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

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From the Publishers Desk

Kumusta

This Special Issue is on Cebuano Martial Artist. Some people do not realize to what extent that Eskrima was influenced through the people that live in the Cebu Islands. Some of the Eskrimadors are famous and known throughout the world, while others are known only in the Philippines and then a few are not even known outside of Cebu.

I have to really thank the Cebu Eskrima Society. It must be fully realized that the Cebu Eskrima Society has one thing in common; they are not motivated by financial rewards. Many of them do not rely on the Filipino Martial Arts for a living, they all have good paying jobs, although they are by far not rich, but are comfortable with their means of making a living in the employment they have. What really DRIVES the group is to bring forth the truth about the history of the Filipino Martial Arts - eskrima in particular.

What is really misunderstood and repugnant for the Cebuano martial artists is the way throughout the world is, that it is believed that the Filipino Martial Arts is basically of Moro origins. That is far from the truth. Also I have to personally thank Mr. Celestino Macachor, for all the information and assistance that was provided to the FMA Digest.

In looking for the history of Cebuano Martial Arts, it is very difficult to find something that really stands out for there is really not a description of the Cebu Islands history without going through the history of the Philippines as a whole, so one of the most noteworthy documentation that the FMA Digest could find, came from Grandmaster Dionisio Canete's book 'Filipino Martial Arts Espada y Daga' which has a most informative and comprehensive description, of the Eskrima history in Cebu, and reveals many things that have never been written down before. And also from Mr. Macachor article "New Theories on the Origins of Eskrima". Which was published in Rapid Journal who granted the FMA Digest permission to show it to you. The Rapid Journal is a very informative magazine that is published in the Philippines by Mr. Daniel Go and is really worth subscribing too. Visit them at: **www.rapidjournal.com**

Both of the history articles will have links that go to where you can fully read them in their entirety, at your leisure and you are not just getting another copy in this issue.

So it is hoped that this Special Issue is interesting to our readers, and that it is realized that the Cebuano Eskrimadors played a major part in the development of the Filipino martial arts.



Maraming Salamat Po

Cebu Eskrima Society

Introduction

cebueskrima.s5.com



The Cebu Eskrima Society's prime motivation is to tell the truth about the cultural heritage and to preserve it for future generations.

The Cebu Eskrima Society is a rather fledgling group with no formal organizational hierarchy. They are a group of Eskrima practitioners that meet in cafes and sometimes in

each others schools leaving behind bloated egos and bickering that characterize the Eskrima community here in Cebu. Some of the personalities/instructors here in Cebu that have signified there support and affiliation for the Cebu Eskrima Society are: Manuel "Uwit" Jecong of De Cuerdas Eskrima, Mario Jadraque Vice-President of Lapunti Arnis de Abanico, Isidro Edring Casio of San Miguel Eskrima, Rodrigo "Drigo" Maranga of Combat Eskrima, Nick Elizar of NickEl Stick Arts Eskrima (Balintawak), Sergio Arcel, Eusebio Monino, Grandmaster Johnny Chiuten, Allan Cabahug, Goyong Ceniza and many more. The group was an offshoot of the successful eskrima exhibition held on Mactan Island in 2002 in commemoration of the Battle of Mactan. The event was promoted and supported by the Philippine Indigenous Martial Arts Federation (PIMAF).

There's more to Cebuano Martial Arts than the well-known martial arts of Cebu like Doce Pares, Balintawak, Lapunti, Ilustrisimo, etc. This is a major reason why the Cebu Eskrima Society has formed to progressively search for eskrimadors that have no pedigree or lineage with Doce Pares and the other more popular styles. What the world knows about Cebuano Martial Arts barely scratched the surface. Such arts as, Dugukan a ground fighting art indigenous to the people of Dalaguete south of Cebu province to mention only one of many which are not familiar outside of Cebu let alone the Philippines.

In the book *The Masters of Arnis, Kali and Eskrima* by the late Edgar G. Sulite, of the 38 of Grandmasters featured 33 were Visayans. A mix of the different ethnic groups like the Cebuanos, Ilonggos and Waray-warays were evidently predominant. Why do the Visayans virtually monopolize the Filipino Martial Arts? Look further into the article "New Theories on the Origins of Eskrima" [[Click Here](#)] for an in-depth analysis.

The defeat of Magellan in the Battle of Mactan, has been played up by almost every Filipino Martial Arts organization as an epic display of our hero's Kali prowess, but so far there has been no hard evidence collected to date to prove that Kali as what many believe is indeed the progenitor or the mother of all Filipino Martial Arts. It is in this vein that we aim to debunk some of the inaccuracies and the myths that abound and erroneously accepted as historical fact by so many practitioners of the Filipino Martial Arts.

While there is practically no archaeological or even written records to prove that Kali the early form of Eskrima was pre-Hispanic (Origins of Eskrima) [[Click Here](#)] one irrefutable fact stands out: the warrior spirit of our intrepid ancestors is deeply ingrained in the genetic code of the Visayan people. Topping the list of great Visayan Eskrimadors are the names of Grandmasters like: Floro Villabrille, Regino Ilustrisimo, Juanito

Lacoste, Felicisimo Dizon, Cacoy Canete, Anciong Bacon, Jose D. Caballero, Antonio Ilustrisimo, Angel Cabales, Leo Gaje, Col. Timoteo Maranga, Johnny Chiuten, Filemon Caburnay, Arnulfo Mongcal, Atty. Villasin, etc.

The Cebu Eskrima Society's bold mission is to propagate and promote all indigenous Visayan Martial Arts of varying styles. It is not part of their mission to unify the various methods or systems but to find a common ground that can be nurtured in order to stimulate enthusiasm of the Visayan Martial Arts and culture for future generations to inherit. It is only through our Martial Arts that we can find a distinct cultural identity, not our Christian traditions or Arroz Valenciana or Kinilaw or Otap or Paltik pistols.



This is a graphic illustration of the concentration of eskrima in coastal towns, which was the favorite hunting ground of Moro pirates.

History

The History Cebuano Eskrima has various forms depending on who wrote it, or who is telling it. FMAdigest recommends these two writings that are the most interesting and believed to be the most accurate.

New Theories on the Origins of Eskrima – By: Celestino C. Macachor

Printed in **Rapid Journal** – Volume 6 No# 2

To view the article [[Click Here](#)]



Grandmaster Dionisio Canete's book 'Filipino Martial Arts Espada y Daga'. It is said to be a most informative and comprehensive description, of the Eskrima history in Cebu, and reveals many things that was never written down before.

To view the writing [[Click Here](#)]

Eskrima

The word "eskrima" is derived from the Spanish word "esgrima" which means "a game between two combatants with the use of blunt instruments". The name of the stick, which could either, be rattan or a piece of hardwood used in "eskrima" is called either "olisi", "baston" or "garote". The word "eskrima" became popular in the early years of the American regime, when the first Arnis club organized in Cebu City, Central Philippines in 1920, and the Labangon Fencing Club used the term in their practice of the art. This group was dissolved in later years due to serious political conflicts among its officers. In 1932, Doce Pares Association, with all the well-known grandmasters based in Cebu as a nucleus, came into being.

Cebuano Eskrimadors

The following Cebuano Eskrimadors are each exceptionally skilled in their own arts. Some are well known while others are not known outside of the Philippines and possibly outside of Cebu.

[Click the Name to go to that Eskrimador]

Sergio Arcel	Miguel J. Fernandez
Venancio "Anciong" Bacon	Julian Goc-ong
Facunda 'Aling Cunda' Sabanal Berro	Uldarico "Poldeng" Llanos
Jose D. Caballero	Antonio "Tonyong Moton" Ilustrisimo
Mawe Caballero	Floro S. Mabalhin
Filemon Caburnay	Drigo Maranga
Prudencio "Undo" or "Ondo" Caburnay	Jose "Joego" Milan
Ciriaco "Cacoy" Canete	Manoy Eusebio "Sebio" Monino
Dionisio "Diony" Cañete	Teodoro "Totong" D. Nuevo
Gregorio "Goyong" Ceniza	Epifanio 'Yuli' Romo
Johnny Chiuten	Bobby Taboada
Alberto D. Dacayana Sr.	Sonny Umpad
Tony Diego	Bonifacio "Loloy" D. Uy

Sergio Arcel

Balintawak South Expressway Chapter



Sergio "Noy Sergio" Arcel was born on February 24, 1941, at J.M. Basa St., Cebu City. Raised by a poor family of a Boholana descent and a Cebuano father. He grew up in a less privileged environment, which has forced him to work early in life to survive. He supported his way by working as a carpenter, a farmer and at other times a fish vendor with his wife to support his family of seven.

