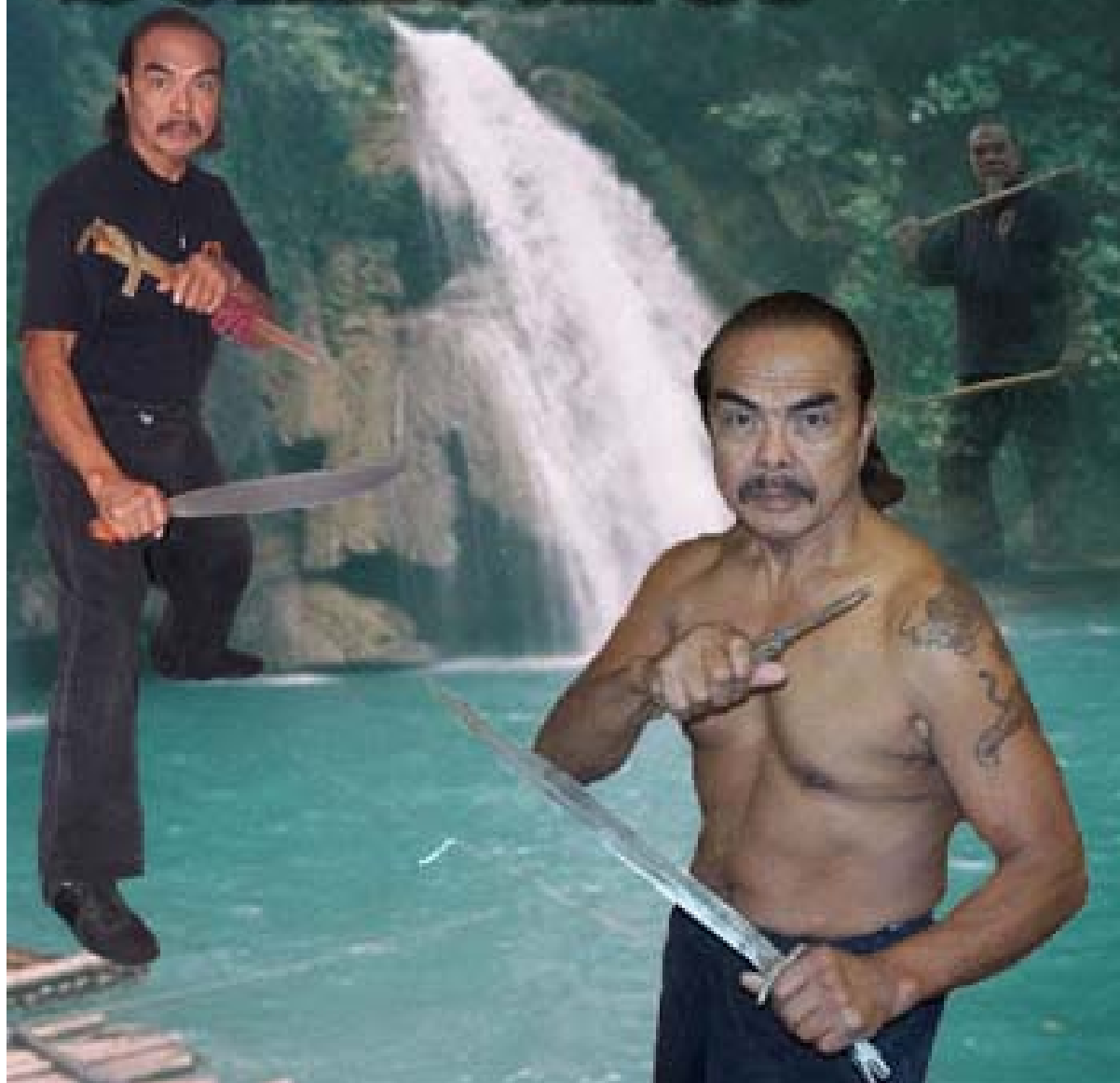


# Filipino Martial Arts

Digest

## Senkotiros

Special Edition  
2007



## **Publisher**

Steven K. Dowd

## **Contributing Writers**

Jane Kessler	Krystal Manuel
Jim Trapani	Nisha Bhakta
Stacy Desideri	Mike Kessler
Jim Schaufele	Mike McFarland
Restie Marvive	Dean Goldade
Ryan Preston	Sid Campbell
Jowett Legaspi	Brock Geneviro
Shane Peralta	Max M. Pallen

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**The Makings of a True American Martial Arts Pioneer**

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**Anting-Anting and the Search for Mastery of the FMA**

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

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

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## From the Publishers Desk

Kumusta

Professor Max Pallen is a wealth of knowledge, which he has obtained throughout the years. Between many Filipino martial art styles that Professor Pallen has learned, he has revived and founded Senkotiros International. Continuing to develop Senkotiros, his system of Philippine martial arts; he has worked tirelessly to perpetuate the martial heritage of the Philippines; and he has established himself as a consummate instructor, competitor, coach, promote, and official.

To know this man is an honor, quiet, patient, always willing to go that extra step for a student, friend and fellow practitioner.

The FMA Digest hopes you the reader will not only just learn about Senkotiros, but will also get to know the man himself through this Special Edition.

Spending a considerable amount of time in the Philippines each year, Professor Pallen just keeps the knowledge coming forth that he learns while being there. When here in the United States he spreads his knowledge to others. If you have the chance to attend a seminar or visit one of his schools, make sure you do not pass up the opportunity. Well enough of my rambling, read and learn about the man Professor Pallen and the art of Senkotiros.

Maraming Salamat Po



[www.senkotiros.org](http://www.senkotiros.org)

## **Introduction to Senkotiros**



Between many other Filipino martial art styles that Professor Pallen has learned, he has revived and founded Senkotiros International in the year 2000.

Senkotiros originated in the Bicol Region of the island of Luzon in the Philippines. Professor Pallen was born there and learned the basic techniques of the style from his grandfather. His grandfather, Luis Moratillo, a Barangay chief and police officer, was one of the practitioners of this style of arnis. These teachings, from many years ago, sparked Professor Pallen's life long interest in the heritage that is the Philippine martial arts.

Professor Pallen continues to develop Senkotiros, his system of Philippine martial arts; he has worked tirelessly to perpetuate the martial heritage of the Philippines; and he has established himself as a consummate instructor, competitor, coach, promote, and official. He is also a proud instructor, coach, and trainer of several World stickfighting champions.

Professor Pallen today as in the past furthers his quest for the Philippine martial arts skills by continuously returning to the Philippines visiting Luzon, Visayan and Mindanao Islands.

## **Origin of Senkotiros**

Senkotiros is a style of Filipino martial arts that originated in the Southern Luzon Province of the Philippines. Unlike other Philippine martial art styles, Senkotiros originators were probably not able to pass on the art to their descendants primarily because of the widespread necessity to find work in other provinces and cities. The demand for work forced the practitioners to spend most of their time away from home. As in most Filipino fighting art systems, it is difficult to determine the exact origin of Senkotiros. Some say that it was derived from the "Camarin" style.

The word "Camarin" means a place to store rice or "palay" or any other grains harvested during the harvest season. The Camarin system was practiced in the "camarin" (warehouse or factory) to avoid being seen by the public and thus maintain the secrecy of their style. "Camarin" also became the name given by the locals to those who worked in the camarin. When asked about their style of arnis, the practitioners would respond, "Camarin Style". Others thought that the system was named after the Camarines Province of the Philippines. It was not until after World War II that the art of Senkotiros started to surface in the urban communities of the Bicol region of Southern Luzon. Luis Moratillo, a Barangay chief and police officer, was one of the practitioners of this style of arnis in Sipocot, Camarines Sur during those days. In 1947 he passed away, leaving the art of Arnis to his young grandson's mind (emong) only to be revived 20 years later.

It was not until after World War II that the art of Senkotiros started to surface in the urban communities of the Bicol region of Southern Luzon. Luis Moratillo, a Barangay chief and police officer, was one of the practitioners of this style of arnis in Sipocot, Camarines Sur during those days. Unfortunately, his life-style sent his poor

health from bad to worse because of sleepless nights spent on his gambling habits. In 1947 he passed away, leaving the art of Arnis to his young grandson's mind (among) only to be revived 20 years later.

Urban legend indicates that the Camarin workers were constantly ridiculed because of their subordinate place in society. The Camarin workers practiced Arnis in order to defend themselves against the many groups that constantly wanted to harm and ridicule them. Not long after its development, the rich owners of the camarins (warehouses) soon started to hear tales of the deadly art of Arnis practiced by the workers. This discovery prompted them to investigate the workers and their fighting capabilities. Those that were found to be experts in Arnis and had been working for the owners for many years were considered loyal and were hired as their personal bodyguards or "katuwang" (trusted right hand person). This practice continued throughout the years. From Camarines style soon Senkotiros resurfaced and was adopted because of the deadly five striking angles.

Others thought that Senkotiros was the same as the better-known art of Arnis, Cinco Tiro. Cinco (or "sinko" or "senko") means "five", and "tiro" means, "strike". "Senkotiros", although similar in meaning to "Arnis" Cinco Tiros, was developed in the Bicol region independently from Cinco Tiros. The word "Senkotiros" could also mean "senior student" in the art of Arnis, or the "Arnis Master". This style of Arnis, Senkotiros, is known to be very deadly in the handling of the single stick or "solo baston". Ultimately the goal of this system is to develop great expertise in the art of empty handed fighting.

The main concept of Senkotiros is to disable and not to kill unless necessary.

## **Senkotiros International**

**Basdiot, Moal Boal**

**Cebu, Philippines**

Cell: (0916) 358-4304

[www.senkotiros.org](http://www.senkotiros.org)



### **Professor Max Pallen**



Professor Max Pallen was born and raised in the province of Camarines Sur, in Bicol Region, located at the Southern part of Luzon in the Philippines. He was first exposed to the Filipino martial arts at the tender age of six by his Grandfather Luis Moratillo. His father, Zacarias “Kid Baron” Pallen also exposed him to the art of “Panuntukan”. His experience in street fighting goes back to his younger years in the Philippines.

Professor Max Pallen was a young engineering student in the University of Nueva Caceres in Naga City, Camarines Sur in the Philippines. In 1959, his father thought that it would help him develop a more prosperous future by sending him to Honolulu, Hawaii, but Max decided to go to California one year later.

At the beginning it was all hard times for young Professor Pallen. Working side by side in the field with the “Manongs” (senior Filipino workers) on the farm. Fortunately, a year after, in 1961, Max was able to find a permanent job in Oakland, California. While hanging out at the West Lake Bowl billiard room section, he met a combat jujitsu instructor who began instructing him in the combat style of self-defense. In addition, Professor Pallen continued his interest with other styles of martial arts. Looking for a stronger foundation and cultural identity, he decided to return to the



Philippines to study and research Philippine martial arts. Professor Pallen also had the opportunity to study here in the United States under several Kali, Arnis and Eskrima

Masters. He was a certified Guro (Instructor) in Kali Villabrille system until he thought it was time to move on after 5 years. Today, his quest for Philippine martial arts skills continues through his travel to Luzon, Visaya and Mindanao in the Philippines.

In 1973 Professor Pallen, as a certified Modern Arnis instructor and first Modern Arnis California Commissioner established the first Modern Arnis (Philippine martial art) School in downtown, Oakland,

California, 1974 Professor Pallen was the Executive Producer of the Asian Martial arts Exposition that was held in Kaiser Civic Center (Masonic Convention Center) in Oakland and introduced the very first Modern Arnis (Philippine martial art) demonstration to the American public. He was the first and sole mover of Modern Arnis as a Philippine identity in United States until Grandmaster Remy Presas arrived from the Philippines in 1975, with the assistant of the Filipino Community.

