo Querubin

Author: Sikaran, Fighting Art of the Filipino Farmer



The author's first lesson in fighting was when he was 15 years old under his paternal uncle, Fructuoso "PCC BOY" Querubin, a professional prize fighter and younger brother of his late father. An unfortunate accident during training caused the author to give up the dream of being a professional fighter like his uncle and his late father who died when the author was only 5 years old.

While on vacation in his mother's province of Bauan, Batangas, he witnessed his mother's cousin, Inong del Espiritu Santo (locally known as Kilabot) playing with some youngsters. Kilabot was jokingly manhandling anybody who comes near him. Even if they all gang up on him they cannot hold him down. He either applies a takedown technique, a throw or a submission hold.

That was the start of the author's training in "Babag", the term Kilabot called his system. Literally, Babag means fight.

Emmanuel Querubin was also schooled in the use of different weapons. Aside from the baston, Kilabot was also very proficient in the use of the tungkli (also called pingga), a medium length carrying stick Batanguenos use in plying their merchandise of kolambu (mosquito net) and banig (a type of floor mat used to sleep on). A farmer by calling, Kilabot was an expert in the use of the karit (sickle), the dulos (reaper), the gulok (machete) and the palakol (axe). He can likewise throw any of the weapons and hit the target dead center at 10 yards.

But Kilabot's favorite weapon was the kudlit, a 4" version of the balisong. Due to its size, the kudlit was very easy to conceal and very handy to employ. The blade was only 2½ inches long concealed in the handle which was about 4 inches long, 1 inch wide and ½ inch thick. He said that you do not need a longer blade, emphasizing that the short blade will be more than enough protection, all you need to know is where to hit. Besides being a farmer, Kilabot was also the local barrio butcher and well acquainted with vital points. Other than the blade, kudlit had other tactical uses. The use of the blade was a last resort application. The most common use of the kudlit was hitting vital points with either end while holding it tightly hidden in your hand. The kudlit, given to the author, became his favorite secret weapon.

In 1957, through an uncle, who was involved in heavy machineries and infrastructure, he met Toru Tomada, a Japanese engineer who was part of the reparations effort in the Philippines. Toru Tomada was a black belter in Goju-kai Karate. Although not a certified Karate instructor, Tomada was willing to have anybody interested, like the



Fructuoso "PCC BOY" Querubin, the author's first fighting art (boxing) teacher.

author, train with him. The author trained earnestly with Tomada Sensei. Every training session consisted of punching, blocking and kicking. There was only one kick, the front kick and it was executed low to the groin or medium height to the stomach. There were no high kicks or other kicks. The only other part of the training was doing the Sanchin kata over and over again. The only sparring was pre-arranged sparring involving punching and front kick.

After a year, Toru Tomada went back to Japan and was replaced by another engineer named Kenji Kurusawa. Like Tomada he was a black belter in Karate, but not a certified instructor. His type of Karate was different. His style had more kicks and the stances are wider than Goju-kai. Kurusawa said that his school is called Shuko-kai, an off-shot of Shito-ryu. Unlike Tomada, Kurusawa performed more katas. Kurusawa's training involved the repetition of the katas and the basic techniques of punching, blocking and kicking. It was unfortunate that Kenji Kurusawa stayed in the Philippines for only a few months.



Emmanuel Querubin continued his Karate training on his own combining what he learned from Toru Tomada and Kenji Kurusawa.

In 1958, the author, a Corporal in the Philippine Air Force Reserves, heard about Captain Meliton Geronimo of the Philippine Air Force and the Karate (Sikaran) Brotherhood of the Philippines. The author joined the Karate (Sikaran) Brotherhood of the Philippines calling his Karate school Samahan sa Ikauunlad ng Karate sa Pilipinas (SIKAP). In English it meant Society for the Improvement of Karate in the Philippines (SIKAP). Later the school's name was changed to Sikaran Pilipinas (SIKAP). Captain Meliton Geronimo appointed the author Director for Research and Standards.