At the age of 20, he enrolled at Balintawak Eskrima Club under the guidance of the Great Grand Master Venancio "Anciong" Bacon. From the moment he started practicing the Art, he became so obsessed that until today he continues to practice the Art almost everyday. His

personality is very opposite to his art, very meek, gentle, soft-spoken and humble. He enjoys songs of Jerry Vale, Tony Bennett and other "oldies but goodies" music. Surprisingly, he is a very graceful dancer too!

"Noy Sergio" is a true-blooded Balintawak from the very beginning and a loyal student of the late Grand Master. He stayed with the Club for more than 10 years and witnessed numerous bloody fights by the Grand Master Anciong Bacon, Delfin Lopez, Teddy Buot, Timor Maranga, Atty. Villasin, Jose "Joe Go" Millan, Isidro Bardilas and many others. One story, which he told of, is the fight between "Noy Anciong and Master Trovador Ramos during the formers stint in Camp Crame while serving in Prison.

After “Noy Anciong’s” release from prison, in 1978, Noy Anciong called a meeting to all his students because he wanted to introduce a modification to his techniques. Not everyone took it seriously though because it was very minute - so they say. “Noy Sergio”, the ever-loyal student, took matters without reservations together with Teddy Buot, Arturo Sanchez, Joe Go, Jim Boy and a few others.

“Noy Anciong’s” demise produced different teaching methods as can be seen today and thus 3 Balintawak schools were formed, namely: Balintawak International, Teovel’s Balintawak and Balintawak Original, retaining the deadly form but different teaching methodologies.

Today, Noy Sergio continues to teach the traditional system. He survives with its meager income teaching new students the Balintawak technique and a Cultural heritage. Sometimes, he has to wake up very early in the morning to take a boat to Ormoc because his student requested him for practice. Other times, he goes Danao about 60 kilometers away from his abode to follow-up a student. However, he is very selective of his students, and prefers to teach new students in a location near his place so that he can have more time teaching than traveling for a single student. He has also very high respect to Arturo Sanchez, his batch and the said rightful heir of the Balintawak Original School in Cebu, Philippines. He can be reached at akhandakhumar@yahoo.com.

His system of instruction follows that of the tradition of the Late Grand Master Anciong Bacon. He starts from the basic 12 hitting points always emphasizing the correct body weight position (“Undayag”) He continues to guide the student until fluidity in his movement is attained. The steps here are the usual walking distance of the foot but the variation is when to put your weight of either foot, He prefers that the student practice daily.

After the basic, he will proceed to the “Corridas” or random. Here, the student will learn to catch up the speed, coordination and anticipation of the instructor. This will take a lot of time and sweat! Sometimes you have to catch up your breath in each set.

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Grandmaster Venancio "Anciong" Bacon

Founder Balintawak Eskrima
(1912-1980)

Balintawak International Self-Defense was founded in 1957 with Venancio Bacon as its grandmaster. Grandmaster Bacon later formed another style under his own name, but Balintawak International continues on.





Jose "Joego" Milan and Venancio "Anciong" Bacon

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Facunda 'Aling Cunda' Sabanal Berro

By: Celestino C. Macachor



Born in Tunga, Moalboal on November 25, 1924 Facunda "Aling Cunda" Berro is the descendant of two legendary eskrimadors of Moalboal, Cebu. His grandfather Laurente "Laguno" Sabanal was one of the early pioneers of the rustic town of Moalboal south of Cebu. Laguno along with Solferino Borinaga of Camotes Island was one of the first documented practitioners of eskrima that successfully defended their home against Moro pirates during the early 19th century. To honor his courage the town of Moalboal used to be called Laguno. Aling Cunda's father Pablo "Amboy Kidlat" Sabanal; the horseback-riding drifter was one of the earliest eskrima teachers of colonial Cebu. Amboy Kidlat living in the shadow of Laguno may have even surpassed the legend of his father during his time.

At this writing Aling Cunda is the only living survivor of a brood of seven. Her siblings like their fearless ancestors were endowed with extraordinary strength. One of Aling Cunda's fondest memories of her late father was during World War II, when she saw how her father intimidated a Japanese soldier who barged into their home, by bending a crowbar right before the eyes of the frightened intruder and slammed it on his chest. From then on, no Japanese soldiers knocked on their doors again. Aling Cunda passed on the genes of her ancestors to her daughter Luzvisminda who in 1987 won second place in the Third World Marathon held in Cebu City.

Aling Cunda learned eskrima by simply observing her father teach his brothers Brigido, Serapion, Alfonso, Ubaldo and elder sisters Magdalena and Segundina. Aside from her father one of her biggest influences was her aunt Insi Benang Sabanal, a

ferocious fighter who she remembered foiled an attempted rape by nearly crushing the attacker to death with a tight submission lock.

Aling Cunda herself while still a high school student at the University of the Visayas repelled two attackers at the Cebu Normal School, throwing one of the assailant's unconscious on the ground while the other fled for his life. When a policeman approached to rescue her, she calmly told the officer, "I'm alright, but check that guy on the ground if he's still alive!" Typical of most eskrima practitioners of her generation, Aling Cunda claims that one of the secrets of their family's invincibility are the oraciones and amulets that they inherited from their grandfather Laurente "Laguno" Sabanal.

She had a collection of mystical panyo (handkerchief) inscribed with Latin incantations that they used as headband for protection. When Luzvisminda showed us an old picture of her grandmother Demetria, Aling Cunda fervently mused over that her mother was also an eskrimador even before she met her father Amboy Kidlat. When we asked why there are so many eskrimadors in her era, Aling Cunda confirmed what we had been expecting all along. She was the first and probably the last living eskrimador we interviewed who corroborated that the primary motivation of their family practicing the art was to defend their village against Moro pirates. Women being the favorite prey of Moro raiders for their harem, it is not surprising that some of them were equally deadly fighters. Even during the early 20th century Moro pirates continued to wreck havoc and terror on the coastlines of Cebu, her elder brother Serapion took on the job of their grandfather in defending Moalboal against Moro raids. This firsthand account on the use of eskrima against Moro pirates is the final seal to prove that our theory on the origins of the Filipino Martial Arts is historically correct!

Aling Cunda is a testament of her generation's courage, strength, tenacity and profound spirituality. Today at the age of eighty, she still commutes daily between Cebu City and her hometown Moalboal to gather scrap food for her livestock. Truly a remarkable woman and eskrimador.

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Grandmaster Jose D. Caballero

(1907 – 1987)

De Campo Uno-Dos-Tres Orihinal

Grandmaster Jose D. Caballero was born on August 7, 1907 in barrio Ibo, Toledo City, west of Cebu Province. In his early youth he used to go from barrio to barrio to watch eskrima exhibitions during fiesta celebrations. These demonstrations were more of a cultural presentation than a display of real fighting. The exhibitions mostly pre-arranged sparring called de Cadena was far from the real combat that the young Caballero was doggedly searching for. From his observations of these exhibitions he later modified the moves with emphasis on three striking levels: the eyes, hands or elbows and knees. He later named the method as De Campo Uno-Dos-Tres Orihinal.

The name of the method was derived from his middle name Diaz and his surname Caballero. He also postulated that when lifting heavy objects, it is usually accomplished at the count of three as in "Uno Dos y Tres!" A rabid fan of western movies, he likens his style to the quick draw. Whoever lands the first strike in a stick fight, wins!

