

# FMA

# Informative

Propagating the Filipino Martial Arts and the Culture of the Philippines

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## *Filipino Martial Arts Education*

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*Mataw-Guro Louelle Lledo*

*A Dream Becoming A Reality*



Filipino Martial Arts Education for Arnis de Mano

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#### **The Mataw-Guro - A Teacher Above Par**

#### **How Early Should Martial Arts Training Start?**

What are the basics, fundamentals, or the core of Filipino martial arts? Well to my understanding basics are the beginning, pertaining to, or forming a base, an essential ingredient, principle, procedure, etc... Fundamentals are serving as, or being an essential part of, a foundation or basis, a basic principle, rule, law, or the like, that serves as the groundwork of a system. And a core is the central, innermost, or most essential part of anything.

How, is it all explained when teaching? For each person has their way of explaining things when they teach, a personal attitude, technique in demonstrating etc...

So when the FMA Informative hears about basic strikes are 3 strikes, or 5 strikes, 7 strikes or 12 strikes or how to execute a block properly, or which way the body should move and people argue about it. We just shake our heads and smile. They are all basics, so in our beliefs the basics and fundamentals when properly explained all come out to be the same the core of the Filipino martial arts.

Now Louelle Lledo in forming the Mataw-Guro Associa-

tion teaches the basics of the Filipino martial arts. What are the basics of the Filipino martial arts? Is it 3 strikes, or 5 strikes, 7 strikes or 12 strikes is it the way one blocks? In empty hand is it an inward, outward, downward, and upper block? Are the blocks circular or angular? In the body movement in stances are they triangular, angled, circular, or horizontal / vertical? In the execution of leg movements for kicking and sweeping what is the concept for balance, power and speed?

All are basics to all the Filipino martial arts. It is the way they are explained, taught and the principles in the execution and philosophies that make them different.

All Filipino martial arts are great in their own respect. What makes each art better than the other? Nothing really, it is what the receiver (student / practitioner) perceives and what their body adapts and coordinates to and what in their mind; is the best art for them personally.

What is the Mataw-Guro Association trying to do? It is attempting to bring together the

Filipino martial arts practitioners which realize and wants to teach the basics, fundamentals, the core of the Filipino martial arts so the student will understand the structure and essentials and then be able to move on with this knowledge to a style which will fully benefit them and they will adapt and excel in, becoming the best they can be.

What is rank? It is not an elected position in the Filipino martial arts, it is an established position of knowledge in which the practitioner has trained towards and achieved, unless it has been given due to the senior practitioner wanting money over skillfulness which unfortunately happens.

The Mataw-Guro Association in the beginning had no ranking all are believed to be equal in their goals to teach the basics of the Filipino martial arts. Of course there is the Founder who had the dream of establishing such an Association, and Officers of the Association which are appointed, to bring about organizational value, and to represent and guide the Association in the goal it was established for.

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## The Beginning Comparison of Teaching Approach

Louelle Lledo learned the Filipino martial arts, the way it was taught by the Masters of old. Having learned the Japanese arts also, Louelle Lledo became aware of the similarities of the arts, but more important he noticed the difference in the teaching approach

Seeing martial arts education first hand, at the Japan Karate-do College of Grandmaster Gogen Yamaguchi, Louelle Lledo decided that the best way to learn and teach martial arts is through the educational system of the academe. The Japanese arts were systematically broken down to basic techniques before the application of the techniques were taught. Watching the Grandmaster and the seniors of the Japan Goju-ryu Karate-do in training, he realized their emphasis was training the basic techniques in

forms and drills. Training started with a lot of reverence. Before physical preparation, mental preparation came first. Before teaching the technique, the students were taught the underlying principles. The students spent weeks, just in assuming the different stances. Defensive techniques, such as evasion, blocks, and deflections, were taught, only after learning the stances. Offensive techniques were taught, but only after the student learned how to evade and block while moving from one stance to the other. Physically, this type of training prepared the student in effective evasion. Mentally, it instilled in the consciousness that the student was training in a self-improvement class first and in a self-defense class second. Months would have passed before the student was taught how to move, defend, and counter-attack. This

training also served as a weeding our process for those who were not serious in learning the art.