Emmanuel Querubin trained under Captain Geronimo. He was fascinated by the variety of kicking techniques of the KBP, which Captain Geronimo said were Sikaran techniques. The most intriguing techniques were the biyakid (spinning heel kick), the pangbali (stomping kick to the knee) and the panampal (roundhouse kick to the face using the crook of the foot between the instep and the shin). Another variation of this kick is using the ball of the foot to hit the temple or the cheek bone and the use of the shin bone to break the knee.

Captain Meliton Geronimo took the author to Baras, Rizal and introduced him to the surviving masters of Sikaran. Part of his responsibilities as Karate (Sikaran) Brotherhood of the Philippines Director for Research and Standards



Emmanuel Querubin, extreme left chronicled the history of Sikaran. Melencio Bigasin is shown delivering a front thrust kick against Captain Melito Geronimo.

was to assist Captain Geronimo in formulating the curriculum for Philippine Karate, which was how Sikaran was referred to at that time. The author undertook an in-depth study and research about Sikaran. He interviewed the remaining practitioners of Sikaran in the town of Baras and adjoining towns in the Province of Rizal and chronicled the history of Sikaran and took pictures to preserve the history of the truly unarmed fighting art of Filipino origin.

It was also at this time that the author met Daniel Rendal of the Rendal Innovative School of Filipino Fighting Arts. The biggest innovation that Tata Daniel, the title he prefers, introduced was the use of protective gear in the practice of Arnis de Mano. He maintained that to make Arnis de Mano a sport it is necessary to use protective gear to achieve realism in combat and validate the one-strike-one-kill principle of the Filipino fighting art.



Daniel Rendal of the Rendal Innovative School of Filipino Fighting Arts (right).

Interestingly, Captain Geronimo also preferred using protective gear in the full-contact sparring practiced by the Karate (Sikaran) Brotherhood of the Philippines. The author later found out that Japanese Karate Master Koichi Kondo introduced the use of protective gear to Captain Geronimo.

The boxing techniques from PCC Boy, the Babag techniques from Ingkong Inong del Espiritu Santo, the Arnis techniques from Tata Daniel Rendal and the Karate lessons

he learned from Toru Tomada and Kenji Kurusawa complemented the author's training in Sikaran.

At that time, black belt promotions in the Karate (Sikaran) Brotherhood of the Philippines were done by the All Japan Karate Federation, upon the recommendation of Captain Meliton Geronimo. The author was promoted to 1st Degree Black belt. Two years later, Emmanuel Querubin was promoted to 2nd Degree Black Belt.

In 1960, Emmanuel Querubin joined the YMCA Judo Club to complement his martial arts skill. He learned Judo from Engineer Fortunato "Boity" Sevilla, then Vice-President of the Philippine Amateur Judo Association, Francisco Alvina and Professor Perfecto Mendiola a guest instructor at the YMCA Judo Club. Professor Mendiola was responsible in the widespread

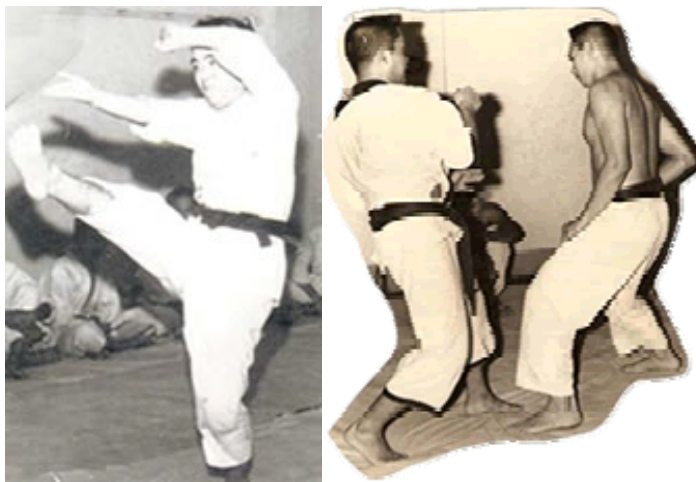


To complement his martial arts skill, Emmanuel Querubin studied Judo from Professor Perfecto Mendiola and Fortunato "Boity" Sevilla.

dissemination of Judo when it was introduced in the Philippines in the 1930's.