Max Pallen with  
Grandmaster Remy Presas



Grandmaster Floro Villabrille

During 1975, Professor Pallen and the Bay Area Filipino Community organized the first Modern Arnis seminar for 7 law enforcement agencies and the Unified School District in the wide Bay Area (West Coast), as well as the very first Modern Arnis martial arts instructors' camp. Professor Pallen and Grandmaster Remy Presas were also featured as special guests and demonstrated Modern Arnis at the Ed Parker International Karate Championship in Long Beach, California in 1976.

In the 80's Professor Pallen started conducting Filipino martial arts seminars and tournaments in Northern California. In year 2000 he officially revived the Senkotiros style he had learned from his grandfather Luis Moratillo. Combining Senkotiros with the knowledge that he had gained from other

masters now makes Senkotiros a complete style of its own. It was also the beginning of Professor Pallen conducting Senkotiros seminars nationwide.

In 2004, he demonstrated Arnis in the Forbidden City and Shaolin Temple in China, as well as in Russia in 2005. His quest continues to the other parts of the World, traveling throughout Europe, Asia, and Africa. With the guidance from his spiritual protector in 2004, he was training with the Penjak Silat (Selik Tou) group in the mountain of Bukittinggi, Sumatra and missed the disastrous Tsunami by 7 days, on the way to the Philippines.

**Professor Max Pallen Sr. is a Hall of Fame recipient by:**

- The Eastern U.S.A. International Martial Art Association
- World Head of Family Sokeship Council,
- The American Teachers Association of the Martial Arts
- Hikari Ryuza Ryu Do Kan
- European Ju-Jitsu Union
- Affiliated Martial Arts Promoters Association
- Filipino Magazine Man of the Year 2001
- And currently is a World Black Belt Founding Member. [www.worldblackbelt.com](http://www.worldblackbelt.com)



Professor Pallen with Grandmaster Hortincio Navales



## Kali Association of America



Professor Pallen - Top row first on right



Professor Pallen - Top row third from the right.



Professor Pallen with  
Grandmaster Leo Gaji of Peketi Tirsia



Grandmaster William Chung  
Wing Chun



Stephen Hayes  
Ninja

### **The Sons Professor Max Pallen**



Sigung Joseph Pallen



Master Max Pallen, Jr.



Tuhan Jordan F. Pallen

## **Senkotiros**

### **Basic Concepts**

#### **Symbols Of Senkotiros**

Many times, simple symbols or shapes or can trigger a level of understanding in the mind of an individual, where it could not otherwise be achieved. A complex idea or an abstract concept can be understood by relating it back to a simple shape, common to all people, ingrained in the mind. The simplicity of the shape can somehow soothe the mind and trigger the comprehension of the complex interactions of the martial arts.

The movements in Senkotiros can be broken down into several simple shapes. They are presented here to assist the beginning practitioner with their understanding of the basic concepts of the style.

#### *Circle*

The circle symbol represents the circular movement of Senkotiros. Movement in an encounter follows a circular pattern as one maneuver around an attacker. This circular pattern of movement is called the Tayada. Many times, the hands working together follow circular patterns as well, and the body often torques with a circular movement.

#### *Triangle*

The triangle represents the footwork of Senkotiros. Many times the footwork patterned to defend or attack follows a triangular pattern.

#### *Cross*

The cross symbolizes the defense applications of Senkotiros. The style teaches that there is only one method of defense: to cross the baston with the opponent's. This is explained in greater detail later.

#### *Star*

The star represents the five angles of attack and defense. These five angles are represented in each line of the star.

#### **Senkotiros, Basis and Highlights**

Senkotiros is unique when compared to many forms of the Philippine martial arts in that it is taught and practiced to be a free-formed style of martial art. In its purest form, the movements, counters and fighting techniques of the style are based on some very simple rules and concepts. These rules and concepts are the building blocks of the style, rather than the patterned or repetitious responses and techniques common to many other styles. The response to an attack is based on what the Senkotiros practitioner feels and senses in response to what is presented by the attacker.

#### *Free-Form, Non-Patterned*

Many Philippine martial arts teach patterned movements as the method to respond to an attack. If the attacker does this, you do that, is often the way encounters are dissected. The responsive techniques are practiced over and over. The Senkotiros

practitioner, however, does not respond to an attack with a single prescribed or predetermined technique. The Senkotiros practitioner views a counter attack as a response with an infinite number of possibilities. In any combat encounter the interactions are unpredictable, complex and varied instantaneously. Senkotiros looks upon the response to an encounter as the ability to respond to anything, with anything. The actual movements or techniques are based more on the dynamics of the situation and combined with what the practitioner senses at the given moment of the response.

### *Sensitivity Concept*

The style is taught and practiced in such a way as to allow the experienced practitioner to react and respond instantly to the situation presented by the actions or movements of his opponent. What the practitioner sees, feels (with the hands, arms and arnis stick) and hears is combined with the intuition he has developed over the course of the training. It is commonly referred to as the Sensitivity Concept.

This heightened level of awareness comes naturally as the practitioner comes to understand the complex interactions of his and his opponent's movements. The Senkotiros training helps the practitioner to integrate this with the physical techniques that one is taught in the Philippine martial arts. Such traditional techniques such as distance, angle of attack, hand and foot position, footwork, etc., when combined with this high level of sensitivity, enables the Senkotiros practitioner to respond in a way that is sudden and devastating.

### **Senkotiros Principles and Theory**

Several of the more important principles and theories presented here are at the foundation of the style of Senkotiros. These are based on the teachings and philosophies of Professor Max M. Pallen.

### **Unique Aspects Of Senkotiros**

#### *Fighting Style*

Senkotiros is a fighting style. All Filipino martial arts were ultimately developed to defend their homeland from the many invaders they encountered over hundreds of years. Many modern day styles of the Philippine martial arts have come to emphasize different elements of arnis. Some have come to stress elements of other martial arts such as locking and jujitsu type moments. Further confusing this, the Philippine martial arts has been integrated into other martial arts styles and presented as a part of those styles.

Senkotiros emphasizes fighting and is based on the traditional method of self-defense practiced in the camarins of the Bicol region of Southern Luzon, in the Philippines. The style represents a fighting system that addresses all aspects of combat (from all distances or ranges) between individuals with much emphasis on striking (with the baston or hand).

As a testament to this, the Senkotiros system has produced several WEKAF World Champions and its practitioners are always competitive in national and international competition.

### *The Five Angles*

Senkotiros measures strikes different from other arnis styles. Strikes are measured by angle and direction. Striking areas are more simply illustrated. Senkotiros targets the most vulnerable areas of the body such as joints (fingers, wrist, knees, etc), shallow bones (forearms, shins), nerve endings or pressure points, and vulnerable areas of the body (eyes, nose, ears, groin, solar plexus, etc.).

**Senkotiros measures all strikes by three factors:**

1. The direction of the strike (from the right or left side, or from overhead).
2. The angle of the path of travel of the tip of the baston (horizontal, angled downward or angle upward).
3. The motion of the strike created by the rotation of the wrist.

Senkotiros has only five strikes, each measured as described, by direction and angle. Each can be delivered from the right or the left side of the striker's body. They are referred to as.

**The Five Angles of Strikes**

*Angle One Strike:* Horizontal angle at a plane parallel to the ground.

*Angle Two Strike:* Downward at an angle (plus/minus 30 degrees).

*Angle Three Strike:* Upward at an angle (plus/minus 45 degrees).

*Angle Four Strike:* Any thrust with the tip of the weapon.

*Angle Five Strike:* A witik strike (a very fast whipping motion with the wrist) from either side, or from overhead downward.

This is how the Senkotiros striking techniques, both offensive and defensive, are measured and taught. These are the base techniques and much of the methodology and terminology is built from The Five Angles.

*The Cross Section Defense*

There are many methods of defense in the Philippine martial arts. Many styles emphasize force-to-force blocks or deflecting blocks, checking to the hand or arm, etc. Senkotiros uses all of these types of blocking techniques, but there is an emphasis on one aspect of defense: the Cross Section Defense.

The Cross Section Defense involves using an object placed perpendicular to the force of an attack, and placed between the strike and its target.

The Cross Section Defense places the center of the blocking object at the center of the force of the attack. If the attack is with a baston, the Senkotiros practitioner will place his baston at a perpendicular angle where each baston meets in the approximate center, thus forming a cross. This cross, when properly applied and supported (or braced), intercepts the strike and shields the Senkotiros practitioner from the force of the blow.



### *Shielding*

Shielding is the combat application of the Cross Defense. Senkotiros uses many different ways to counter an attack. Sometimes a check is used, or an intercepting strike to the hand. Other methods can be used as well. But the retraction to place the weapon between an attack and its target in the form of a cross is the most common technique of defending and setting up for a counter attack. Senkotiros teaches to use this technique as the best method to respond to an attack, if no better options are available. This is referred to in Senkotiros as Shielding.

### *The Second Hand Concept*

The philosophy of dealing with a follow up attack of the second hand is called the Second Hand Concept. The Senkotiros practitioner's training is geared to developing the ability to instantly deal with a follow up attack by the second hand of an opponent. In the Philippine martial arts, this is often the open hand (the hand without the baston) performing some type of control technique in the form of a punch, grab, trap, etc. Many times the second hand contains a long or short knife, a baston or some other type of weapon. The Senkotiros practitioner is taught to see, feel or sense this attack. They are taught to instantly respond to the second hand with some kind of defense such as a block, intercepting strike with a baston, check, grab, etc. Senkotiros Practitioners are trained to do this quickly and with authority, without breaking the rhythm or the flow of their actions.

## **Senkotiros Training Principles**

### *Family*

One might consider family an odd quality to find listed as a basic principle of a martial art. The Senkotiros Grandmaster and his closest Lakans (Black Belts in the Philippine martial arts) are a group of men and women dedicated to the cause of Senkotiros and traditional values such as home and family. While many martial artists will pass their art on to any who can afford to pay, only the finest people and those most dedicated to the perpetuation of the style, reach the highest ranking in Senkotiros. The Lakan Disciples of Senkotiros are spread all over the country, but are bound by a common respect for the Grandmaster and a love of Senkotiros. They look upon each other as brothers and sisters, their group as a family, and their leader as the head of this family.

### *The Flow*

Senkotiros is based on the natural movement of the body. As the practitioner comes to know and understand these natural movements, he begins to move in a seemingly effortless manner as the techniques are executed. This is just not limited to the execution of physical techniques, but rather depends on the mind and inner spirit of the person as well. One must be at peace in their mind, relaxed as they move and in tune with their body. When all this occurs, they have achieved the Flow. The Flow is smooth, graceful execution of movements in harmony with the mind. Practitioners that have achieved this will know, as they will feel it. Achieving this level of harmony with the body and mind is the goal of every practitioner of Senkotiros.

### *Train Slow*

Something happens deep within the subconscious mind whenever a weapon is picked up or one looks across another person holding one. Adrenalin starts to flow; the inner mind becomes excited and forces the body to become quick to react. This is most likely from millions of years of the development of the human mind. It is part of the preservation instinct that we all have. It brings on a level of sudden and jerky movements instead of the smooth flowing movements required for the smooth execution of Senkotiros and other martial arts. This is very common in lower ranking students new to the Philippine martial arts.

This reaction can affect the quality of our training and limit the ability of our mind to absorb information and distracts our muscles from learning the movements. Train slowly, in a relaxed manner and atmosphere to relax the body and mind to focus on the teachings and beauty of the art. The weapon should not become a threat to ones self, but a tool to learn the movements and beauty of the art.

Any technique unto itself will not produce speed. Learning proper execution of a technique will produce speed. Senkotiros practitioners train slowly; they learn the moves the way they should be learned--then speed things up!