Louelle Lledo was amazed by the very motive of the Karate-do College. The main goal was the development and propagation of Karate as an art, without regards to style or school of thought, despite the fact that there are four major styles of Karate.

Lledo envisioned a program of Filipino Martial Art Education with the same goal in mind. He even toyed with the idea of a true Filipino Martial Arts College, where students will study and graduate with a Degree in the Filipino martial arts, Major in Armed Fighting and Minor in Unarmed Fighting, or even a degree in martial arts healing.

In comparison, the Filipino martial arts are taught in an almost roundabout manner. All Arnis de Mano schools or styles have one thing in common - the way the art was being taught. Training starts by facing the opponent and blocking his strike. This training goes on until the student becomes an adept. Most instructors believe that this is the best and the only way to teach the fighting art - by actual exchange of blows from day one. A training session starts with engagement and ends with engagement. "No pain, no gain" seemed to be the principle on which learning Arnis de Mano revolved. Another "sorry" state of training the "old-fashioned" way, without the use of padded sticks or protective gear, is the injuries the trainees sustained. Aesthetics and good form were being sacrificed, for the sake of injuring the opponent to make him give up. More

and more "one-technique fighters" and less and less martial artists are being produced. As less and less martial artists, are being produced, less and less good teachers are also being produced.

Lledo did not develop "new" techniques or a "new" style. What he did was to "re-arrange" the way the techniques were taught. The first step was to plot a course of study, which will cover all the aspects of the Filipino martial arts and set the stage for upward evolution to an exciting and aggressive but safe modern fighting art. He separated the "unarmed" techniques from the "armed" techniques, but based the training on a common platform. Comparing the techniques will show that they are one and the same. The only difference is that "unarmed" techniques use the empty hands and the "armed" techniques use a weapon. Whether the weapon is a single stick, a double stick, a knife, an alternative weapon, or even the empty hands, the maneuvers are the same.

His next step was to break down the maneuvers into their most basic elements. To achieve this purpose, the maneuvers, were classified as "basic" and "progressive." "Basic" meant executing the maneuvers in forms and drills. "Progressive" meant applying the maneuvers to various different situations or as Lledo says "situational application."

Another term he uses, when referring to "basic" is "foundation." "Foundation" included such matters as stances, breathing, footwork, basic strikes, basic thrusts, one-man drills and one-man forms, such as the classical maneuvers,

and the Salpukan (Impact Training) and the Palaisipan (mental game) or shadow fighting.

Application of techniques, whether in two-man drills or two-man forms were called "Progressive training". The drills or forms may be in the manner of Bigayan or Palitan (semi-free style sparring) or Sabakan (free-style sparring or engagement).

After laying out the program, Lledo worked on the "nitty-gritty" elements. He broke down each maneuver to its most minute element and explained the techniques in detail. Starting with stance, he differentiated stance of

execution from preparatory stance and explained the proper utilization of the stance in relation to the center of gravity and proper breathing. As a natural consequence, good form and aesthetics came about. With good form, proper use of body mechanics, leverage and direct application of force came naturally.

Lledo then selected classical maneuvers that were common in almost all the styles and schools, such as the kruzada, the single and double sinawali, the figure of eight, the redonda, the abaniko, the rompida, the sungkiti and other variations. He broke

down and explained the basic patterns of linear motion into diagonal, vertical and horizontal; circular motion into clockwise and counter-clockwise; the basic strikes into forehand and backhand; the basic thrusts into overhand and underhand; and the disarming techniques into arm turn and arm twist. He designed warm-up and cooling down exercises from ordinary calisthenics into stick-fighting specific and oriented movements. He instituted one-man, two-men and even multiple-opponents drills. The emphasis of his training method was to make every technique a "simple reaction."