Engineer Sevilla, at that time was a Sales Engineer at the Araneta Heavy Machineries. He invited a Heavy Machineries consultant, Japanese Engineer named Ryusuke Ohtake who was a 3rd Degree Black Belt in Wado-ryu Karate to train at the YMCA Judo Club. Ohtake and the author became very close Karate training partners at the YMCA Judo Club.

At that time, Emmanuel Querubin was also communicating with the Japan Karate Association so when Ceferino Vasquez, Jr. returned to the Philippines from training at the Japan Karate Association Headquarters in Tokyo, he got in touch with the author. The author helped Vasquez in putting up the All Philippines Karate Federation as the representative body of the Japan Karate Association which was the authority in Shotokan style Karate.



Ryusuke Ohtake of the Japan Wado-kai doing the Heian Yondan and Ceferino Vasquez (bare-chested) of the Japan Karate Association (Shotokan) were the author's Karate training partners and associates.

Thereafter, Vasquez, Ohtake and Emmanuel Querubin became Karate training partners at the YMCA Judo Club. At that point in his martial arts life Emmanuel Querubin has been exposed to the four major styles of Japanese Karate, Goju-kai, Shuko-kai (Shito), Wado-kai and Shotokan. This exposure to the various styles of Karate gave him a clearer understanding and better appreciation of the Sikaran techniques that Captain Meliton Geronimo was

teaching and propagating.

When Kunio Sasaki came to the Philippines to take over the JKA in the Philippines, Vasquez and the All Philippines Karate Federation joined the Karate (Sikaran) Brotherhood of the Philippines headed by Captain Meliton Geronimo.

To help in the administration of the Karate (Sikaran) Brotherhood of the Philippines, Emmanuel Querubin introduced Engineer Fortunato Sevilla and Professor Perfecto Mendiola to Captain Meliton Geronimo. Engineer Sevilla and Professor Mendiola became close advisers of Captain Geronimo and played major roles in the establishment of the syllabus of Sikaran.

In connection with the author's job as Operations Manager of the Philippines International Magazine (a cultural magazine), he traveled all over the Philippines from Batanes to Jolo. During his travels he took the opportunity to undertake a research about the various fighting arts of the Philippines.

Emmanuel Querubin met several martial arts teachers and practitioners, but almost all were exponents of stick fighting. Their arts were known under different names

but were from the same origin. In the Visayas and Mindanao regions, the most common name of the stick fighting art was Eskrima, Estokada and Kali. In the Tagalog region of mainland Luzon, the predominant name was Arnis de Mano. In Central Luzon, Brokil was the accepted name.

In Jolo, Emmanuel Querubin met Hadji Kiram Ijiran, a school teacher who was an expert in Koon-tao and Silat and very knowledgeable in the history of the Muslim fighting arts. Koon-tao, originally brought by Chinese traders and merchants, due to its similarity with Silat from Indonesia, assumed a Muslim personality all its own and was later considered a Muslim art. In Cotabato, Marawi and Zamboanga, Emmanuel Querubin also met several Muslims who were proficient in both Koon-tao and Silat.

In 1965, Emmanuel Querubin was appointed Philippine Correspondent for Black Belt Magazine, published in the United States. The author's first article was entitled "Sikaran - A Dying Art", in the April 1966 issue. This was followed with another Sikaran article entitled "It All Started 800 Years Ago", in the June 1966 issue.