Grandmaster Caballero served in the Philippine Constabulary and was once assigned in the hostile Moro country of Lanao province. After his retirement from the Constabulary he continued to teach his brand of Eskrima, and at the same time the challenges that was part and parcel of the art continued to hound him. One of his most memorable matches was in 1936 when he fought an eskrimador named Anoy from the nearby town of Tangub. During the match the hometown crowd rooting for their challenger, cheered as Grandmaster Caballero dodged, backpedaled around the tennis court. In a flash Grandmaster Caballero unleashed his trademark one-two three strikes and sent the opponent's stick flying into the air. The challenger, hands and pride bleeding surrendered. The crowd not seeing the blurring combinations of Grandmaster Caballero thought the whole match was fixed, shouted "TAYOPE!" (fixed) In his prime Grandmaster Caballero was the vaunted Juego Todo (All Out, no holds barred) champion and beat famous Eskrimadors like Simeon Saavedra of Talisay, Balbino Mancao, Vicente Labor, Juan Carolla of Ilocos, Alfredo Macalolan of Negros, Tanciong Lopez from Cebu City, Salomon Canonio and many lesser known challengers to his crown.

His most illustrious students were PG Edgar G. Sulite founder of Lameco Eskrima International, his brother Helacrio Sulite, Jr. and favorite protege Ireneo L. Olavides. Never realizing his dream to gain the recognition like the more popular "Doce Pares" and "Balintawak" methods, the old warrior died on August 24, 1987.

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Mawe Caballero

De Campo 1-2-3 Orihinal

Manuel Lebumfacil Caballero was born on April 23, 1953 in Ozamiz City. He is currently residing in Sitio Tugas, Ibo Toledo City and works as a bodyguard of the Mayor. His father Grandmaster Jose D. Caballero started giving him Eskrima lessons at age 9. Of his six brothers Eddie, Nelson, Rodger, Salvador, and Lando--- only Salvador, Oscar and Lando took Eskrima seriously. Bador's Eskrima however, is not De Campo but hodgepodge of various styles he learned from different systems. Oca specializes in dagger fighting.

His father GM Caballero or Nong Otek was also into hypnotism, orascion and judo during the pre-war years in Toledo. GM Caballero trained with a certain Santiago "Tiago" Amaya in Ibo and used to lift heavy stones in practice. He went to Kanlaon during World War II and got the knowledge of orascion and hypnotism from an old hermit. His orascion gave strong emphasis on the words of God the Father.



While undergoing Ranger training with the Molave Warriors, a fellow soldier told the CO about Mawe's Eskrima background and was challenged by the CO to show his skills. Hesitantly he obliged but warned the Commanding Officer challenging him that he could get hurt. The CO a graduate of the elite Philippine Military Academy boasted that his Eskrima could not beat his Karate techniques. The fight was a very lopsided mismatch with the CO badly bruised in the legs and knees. Like a true officer and gentleman the CO accepted defeat and thereafter assigned Mawe as unarmed combat instructor of their unit.

Mawe trained in the Army in 1978 with combat experience in Jolo. Like his legendary father, Mawe possessed an intrinsic combat mindset and was reputed to seldom seek cover in a firefight. He wears a medallion of San Miguel that he swears gave him protection. His unit took part in the pursuit operations of the notorious Usman Salih the MNLF commander responsible for treacherously killing Marine General Bautista and dozens of his troops. Among the spoils of war, he once collected a Kris, Barong and M2 carbine from a Moro casualty- but the souvenir was later ripped off by his commanding officer Lt. Dailig. Mawe ascribes his invincibility in Jolo firefights to the panipas incantations he inherited from his father's Orascion.

He learned the orasciones by secretly studying the librettos of his old man. He was later given the complete lesson in orascion by his father with devotions that include prayers daily prayers starting at 6 am, 12 noon, 3pm and 6 pm.

His full curriculum will take a year to finish with at least four times a week training. The unique features of DC-1-2-3 are hayang-kulob techniques and specialization of solo baston. Stick lengths vary from 28 to 30 inches. Beginners start with slow drills and progress later to fast combinations. Siete Pares is the first basic instruction along with proper grip of garrote, stance and range estimation.

The first tournament he competed in representing De Campo was on August 1979 during the First National Invitational sanctioned by the NARAPHIL. He fought in the Senior Division and won Silver Medal and awarded the Best Fighter Award. During the second round of that tournament he complained to GMs Momoy and Euling Canete to fight armor less, but was told by Atty. Dionie to stay in the game as the whole thing was already "arranged."

He fought in another tournament in 1982 and became champion of the Senior Division beating Lofranco who eliminated Edgar Sulite in the same tournament. During the tournament Edgar went around telling everyone that he didn't like to beat Mawe so as not to disappoint the old man GM Jose Caballero. A confrontation with Mawe never realized with Edgar's humiliating defeat in the hands of Lofranco a Balintawak stylist who Mawe beat in the championship bout.

Today Mawe continues to teach the same syllabus of De Campo 1-2-3 Orihinal in his father's original hometown of Barrio Ibo, Toledo City.

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Filemon Caburnay
Lapunti Arnis de Abanico

In the early 1950's, Filemon Caburnay was an acknowledged arnis practitioner. He called his style, Lapunti stood for Labangon, Punta Princesa, and Tisa to honor the localities where thrived. Abanico was added because the movements resemble that of a fan. As a young man, he was a salesman roving the Visayas islands. An old friend reminisced that he used to seek out other arnis grandmasters bringing with him a gift, usually a dagger, and introducing himself as an arnis student. On to Samar, Bohol and Panay Islands, he sold his wares and at the same time improved his art. This way, Arnis de Abanico was born.



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Grandmaster Prudencio "Undo" or "Ondo" Caburnay
Lapunti Arnis de Abanico

Prudencio "Undo" or "Ondo" Caburnay born April 28th, 1943 the son of Filemon Caburnay, the heir and current Grandmaster of the style, began his training in 1960 in the Arnis de Abanico circle. Undo during the 60's, began to research, develop and modified his own style within the Arnis de Abanico group. He states "My father designed the abanico style to fight bigger men, so being small myself I had to make do and improvise for my lack of size". Undo stands 5 foot 2 inches. It was during this time that Undo began to perfect the union of all the styles taught to him by his father and friends.



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Grandmaster Ciriaco "Cacoy" Canete
Doce Pares Eskrima
Escrido



Grandmaster Ciriaco Cacoy Cañete. Grandmaster Cañete is the oldest surviving member of the original Doce Pares Eskrima club of Cebu. The original art he inherited from his family consisted of single stick, double stick, stick and dagger (espada y daga), knife, and sword techniques. The weapons training translated perfectly into empty hand combat, as well, giving him a well-rounded combative skill set.

Ciriaco Cañete or 'Cacoy' as he is known by his Filipino nickname, was born in August 1919 in San Fernando approximately 30 kilometers south of Cebu City, on Cebu Island,

in the Visayas region of The Philippines. He was the youngest of twelve children. At the early age of seven he was initiated into Escrima, learning from his brother Filemon or "Momoy" who had in turn learnt Escrima from his father Gregorio and uncles Gavino, Pedro (from his fathers family) and Juancho (from his mothers family). Because of his open mindedness and desire for knowledge, he has trained in many different styles of Martial Arts. Some of the styles he has learnt include Jui Jitsu, Boxing, Kodokan Judo, free style wrestling, Shorin Karate and Aikido. With his acknowledged spectrum of skills through his lifetime of training, he has gained a deep insight and a broad understanding, with mastery of the concepts of self-defense and combat. The culmination of years of learning fused into the style that he teaches which is called 'Escrido'. This style combines the refined essential elements of every martial art he has learnt through his life.

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Grandmaster Dionisio "Diony" Cañete

Doce Pares

Dionisio belongs to the second generation of the famous Martial Art advocates, the Cañete brothers of Cebu City, Philippines. He is the youngest son of GM Eulogio (Ylong) Cañete, the principal organizer of Doce Pares, who headed the organization since it's founding in 1932 until his death in June 1988.

Dionisio began his lessons in the Filipino Art in 1946 at the age of eight from his father and brother Iluminado, the eldest of the five children (4 sons and a daughter) of Eulogio and Irene Aventura. He studied under GM Felimon "Momoy" Cañete and later with GM Ciriaco "Cacoy" Cañete, both brother of his father. He also trained with GM Vicenter Carin and Maximo Cañete.

In 1960, immediately upon his election as one of the officers of Doce Pares, rules on the acceptance of students and membership were liberalized. They started to promote and develop Arnis to a wholesome spectator's sporting event. In 1975, He initiated the formation of the Cebu Eskrima (Arnis) Association.