## **The Concepts Of Movement**

### *Circle Concept*

The circle concept refers to the many movements in Senkotiros that use a circular motion. This circular motion is applied in many ways and many of the hand combinations and the footwork follows circular patterns. The strikes, twirling patterns, and the baston-open hand combinations follow this type of pattern. The Circle Concept represents all of these motions and is an important concept in understanding the movements and patterns of Senkotiros.

### *The Torquing*

The torquing is the circular movements made by the entire body while executing the offensive and defensive movements of Senkotiros.

The torquing movements are found in the striking motion, the shielding (defensive) motions, and footwork and in the simultaneous use of the hands. A common philosophical element in Senkotiros is to move off the center of the attack, or off of the center of the force applied by a punch, kick or grab. Movement to escape, jam or counter the attack can include backward and forward movement, either on a straight line or at angles, is a common and effective method of response in many styles of the martial arts. Senkotiros uses all of these but also emphasizes a torquing type motion against an attack.

### *Cushioning Or Absorbing*

Cushioning or absorbing is a method that is often used in close range fighting to help extend an opponent and draw them in close to the body of the Senkotiros practitioner. This is done to get better position for a counter attack. Intercepting an attack and then cushioning its force inward for a counter such as disarming, locks, traps, takedowns, etc, is a staple for the defensive and countering applications of Senkotiros. It is a key component in Shielding and in the Methods of Blocking.

## Levels Of Sensitivity

### *Seeing Without Seeing*

Seeing Without Seeing is a byproduct of the Sensitivity Concept. As one develops this higher level of awareness and sensitivity in the outer appendages, they began to sense the movements of their opponent through this interaction. The Senkotiros practitioner begins to feel where the person is going, how they are turning, if they are going to strike or kick, and which hand or foot they may be attacking with. After a time, reactions are made instantly in response to the information picked up by other parts of the body, not just the eyes.

Often times these movements are picked up by a contact made during the interaction of the encounter or may be sensed with a simple touch of the open hand. The movements, angle and direction of an attack can be understood with one's own body, if one knows how to sense these things, without depending on the eyes.

Anyone can see the advantages to this type of perception in the martial arts. The reaction time can be cut to split seconds. One responds based on actions that are sensed in the attacker and are picked up on in an instant. One can almost respond with the proper counter before the attacker has even completed the attack. The effects can be devastating.

When one reaches this level of sensitivity and can execute it to a high level, it is said that they can see without seeing.

### *The Third Eye*



The Third Eye is a higher state of mind where skill, and intuition meet. It is the highest level of martial arts perception. It is the state of mind one achieves when all of the elements of perception, touch, seeing, sensitivity, etc., are combined with advanced martial arts skill and technique. It is where all of these things come together that allows the practitioner to know what is coming next, and how to respond, without looking. It is the level where you not only sense, but seem to know what is coming next, and when, and how to respond, without seeing or thinking. An individual that is strong in the Third Eye

has a kind of sixth sense that allows the fighter to know what the opponent is doing almost before they do themselves.

## Conclusion

Senkotiros, as with most Philippine martial arts, is simplistic in its basic approach to self-defense. Any motion or technique in the style is straightforward, short, and makes the simplest of motions. With this simplicity comes speed and power.

Senkotiros is also based on the natural movements of the human body. For instance, bringing the hands up to block an attack is an instinctive action and one that comes naturally to us all, passed on from thousands of years of our ancestors defending themselves from the attacks of others. Senkotiros simply uses this instinctive motion, in

much the same way, to achieve the same goal. In many instances students need not learn new techniques, but give in to the instinctive motions they already possess.

This also makes the basics easy to learn and quick to understand. The real challenge exists where one must put all of the small simple movement together as one. Many times every part of the body will have a different job to do, or a different technique to execute, all simultaneously. This is what makes the style so challenging and interesting. To many, it is addicting.



Professor Max Pallen and Senkotiros Instructors

## **Senkotiros Davis, CA.**

**628 4th Street  
Davis, CA 95616  
(530) 758-5431**

**Master Joseph Pallen**

**Manoi Jim Trapani** - Professor Pallen: A Unique and Charismatic Individual

**Manoi Richard Bacarini**

**Manai Stacy Desideri** - Compensates for Size - Rather Than Rewarding It

**Tugan Russ Imbat**

### **Professor Pallen: A Unique and Charismatic Individual**

By Manoi Jim Trapani



I became interested in the Filipino martial arts through my relationship with the Davis Pallen's martial arts school. The Master Instructor in karate, Sigung Joseph Pallen encouraged me to go see a demo and seminar that was being given by his father, Professor Pallen. I went there to see this, not really knowing what to expect.

Professor Pallen put on a demonstration for a packed house that day. For many of us, this was our first exposure to the Filipino martial arts. Professor made it look easy, almost mystical, the

way he demonstrated disarming, take-downs, the Gumon. The crowd was literally blown away that day. There was a point where Professor was doing the Gumon (which is an unscripted and un-patterned continuous exchange between him and another student) while he was facing and talking to the crowd, still doing the drill. The student (Manoi Jim) was striking at the Professor, grabbing his stick, checking him, etc. and Professor just kept countering his every move as he looked and talked to the crowd of people. Suddenly, he reached over then disarmed and took poor Manoi Jim down with a slight and subtle movement.

I was really blown away by this and I had never seen anything quite like that. It was all as if Professor had a 3rd eye. I came out of that seminar truly inspired, my interest in the Filipino martial arts and specifically Senkotiros.

I met Professor informally at the seminar I previously mentioned, and I had paid my respects to him as a karate student many times at tournaments. But I never really met and talked to him until, I was recommended to him as a student in the Filipino martial arts by Sigung Joseph. Sigung arranged for me to speak with Professor after he had conducted a demonstration at an AMAPA tournament. He came off the floor, got something to drink, then took me aside in a private place to talk about what it meant to be one of his students and what it meant to be a Lakan in his group. I was extremely nervous. Having seen this man at this point do so many amazing things, suddenly I was



there talking to him about becoming one of his students. Man, I could hardly speak. However, Professor has a way of putting you at ease, and by the end of the conversation, I was more relaxed. I started training under him shortly there after.

I can only describe Professor Pallen's teaching style as "from the heart". Professor is a true Grandmaster; he truly loves the Filipino martial arts, and Senkotiros. While he has lived in the United States for many years, he is a Filipino at heart. So when he teaches, he is not just teaching the martial arts, he is passing on his culture and the history of his people. This all comes from his heart. It is all so genuine; you can see him get excited to pass this on. This makes his classes special and gives him a unique approach to teaching the martial arts, at least in my experience.

Professor also has a more eastern approach to how he explains the techniques and philosophy of Senkotiros, and on his outlook on life. His classes are a mixture of formal and informal teaching and interaction with his students. His background and personal philosophy are based on his life long experience as a Filipino and Filipino American. This shows through in his classes and the way he teaches. It is very refreshing and makes those of us born and raised here in the west really pay attention and try to understand where he is coming from. This approach and life outlook, combine with the uniqueness of Senkotiros, makes for some extremely interesting and satisfying classes.

My favorite aspect of the art is actually the open hand applications of it. While I love the sticks, finding ways to use the same techniques open hand is my favorite aspect of the art. In our karate style, we start out open handed as part of our training, then become more and more proficient at the basic aspects of arnis. If we are lucky enough to get on to train with Professor Pallen, we can then become more proficient at weapons, in theory mastering the use of the solo baston. With time, as we further advance, we begin to use the same Senkotiros techniques open handed. The highest application of Senkotiros is its application of the style open hand. So the training comes full circle. This is something I have always found fascinating. So I love things like the Simpeat and the open hand applications of the style.

I have been training with Professor Pallen for about 10 years. In all my time in the martial arts, and all the instructors I have met or seen demonstrate their style, I have never met anybody so dedicated and in love with what they are doing as Professor Pallen. It shows through in every class or anytime you get the opportunity to hang out with him. He is one of the most unique and charismatic individuals I have ever met. Some of the most unique and wonderful experiences I have had in my life, came from times when I was training with him, or with him for some trip or seminar. When you go with Professor, you can expect an amazing experience.

One of his students once told him "Professor, you open my eyes". This sums it up for me as well. Professor Pallen's teachings and approach is so unique, especially over time that it opens your eyes to many things you could not see or understand. My time training with him has been one experience after another where my eyes have been opened to something new, or something I never considered before. This keeps you always wanting more.

## Compensates for Size - Rather Than Rewarding It

By Manai Stacy Desideri

I was a new mother with a 3-month-old daughter, and when my home was robbed, I asked myself-how do I defend myself? How do I protect my daughter in a dangerous situation? So I began training in the martial arts. What I noticed about most martial arts programs is that most of them are designed for a certain body type; the biggest, fastest, youngest athlete will win. While I appreciated that size might bring power, I was always looking for the art that would accentuate elements that can compensate for size, rather than rewarding it. Then I saw a demonstration with Professor Pallen, in which I saw him absolutely decimate an opponent twice his size. I knew there must be something to this style of martial arts.



After seeing the demonstration, I went out of my way to find every opportunity to train in the Filipino martial arts. The studio I was being taught at had an annual camping trip that hosted a Filipino martial arts seminar on the beach, and I made sure to be in the front row. When I got my orange belt, I heard (wrongly) that intermediate students could begin training in the Filipino martial arts at our school. Ok, so it was really not until at an advanced level. But when I showed up in class with my new arnis sticks, no one had the heart to turn me away.

I continued training until I was told that I had completed the basic course, and had to stop coming, I kept going anyway. Eventually, they realized that I would never quit, so our master instructor recommended I meet Professor Pallen and to apply to train as a lakan. I have been with Professor Pallen ever since.

Professor Pallen is incredibly adept at reading his students. The power he brings to any lesson is to create a powerful learning moment for each individual student. As he often says, he never writes a lesson plan, he takes it from above. He gives to his students truly from his heart, which makes each lesson that much more meaningful.

Often, as a woman, I am addressing an opponent more than 50 pounds heavier than I am. When he teaches a technique that I find difficult to execute due to my size, I can ask him to address the opponent directly.

He will size up my opponent and offers me the exact modification of the technique in order to take down a much larger opponent! The equalization of size, in this art makes the big ones little. It gives power to the smart and technically correct, not just the biggest and strongest. The fastest people in this art are the ones whose power comes from within, not from the biggest muscles. I like the fact that larger opponents have no greater advantage over me.

I have been training with Professor Pallen for 6 years. The fact that I have grown is due to his influence over me. I like what his teachings have given me, both as a martial artist and as a person. Many of his lessons address more than what to do on the mat.

No matter how far I grow as a person and a martial artist, I find that what he has to teach me and give me grows faster. It is very clear that Professor Pallen sees training his

students as a means of growing himself as an artist and a person. The more I grow, the more I elevate him. The more he grows, the more he has to offer me. This is a powerful relationship. In everything he does and says, Professor makes it clear that what he has to offer is only for the worthy. He does not offer his teaching to those he deems lacking in personal strength and moral character. By valuing what he has to offer so highly, he pushes his students to heights of personal strength and commitment.

What makes this art different from other arts is the adaptability. Other Filipino martial arts tend to rely on rote memorization of a prescribed set of techniques. When someone doesn't throw you the right feeder techniques, you might not know how to respond. The improvisation of Senkotiros makes it eminently adaptable to any attacker.