In November 1966 the Asian Karate Association recognized Sikaran as a Filipino Unarmed Fighting Art of distinct origin. Meliton Geronimo was granted the title of Grandmaster of Sikaran and was awarded the rank of 10th Degree Red Belt. Thereafter all promotions in the Karate (Sikaran) Brotherhood of the Philippines were given by Sikaran Grandmaster Meliton Geronimo, honored by the Asian Karate Association, the All Japan Karate Federation and the Korean Karate Association. Grandmaster Meliton Geronimo promoted the author to 4th Degree Black Belt.

In 1967 Emmanuel Querubin was commissioned by the Karate Association of Malaysia to be Chief Foreign Karate Instructor and was asked to select three instructors to assist him in Kuala Lumpur. The author selected Nestor Principe, Vince Vasallo and Luisito dela Cruz, all members of the Karate (Sikaran) Brotherhood of the Philippines.



Minister of Education and President of the Karate Association of Malaysia Khir Johari, welcomes the author. Looking on from left are: Nestor Principe, Luisito dela Cruz, Karate Association of Malaysia Secretary General Chew Choo Soot (between Johari and the author) and Vince Vasallo.

While in Malaysia Emmanuel Querubin trained in Soong Leong Kwan (Double Dragon School) Kung-fu under Chan Keng Wan, last Master of the system who was also a guest instructor of the Karate Association of Malaysia, he also trained in the Malaysian version of the Muslim Art of Bersilat.

Before returning back to the Philippines in 1968, Emmanuel Querubin was introduced to the Keishin-kai style of Japanese Karate by Eiichi Yamazaki. Yamazaki replaced the author as Chief Foreign Karate Instructor of the Karate Association of Malaysia.

In 1969 on the occasion of the Sixth Asian Karate Championship, Emmanuel Querubin was



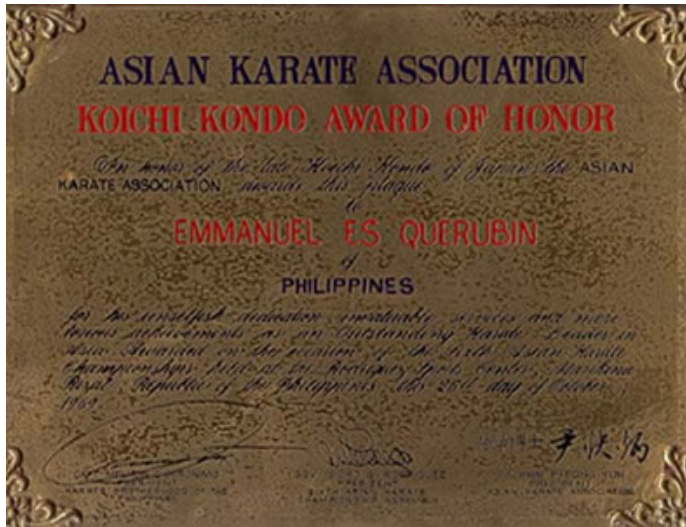
Soong Leong Kwan Kung-fu Master Chan Keng Wan with Emmanuel Querubin, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia 1967.



Emmanuel Querubin with Eiichi Yamazaki of the Japan Karate-do Keinshin-kai

vested the “Koichi Kondo Award of Honor” by the Asian Karate Association. He also received the “Meliton Geronimo Award”, the highest award of the Karate (Sikaran) Brotherhood of the Philippines. The author was also promoted to 5th Degree Black Belt. Together with Grandmaster Meliton Geronimo, Emmanuel Querubin published two SIKARAN Instructional Manuals.





In recognition of Sikaran as a superior combative art, President Ferdinand Marcos enlisted the services of Captain Meliton Geronimo and his senior instructors to train the Presidential Security Command in the art of Sikaran. President Ferdinand Marcos awarded the author and the rest of the instructional staff Plaques of Recognition and Appreciation.