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Gregorio "Goyong" Ceniza

Baraw Sugbu

Indeed very few practitioners of the Art of Eskrima nowadays specialize only in one facet of a complex fighting system ranging from solo baston, double baston, espada y daga, pangamot-the entire gamut of the Filipino Martial Arts. One such rare master is Gregorio "Goyong" Ceniza of Mandaue City, Cebu. GM Goyong specializes only in the deadly business of knife fighting, period. Baraw Sugbu formerly known as Arnis Diablo traces its lineage to the patriarch of Cebuano Doce Pares the Great Grandmaster Lorenzo Saavedra. Saavedra

taught a distinct brand of knife fighting that he shared to only a few chosen disciples. One of Saavedra's protégés a certain Simo later passed on the methodology to Lucrecio Okit Albano who became later Goyong Ceniza's mentor in Baraw Sugbu.

The system was so secret that GM Ceniza says they used to practice under a cloak of blanket to screen the deadly drills.

One of GM Ceniza's top students was the late Aproniano "Rene" Capangpangan who also later became the mentor of Dr. Ned Nepangue.

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Grandmaster Johnny Chiuten

He is one of the few Filipino Martial Artist today that rightfully deserves the title grandmaster. A reservoir of 60 years of martial arts studies from Hung Gar Kung fu, aikido, karate and eskrima Johnny Chiuten now sixty-eight years old still exudes the youthful enthusiasm in his quest for martial arts knowledge. His reputation as brawler and street fighter is beyond reproach. Back in the sixties while hopping from one college course to another from engineering, commerce to pharmacy he has already carved a niche in the Martial Arts circles of the University of the Philippines campus and in Chinatown.

Johnny F. Chiuten, Jr. of pure Chinese Cantonese decent grew up in Cebu City. Right after the World War II, he was sent by his father to Taishan, Canton with along four sisters to learn the Chinese culture and language. He lived with his grandfather who practiced martial arts the Shaolin monastery and on the side assisted Chinese immigrants. He was at first reluctant to learn the martial arts until his grandfather gave him two choices: to practice the martial arts or wash dishes. Chiuten, Sr., sensing an imminent communist takeover of Mainland China and also because of his disappoint that his children never learned to speak the Chinese language, shipped his children back to Cebu. Johnny came home with a good background in the Shaolin Kung fu taught by his grandfather. He was close to learning the katas and forms from his grandfather prior to his trip back home. His rigid "bootcamp" conditioning in Taishan prepared him later in his apprenticeship with Lao Kim of the Hong Sing Athletic Association in Manila. In his teenage days, the young Johnny Chiuten hung around with rich Chinese brats at the Blue Danube Dance School along Sancierco St., Cebu City. Born with natural thespian grace, Johnny became a dance instructor of the Blue Danube. Most of his dance students were teachers at the nearby University of San Carlos. He later dated one of them and often came home late to the chagrin of his mother. He became a celebrity in the dance circles and was the most sought after consort (escort) of the town princess during fiestas because of his dancing talent. He went around the province from the north and south of Cebu whenever there was a fiesta celebration.

His popularity later paid a price. The envious local guys who never got a chance to dance with their town's prettiest princess pounced on him. Not one to run away from fights even in somebody else's turf, he got embroiled in more than one fracas that later

drew his father's ire. He was shipped to Dumaguete to continue his high school studies. He didn't do well in Dumaguete either and was later sent to the Ateneo (now Xavier University) in Cagayan de Oro City, Mindanao. The Ateneo then was the famous exile of the notorious sons of the rich and famous in the Visayas and Mindanao. Shipping magnate Victor Chiongbian was one of his classmates. Johnny turned a new leaf at the Xavier with the watchful guidance of the German priests and could have graduated with Valedictorian honors if only he met the residency requirement.

He went to college in Manila and lived in Chinatown where he met Shakespeare Chan the assistant instructor of Lao Kim of Hong Sing Athletic Association. Shakespeare tried to block his enrollment in Lao Kim's dojo.

Admission to the secretive kung fu school was through board nomination. Through his father's intercession he got the nod of the board whose members were mostly my father's friends. Shakespeare was furious and gave him a tough beating during his initiation. Shakespeare later accused him of being a spy from another school because of his unusually strong straddle leg stance.

Grandmaster Lao Kim gave him three tests prior to his admission. First, he was told to place a match under a bridge, second he had to make an offering to a tomb in a cemetery at midnight. The third and final test happened while he was opening the door, which was booby-trapped with a large basin filled with water that really gave him a good drench. Lao Kim later told him that it was to test of his temper and emotional control. Johnny got knocked out during his first full contact sparring with Lao Kim. In the second fight, he dislocated a right elbow. Master Lao immediately applied first aid and Johnny lost consciousness again when the old man pulled it to align the bones back in shape.

All in all he spent a total of ten years in Manila shifting from one course to another from Engineering, Commerce, Pharmacy. He did this to prolong my martial arts studies at the Hong Sing and other martial arts school.

His mastery in the Cebuano art of eskrima was precipitated by a challenge from Remy Presas founder of Modern Arnis. Presas armed with rattan sticks dared Chiuten to pick any Chinese weapon of his choice. He picked a 9-sectional steel whip to the horror of Doc Lengson who predicted a mismatch and persuaded Remy Presas not to proceed with the fight. Johnny asked Remy to give him one year to learn eskrima so that he can take on his challenge with the same weapon to level the playing field.

The young Johnny Chiuten dropped all his college subjects for the year and went back home to Cebu to study stick fighting with the masters. Momoy Canete of Doce Pares turned him down. He learned later that the Doce Pares bigwigs were insecure of his Karate ranking. He turned to Anciong Bacon of Balintawak who accepted him without reservation. Anciong who had difficulty pronouncing his family name fondly called him "Tuten". Johnny went through the three levels of Balintawak curriculum. His elementary level was handled by Atty. Teofilo Velez, high school level by Atty. Jose Villasin and college (advanced level) by Anciong Bacon.

He broke away from Balintawak due to his frustration over the agak (pre-arranged tandem drills). As much as he wanted to be loyal to the club, however his suggestions to introduce innovations to Balintawak were ignored by the senior members. Johnny was also averse to the drinking sessions that often resulted in heated arguments and also of the persistent wild claims that their style is unbeatable - the best. He once challenged them to prove they are the best by participating in tournaments, but the usual flimsy excuse was:

"Our style is too deadly for tournaments", by which he often retorted by: "Oh really, how can you be so sure? Have you tried hitting the other guys? Have you proven it in combat?"

Disappointed that his proposed innovations were ignored by the Balintawak hierarchy, Johnny left the club to avoid an open confrontation.

He approached GM Filemon Caburnay a former member of Doce Pares. They had good chemistry and the two of them later invented Lapunti Arnis de Abanico. Johnny Chiuten introduced the footwork and locking techniques of Hung Cha Kung fu into Lapunti.

Today, Johnny Chiuten, one of the few remaining icons of the Chinese and Filipino Martial Arts lives in virtual seclusion in Bantayan Island. A consummate martial artists with a vast array of techniques in his repertoire, he is truly a Grandmaster in every sense of the word.

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Grandmaster Alberto D. Dacayana Sr.

Mig-Sune-Do Escrima De San Miguel

In 1962 Alberto D. Dacayana Sr., began his studies in the unique style of San Miguel Escrima, with the late Grandmaster Felimon "Momoy" Canete. Momoy was considered, during his time, as the "Walking Bible of Eskrima".

It was during this period that Albert Dacayana began to gain recognition from his Grandmaster as a rare individual who could easily create techniques based on anticipation. In the 1970's Albert Dacayana was given the authority to teach thousands of soldiers at Camp Lapu Lapu, Lahug, Cebu City, as an official instructor of both Eskrima and Combat Judo, while also being active in the service of the Military Philippine Constabulary.

In September 20th 1971, Albert Dacayana founded the Mig-Sune-Do Eskrima club. Mig-Sune-Do is an evolution of Martial Arts from the ancient, to the latest empty hand and modified stick fighting techniques. These fighting techniques aim to develop self-confidence, courage and discipline. It is an original combination of Eskrima, Combat Judo and Wing Chun Kung Fu, which produces a perfect defense and fighting system.

Grandmaster Albert Dacayana is presently living in Rome, Italy continually propagating the art of Mig-Sune-Do. His son Master Alberto "Jhun" Dacayana currently continues the instruction in Cebu City, the Philippines.