**Senkotiros Castro Valley, CA.**  
**3963 E. Castro Valley Blvd.**  
**Castro Valley, CA. 94225**  
**(510) 357-0901**

**Master Max Pallen Jr.**  
**Tugan Ignacio Lopez**  
**Mayan Shirley Ng**

**Senkotiros San Leandro, CA.**  
**13752 Doolittle Drive**  
**San Leandro, CA. 94578**  
**(510) 483-6560**

**Master Jordan Pallen** - Interview  
**Manoi Jim Schaufele** - My Association with Professor Pallen and Senkotiros  
**Guro Tim Calvin**  
**Guro Wade Taylor**

### **Tuhan Jordan Pallen Interview**

October 4, 2006  
Speaking with Manoi Jim Schaufele



**Q:** *Tuhan Jordan Pallen, I want to ask you some questions about your father, Professor Max Pallen, as well as your training and experience in the art of Senkotiros. Give me some idea of your early years in training. What do you remember and what was it like?*

**A:** I remember when I was younger, I was about nine or ten years old, and my dad would wake up my brothers and I at 7 o'clock in the morning on Saturday morning to make us run and afterwards train. I hated that. All the other kids in my elementary school would watch all the morning cartoons, they'd talk about it on Monday, and I'd be like, "I didn't see that show, I was working out." That sucked at the time, but it was for my own good. In the end, I became better. Training with my father, there was no such thing as time when it came to training. We would train till he got tired or when he got fed up with our whining. The whining didn't always work, because he would have us train harder.

**Q:** *I just would like to hear about the early years and what it was like training with the Professor.*

A: Well, my dad was really strict. He was no joke. He believed in just the straight up, hardcore stuff. You trained hard, you hit hard, and you had to block hard or you got hit.

*Q: Other than how strict he was and how serious he was with his sons in training, how would you describe his teaching style? Either with you or with the students that he's teaching now, what do you notice about his style of teaching? How would you characterize it?*

A: He's a lot more gentle and understanding now. When we were younger, my father had no patience and was just very militaristic and hardcore. Now he's a lot more patient. He allows people to develop at their own pace rather than expecting a lot right away. I think he's an excellent instructor. He explains things so much better now. He is motivating and inspirational. I think as a martial artist he's at his best, physically as well as mentally.

*Q: Do you have anything to share with us regarding the evolution of Professor Pallen's art or the evolution of his take on the Philippine martial arts?*

A: With the different styles that he trained in, how can I say it, he has a lot more finesse now. I just know that now, compared to before, he is a lot smoother and his techniques are more efficient. Before, there was a lot of energy and strength that was used. His emphasis is simplicity and practicality.

*Q: You've seen a lot more than I have, but one thing that I am aware of is that Professor Pallen studied a lot of the different styles. He was a skilled martial artist all along, but it wasn't just like he just glued a bunch of styles together. It's like he understood the essence of each one, filtered them through his own skill, and made it all work better. It wasn't like simply getting expertise in a bunch of different facets of Philippine martial arts. It entailed understanding them, refining it all within himself, and creating something even greater than the combination of parts. That is how it seems to me.*

A: Yes, exactly. I totally agree. I think some people just take this drill and add it to their curriculum. These are just drills. You lose the culture and the essence of the art. My father understood the art and its purposes. He kept and used what fitted in his art.

*Q: We have talked a little bit about how your father's style is different, how his martial arts prowess has grown, but what about the system he teaches, Senkotiros? How would you characterize it versus other Philippine martial arts? Is it just him and his unique expression of the art? How would you describe it or explain how it's different from other styles?*

A: My father has created a very open and responsive style. His emphasis is not being bogged down with drills. If A, do B and you will end with C. If one trains in such a way, if there was a D, the practitioner would be at a bind. My father believes that if one door closes, another door opens. He applies that same concept in Senkotiros. There are no restrictions; there are only opportunities. Never limit yourself, open your eyes to your options. In all of his lessons, he always correlates a technique or drill with everyday life experiences. It not just stickfighting, it's life lessons.

*Q: I would definitely agree with that.*



A: We talk about the flow of kali, but yet, my dad emphasized so much on power, too. I remember when we were training for the World Championships. With a lot of those guys, it's all about the witiks. But my dad didn't want us to just hit them, he wanted us to rock, rock everybody, and rock hard.

*Q: You have obviously been successful as well. You are successful as an instructor and you are successful as a competitor on all levels, being a repeat world champion. You're a modest guy, but obviously you are highly skilled. You are a great martial artist in your own right, but besides the fact that he taught you Philippine martial arts, how has your father's unique training and instructional style helped you get to where you are both as a professional and also as a competitor?*

A: When I was younger, I had the opportunity to train with my dad, one on one. I used to wake him up 10 o'clock on Tuesday and Thursday mornings and we'd train. Every Tuesday and Thursday from 10 to 12. He really helped my hand speed and my coordination a lot. The private training with my father was the key to my success in the World Championships. My father's emphasis on efficiency played a big role on my performance. Utilizing not just the hands but the whole body, and I is why I was as good as I was. My dad didn't tell me just to hit the guy with my stick, using my arm strength. He told me to use my whole body, torque, just the little things that made the big difference. This was a precious time during my relationship with my father. It was my bonding time with him. My brother both had their private training at an early age. It was my time to really grasp his passion of the arts. We didn't train in the school; we trained in the backyard like how he trained with my great grandfather. It was like continuing tradition.

*Q: What is your favorite aspect of the art?*

A: My father raised me as a competitor, as a fighter. I love live stick fighting. I love to fight. I just like the whole fighting aspect: the training, the suspense, the strategy, the mental combat prior to the fight, the physical combat and the rewards of winning and the lessons of losing. Getting older, I also appreciate the beauty of the art: the carezas.

*Q: Is there anything else?*

A: I am very fortunate to be able to teach the arts. I love to share the art and knowledge that my father has shared with me.

*Q: Is there anything further that you want to let people know either about you and your own experience and accomplishments, which obviously flow from your father's instruction, or specifically about your father and the martial arts?*

A: One thing I appreciate about my dad is the freedom he gives me in the martial arts. He allowed me to add a little different flavor, a little different interpretation. He's a very open guy. He wants to make it the best, and if he trusts you, then he'll open his arms and allow you to expand your knowledge.

I truly believe that my father is one of the top stick fighters around. I don't know any other 60-year-old guys who go toe-to-toe in those underground dog brother fights. He's really knowledgeable. I don't know anybody who could demonstrate like he does. Now, there are people who could demonstrate different drills and that's not hard. You do

it all the time, you do these drills, you do it repetitively, it's the same. But my father, in his seminars, he'll teach what people want to see. He could transfer to one stick, to knife, empty hand, and at some seminars he does that. He says, "Well, what do you guys want to learn." Not a lot of instructors are like that or grand masters. They have a set plan, "Okay, this is the stuff that I'm going to teach." Instead, my dad's like, "What do you want to learn." I think that's really unique, his ability to give people whatever they want. And it's effective. It's not a bunch of B.S. you know, it's amazing.

One of the things that is also unique is that for the longest time, they have said that within the Kajukenbo system, there was a Philippine martial arts component. With the practitioners that I know, there are no set forms. But my father and I incorporated, or translated the pinions into forms with the stick. That was really unique and they're good forms. My dad could translate all those forms. He also translated the punch defenses and the grab defenses. Not a lot of people could do that, because my dad knows both. But I don't think people really take advantage of that, because it is "the missing link" in regard to the Philippine martial arts in the Kajukenbo system.

But you know people don't give credit to my dad for being the guy who brought Remy Presas to the United States. When we were younger, we called him uncle. He actually lived with us for a while. But people don't know that. My dad doesn't say anything; he is quite humble.

My dad is the one who organized a lot of the Philippine martial arts tournaments in Northern California. He was one of the persons who really brought Northern California together in 1996 through 2002. He really brought everybody together in the Northern California Eskrima-Kali-Arnis Federation, NCEKAF, but he doesn't say much about that. He's a man that people really trust.

My dad is really humble. My father is really focusing on Senkotiros. He has the opportunity to do that now. He is retired. My brothers and I are all grown up and run the schools. He is training all the time. I don't know a 60-year-old who works out as much and as hard as he does. We're very fortunate to have him.

*Q: Other than promoting his own art, which he has done, your father has definitely promoted the Filipino martial arts within the larger martial arts arena. I know he has produced various tournaments, expos, and similar events. I believe he has brought other noted practitioners to the United States and introduced some individuals into the martial arts community who may have been a little more obscure. Do you want to add anything about other martial artists that he has assisted?*

A: Yes. Another person was Ising Atillo. He brought him to the United States and he introduced him to a lot of people. My father assisted Mr. Atillo in many ways.

*Q: Professor Pallen has tried to do things to foster not just his art, but the Philippine martial arts in general and to get them more tournament exposure. Obviously it helps his own students and gives them an outlet, but it seems like he's proud of the Philippine martial arts as a whole. He doesn't always mention Senkotiros, but tries to do things for the Philippine martial arts in general.*

A: Yes, that's true. He's very helpful. Recently, he arranged a seminar for the Philippine National Stickfighting Team to financially help the team. He's always helping people. He used to always help Mr. Atillo. He's always trying to make that difference, you know.

*Q: Another thing that is significant concerns the esteem in which Professor Pallen is held. I have heard some remarkable things said about your father by people who give their frank and honest opinions. An example is Grandmaster Al Novak, a great, great, martial artist who has had a long and illustrious career. One time after a demonstration, Grandmaster Novak noted that your father was really skilled, and that his demos were the real deal. He said that he never saw anybody who could move like that or effectively apply fighting skills in such a realistic way other than Bruce Lee. That is not a bad comparison, you know.*

*A: I totally agree. My father's skill and speed is equivalent to Bruce Lee. He has very fast hands and makes techniques look easy.*

*Q: And Grandmaster Novak knew Bruce Lee. This was just an informal conversation that he and I were having, but do you remember any similar things people have said about your father. Maybe there are times when people have not said anything, but just treated your father a certain way because of their respect and honor for him.*

*A: Just like last Saturday, Professor Gaylord, who was my dad's teacher in Kajukenbo, recognized his skills. He just said that Pallen's is the best. He knows our history he's seen us. He's seen my brothers and me when we were younger; he's seen how my dad and my uncles dominated Northern California in regard to open karate tournaments. He even quoted other people regarding my dad and his brothers, that when you spar against a Pallen, expect a good fight. Not only that, in regard to the Philippine martial arts, Professor Gaylord really recognizes my dad as one of the top martial artists.*

*Q: One thing I feel is that if I was ever in a dark alley and wanted someone to have my back, or maybe I'd want to take his back and let him lead the way, it would be your father. I mean he's a gentleman in many ways. But if push came to shove and you're looking for someone to help defend you, whatever age he is right now and probably if he was a hundred years old, he's somebody who you would not want to mess with.*

*A: It was great growing up with a dad who can kick butt, but also who instilled confidence in me so that I can hold my own.*

*Q: Let me conclude by saying that I highly respect Professor Pallen and I also highly respect you, Tuhan Jordan Pallen. I appreciate your willingness to share your thoughts.*

*A: Thank you.*

## **My Association with Professor Pallen and Senkotiros**

By Manoi Jim Schaufele



I first met Professor Max Pallen and began training with him back in 1975. From the beginning, I have been impressed by his martial arts prowess, his teaching expertise, and his sincere interest in the development of his students. Over the years I have had the opportunity to both observe and train with a number of martial artists and it is clear to me that Professor Pallen is uniquely talented at what he does.

It was my older sister Jo Ann who initially encouraged me to study with Professor Pallen. At that time, Professor Pallen was promoting Filipino martial arts with a series of classes in Oakland that were open to the general public free of charge. This was in addition to his operation of a martial arts school on Broadway in downtown Oakland. As part of his effort to spread knowledge of the Philippine martial arts, Professor Pallen had sponsored a trip to the United States by Modern Arnis founder Remy Amador Presas who also served as an instructor at the free class series.

Jo Ann read about the free lessons in the Oakland Tribune and attended the first class in the series. After she returned home from that class, we removed the shafts from a set of croquet mallets that were stored in our garage and she showed me some of the stickfighting drills she had learned that day. We both attended the next scheduled class and continued training with Professor Pallen after the initial series of classes ended.