In 1970 Captain Meliton Geronimo headed the Philippine National Karate Team to participate in the First World Karate Championships in Tokyo, Japan. In connection with the world championships, the First World Karate Congress was held to form the World Union of Karate-do Organizations (WUKO) to be the ruling body of Karate in the international world of sport. Captain Meliton Geronimo and Emmanuel Querubin became lifetime signatory members of the WUKO charter. Sikaran was recognized by WUKO as the representative body of Philippine Karate under Grandmaster Meliton Geronimo, 10th Degree Red Belt.





Sikaran Triumvirate in front of the Budokan in Tokyo, Japan during the first world Karate Championships in 1970. From Left: Jimmy Geronimo, Grandmaster Meliton Geronimo (team leader and delegate to the First World Karate Congress) and Emmanuel Querubin (delegate to the First World Karate Congress).



Captain Meliton Geronimo, (first row 3rd from left) to his left is Dr. Kwai Byeung Yun past President of the defunct Asian Karate Association. Emmanuel Querubin is behind Captain Geronimo (second row 3rd from left), with Karate Leaders from other parts of the world during the formation of the World Union of Karate-do Organizations (WUKO).

While in Japan, the author had the rare opportunity to meet the Grandmasters of the different Japanese Karate schools, Gogen Yamaguchi of Goju-ryu, Hironori Otsuka of Wado-ryu, Kenwa Mabuni of Shito-ryu, Masatoshi Nakayama of Shotokan, Masutatsu Oyama of Kyukoshin-kai and many other Masters, not only of Karate but other Japanese martial arts.



Emmanuel Querubin with Japan Goju-kai Grandmaster Gogen Yamaguchi, Tokyo, Japan 1970. Training under the waterfalls, the Grandmaster at the left and Emmanuel Querubin at the right.

Korea's Dr. Kwai Byeung Yun, past president of the defunct Asian Karate Association introduced Captain Meliton Geronimo as Soke (Founder) of Sikaran to the various Grandmasters and Masters who all considered Captain Geronimo equal in rank and title.

The All Japan Karate Federation, once headed by Grandmaster Koichi Kondo, played host to Captain Meliton Geronimo and the Philippine Team at Utsonomiya City in Tochigiken, where several celebrations were held to honor Grandmaster Koichi Kondo and commemorate the defunct Asian Karate Association, the only international Karate

Association in Asia before the formation of the World Union of Karate-do Organizations (WUKO).

When Emmanuel Querubin returned to the Philippines he had a busy schedule of teaching not only the Presidential Security Command but also the Metropolitan Command (METROCOM) of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. He was Combative Arts instructor in the Counter-Urban Guerilla Course of the Philippine Constabulary and the Distinguished Visitors Protection Course of the Philippine Air Force Intelligence and Security Unit. He also taught Unarmed Combat in the Philippine Air Force Officers' School. He was also appointed Philippine Correspondent for Official Karate magazine published in New York.

In 1971, upon the request of Engineer Sevilla, brother-in-law of mayoral candidate Ramon Bagatsing, the author headed a special unit providing security to the candidate. When Ramon Bagatsing was elected Mayor, Emmanuel Querubin was appointed as a Special Confidential Agent, in-charge of five agents in the Civilian Intelligence and Security Unit of the City of Manila headed by Jess Patajo. When working close-in security and undercover, where carrying of firearm is not an option, the use of the kudlit came in very handy.

Emmanuel Querubin played a balancing act between his job, his family and his duties to the Karate (Sikaran) Brotherhood of the Philippines. Something had to give and in the end, when his daughter was born, Emmanuel Querubin took a leave of absence from Sikaran.