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Despite the historical proliferation of martial arts, we all have similar bodies which work much the same way. Some themes keep recurring over and over in the basics of most martial arts. Guro Louelle's approach starts with the idea that all of the Filipino stickfighting arts can be characterized by where they fit into four Filipino classical systems:

- **Kruzada** - This is anatomically the most straightforward and one of the more physically powerful styles. It concentrates on cross-body diagonal strikes or slashes going either up into the opponent's legs or down across the body.
- **Sinawali** - Sinawali means weaving. Basic techniques involve changing the direction from which discrete strikes are made. Sinawali is most effectively introduced as a double stick (or "doble baston"). Strikes can come from side, top, bottom, or on any diagonal. Sinawali techniques can be and are used with single stick (solo baston) fighting, but they are easiest to understand when introduced with double sticks.
- **Redonda** - Redonda harnesses the power of circular strikes. Where sinawali employs discrete strikes, redondo strikes are a continuous slashing circular flow Redondo is often used to administer a fight-ending blow.
- **Abaniko** - Abaniko is semi-circular or fan shaped striking. Twisting of the wrist and forearm produce these blows. They are used in mid to close range often to set the opponent up for a killing blow. These strikes give up a bit of power for speed and strategic advantage. Abaniko can be like a stick-fighting analogue of some close range hand-to-hand styles.

## Basics Building the Foundation

### Breathing

Proper breathing in any martial art, or any physical activity for that matter, is of utmost importance. However, most teachers of the Filipino fighting arts have relegated breathing in the background. There are even some who have ignored teaching proper breathing altogether. Breathing may be simply defined as a process made up of inhalation (taking air in) and exhalation (expelling air out).

The process may sound more complex. Instead of just taking the air in, inhalation is drawing into your body the universal energy, forging that energy in your personal anvil of training and expelling it out as a destructive or constructive force, depending on the need and intention. This exhalation may be vocalized, called *bunyaw* in Filipino. At this very instant all the energy of the body

must be concentrated in the center of gravity transforming the whole body into a one solid unit by tucking the buttocks, pressing the shoulders, tightening the abdominal, back, sides, chest and leg muscles.

#### Training in proper breathing:

- Stand in natural parallel toe stance, feet spread hip width with hands hanging on the side
- Turn palms up and slowly inhale through the nose to chest level
- Hold breath for 5 seconds
- Turn palms down and slowly exhale through the mouth as you bring your hands down and bend your knees as you bring your center of gravity down
- When you have exhaled all the air in your body force one last exhalation
- Hold your breath for 5 seconds
- Straighten your knees as you turn your palms up to the level

of your chest inhaling slowly through the nose

- Repeat the process
- As you progress increase holding your breath up to 10 seconds

### Stance and Center of Gravity

There are three components of a stance. It must be comfortable so one can assume the posture without undue fatigue. It must be stable so proper traction is achieved for a fast and powerful technique. Finally, it must be flexible so mobility is never hampered

Understanding of body mechanics and knowing what muscles are involved and how and when they play into action must all be considered. Placement and maneuvering of the center of gravity completes the equation. There are two main stances - the natural knees straight stance and the knees bent one foot in-front fighting stance.

#### Characteristics of all stances:

- Center of gravity falls within the stance
- Feet are spread hip width

#### Characteristics of fighting stances:

- Both knees bent slightly and tensed outwards
- Weight evenly distributed on both feet
- Feet are spread hip width
- Toes of trailing foot is in line with heel of leading foot
- Leading foot points directly forward
- Trailing foot points about 15 degrees to the side

#### Exercise: From Natural Stance:

- Move right foot forward to assume right fighting stance
- Move left foot forward to assume left fighting stance
- Move left foot backward to assume right fighting stance
- Move right foot backward to assume left fighting stance
- Move left foot forward, turn 90 degrees to the right to assume left fighting stance
- Move right foot forward, turn 90 degrees to the left to assume right fighting stance
- Move right foot to the right, turn 90 degrees to the right to assume right fighting stance
- Move left foot to the left, turn 90 degrees to the left to assume left fighting stance



Natural Stance

Right Fighting Stance



Left Fighting Stance

### Grip and Strikes

There are about 90 dialects in the Philippines, give or take a few. It is safe to assume that there are as many styles or schools of thought of the same fighting art with different vernacular titles. These arts were given a collective, generic name by the Spaniards. They were simply called *Armas de Mano*, later Filipinoized to *Arnis de Mano*.