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Master Tony Diego

Kali Ilustrisimo

Growing up in Pasil, Cebu one of his first instructors in eskrima was Eslao Romo. Later he studied Tres Personas Cuentada system under the tutelage of Grandmaster Timoteo Maranga and also learned the Balintawak style of arnis from Perio Mosqueda. He resettled in Manila during the mid-seventies and found a job in the harbor area. Tony Diego left Cebu still unsatisfied with his eskrima training from the different masters and continued to search for teacher who he only knew from the grapevine as a truly invincible eskrimador. Tony made several unsuccessful attempts to get the opportunity to train with Grandmaster Antonio "Tatang" Ilustrisimo who at that time was still working as a merchant marine. At first Tatang ignored Tony's request for instruction, but Tony's persistence and patience finally paid-off when Tatang returned from a sea voyage he relented and agreed to teach Tony. Master Diego was one of Grandmaster Ilustrisimo very first students who trained extensively with him.

It has been said, that Tony is the one who truly succeeded Tatang Ilustrisimo. It can only be surmised that Tatang was not too keen in appointing a non-Cebuano to succeed him. It was duly documented and witnessed by the top Bakbakan officials, like Christopher Ricketts, Rey Galang and Yuly Romo. Some of Tatang's top students formed another faction opposing Tony's appointment as successor of Kali Ilustrisimo - this is the group of Romy Macapagal and Pedro Reyes.



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Grandmaster Miguel J. Fernandez

COJUKA Combat, Judo, Karate and Arnis



Miguel J. Fernandez or "Mike" was born in Cebu City on Sept 29, 1938. At the age of 14 he trained with "Demetrio Arong". Demetrio's style was old Doce Pares styles and combat judo. The late Demetrio lived on Mactan Island.

Miguel after completing his training with Demitrio started instructing with Demetrios' old styles. Another of Miguel's Arnis styles is the "TORSIDO" style or twisting style. This style originates from Iloilo where it is called in the local dialect "Bakhan Tapado " which translates roughly into "To level the ground with a big or large weapon". The stick used in training in this style is about 40 inches long. He has also learnt an early pre-grouped style of Balintawak. His instructor's name was "Sergio Arcel" a onetime assistant of Anciong Bacon. In 1957 He began training in Kodokan sports Judo taught by Michael Sanchez, a University of San Carlos instructor.

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Julian Goc-ong

Abanico De Vertical

By: Celestino C. Macachor



He is the quintessential World War II hero that would have made a perfect model for Tom Brokaw's best selling book- The Greatest Generation. He is the embodiment of the good old virtues and discipline of a truly great generation that fought with blood and guts for peace, freedom and democracy. An epitome of machismo, he is endowed with extraordinary strength and pure courage.

Manoy Julian is third in the line of succession of an archaic eskrima that traced its lineage to Pablo Sabanal the legendary eskrimador of Southwest Cebu also known as Amboy Kidlat. Amboy Kidlat was the grandson Laurente Sabanal an 18th century pioneer of Moalboal that was reputed to have repulsed Moro

invaders with his magic cane and orasyon.

When Manoy Julian was interviewed for this article he was very explicit in telling us that they do not have a name to their style of eskrima. It was simply called eskrima, however for purposes of making a distinction of their system from the others and it being the dominant technique of their methodology, he calls it abanico de vertical which is just one of the styles they practiced along with the florete, fraille, juego literada techniques.

The horseback riding Amboy Kidlat roamed the rugged mountains of Central Cebu Province and taught eskrima after the Philippine American War in the early 20th century. His favorite sanctuary cum spiritual retreat is the famous Sudlon Mountains - considered as the last bastion of Cebuano resistance against Spanish and American colonizers.

The only person known to have inherited directly Amboy Kidlat's eskrima was Felix Goc-ong the granduncle of Noy Julian. Felix or "Titi" trained with a certain "Tiboy" and migrated to Hilo, Hawaii in 1920 as a contract worker. A contemporary of Moro-Moro stylist and fellow town mate Telesforo Subing-subing, "Titi" joined a



labor strike in the Hilo plantation where he once worked. An American officer on horseback tried to break the picket line, but “Titi” did not budge an inch and instead hit the horse with a powerful punch on the face knocking it down and its American rider. The incident earned him the respect of the American plantation official who later became a matchmaker of juego todo (no holds barred) fights. Titi beat the Hilo Eskrima Champion and later killed an African American in a fair duel. Titi was reputed to be very fast with his hands that he could catch a live fish in the shallows barehanded.

The other styles that comprise Abanico de Vertical are:

- Fraile- basically kulúb- hayáng (pronation-supination) and ginunting, espada corta, punta y daga techniques.
- Florete- basically double stick.
- Juego Literida- akin to Lastico technique to counter aggressive opponents.
- Cadena de Pasa- a fluid motion of continuous double stick strikes starting from the lower extremities to the head or vice versa.

Julian started learning the art of eskrima as a teenager with a certain Himaya as his first instructor who taught him the first the double stick florete technique. When Felix “Titi” Goc-ong arrived from Hawaii in 1922, he gathered all his nephews to train in eskrima.

Julian along with cousin Dalmacio “Maciong” Goc-ong trained with their Tio Titi in Barangay Nanca during moonlit nights. Eskrima in the old days was taught at night to maintain secrecy. The highlight of these nocturnal workouts was the triangular footwork drill. The exercise requires alternate stepping on three coconut shells cut in half to develop balance and body angling.

They started with slow bansay-bansay sa sagáng (defensive blocks) and ginunting (scissors) blocks of the Florete style. In one of their Hagad drills Titi hit Maciong with a wayward strike on the shoulders. Accidental injuries sometimes resulting in sprains, bruises and fractures were not uncommon in the old days when armor was not yet available. To test his hitting accuracy, sometimes Titi would let the two of them bite pakaw (corncoobs) and hit them with fast witik strikes. Unlike Julian who loosened his bite at the moment of impact, Maciong bit the pakaw so tight and almost lost his teeth in the process.

Titi’s advice for the hotheaded Maciong to control his temper fell on deaf ears. Thus, it became apparent later on that the levelheaded Julian would one day inherit the eskrima of Pablo Sabanal a.k.a. Amboy Kidlat through the guidance and tutelage of Felix “Titi” Goc-ong. Julian also trained and sparred with other eskrimadores in their Barangay like Abon Agbay and Cadio Arcilla.

In his old age, Felix Goc-ong continued to give private lessons to prominent figures of their town like Judge Tumalak. Judge Tumalak took pity of Felix’s Goc-ong’s asthmatic condition and requested for a proxy training partner and dummy. Felix did not hesitate to recommend his favorite nephew Julian.

Julian encountered a cocky Boca de Leon (Lion’s Mouth) stylist who bragged killing three dogs with one strike with his favorite amara technique. He challenged the best eskrimador in town and without the slightest hesitation Julian took his challenge in a hagad sparring drill. Julian fed the fighter with a slow wetik to the crown but was

countered by a fast sneaky strike that he blocked with an *agak* (check) with his left hand. Julian goaded him: “Can I see your *amara*, so I will have an idea how you killed three dogs with it”. The man quickly obliged but warned Julian: “I will but I have to warn you that this is going to be very fast”, by which Julian retorted: “You be careful too and promise not to get angry with my block and counter.” Not even halfway to the *amara*, Julian hit the left crown with a *doblete* strike and the *boca de leon eskrimador* left town humiliated with a bad gash on his head

Julian Goc-ong was born on Oct. 18, 1925 in Balamban town west of Cebu province. He joined the renowned Philippine Scouts then trained by the U.S. Army and became a decorated World War II veteran. His favorite advice to *eskrimadors* is to stay cool and composed in a lethal confrontation and treat it like “*sayun kaayo*” (piece of cake) but nonetheless to always keep a high level of alertness.

His archaic form of *eskrima* is heavy on triangular footwork with a good dose of disarming in his repertoire. His disarming skills was put to good use when a certain Esing Laron, a deranged man, went amok armed with a *sapang* a short spear about 42 inches in length. Twenty-two of the town’s best *eskrimadores* came to encircle Esing who was cornered but none can get close because of Esing’s extraordinary strength and the *sapang* that he brandished with a tight grip. A more daring *eskrimador* Ingko Genio tried to tackle Esing, but he was no match for the agitated amok who was able to escape his *dumog* when both of them fell hard.