At the time that I began studying with Professor Pallen I was a big fan of the martial arts, but I had never had any formal training in any combative system. My sister's informal instructional session with me was my first martial arts lesson. This was also my first introduction to the Philippine martial arts, of which I knew nothing. Up to this time, the martial arts of the Philippines were largely unknown to the general public in the United States. I consider myself very lucky to have begun my study of the Filipino martial arts at that early date and to have found such a talented instructor and mentor at the same time.

From the beginning of my association with Professor Pallen, he has proven to be a demanding yet understanding teacher. He has a unique ability to teach students the feel the flow of combat. Professor Pallen has always provided a level of individual attention that is rare among martial artists of his caliber. He is committed to ensuring that even the most junior student receives adequate supervised instruction to develop optimally. The concepts and principles that underlie various techniques are stressed. Students are taught to flow from one technique to the next and to adapt to the actions of their training partner or opponent.

Professor Pallen's vast level of understanding and experience with a wide spectrum of martial arts skills contributes greatly to the depth and breadth of his own expertise as well as to his ability to instruct students. Through his mastery of combative principles and techniques, he has developed and refined his own martial art system of Senkotiros. This unique art emphasizes the application of general combative principles, fluidity of motion, sensitivity to the movements of one's opponent, anticipation of an

opponent's actions, limitation of an opponent's options, instant recognition of effective defensive counters, and adaptability.

All of these aspects of Professor Pallen's art and his teaching continue to keep me interested and enthused about continuing to train with him. What I personally enjoy most about the art is its practical nature and the framework that it provides for practitioners to respond flexibly and creatively in combat situations. What I appreciate most about Professor Pallen is his extraordinary level of expertise, his enthusiasm for the art, his generosity, and his kindness. I feel honored that he has treated me as part of his family.

I never cease to be amazed by Professor Pallen's mastery of the martial arts or by the respect that his skill has earned him among elite practitioners. After one demonstration in which he countered my unscripted attacks, a well-known martial arts master who was one of the early students of martial arts icon Bruce Lee told me that in his experience Professor Pallen and Lee were unique in their ability to effectively apply their combative skills in realistic situations. Even though Professor Pallen and I are not as young as we were back in 1975, he continues to possess the type of fighting spirit and skill that would give me a profound sense of confidence if we were ever to encounter a threatening situation together.

**Holly Community Center**  
**31600 Alvarado Blvd.**  
**Union City, CA. 94587**  
**(510) 471- 6877**

**Manoi Rusty Marvive** - Simple and Direct Techniques

**Tugan Rryan Preston** - When the Journey Began

**Tugan Jowett Legaspi** - Senkotiros Arnis: An Art Unlike Any Other

**Tugan Manny Paras**

**Tugan Harpreet Bains**

**Tugan Jeff Jamero**

**Lakan Shane Peralta** - I have Grown Not Just as a Martial Artist, But as a Person

**Dayang Krystal Manuel** - Craving Action Try Senkotiros

**Dayang Nisha Bhakta** - Foundation of Support and Friendship

## **Simple and Direct Techniques**

Manoi Restie Marvive

I became interested in the Filipino martial arts when I was still a young child in the Philippines. At that time, Arnis or Arnis de Mano as I have known it as a young child was only taught to individuals who are related to families that have been arnis practitioners. As I was growing up, the popular martial art then was Karate, specifically Okinawan Karate.





This was due to some Filipinos that learned the art in Okinawa and they brought it to the Philippines. A lot of the older folks back then ignored the art for they felt that their art is more superior. You have to remember that was the mentality then, for the older arnisadors or eskrimadors still having a lot of animosity towards the Japanese. For lots of Filipino's suffered during the Japanese occupation in World War II. There were plenty of Filipino fighters or guerillas that fought side by side with the Americans and used their skills as arnisadors or eskrimadors in fighting the invaders.

I met Professor Pallen back in the late 1994 and did some research on him and finally became one of his students early 1995 at the Holly Community Center in Union City. Back then, Professor Pallen was still known as Master Pallen in the martial art of Kajukenbo but was called Tuhan Pallen in the Filipino martial arts. He often called his art back then as the Arnis Bicol naming after the province or state where he came from.

Professor Pallen's style is very unique, direct to the point and no beating around the bush. He is very patient and makes sure each of his students will succeed. From this, the students learn the real meaning of patience and through repetitive workout, the student will achieve the proper and traditional way of learning the art.

From what I said before, he is a very traditional instructor and through his experiences and knowledge of other martial arts, his style is very simple and very easy to learn by just learning the basic moves which he often emphasize to his students.

My favorite aspect of Senkotiros is the simple and direct techniques. By making it simple and deadly, one does not have to kill but just disable the opponent thereby giving you the advantage. The philosophy behind Senkotiros involves reducing the amount of tactics a fighter knows and leaving him with the most applicable, effective ones that can be employed in many situations. You don't have to remember a lot of things other that there are five different angles of attacks/strikes and only ONE defense. And the most important part is the developing of your sensitivity where you can predict the movement of your opponent just like in chess where you make sure that your opponent is always in check. Hence, the name SENKOTIROS, where there are five angels of attack/strikes and the mastering of your sensitivity towards your opponent.

I've have been a student of Professor Pallen since 1994 which will make it almost twelve years now. I feel I still have a lot to learn and will continue to train with Professor Pallen. As he continues to expand his knowledge of the martial arts, he is very generous to pass and teach what he has learned to let you grow. Although I have been a student in various martial arts, my personal feeling is that I feel it is my obligation that I should continue the legacy of spreading not only the art itself, but the understanding of the Filipino culture.



## **When the Journey Began**

By Tugan Ryan Preston

I have always been interested in the martial arts as a child and teenager. Throughout high school I had always heard many positive stories and experiences about the Pallen family of martial arts from a good and close friend of

mine (fellow instructor and eskrimador, Tugan Jowet Legaspi).

One day on a weekend in 2000 I was home from college, Tugan Jowet had given me a gift that he had bought from the Philippines on a recent trip. It was two rattan sticks. He told me “When you’re done and back home from school, you’ll learn how to use these.” One year passed and I was done and home; this is when the journey began. I was invited to join a class at the Holly Center in Union City. It was Professor Pallen’s class; the one I had heard about. From that point on I knew I had found a new passion.

The class was small then; only 7 others aside from myself. I walked up to Professor Pallen, paid my respects (performed Mano) and introduced myself. After asking to join the class, he approved and I took my place at the end of the row. With no sash around my waist it all began.

I would describe the Professor’s teaching style as simple, to the point and persistent. There is great emphasis on the basic fundamentals. We practice these until they become a part of us. In addition to our fundamentals we are given a new skill to add to our arsenal every day. With every new skill we are shown what this skill will become, what it can do and just how effective it is. Professor shows us what it will evolve into and teaches us what skill this will produce. He makes sure we understand. After all, the best way to learn something is to understand why you are learning it. Professor emphasizes on the foundation of the art. After all, what is an impenetrable fortress without a strong, unbreakable foundation?

With the Filipino martial arts and Senkotiros being my first real exposure to the martial arts, my opinion may be a bit biased. What I appreciate most from the teaching style of Professor is that he makes you understand why you are learning a skill. He will show you our basic 5 strikes and then show you what they can do, how to connect them and how deadly they are. He always lets you know that there is so much more to learn. It’s all there just as long as you are willing to learn it.

Senkotiros style Arnis is free flowing. It allows free expression and creativity, however there are no needless flashy actions. Every twirl, strike, block and step is firm, powerful and simple. This free flowing aspect prevents us from running out of options. For every action there is a reaction. For every attack there is an option. The style emphasizes on sensing or developing our third eye. We are taught to read or “sense” our opponent, to know where he is going next. Better yet, to know where we can go next. Last but not least, there is always something to learn. We are constantly evolving. I have been with Professor Pallen for almost 5 years. I continue for the bottom line is, I want to know more. Throughout every peak and valley of my training I could always see that there was something more ahead of me. Professor Pallen has so much to offer with such a rich background in martial arts and the Filipino martial arts. I know that he has so much more to offer and I want to take in as much as I can to become a better, stronger person. It has been an honor to train under the Professor, the founder of the very style I train in. I can only look forward to what is to come.

## Senkotiros Arnis: An Art Unlike Any Other

By Tugan Jowett Legaspi



From 1989 to the present day, I have been involved in martial arts training, and more importantly, that training was given to me by the Pallen family. I can honestly say that I am one of the very fortunate few to receive the benefit of learning martial arts from Master Max Pallen Jr., Tuhan Jordan Pallen, and finally Professor Max Pallen Sr. himself. My martial arts journey began in 1989 at the age of 9, when Pallen's Martial Arts was still a small, single school in the Marina district of San Leandro, California. At that time, my training consisted primarily of Kajukenbo/Hawaiian Kenpo Karate, provided by the instruction of Master Max Pallen Jr. and Tuhan Jordan

Pallen.

Later, in 2001, while I was doing my undergraduate studies at California State University Hayward, I became more interested in exploring every aspect of my own Filipino ethnic culture by taking Tagalog language classes and being an active member of CSUH's Pilipino American Student Association (PASA). Because of my previous martial arts experience, and my desire to establish stronger roots with my ethnic Filipino culture, I decided to research various styles of Arnis, Eskrima, and Kali. While I knew that Filipino Martial Arts was an effective art when looking at it collectively, the question for me now was finding the right teacher. I must note that at this time, I took a break from martial arts, and the Pallen's Martial Arts School that I thought I knew focused more on kenpo karate rather than arnis; I was mistaken. When I befriended Guro Johnny Balellos, a former Lakan black belt who trained under Professor Pallen, he introduced me to the complexity of Senkotiros, and highly encouraged me to train with Professor Pallen at the Union City Holly Community Center. In Guro Johnny's words, he said, "Trust me, it's worth it."

Thus, in the summer of 2001, I enrolled in the Arnis class at the Holly Center. To my surprise, the class only had 3 students in it, including myself. During the first minute of the class, Professor Pallen introduced himself, gave a brief history of Philippine martial arts, and gave each of us a short demonstration of freestyle twirling and most importantly, empty-hand applications in Philippine martial arts. From that first lesson, I knew that nothing would stop me from becoming a true arnisador, and eventually, earning my Lakan rank. To my benefit, the other two students dropped out of the program, and I was the only student left for that summer enrollment period. I felt very fortunate that, as a beginner learning arnis, I had an actual Grandmaster teaching me one-on-one for the entire summer enrollment period. Because of my strong desire to learn more and more about my Filipino roots, learning Arnis was a way for me to feel closer to my culture, especially since my great-grandfather was a member of the Cavite Katipunan during the Philippine Revolution against the Spanish Imperial forces. During the following fall enrollment period of 2001, I was joined by Tugan Jeffrey Jamero, and our class steadily began to grow.

While every style of the Philippine martial arts is effective, what makes Senkotiros unique are the concepts that we teach to our students. Different martial arts styles may focus solely on teaching patterned techniques or “tricks”, however, in Senkotiros we are taught applicable ideas that can blend with any fighting art, as well as free-form/non-patterned training methods. Most importantly, in my opinion, was the concept that Arnis should not be taught as an “extension of the hand,” but rather, to develop good empty hand fighting; because when someone throws a punch, they are already extending their hands. As every practitioner of Philippine martial arts is aware, the purpose of training both stick and live hand increases dexterity, sensitivity, and balance in a fighter.

Since the beginning of my Filipino martial arts training, I have learned many new concepts and techniques that I would never have learned if I did not decide to take Senkotiros Arnis with Professor Pallen. Despite numerous obstacles to my martial arts training, I always found a way to make time for learning Senkotiros. Professor Pallen once said to me, “If something is important to you, then you will find a way to make it happen. It is necessary for you to know when to make options or adjustments when something stands in your way.” Those words not only applied to the world of martial arts, but to life itself.