Before the development of *Arnis de Mano*, when real broadswords were used, the knife was held tightly on the handle. The butt of the handle extended about a couple of inches to secure the blade to the handle. The butt was not intended for any tactical purpose. In present day *Arnis de Mano*, the stick is held about a couple of inches from the end of the stick, first as a carryover of the old practice and second to be used for disarming techniques, an innovation of the 20th century.

**Note:** For those not acquainted with Filipino sticks, they are “700 mm of Filipino tactical diplomacy.” That is about 28 inches long and 1/2 to 1 inch in diameter. A long stick (5+ feet) serves to simulate any pole arm. Medium (28 inches) and short sticks together are a sword and knife or *espada y daga*. When enough time has been spent on the basics of stick fighting, transferring its techniques to other situations comes fairly quickly.

Several elderly Masters of *Arnis de Mano* however have a disdain for disarming techniques, claiming that if your stick can be disarmed you are not good enough to be called an *Arnisador*. The ancient disarming technique was to cut off the arm or to hit the hand so the opponent will automatically drop his weapon.

Whether you hold the stick at the very end or two inches from the end, the stick must be held tightly and securely with the thumb over the forefinger.

In *Arnis de Mano*, there are two types of blow, the strike (*hablig*) and the thrust (*ulos*). In the English terminology these terms may be used interchangeably. In Filipino terminology, however, these terms convey two different actions. A strike (*hablig*) is normally delivered in an angular cutting, slashing or snapping motion (like a whiplash). A thrust (*ulos*) is normally delivered in a straight forward stabbing, piercing motion.

In this section we will only deal with the primary blow of *Arnis de Mano*, that is strike or *hablig*. Thrust or *ulos* will be dealt with in another appropriate section.

With the different named styles and countless techniques of *Arnis de Mano*, there are only two classifications of strikes. They are the *hablig na palabas* (outward strike) and the *hablig na papasok* (inward strike). To better understand this concept, one has to think in tennis terms. In tennis there are the forehand (inward strike) and the backhand (outward strike). In more technical terms, forehand strike is also called medial strike and the backhand strike is called lateral strike.

Like in tennis, the strikes are oriented from the perspective of the person delivering the strike which is determined by the grip on the stick in relation to the direction of the strike.

The body is hypothetically divided vertically in the middle. This hypothetical division is called the vertical midline or the center line of the body. Any

strike directed towards the vertical midline is called *hablig na papasok* (inward strike, forehand strike or medial strike). Any strike directed away from the vertical midline is called *hablig na palabas* (outward strike, backhand strike or lateral strike). Strikes, whether offensive or defensive, fall under the category of forehand strike or backhand strike. In simple terms when you strike with your right hand in the direction of your left side it is a forehand strike. When you strike with your right hand in the direction of your right side it is a backhand strike. This is also true with the left hand. When you strike with your left hand in the direction of your right side it is a forehand strike. When you strike with your left hand in the direction of your left side it is a backhand strike.

No matter what maneuver one executes, whether it is the up and down vertical strikes, the side to side horizontal strikes or the circular or roundabout strikes, the strike is either a forehand or a backhand strike.

A forehand strike may be delivered with the leading hand or the trailing hand. Likewise, the backhand strike may be delivered with the leading hand or the trailing hand. Both strikes may be delivered from a regular stance (leading hand is the same side as the leading foot) or the reverse stance (leading hand is the opposite side of the leading foot).

All basic exercises are performed with two sticks. This is to instill in the student the need and importance of developing both the strong and the weak hand from the very onset of training. If only one stick is used, the student will favor one hand over the other and lose the fundamental nature of be-

ing able to fight with either hand, or just the “weaker” hand in case the “strong” hand is incapacitated. This is a condition that is called a “one-sided fighter” which may be a fatal flaw.

The most important factors in any strike, whether forehand or backhand, are form and technique. There was a time when a Filipino warrior depends solely on sheer brute strength. They did not have any style or form.