Franceng Sereno went to Julian to seek assistance in pacifying Esing who was still armed with the *sapang*, only this time even more agitated and very violent. Julian approached cautiously and cajoled him into putting down the *sapang* to shake his hand. Esing agreed to shake hands without laying down his *sapang*. Julian took the opportunity by offering his right hand and simultaneously executed an elbow lock using his left hand from below the weapon hand of Esing and swiftly when the weapon fell locked the right wrist of Esing and successfully subdued and locked him into confinement. Another challenger Guillermo “Emot” Villamor tried to test Julian’s skills. Prior to the fight Emot bragged that a fledgling chick (alluding to Noy Julian) is no match to a seasoned fighting cock. The town officials sanctioned the fight with the protagonists offering their sticks in the altar of San Antonio in Celestino Subing-subing’s private chapel. It was the town Fiesta in honor of San Antonio. After the prayers and rituals Emot deceptively picked up Julian’s *gu-od* (thick rounded bamboo) stick while Julian reluctantly picked up Emot’s *lipák*. Emot’s first strike broke Julian’s stick in half in the first round. Emot bragged to break Julian’s head like a coconut in the second round. Forewarned by spectators of Emot’s treacherous plan Julian anticipated his head strike with a *sumbrada* (umbrella block) that he converted to a *punyo* (butt) strike to the face of Emot. Emot grimaced in pain with a bad cut stretching from his right forehead down to the bridge of the nose to his left cheek.

Noy Julian is also famous in the town of Balamban for restraining or in extreme cases killing mad dogs on the loose. In one incident Noy Julian noticed a commotion while taking a bath and immediately sprang into action. Before the rabid dog could attack more people Noy Julian killed it with his *kabò* (dipper). Most of the time he used *latigó* to subdue rabid dogs. His *latigó* techniques also came from the legendary Amboy Kidlat.

Another altercation almost turned to a lethal confrontation when Manoy Julian got into a heated argument with a neighbor who was encroaching into his land. The trespasser who was caught plowing Manoy Julian's field was armed with a pinuti. Sensing an imminent bloody encounter was brewing, one of his sons rushed to their home to get the bahì stick of the unarmed Manoy Julian. Like a cliffhanger scene from an action movie his son threw the stick to Manoy Julian who caught it and with a blinding speed hit the man's scabbard separating the handle from the blade while in the motion of drawing the sharp pinuti. Now his enemy was only armed with nothing but the wooden handle of his blade that already fell off from his waist. The helpless farmer fell to his knees to asked forgiveness from Manoy Julian.

He passed on his eskrima to his prodigious son Pat Goc-ong a Nestle sports executive and two-time Philippine weightlifting champion in the bantamweight division. Manoy Julian Goc-ong passed away in February 19, 2003.

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Uldarico "Poldeng" Llanos

Born in 1926 in Sibonga, Cebu, Uldarico Poldeng" Llanos had a passion for hand-to-hand combat at a very early age. He learned the rudiments of Eskrima from his elder brother the former Governor of Davao del Sur Nonito Llanos. He finished college at the University of San Carlos, Cebu City. Right after college, he went to boot camp in Floridablanca to train as probationary second lieutenant of the Philippine Army.

After the Army training, Poldeng went to Jimenez, Misamis Oriental to teach Physics at the St. John the Baptist College. It was in this school that he was hitched by a fellow teacher who later became Mrs. Uldarico Llanos. While in Jimenez he learned of another Cebuano Eskrimador residing just 20 kms away in Ozamiz City. Grandmaster Jose D. Caballero of De Campo 1-2-3- Orihinal was his first formal mentor in the Art of Eskrima Largo Mano. Poldeng along with ten other co-teachers of St. John the Baptist spent the weekend in Malaubang district of Ozamiz City to study from the one time Juego Todo duelist and champion. They later arranged for GM Caballero to come to Jimenez for a more regular training schedule. He remembers fondly calling the De Campo inventor as Noy "Otek".

Poldeng recalls Grandmaster Caballero as a stickler for hard training and would not hesitate to drop a student if he cannot keep up with the grueling pace. He trained with Noy Otek in 1957 up to 1959. A few years later, he met a Japanese businessman he recalls only by the first name Shogu. Shogu taught him Aikido and Jiu Jitsu. When he moved to Manila he taught aikido at the De La Salle University and at the same time cross-trained in Modern Arnis with Pat Gonzales. As time went by he blended the salient techniques of Aikido, Jiu jitsu, Modern Arnis and De Campo. He has also infused some of the effective techniques of Balintawak Eskrima into his stick fighting style. While on a business trip to the U.S. in 1986-87 he taught part time to Filipino experts and a few

American friends. Still in top shape at 76 years old, Uldarico "Poldeng" Llanos teaches to a few enthusiastic students and police officers in his hometown Sibonga.

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Grandmaster Antonio "Tonyong Moton" Ilustrisimo

Kalis Ilustrisimo



Antonio Ilustrisimo was born on Kinatarcan Island, Santa Fe, Philippines, in 1904. He began learning the art of eskrima at the age of seven under his father, Isidro Ilustrisimo, and his uncle, Melecio Ilustrisimo. Among his earliest recollections is his "calling" to go to America. By the age of nine, he was determined to do just that. Along the way, he encountered martial arts masters from around the world and fought in more patayan (death-matches) than perhaps any other Filipino master. He is among the most respected and revered masters that the Filipino martial arts have ever known, as indicated by his nickname, "Tatang" (a Tagalog term of respect).

Kalis Ilustrisimo is the system of combat practiced for centuries by the family of the very great master fighter, Grandmaster Antonio 'Tatang' Ilustrisimo.

The Ilustrisimo clan has a long history as warriors and "men of power" (mystics or medicine men if you like) that continues unbroken to this day. Grandmaster Antonio Ilustrisimo was the head of the style. The previous head was his uncle, the great Melecio Ilustrisimo, who was famous and dominant in northern Cebu (north coast, Bantayan and Bohol islands) in the early 20th Century.

Another famous relative was the great mystic Agapito Ilustrisimo (grand uncle?), who was active as a fighter in the revolutionary Katipunan.

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Floro S. Mabalhin

Celso Amora Mabalhin - Martial Arts and Sports Organization,
Affiliated to the Doce Pares Federation in Cebu City.



Floro S. Mabalhin 4th child of Celso A. Mabalhin, Born October 26th, 1956.

During his younger years he was a witness to his fathers training, in their Photographic studio with different Martial Arts masters from around Cebu City, who would train with Celso at his request, over traditional club barriers.

At 7 years of age Floro began his training with his brothers and sisters Evito, Celso Jr, Tomas and Lucia in Judo, Karate and Jui Jitsu.

At 12 years of age with his brothers Celso Jr and Tomas, they participated in local Judo tournaments winning in different categories.

In 1976 with his brother they began training in Escrima and ESKRIBO wherein they demonstrated at NARAPHIL festivals. He eventually received a promotion to 2nd degree black belt in ESKRIBO from the Doce Pares group. During the following years he continued his training, intently with his father and Jesus Cui Sr.

With the death of his father he has resumed his interest in the Martial Arts, especially at the bequest of his father, whose dream was for someone to continue his Martial Arts legacy.

Floro has formed CAM-MASO (Celso Amora Mabalhin - Martial Arts and Sports Organization) affiliated to the Doce Pares Federation.

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Drigo Maranga

Combat Eskrima Maranga

One of two brothers with seven other sisters, the responsibility of carrying on the legacy of his legendary father lay heavily on his shoulders. His elder brother Timoteo "Boy" Maranga, Jr. prefer the Karaoke microphone to the olisi, thus Rodrigo "Drigo" Maranga became the heir apparent to the Tres Personas Super Kwentada system of Grandmaster Timoteo "Timor" Maranga. But it did not happen overnight.

Master Rodrigo "Drigo" Maranga was born on April 6, 1950. His Eskrima odyssey did not begin until he was married.