## **I have Grown Not Just as a Martial Artist, But as a Person**

By Lakan Shane Peralta

Nine Years ago, my grandfather died of pancreatic cancer. We had been close, so naturally, I was quite depressed. It is after a traumatic instance such as this that my parents signed me up for karate classes at the local community center under the tutelage of a Professor max Pallen (due to my budding interest in Bruce Lee movies). From the viewpoint of the helpless little seven-year-old boy that I once was, the Professor (as we call him) seemed quite the intimidating person; a

healthy aged man who demands the respect of his students. Though his training may be disciplined and sometimes strict, he also acts very compassionately and patiently towards his pupils when the occasion is appropriate. After training with him for close to nine years, he has educated me in the kenpo style of karate and arnis (a Philippine martial art focusing on the use of both open-handed combat and various weapons, including knives and bamboo rods), I have grown stronger and more confident than I could ever have become alone.

Last year, I was initiated as a member of Senkotiros, a Filipino martial arts organization headed by Professor Pallen that trains its members in the art of arnis. Although training in arnis is both physically and mentally enriching, the true benefit in being a Filipino martial artist is more intrinsic. As a martial artist, I acquired many advantageous personality traits. Studying under Professor Pallen teaches me discipline



and humility. Training for hours on end without rest teaches me perseverance and determination. Working with other black belts during Senkotiros, enforced by the practice of meditation. Through meditation, we train our minds to remain calm yet focused, clear yet all encompassing, and separate yet attuned. It is during intervals such as these that a person can be truly introspective. Coming out of meditation leaves me calm and refreshed. Every moment that I meditate, I feel that I become a better person, more connected to the world and the people around me, more empathetic to the needs of others.

This is not meant, however, to belittle the significance of the corporeal and cerebral qualities bestowed by studying Filipino martial arts. On the contrary, arnis keeps me physically fit. This is especially important at times such as now, when obesity runs rampant throughout the nation. Additionally, arnis serves as a sort of stress-relief; keeping me sane in the hectic conflagration that is the world we live in. Arnis breeds sanity. Training also increases my mental acuity as well as improves my reaction time. Through these are good characteristics for a person to have; the martial arts promote more moral growth than physical growth. The ethical and spiritual lessons learned through training with Senkotiros will last longer than any other physical result. In Conclusion, my experience with Senkotiros has been highly positive and with them, I have grown not just as a martial artist, but also as a person.

### **Craving Action Try Senkotiros**

Dayang Krystal Manuel



I've been a student of Professor Max Pallen since the summer of 1998 when I was just an eager, curious, fresh eight year old. After a few years, my fellow classmates and I took up arnis. As we progressed through the many ranks of sashes, we learned a lot about the Filipino art of stick fighting, knife disarms, and other techniques. On January 22nd 2006 (the same day as the Sama-Sama Banquet), I took the Lakan test, which was an inspiring experience. Now I hold the rank of Dayang and am currently taking Lakan classes on Thursdays at the Union City School and also on Sundays at the San Leandro School.

On Sundays, I experience contact with other Senkotiros students and I learn a lot from them, and I'm sure they learn from me also. I would have to say that my favorite area of arnis is the live stick fighting. Overall, the arnis program has rounded out my martial arts skills and it has brought me to a better understanding of Filipino martial arts. I recommend anyone craving for action in their lives to try out Professor Pallen's arnis program.

## Foundation of Support and Friendship

By Dayang Nisha Bhakta



I live in Union City, California and have been taking karate with Professor Max Pallen for nine years. I started the Senkotiros program two years ago and am now currently holding the rank of 1st degree black belt. My testing for Senkotiros was one of the most memorable experiences of my life, it allowed me to accomplish things I thought were impossible.

In the Senkotiros program we learn a wide variety of things, from pressure points, takeaways and disarms to escrima and knife fighting. We also have indoor and outdoor workouts, which help with being able to react well in different environments. Every time we go to class we are guaranteed to be able to learn

something new, and there is never a dull moment. Our class is a combination of arnis black belt holders from the different Pallen schools.

The majority of my classmates are all adults and are higher in rank than myself. This is an extreme advantage, because I get a diverse and mature insight into what I am doing and it really helps in honing my skills. The atmosphere that we have in and out of class is that of a family, because we always help and support each other. Our classes are built on the foundations of support and friendship. And the bonds that we create are just as unique and deep as the style of Filipino martial arts that we represent.



**Senkotiros Concord, CA.**

**P.O. Box 656**

**Concord, CA. 94522**

**(925) 642-5638**

**Mayan Jane Kessler** - Professor Pallen Teaches With Concepts, Not Techniques  
**Tugan Michael Kessler** - A Direct and to the Point Teaching Style

**Professor Pallen Teaches With Concepts, Not Techniques**

By Mayan Jane Kessler



I was never interested in Philippine Martial Arts. I studied an Okinawan martial art and was just going along training in that. But now I find the Philippine martial art very fascinating.

In 2003, Professor Pallen was holding a set of seminars in San Leandro. He sent out a flyer to other Filipino martial arts schools. My husband was in a school that received one and really wanted to learn stick fighting so he signed up for the first seminar scheduled. I went with

him to be supportive and so we could do a martial art together as we each practice a separate martial art. Now, it is not because of him that I go.

Professor Pallen teaches with concepts, not techniques. He uses basic movements and builds on them until you find yourself doing a very complex set of movements. He loves it when his students finally “get” something. He gives a big smile and a high five and you feel really good about yourself. Yet, he is a staunch traditionalist, philosophically as well as physically he wants the students to be of sound body, mind and spirit and trains us in that way. Though we have fun and enjoy learning the art, we do not play when it comes to fighting. He is the real thing and has the experiences to back it up. The Professor leads by example.

He brings arnis and martial arts alive. It is not just stick banging against stick or two people in a contest to see who can do the coolest technique and “get the other guy”. He teaches blending and cooperation in order to maintain the flow of movement and learn composure and sensitivity.

I really like the softness and flow of technique to technique. Most styles other than the internal arts are hard and stop after one or two well-placed techniques. Senkotiros Arnis flows and you need to learn how to see without looking, feel without touching and sense just by knowing.

I have been a student of Professor Pallen for three and one half years. He does not have the kind of ego you find in most martial arts “masters”, most of whom are afraid their students might know something they do not and teach with their tongues only. He constantly encourages us to train more, to know more so we can become the best we can

be. For the more we know, the more we push him to be a better teacher. He does not stop to rest on his laurels. He continues to expand his breadth of martial arts understanding. He does not seek out to other martial artists to find and bring back new techniques. He goes for a deeper understanding of what martial arts are for and what it gives us in return for our efforts. Every moment I am with him I feel this great depth of knowledge, awareness and compassion and I am glad I made this choice.

## **A Direct and to the Point Teaching Style**

By Tugan Mike Kessler



For the past 13 years I have been training in Kajukenbo Karate of which many of the early black belts in this style were Escrimadors including the founder, Sijo Adriano Emperado. My instructor, Professor Christopher Rapacon, received his black belt ranking from Ahgung Tony Ramos who was ranked in Doce Pares. So you can see that there has been an underlying influence of Philippine Martial Arts within this style right from its inception.

Although, Arnis is not taught as part of our curriculum, in 2002 some of the students from our school were able to participate in a Modern Arnis seminar taught by Remy Presas Jr. and Demetrio Presas. Having never used weapons before, and with multitude of the blocking, striking and disarming techniques we were exposed to, it was a bit overwhelming. But, if you had the knowledge, I could see that this type of weapon had enormous potential when used in a self-defense application against other weapons. So, I continued to play with the sticks and bided my time until I could receive training from a local, reputable instructor.

In 2003, a flyer came to our school advertising the Senkotiros Winter Training Camp taught by Professor Pallen, and it was to be held locally in San Leandro. This is what I had been waiting for! After a discussion with Professor Rapacon, who personally knew Professor Pallen and his expertise with the solo Baston, I signed up as quickly as I could. I considered this to be a very unique opportunity to learn Philippine martial arts from someone who had first hand knowledge of it's cultural and martial arts customs and traditions.

Professor Pallen has a very direct and to the point teaching style. When he is instructing, he breaks everything down so that you can see it step by step. Then he will demonstrate with an actual application so you can see where it is going, but he makes sure that you don't get too far ahead of yourself so that you won't get confused and inadvertently injure yourself or the student you are training with.

What makes Professor Pallen's teaching different from other martial arts instructors? In my opinion, is that there are several things that differentiates Professor Pallen from other instructors, First he teaches without ego his focus is directed toward

passing his art down to all who are sincere in learning Senkotiros and are willing to make the training commitment. His focus is on the student, not himself and his skills. Secondly, Professor Pallen is one of the most patient instructors I have ever seen. He will demonstrate a particular technique over and over until the student gets it and/or will take additional time after class to clarify any confusion a student may have. He is always encouraging students and makes you feel as though you are the only one in the class.

My favorite aspect of Senkotiros is disarms and takedowns. In an extreme application, Senkotiros is deadly! If you can see that the attacker's intent from the onset is on taking your life, then deadly force is to be applied, but only if you know your life is in jeopardy. But, Professor Pallen teaches self-defense (block) first, then exercise a deterrent (counter), neutralize the attacker (disarm or takedown). It gives the Senkotiros practitioner the opportunity to make the attacker aware of their aggression, most times painfully aware. The more aggressive the attacker, the more painful the lesson, and disarms and takedowns can be very painful.

I have been a student of Professor Pallen for three and one half years. I have found that Professor Pallen has a very traditional style of instructing. Senkotiros Arnis is not watered down, yet it is simplistic in application, to the point, and very, effective. In addition, Professor Pallen teaches the student how to develop their sensitivity to the situation at hand, to include the attacker's ability and intent, and the immediate environment.

Truthfully, I continue my training because, who he is, his style of teaching, and what he teaches is why we all keep coming back. It doesn't get any better than Senkotiros Arnis as taught by Professor Max Pallen.

**Senkotiros Delaware**  
**102 Beaumin Dr.**  
**Newark, DE. 19702**  
**Email**

**Tugan Mike McFarland - Realistic and Simplistic Applications**

## **Realistic and Simplistic Applications**

By Tugan Mike McFarland



I first became interested in the Filipino martial art of Modern Arnis in the late 1980's. It was not until the mid 1990's that I began to seriously study arnis. Grandmaster Remy Presas passed away in August of 2001. During a memorial service for Grandmaster Presas in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania I had the opportunity to meet Professor Max Pallen. However, we only talked briefly. A couple of months later Professor Pallen was in Philadelphia teaching a three-day Arnis camp. I was immediately impressed with his style of Senkotiros, his skill level, and his ability to help

each student understand the material.

During the three-day camp I finally had the opportunity to get to know the Professor. We talked many times over the next three days as I tried to learn as much as I could about Senkotiros. He was very friendly and willing to share his knowledge. During this camp I learned that Professor Pallen would soon be teaching seminars in Maine and Texas. I decided to attend those seminars to further my research of his style.

While attending the seminars in Maine and Texas Professor Pallen noticed that I was serious about learning his style. During the Texas seminar he invited me to come to his home in San Leandro, California for a week. As I got to know him better and to learn more about Senkotiros I was convinced that this was the Philippine martial art that was right for me.

The aspects of the Senkotiros style that attracted me the most were its realistic and simplistic application of the techniques. In my opinion, Senkotiros is a fighting style that stresses close quarter combat but is also flexible enough be effective at medium and long range. Professor Pallen has helped me tremendously to improve my knowledge and skill level. Because of this I have dedicated myself to continue to train with this awesome and truly gifted martial artist.