With the evolution of the art, body mechanics, leverage and utilization of the center of gravity have elevated the strikes to a higher and more powerful level. Proper style or form eliminates “wasted movements” increasing speed and energy.

There are three levels of target of both forehand and backhand strikes; they are: upper, middle and lower. In the upper level, the most common strike is a

strike to the head, the neck, or the shoulder in a downward motion. A deceptive strike in this level is a strike to the head or the neck in an upward motion. In the middle level, the most common is strike to the arms, sides or the hipbone in a sideward cutting motion. In the lower level, the most common is a strike to the knee in a downward motion. A deceptive strike in this level is an upward strike to the groin.

## Manners of Striking

There are three manners in delivering a strike: with the flick of the wrist (like European foil fencing); the elbow bend (like tennis); and with the twist of the hips with follow through (like a slugger hitting a baseball). These motions should not be confused with range of fighting (short, medium and long range). All Amara Arkanis strikes utilize these three movements in every strike in conjunction with the stance, breathing and body tension.



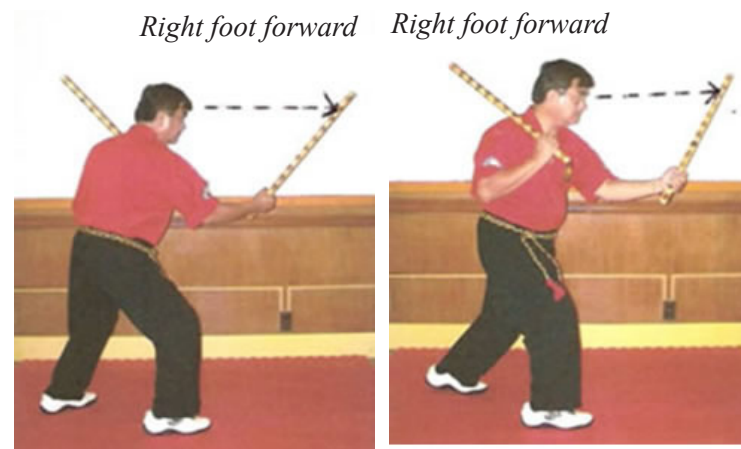
*Right foot forward - Left foot forward*

*Forehand strike directed towards vertical centerline from regular stance.*



*Right foot forward - Left foot forward*

*Forehand strike directed towards vertical centerline from reverse stance.*



*Left foot forward Left foot forward*



*Backhand strike directed outwards the vertical centerline from regular stance. Backhand strike directed outwards the vertical centerline from reverse stance.*

## Exercises and Drills:

- From natural stance move left foot forward to the left oblique to assume left fighting stance then deliver a forehand strike with the leading (left) hand
- Follow with a forehand strike with the reverse (right) hand
- Move left foot back to natural stance
- From natural stance move right foot forward to the right oblique to assume right fighting stance then deliver a forehand strike with the leading (right) hand
- Follow with a forehand strike with the reverse (left) hand
- Move right foot back to natural stance
- From natural stance move right foot to the right and pivot on left foot to face 90 degrees to the left to assume left fighting stance then deliver a forehand strike with the leading (left) hand
- Follow with a forehand strike with the reverse (right) hand
- Move right foot back to natural stance, pivoting on left foot to face 90 degrees to the right (original position)
- From natural stance move left foot to the left and pivot on right foot to face 90 degrees to the right to assume right fighting stance then deliver a forehand strike with the leading (right) hand
- Follow with a forehand strike with the reverse (left) hand
- Move left foot to natural stance pivoting on right foot to face 90 degrees to the left (original position)
- From natural stance move right foot back to the right oblique to assume left fighting stance then deliver a forehand strike with the leading (left) hand
- Follow with a forehand strike with the reverse (right) hand
- Move right foot forward to assume natural stance
- From natural stance move left foot back to the left oblique to assume right fighting stance then deliver forehand strike with the leading (right) hand
- Follow with a forehand strike with the reverse (left) hand
- Move left foot forward to assume natural stance

### Note:

*First set of exercises will be upper strikes*

*Second set of exercises will be middle strikes*

*Third set of exercises will be lower strikes*

## Progression of Training:

- Move the foot to assume the stance, then deliver the first strike bringing center of gravity down and exhaling through the mouth then go back to original position.
- Move the foot to assume the stance as you deliver the first strike bringing center of gravity down, hold your breath, then deliver the second strike exhaling through the mouth then go back to original position.
- Move the foot to assume the stance as you deliver the strikes in quick succession at the same time bringing center of gravity down and exhaling through the mouth then go back to original position.