Father Rodrigo "Drigo" Maranga
training with son Rico

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Jose "Joego" Milan

Tat Kun Tao and Gokosha

Tat Kun Tao Kung Fu was originally formulated by 'Jose Millan' or by his Chinese name 'Ju Go', (or 'Joe Go') who was a Filipino-Chinese Martial Arts exponent from Cebu City. Having also trained in Balintawak a style of Arnis, he set about to fuse the simplicity, and straightforwardness of Balintawak with his already



existing Kung Fu or Kun Tao knowledge from the Go Cho Kun (Five ancestors boxing) style.

The loose translation of Tat-Kun-Tao is, mind, brain or thinking-fist-way. The area where Jose Millan School was located mysteriously burnt down as was redeveloped and is where the Gaisano-Metro now stands in Cebu city. After the school was burnt down the senior instructors of Jose Millan opened their own schools and mostly trained from their different homes.

The most senior students at the time were 'Victor Bulag' (Bulag means blind, as he was blind in one eye and was his nickname) and 'Fred Cabao' (Cabao or Cabaw was his nickname, taken from the Carabao). As these people and other senior instructors trained from their respective houses they all produced variations in their teaching, some added to their own teaching and some even removed certain aspects of Jose Millan's style and so it came about that different types of students were produced. Making the style splintered and the originality lost.

During the later years of Jose Millan's life he changed the name of his style to 'Gokusa'. An effective closed door external style Kung Fu or Kun Tao style. Its practical teaching methods utilize kicks, punches, deflection and blocking defenses and also Ch'in-Na or Chinese grappling self-defense. Inheritor of Gokosha is Roque Muana.

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Manoy Eusebio "Sebio" Monino

Balintawak

Not all of the old Masters of Eskrima have left the country to teach the Art to the more lucrative market in foreign countries especially the U.S.A. Many are still around and teaching the Art to the next generation. Among them is Manoy Eusebio "Sebio" Monino. Manoy Sebio was born on December 16, 1928 in Medellin, North of Cebu. A former boxer and construction supervisor, Noy Sebio was a protege of the Balintawak founder GM Venancio "Anciong" Bacon.

Back in the early seventies Noy Sebio was teaching Karate and Judo at the Kyodai Combat Judo Club at the old Osaka Building in Pasil District. One floor below their dojo was the Balintawak Club of GM Anciong Bacon. He was introduced to the late Balintawak patriarch through a close friend and GM Bacon crony Rencio Paredes. Like his mentor, Noy Sebio a natural fighter and quickly absorbed the finer points of Balintawak. With cockiness and pure guts, he would go out of his way to spar with the best and more advanced students of GM Bacon like the late GM Timoteo "Timor" Maranga and GM Teofilo Velez and Sergio Arcel. Noy Sebio remembers GM Maranga for his fast sweeping techniques and lightning reflexes.

During one of his palakaw drills with the late GM Teofilo Velez, Noy Sebio was so carried away with the intensity of their "play" that he hit GM Velez on the cheek. GM Velez visibly irked by the "accident" snapped back hard at Noy Sebio and hit his crown. GM Velez seeing blood spurting out of Noy Sebio's head immediately applied first aid.



Both men being good sports did not allow the incident to escalate and they continued to be good friends for many years. Three days before he died, GM Maranga sparred for the last time with Noy Sebio.

Manoy Sebio is one of the few Balintawak fighters that can articulate on the more subtle movements of the empty handed techniques of Eskrima that he calls Cadena de Mano. Today he teaches the pure unadulterated Balintawak system handed down to him by the late Venancio "Anciong" Bacon, and as a testament to his loyalty to Bacon, he maintains the same circle of friends and former students of another GM Bacon protege the late Jose "Joego" Milan.

Noy Sebio, like any archetypal Cebuano Eskrimador has proven himself in lethal confrontations and tamed the toughest bullies in the mean streets of Sambag and Barracks Districts. Since then he has moved to the more peaceful neighborhood of Andres Abellana St., as he said, "age is catching up and I can't fight bullies forever".

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Teodoro “Totong” D. Nuevo

By Celestino C. Macachor



Celedonio “Donyong” Sabanal Velina introduced us to Teodoro D. Nuevo. Noy Donyong is a grand nephew of the legendary Pablo Sabanal a.k.a. Amboy Kidlat. Teodoro or Noy Totong is one of the last living inheritors along with Julian Goc-ong and Amboy Kidlat’s youngest daughter Facunda “Aling Cunda” Sabanal- Berro. Noy Totong studied for five years under the tutelage of Amboy Kidlat and Bastian Bungoton. He credits the latter for the bulk of his eskrima lessons. Bastian Bungoton possessed extraordinary powers and strength that baffled the young Totong Nuevo.

Manoy Totong was born in Barangay Tunga, Moalboal on Dec. 17, 1918. Aside from Aling Cunda who was out of town when we paid her a visit, the only source of historical information on the Sabanals was Noy Totong. He fondly remembered Amboy Kidlat as Tatay Pablo a man many believed possessed kalaki a supernatural power that was handed down to him by his grandfather the legendary Laurente “Laguno” Sabanal – the pioneer of Moalboal. Laguno was a Boholano who was imprisoned for killing a Spanish guardia civil. He later escaped and fled Moalboal on a rowboat. Finding the place rich in fish, he went back to Bohol to bring his family to their new home.

The town of Moalboal used to be called Laguno to honor the man who has successfully repulsed Moro pirates on the shores of this rustic southern Cebu town. A batang or huge driftwood lay on the mangrove shores of the Moalboal that is widely believed to be the final burial ground of Laurente Sabanal. It is also here that he buried his magic cane that once struck fear among the encroaching Moro pirates. Today, the batang that present day Moalboalnonns call Laguno is still visible on low tide on the shores where a fish market now stands nearby.



Part of Noy Totong's eskrima apprenticeship involved a ritual of casting spells on lana or coconut oil that gave them protection from evil forces. The ritual always takes place at a cemetery on the night of Good Friday. The traditional method of footwork exercise also made use of three coconut shells. Amboy Kidlat would challenge anyone to hit him in any part of his body without losing his footing on the coconut shells and at the same time successfully foiling all attacks. As a prerequisite, Noy Totong had to undergo full contact sparring also known as juego todo with the use of rolled upak, the outer dead skin of a coconut palm.



Noy Totong vividly recalled the other great eskrimadors of the Sabanal clan among them was Jose Sabanal a prodigious fighter who was known to have defeated seven armed attackers while on the ground. He made good use of his hands and feet to block and strike at the attackers. Another extraordinary member of the clan was the younger sister of Amboy Kidlat, Silvina "Benang" Sabanal. Manoy Totong narrated that Benang was master of tagolilong the art of invisibility. Another skilled eskrimador belonging to the clan was Filomeno "Ingko Menong" Sabanal a man of superhuman strength who can lift a heavy metal grinder with his teeth.

The most famous of the Sabanals was Amboy Kidlat the horseback riding eskrimador who roamed the coastlines and mountains of Central and southern Cebu from the late nineteenth century until he died at more than 90-years old. Although he never had formal education Noy Totong told us that Amboy Kidlat spoke conversational Spanish and memorized long Latin oraciones. Amboy Kidlat bore children from an illicit affair one of them was Brigido who also inherited his eskrima and extraordinary strength. Wrongly imprisoned for stealing bananas and coconuts from a neighbor, Brigido bolted out of jail by bending the iron grills with his bare hands. The other apprentices of Amboy Kidlat were Bastian Bate, Leoncio "Latigo" Tigo, Marciano "Ciano Kalog" Sabanal and Juan Sabanal, the latter a very strong and skilled fighter and notorious for sleep walking. Noy Totong's memory was still very lucid when he narrated to us the story of the Sabanal clan of Moalboal. Later on during the interview he gamely posed for photos that showed his fighting stances and did some fast amarra exercises.

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Punong Guro Epifanio 'Yuli' Romo

Kali Ilustrisimo



Epifanio 'Yuli' Romo is from a long line of highly respected Filipino martial artists. According to eyewitness accounts, his great uncle Eslao Romo defeated several revered masters in challenge matches, including the famous Felicisimo Dizon. Grandmaster Eslao was one of the most respected Filipino martial artists of the 1940's. Coming from such a famous background, Punong Guro Yuli learned the Romo family system from his father, and his uncle Pedring.

During 1972, Punong Guro Yuli began training in the Balintawak system of Eskrima under the guidance of Grandmaster Joe Go. He also studied the kickboxing system of Tat Kun Tao from Grandmaster Go.