**Senkotiros Georgetown, Texas**  
**505-E West University Avenue**  
**Georgetown, Texas 78626**  
**(512) 869-2615**  
**Email**  
**[www.austinkarate.net](http://www.austinkarate.net)**

**Tugan Dean Goldade - When the Student is Ready, The Master Will Appear**

### **When the Student is Ready, The Master Will Appear**

By Tugan Dean Goldade



I have known the Pallen family and Grandmaster Pallen for many years. I first met Grandmaster Pallen who we respectfully refer to as “The Professor” through my Kajukenbo training with Professor Brian K. Yoshii as an affiliate of the Kajukenbo Association of America. Grandmaster Pallen was Professor Yoshii’s first Kajukenbo instructor.

In 1994, I left California, and re-located to Texas. After moving to Texas I continued my Kajukenbo training, as well as cross training in various other fighting methods. I became a member of W. Hock Hochheim’s Scientific Fighting Congress, and headed the Hawaiian branch of his Pacific Archipelago Combatives system. I traveled with Hock to various locations, teaching and assisting with seminar instruction.

In late 1999, we did a seminar in Huntington Beach California, and by co-incidence the Professor was in Huntington Beach assisting his oldest son Joseph to re-locate there. The Professor heard about the seminar and decided to attend. Once I saw the Professor, I went and paid my respects, and we had good day of training and conversation. I asked the Professor if he would be interested in coming to Texas to teach his system to myself and to my students. He said he would be glad to teach us, and we brought him to Texas as often as we could for training.

Soon after, I became a member of the Pallen’s Martial Arts family and Senkotiros International. I am now honored to continue my training directly under the guidance of the Professor. The meeting in Huntington Beach felt like a meeting with destiny, and I knew from that point on I had found my place, and my mentor and teacher in the martial arts... Like the old saying goes: “When the student is ready, the Master will appear”.





My favorite aspects of Senkotiros are the practicality and effectiveness. The system isn't about having hundreds of drills, or dozens of angles of attack. Senkotiros is based on effective principles that can be learned in a few years and mastered over a lifetime verse as some systems that take a lifetime to learn, and leave no time to master. The Professor has combined and blended the best of the best of his training into an effective, achievable system. The effectiveness has been demonstrated in the competitive arenas of WEKAF to the closed-door events of the Dog Brothers gatherings. In the ring or on the street Senkotiros is a force to be reckoned with.

I see the future of Senkotiros as a very bright one. The Professor has laid the foundation, and put the plan in place for the growth of his art for today and future generations. Currently Senkotiros has representatives in numerous states in the U.S. and has gained exposure internationally. The Professor keeps his standards high, and this will maintain the integrity of the system. Also with his son Tuhon Jordan Pallen as the designated successor of the system, he has also left behind an extremely qualified heir. Even though I hope the Professor continues to teach forever, Tuhon Jordan is an incredible martial artist and teacher who I will proudly follow when the time comes. Like father like son, the future of Senkotiros is in good hands.

I am personally working to expose and educate potential students and future instructors in the art of Senkotiros, in the state of Texas. The Professor and I kicked off our local organization, "Senkotiros Texas" in 2002 to help standardize and pass on the art here, as well as establish a tried and true method for the other present and future representatives of the art in other states and countries.

I also plan to spend as much time as possible assisting the Professor in seminars around the U.S. and the globe. Currently we are scheduling his 2007 seminar schedule and I am working with him to organize these seminars. I will assist with the seminar instruction and demonstrations. I plan to assist the Professor and my fellow Senkotiros practitioners in any way I can. As a team and a family the art will continue to grow and flourish.



*Tuhan Dean Goldade has been training in the martial arts for over 30 years. He holds Black Belt rankings in Senkotiros and Hawaiian Kenpo, as well as instructorships in W. Hock Hochheim's Scientific Fighting Congress and Jeet Kune Do under Sifu Tim Tackett. He serves as the Texas State representative for the Senkotiros system directly under Grandmaster Max Pallen Sr.*

**Camarines Sur National High School**  
**Pinafrancia Avenue, Naga City**  
**Camarines Sur, Philippines**

**Mayan Beverly Funtanilla Rili**





## Senkotiros in Indonesia

The adventure trip to Indonesia was to experience the relationship between the Philippine martial arts and the Indonesian martial arts, with the Professors understanding that a lot of the fighting styles were contributed by the Indonesian migration to the Philippines. The Professor was searching for the "Batak" knife fighters, when he ended up in Bukittiggi, West Sumatra and happen to befriend a Penjak Silat (selik tuo) Guru Adik Ji. Pulasan and his group of instructors. The Professor decided to train with them experiencing Penjak Silat at the Mountain. Unlike the training in America, their training start everyday by going down from the mountain, cross a river and train in the deep remote wooded areas down below the mountain. After training they would cross the river again and climb the mountain with 500 large steps all the way to the top. After two weeks of training, the Professor decided to continue his journey to Batak, Minankaibau by the Aceh region, when he encountered a language barrier between the natives. So the Professor decided to return to Cebu instead. 7 days later, December 26th, the Professor was resting and watching TV news at the Marriott Hotel in Lahug, Cebu City. It was then that the disastrous Tsunami hit the Island.





### **Senkotiros in China**

One of Professor Pallen's dreams was to go to Shaolin temple. He discovered that his very good friend Grandmaster Erik Lee and Master Cynthia Rothrock were sponsoring a trip, so he packed his bags and went with them. They visited several places, the ones that intrigued the Professor the most was the University of Martial Art Schools. There were ten to fifteen thousand, or more students in each of the University's training all over the place at one certain time. Professor Pallen, Grandmaster Lee and Master Rothrock each demonstrated their own style of martial art at Forbidden City and also at Shaolin Temple in front of a lot of people (Chinese and Tourists). Eric Lee also interviewed the Professor about his Philippine martial art style "Senkotiros" for promotional purposes in future China tours.



**L - R:** Master Cynthia Rothrock, Grandmaster Bob Maschmeier, Grandmaster John Olivier, Grandmaster Erik Lee, and Professor Max Pallen.





## Senkotiros in Russia

Russia was another adventure trip, curiosity about Russian hand-to-hand combat fighting brought Professor Pallen in Tver, Russia. Where he met Russian military Special Forces instructor, Master Vadim Starov. During the training, the Russian found out about the Professors background in Philippine martial art skills. There is an interest now in trying to work out about teaming up between the Russian hand-to-hand fighting and Senkotiros style of Philippine martial art seminar camp here in U.S.A., Germany and Russia in the future.

Visit: **[www.officialspetsnaz.com](http://www.officialspetsnaz.com)** to find out more.



## The Makings of a True American Martial Arts Pioneer

By Sid Campbell



As a friend and fellow Budo brother for almost forty years, Max Pallen, Sr. continues to impress me with his prowess in empty-hand and weapon skills. Looking back over that vast expanse of time that almost totals four decades I still see the same enthusiasm and sparkle in the eye as a student that has begun his or her very first lesson. Except in this case, it his zest for caring and sharing with the many teachers and students he has groomed over this period of time.

The first thought than comes to mind is describing Max is that he is one of the most generous friends I have ever had the privilege of knowing. He genuinely shares his many years of martial arts experience with those that seek to learn the deeper aspects of the Filipino martial arts.

I have seen him explore every style of martial arts that can be known in this vast realm all the while giving back as much (or more) than is shared with him. He has always explored and experimented with techniques, tactics and martial strategies with the expressed purpose of passing this knowledge to his teachers and students. Perhaps the fact that he has never been content or satisfied with just accepting knowledge at face value and leaving it at that has something to do with this trait that I always deem to be the quintessential quality of a true master.

I also believe that is one of the paramount qualities that distinguish great masters from those that go on to be recognized as pioneers in the field of martial arts. Regardless of style or origin, it is rare to see someone continue to grow in stature, knowledge, wisdom and expertise when they have reached a certain level of proficiency. Max Pallen, Sr. is one of these unique individuals.

It is my opinion that no one starts out in martial arts to become what many would consider to be a pioneer. With the passage of time as the martial arts have evolved in America and the western world since the early 1960s, Max has always been actively involved with promotion and espousing the virtues and cultural aspects of the Filipino martial arts. As a result, he has created an organization and refined the art of Senkotiros that so vividly exemplifies the cultural and traditional values found in stick and knife fighting arts that originated in the Philippine Islands.

I also believe that if Max had lived in the, lets say, 1500's, he would have been a great Filipino warrior that would certainly left a legacy for generations to come. I say this because it is rare to see one that lives the "warrior way" every day of their life. For as long as I have known Max, I have always been impressed with his "warrior spirit" and his calm, confident, reserve demeanor. From my years actively involved in the martial arts, masters of this caliber are the ones that are usually the ones that distinguish themselves as masters and pioneers. Though Max would never tout his credentials or boast of his many contributions to the world of martial arts, his actions certainly speak



volumes of his deeds. I will be among the first to bestow accolades on this gentleman that walks calmly, surely and confidently and wields a very skill stick.

### **A True Martial Arts Goodwill Ambassador**

I would certainly have to say that Max is responsible for perhaps introducing more Filipino stick and knife fighter legends to the America than any other individual.

Over the past thirty some odd years alone I have seen him host virtually every one of the distinguished Filipino Escrimadors at his home and help establish their renowned in the United States. Planning extensive seminar and clinics so that the stick and knife fighters of the western world could meet and train with them. This hospitality and goodwill has in part, I believe, is directly responsible for the martial artists of America learning bout and knowing who these Filipino legends are and discovering their unique styles of Escrima.



### **A Martial Art Career that has Touched Thousands**

The many facets of Max Pallen, Sr. would be impossible in the confines of this letter. However, I would be remiss if I did not say that my brother Max has spent his life sharing and caring about the thousands of students and disciples that have sought to learn the traditional arts that have their origin deeply entrenched in Filipino culture.

He has devoted his life to the martial arts and continues to be an inspiration to everyone that trains with him or his many teachers. Whereas many skilled stick and knife fighters his age may choose to rest on their laurels and assign the rigors of rudimentary (basic) teaching duties to their assistants, Max is happy to step on the floor and share his vast knowledge with the first day student or the advanced devotee without hesitation. His seminar schedule of traveling both domestically and internationally is enough to tire someone half his age. He is equally comfortable training the military special units (Spec Naz) in Russia or learning and sharing ideas with the China from the Shaolin monks. He can also usually be found traveling to the Philippine Islands several times a year to train and conduct seminars in the land of his birth.

Max is constantly expanding his horizons on a global scale. Taking with him his martial arts knowledge and introducing his unique style of Senkotiros to anyone that is willing to learn.

### **Instructional Innovator**

As a close personal friend, Max and I have worked together on many projects related to martial arts. Since we are both teachers and martial educators we have constantly tried to develop new ways to help the serious student refine his or here skills.

Max was the first Filipino that I know of that introduced the E-book (electronic book) to the students and instructors of his organization. Adding to that his educational VHS and DVD programs one has to know that Max Pallen, Sr. has vast insight as to

where electronic and digital technology is going and he stays abreast of it in hopes it will provide additional ways to share his knowledge with students and instructors.

### **The Karate Tournament Legacy**

To my knowledge, Max Pallen, Sr. was one of the first teachers in the greater Bay Area to establish a curriculum that encompassed a wide array of the martial arts disciplines into one well-rounded academic program. Naturally, this has reflected well in the martial art tournament arena where his students have left a legacy for the past forty years. From the mid-60s to the present his students, teachers and their students have continued to leave their mark on the tournament circuit. And, if the legacy continues, of which think it will, the Pallen name will be around a long, long, time.