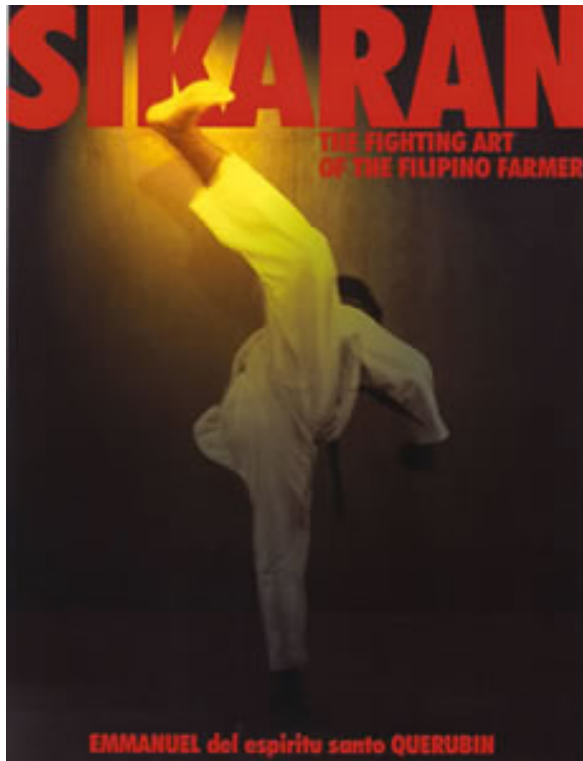
In 1972, Captain Meliton Geronimo concentrated in the propagation of Sikaran and relinquished all his connections with Karate even dropping all references to Sikaran as Philippine Karate.

After migrating to the United States and promotion to the 6th Degree Black Belt in 1975, Emmanuel Querubin taught Sikaran to neighborhood kids in Oakland, California. He also had a brief stint as a Sikaran instructor to the personnel of the Philippine Consulate in San Francisco, headed by then Consul General Romeo Arguelles.

In 1982 Emmanuel Querubin was promoted to 7th Degree Black Belt. Eight years later in 1990, Sikaran Grandmaster Meliton Geronimo promoted Emmanuel Querubin to the 8th Degree Black Belt making him the third highest ranking, next to Jimmy Geronimo, 9th Degree Black Belt Chief Instructor of the Kapatirang Sikaran Pandaigdig (World Sikaran Brotherhood).

In 2006, Emmanuel Querubin became aware that several people were claiming to be Grandmasters and Masters of Sikaran. After meeting with Grandmaster Meliton Geronimo in 2007, Emmanuel Querubin decided to set the record straight and educate the uninformed and misinformed regarding the real history of Sikaran, by finishing the book that he started in the 1960's. In 2008 the book "SIKARAN, The Fighting Art of the Filipino Farmer" was copyrighted and published.

In 2009, in conjunction with the celebration of his 82nd birthday and the official launching of the book SIKARAN "The Fighting Art of the Filipino Farmer," Grandmaster Meliton Geronimo promoted Emmanuel Querubin to the 9th Degree Black Belt in Sikaran.



SIKARAN “The Fighting Art of the Filipino Farmer”

By Emmanuel del Espiritu Santo Querubin

The author was appointed by Grandmaster Melton Geronimo as Director for Research and Standards.

This is the only fully authorized book about Sikaran authorized by Grandmaster Meliton Geronimo.

This book neither intends nor claims to reveal any mysticism or secret of Sikaran. This is solely because there are neither secrets nor mysteries involved in Sikaran. Sikaran is composed of purely offensive and defensive maneuvers systematically organized as an effective fighting art and an exciting sport.

This is a must for all practitioners whether practitioners of Sikaran or not.

Order Form

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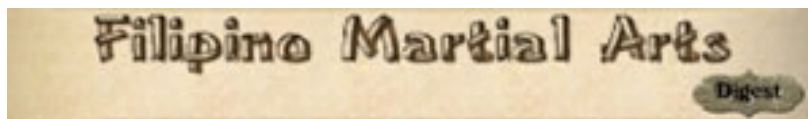
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