Training with Grandmaster Antonio 'Tatang' Ilustrisimo began in 1976, shortly after the current head of the system, Antonio Diego commenced training with this highly respected and feared Filipino warrior. As one of the most senior and dynamic students of the late Tatang Ilustrisimo, Punong Guro Yuli is renowned for his creative interpretation of the art, and for his devastating disarming techniques.

Punong Guro Yuli is a relatively low-key master of the Filipino martial arts, but has featured in the books of Punong Guro Edgar Sulite and Master Mark V. Wiley. As well as being featured in several instructional videos on the system of Grandmaster Ilustrisimo, Punong Guro Yuli has featured in Rapid Journal and Fighter's Magazine.

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Grandmaster Bobby Taboada

Balintawak International



Grand Master Taboada, originally from Cebu City, Philippines, was trained in "old school" ways of stick fighting where the physical abuse one endured in training often exceeded the amount of abuse one experienced during an actual physical confrontation. This combination of extremely rigorous physical training, expert instruction and guidance from the Great Grand Master Venancio "Anciong" Bacon and Grand Masters Teofilo Velez and Jose Villasin, have produced this dynamic, highly-skilled, insightful and caring martial arts practitioner and teacher.

In 1979, Grand Master Taboada left the Philippines and taught his art in New Zealand before relocating to the United States in 1991. He now resides in Charlotte, North Carolina where he operates the headquarters for his Balintawak International Organization. Since his arrival in the U.S., he's been a self-defense instructor for the North Carolina Justice Academy and he has assisted in crime prevention programs sponsored by the North Carolina Sheriff's Academy in the U.S. and other countries, such as England, Australia and Canada.

What is the Balintawak Eskrima Cuentada System?

Balintawak means Heroes of the Cry of Freedom, referring to the famous freedom fighters of the Filipino revolt against Spanish domination. The name was also given to a small street in Cebu City, Philippines where the first Balintawak eskrima (Spanish word meaning skirmish) club was established in the 1930s by the late Great Grandmaster "Anciong" Bacon. The Balintawak system emphasizes both in-tight and long-range fighting and utilizes the singlestick and empty-hand applications for practicality. Cuentada is a Spanish word that means to counter. It acknowledges the reality that there is a counter for every counter and that while making any move you should already be subconsciously anticipating your opponent's response.

Through hard lessons of the past, Grandmaster Taboada realized that very little concern was placed on safety of the student while learning. He has resolved to teach his own students with a minimal risk of injury, which has led him to develop the traditional art of Cuentada into a less punishing, yet powerful and effective system of training. Grand Master Taboada believes that it's easy to offensively strike, punch or kick somebody, but it's a lot more difficult to defend against an aggressive attack. For this reason, in his teaching he places primary emphasis on the creative mindset and technical skills necessary to counter and overcome any attack. To all students of the martial arts, he imparts this message: "Every style has something to offer. Pick up a good move, rehearse it, practice it, understand it and then think about the counter. Then it is yours."

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Sonny Umpad



Living in San Francisco, California. This has been said about his teachings. Sonny Umpad focuses his class on flow. Being that his art focuses on the blade, he has said, "there is no room for freezing points". In his style, you should not execute a form such that you stop after each movement, even if it is just for a second. If you do then he says you are training your body to have freezing points. Execute the form as a smooth flow of movements to avoid building predictable reaction or "freezing" points.

To flow or spar with Sonny is like fighting a perfect dancer, who seems to continuously cut you as he attacks or retreats using both hands and feet at the same time. He will move with you, and time your rhythm. As you move back or to the side, he waits for the exact second to break your rhythm by lightly stepping on your foot while striking and poking key points of your body as if he is walking up a staircase.

To train with Sonny is exhilaratingly fun, and scary at the same time. To think that all of these moves are meant to be executed with a knife. His homemade training inventions are practical and ingenious. One (named "The Frustrator" by some students) simulates a two-handed knife attack at various speeds, depending on how you respond.

Book by Sonny Umpad, Sid Campbell, and Gary Cagaanan - BALISONG: The Lethal Art of Filipino Knife Fighting.

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Bonifacio "Loloy" D. Uy

BDU Eskrima

"I don't teach for pay, if I do, I will be forced to flatter.

I don't want to compromise for the sake of the art.

I hear some self-styled masters that hurl challenges to anyone to prove their superiority.

To them I say - you haven't really seen how deadly eskrima is!

Do not blaspheme eskrima."



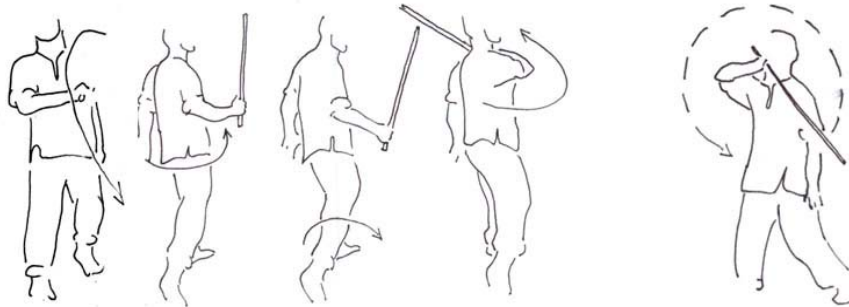
These are snippets in impeccable English of a hyperactive eskrimador, a former WEKAF champion and veteran fighter Bonifacio "Loloy" Dacalos Uy. As a devout disciple of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Loloy has divested himself of all the opportunities to live a life of affluence and never cashed-in on the commercial potential of his residence which is located in the busiest commercial hub of Pardo District. Pardo is located between Cebu City and Talisay City and was once considered the epicenter of the arts and culture during the Spanish colonial period. It is also in this district that the stage play called linambay once flourished until it faded from the scene during the 1950s.

Loloy is a reservoir of Martial Arts knowledge and experience that once trained former WEKAF World Champion, Percival Pableo. Although a one time sparring partner and dummy of Cacoy Cañete, he is quick to alienate himself from the Doce Pares mainstream, asserting that he has developed his own style of Eskrima that he simply called the BDU system.

Like Rodrigo Maranga, Loloy is one of the few that maintain a rigid training regimen like a prizefighter with an upcoming fight. His backyard looks more like boot camp than a dojo. A monkey rope for climbing exercises hangs from the tall sampaloc tree along with heavy bags and iron strike dummies. His hard biceps and a lean abdomen are a testament to his physical condition. Western boxing and Korean Tang Soo Do, Loloy admitted had a strong influence on the BDU system. In his heyday he frequently sparred with Cebuano boxers like former world champion Frank Cedeno, and other top rated boxers like Del Contado, Poker Pelegrino, Jojo Cayson and former Philippine welterweight champion Ruben Rabago. A "dent" on his right lower rib, he says was a "remembrance" of a left hook by former world champion Frank Cedeño.

Bonifacio "Loloy" Uy was born on May 8, 1944. A true advocate of the Art, he always cautions the uninitiated and other martial arts practitioners never to underestimate eskrima. "How much pressure can a nose withstand especially with a totsada strike.

Loloy does not believe in lateral movements or in the triangular footwork. He explained that in triangular footwork the direction of a left foot and a right-handed



serrada strike would cancel each other out thus nullifying the energy. "I'm not into ballroom dancing," he often jokes. The BDU stance should not be too narrow or too wide, and he fondly compares his principle in fighting stance as akin to golfers and baseball players.

The system also puts heavy emphasis on body torque to deliver a crippling strike. The weight of the body should drag the stick like a slingshot. He joined Doce Pares in 1961 and was the sparring partner and favorite dummy of Ciriaco "Cacoy" Cañete. Occasionally he gets invited by Dionisio Cañete to officiate in WEKAF tournaments in Cebu City. Nowadays, Loloy spends most of his time that he has plenty of training for free those fortunate individuals who pass his test of morale strength and character.

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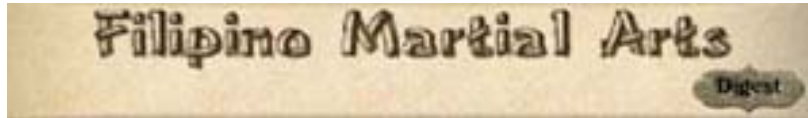
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