#### **World Headquarters**

2019 MacArthur Blvd.  
Oakland, CA 94602

#### **Sid Campbell**

Hanshi, 10th Dan

President (Kaicho)

World Okinawan Shorin-ryu Karate-Do  
and Kobudo Association (WOSKKA)

(510) 530-0241

#### **Email**

#### **Founding Member**



[www.WorldBlackBelt.com](http://www.WorldBlackBelt.com)



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## My Experience with Senkotiros and Grandmaster Pallen

By Guro Brock A. Genevro

In 2001 I attended a memorial ceremony and dinner for the late Modern Arnis Grandmaster Remy Presas. It was at this event that I had my first encounter with Professor Max Pallen. I never caught his name at the event, but the way he carried himself, and the way people around him at the event treated him I knew he was someone important. It wasn't until later when I got home and read the booklet that this unassuming Filipino gentleman very politely asked if I would accept from him that I fully realized just how important this man was. The booklet detailed Professor Pallen's role in bringing Grandmaster Presas and Modern Arnis to America. Little did I know at the time, but this man and his art of Senkotiros Arnis would become a saving grace in my life.

My next encounter with Professor Pallen wouldn't be until July of 2002 where I attended a seminar he taught. His speed and ability amazed me. I also enjoyed the fact that he would personally work with each student attending the seminar to be sure they were moving in the right direction within the art of Senkotiros. His methodical approach to amara was both easy to learn and fascinating. To me it was like applying Bruce Lee's "using no way as way" to the Filipino arts in that most styles have their own specific amara, whereas in Senkotiros students are taught basic twirls, and it is up to the individual to develop their own amara.



First seminar with Professor Pallen

Because of this training philosophy I found Senkotiros to be an excellent style for me because without a reputable arnis school in my area, training for me consisted of travelling to several seminars during the year with various instructors. Although every instructor had their own techniques, I found that they all related to the Senkotiros style in some way, so having the Senkotiros base made it easier to learn from the other teachers I trained with. This reason among many others is why I made sure I planned my training schedule around when Professor Pallen was going to be in Pennsylvania and made the 6 hour one way drive to train with him at least twice a year for the past 4 years. The other thing that I loved about training with Professor Pallen was that he made you feel that by being part of Senkotiros, you were part of his family.



During a seminar in March of 2006 my wife, Joleen, turned to me at dinner and said she wanted to talk to Professor Pallen before we left. She wouldn't explain to me further except that she had something that she felt she needed to tell him and that she would tell me about when we got back to the hotel. As one of my students and I chatted with some of the other seminar attendees; she went into the next room to speak privately with Professor. She wanted to thank him because she felt that he had saved me. Joleen went on to explain to him how my mother, with

whom I was very close to, was killed in a tragic car accident in the beginning of December 2005. She told him how she was afraid that because of how close I was with my mother that she would lose me to depression. She explained further that because of the opportunity I had to teach what he has passed on to me she felt that he had saved me from slipping into that depression. Professor was deeply moved by this and throughout the rest of the weekend he made sure that I knew that whatever I needed he would do his best to help me.

In July of 2006 Joleen and I met Professor Pallen for breakfast in Buffalo, NY to visit and discuss my involvement in the future of Senkotiros Arnis. We discussed a lot and I left feeling the same way I always feel when he and I part company. I felt the anxiety of leaving a family member, but with the excitement of looking forward to the next time I could see him.

**Silver Dragon Martial Arts**

Guro Brock A. Genevro  
St. Marys, PA 15857  
(814) 512-5001

## **Anting-Anting and the Search for Mastery of the FMA**

By Professor Max M. Pallen

During school break my parent used to let me live with my Grandparent situated in the Bicol Valley in Sipocot, Camarines Sur in Southern Luzon. Before bedtime, my grandparent told stories about “anting-anting” (amulet). I had notice every year during Good Friday, my “Lolo” (Grandfather) would disappear in the woods for the whole evening and would not come back until the next day very exhausted. Then, one day when I was growing up he told me his experiences in obtaining “anting-anting”. He told me there are several types of “anting-anting” (amulet) and also several types of protection it can give to the possessor.

I was about 13 years old when my grandmother passed away, but just before she passed away, she had given me a small and aged book with Latin words written in the pages. The Latin word was believed to protect the possessor when in danger. There are some requirements though that in order to keep the power of the “anting-anting” (book as amulet) the possessor must do “halad” (offering) at 6:00 am and at 6:00 pm every Friday and that it must only be used for good intent. Remembering back, my “Lola” (grandmother) would practice these rituals but I thought of it as a normal praying time. I have kept the book in a safe place, so I can get back to it later.

One day after I had watched a movie titled, “Ronquillo” about a man with anting-anting (amulet) and could not be killed by bullets, until he gave his anting-anting to his son to save his son from getting killed. Then, I remember the book that my grandmother had given to me and decided to study the book, hoping to developed power like in the movie Ronquillo. But, I was very disappointed when I found out that the book was no longer where I had kept it. Exhausted from searching for the book with no success, I finally accepted that I had lost the book forever.

When I was 14 years old, my father, who was in the U.S. Navy and a former boxer in Honolulu, Hawaii also known as “Kid Baron”, started training me in “Panuntukan” (western boxing), using only wrapped towels covering my fists, since boxing gloves were not available. This was very useful during that time, especially when I had problem with the local kids, my father would ask me and the other kid, “Do you want to fight”? If we said, “yes”, then we would fight bare knuckles until one of us gave up. The victor would gain respect, not only from his opponent, but also from all of the other local kids. These fights were, “everything-goes,” no rules, no time limit, no restriction and under any weather conditions. With the “Barkadas” (teenage gang), we had a lot of challenges from other “barkadas” from the surrounding areas. Some member of our “barkadas” carried knives, but I preferred to carry a flexible (1/4” diameter.) rattan stick, which I kept hidden behind my back for protection.

My father decided to take me to Honolulu, Hawaii in 1959. One year later, I decided to come to the mainland (California) and finally settled in Oakland. By the early 70’s, some of my brothers started to arrive from the Philippines. Later on, I found out through conversation, that my brother, Zacarias had the missing book all this time and later on, gave it to my brother Basilio. Because of his religious believes, he thought that it was evil, so he burned it. I was disappointed, but I figured it was meant to be.

Already, being a certified instructor in Kenpo (Kuntao). In 1969 I started to travel back to the Philippines in search of Arnis. Since my grandfather was my only teacher and

he passed away in 1948, I went to the Bicol region not knowing where to begin my search. I was not successful. I again went back to the Philippines in 1973. There I met Ernesto Presas with his brother, Roberto Presas. Unsure, I decided to continue my search. I proceeded to another club in Quiapo. I met Remy Presas and his method of Modern Arnis drew my interest to train with him. I had the opportunity to train with him in Intramuros and at his club in Quiapo. I was awarded Lakan Isa in Modern Arnis and appointed California Commissioner in Modern Arnis. In 1974, the Oakland Filipino Community and I tried to petition Remy Presas to come to the United States for the Asian Martial Arts Expo as a Philippine martial arts representative, but was not very successful. Instead, Remy Presas arrived in 1975. He stayed with me and we trained every opportunity we could. Remy Presas promoted me to lakan tatlo.

In 1976, I realized there was something missing in my skills. I felt emptiness and a craving for more mastery in the arts. I started to train in Escrima with Leo Giron in Stockton. I also had the opportunity to train with Ben Largusa, Mel Lopez and Greg Lantayao in Kali- Villabrille system. I was a certified instructor in the Kali-Villabrille system and departed in 1983 to further my knowledge and mastery in the Philippine Martial Arts. My search brought me to Cebu City, where I trained with Cacoy Canete in Doce Pares until I met the Atillo family.



Grandmasters Eulogio Canete, Cacoy Canete, and Vecinte Carin  
Professor received is Doce Pares Instructors Certificate

I have made several trips to the Philippines until today. There are others masters that shared their knowledge with me like Leo Gaje, Undo Caburnay, Henry Jayme, Miguel Fernandez, "Goyong" Ceniza, "Boy" Ceniza, Hortincio Navalez, and "Nene" Tortal both from Bacolod, Negros Occidental. Each of them humbled me with their caliber in the Philippine martial arts. Confident, but not satisfied and my cup-is-never-full philosophy, the search for the mastery of the Filipino martial art still continues on.



**Grandmaster “Goyong” Ceniza - Baraw-Sugbu - with Professor Pallen**



**Master “Boy” Ceniza - Baraw-Sugbu - with Professor Pallen**



**Master Henry Jayne - Teovel Balintawak - with Professor Pallen**





To associate the search of the “anting-anting” and the search of the mastery of Filipino martial arts is intriguing. Since there is a commonality in both, which is the power to protect the possessor from danger. With the “anting-anting” you utilize the power of the supernatural. In Arnis, you utilize the power of your skill. Both are abstract and untouchable but you must depend on faith that through hard work and determination that you reach that level of mastery.

I finally revived Senkotiros in the year 2000, the very first Filipino Martial Arts I learned from my grandfather, Luis Moratillo. Combining Senkotiros with the knowledge that I have gained from the other masters now makes Senkotiros a complete style in its own.

In the year 2000, one of my trips to Bicol Region in Sorsogon to see the popular whale shark of the Philippines, I made a side trip to Naga City to visit “Ina” the miraculous lady of Pinafrancia. It was early afternoon and very few people were around. I came out from the Cathedral church, where people light candles for the “halad,” (offering), and a dark, skinny old women offered me a medal in exchange for me to buy a candle for the (offering) “halad” and Rosary for the safety of all my future adventures. The medal was a triangle in shape with a third eye in the center. When I saw the third eye. I felt a connection with the book, “anting-anting”, that I had lost.

My other interests beside Philippine martial arts are thrill-seeking adventures like trekking, mountain repelling, river climbing, spelunking (caves), scuba diving and skydiving.

In the summer of 2003, I had a skydiving accident, shattering my left femur 5 times. That was O.K, the worse scenario was, I could have died in that crash or could not have walk for the rest of my life. Somehow, I was wearing the medal that day.

In Sumatra in 2004, I was almost robbed and maybe killed on the way to the mountains of Bukittinggi, Sumatra. Days after I left Sumatra, the disastrous Tsunami hit the island of Sumatra.

I thought of all these incidents as just plain luck and faith to the supernatural power above. Thanks to God. And thank you Steven Dowd for giving me the opportunity to share my experiences with you and the readers of the FMA Digest.







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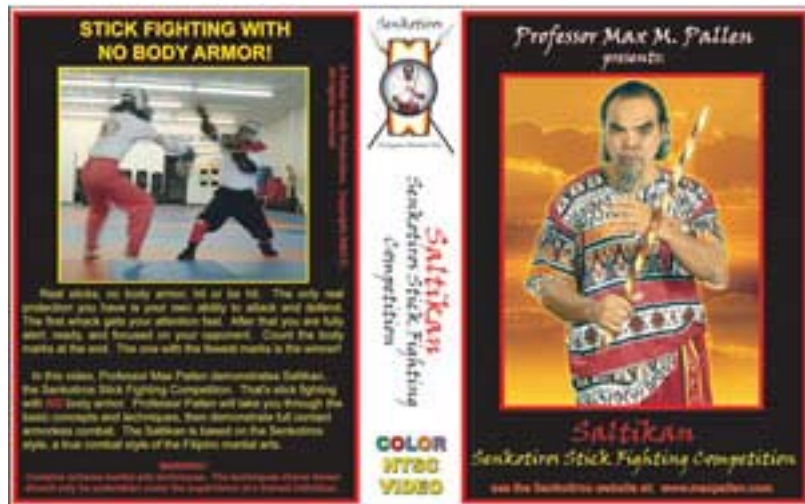
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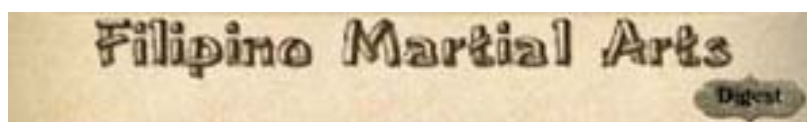




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