Move the foot to assume the stance as you deliver the strikes in quick succession with bun-yaw at the same time bringing the center of gravity down. The moving to the stance, the strikes, bringing down the center of gravity and exhalation (bun-yaw) must all end at the same time. Then go back to original position.

## Basic Thrust (ULOS)

In Filipino Fighting Arts, a thrust (ulos) is different from a strike (hablig). While hablig is an angular, cutting, slicing, slashing or hacking maneuver, ulos is basically a forward stabbing, piercing, penetrating tactic. Ulos (sometimes also known as saksak or tusok) is delivered using the tip of the knife, the end of the stick or the butt of the stick. When a knife is used alone, it is sometimes also used for slashing. But whether the knife is used for thrusting (stabbing) or slashing, the main pattern of motion is the multiplication sign or the X pattern.

Originally used exclusively in close range knife fighting, the ulos became part of Arnis de Mano's espada y daga (sword and dagger) system. In doble baston (double sticks) system, the tip and the butt are used as a knife.

There are two directions of ulos, overhand (pabulusok) and underhand (paahon). Overhand is executed normally in a downward motion with the hand raised above the elbow or the arm raised over the shoulder like a baseball pitcher throwing a fast ball. Underhand is executed normally in an upward



*Combination overhand and underhand thrust to the heart.*

motion with the hand below the level of the elbow or the arm below the level of the shoulder as a softball pitch.

Any part of the body that is hit with a knife, the end or the butt of the stick will cause injury, however, since the Filipino fighting art's principle is one-strike-one-kill, there are specific targets to achieve this goal.

The two main targets of an overhand knife thrust are the carotid arteries on the sides of the neck. Cutting or severing the carotid artery causes severe bleeding, depleting blood to the brain and other parts of the body that will have fatal result.

The two main targets of an underhand knife thrust are the heart and the liver. Injury to

the heart disrupts the efficient pumping action of the organ. When the heart is damaged, blood supply is disrupted which normally have a fatal result. Damage to the liver may cause both external and internal bleeding which likewise may be fatal.

Injury caused by the end or the butt of the stick may not cause bleeding but may cause severe trauma that is just as deadly and fatal as an injury caused by a knife.

The underhand thrust to the heart was the thrust of choice when live blades were used. With the advent of the use of sticks, several variations were adopted. Thrust to the eyes, and thrusts to the other parts of the body were added to the repertoire of stick-fighting blows.

A thrust, particularly the underhand thrust is a very deceptive maneuver. In tournaments, the thrust is rarely used or allowed despite its effectiveness and speed of delivery. In defensive situations, the thrust stands out as a decisive blow that is quick to employ and not easy to block or defend against. The downside of the thrust is it is practical for close in and middle range of fighting but impractical for long range fighting unless using a sword or a long stick.

## Mindset

The dictionary defines mindset as attitude. It is also defined as state or frame of mind. There are those who call it determination or motivation. Others use more colorful terms as "never-say-die," even "do-or-die" and other descriptive terms. For our purpose, we will simply call it mindset.

More than good technique, more than proper conditioning, mindset is the most important factor.

There are individuals born with a positive mindset and are ready and willing to face any type of confrontation head on. These people have self-confidence, self-reliance and the determination to be steadfast.

Unfortunately there are those born with a negative mindset and hide their weakness behind the cloak of pacifism. They mistake timidity and fear for peace and even godliness. They mistake docile submission as cooperative endeavor, not realizing or perhaps refusing to admit that it means crushed spirits and unhealthy attitudes.

Self-confidence and self-reliance create a positive mindset. With this frame of mind, an individual is ready and willing to stand straight and face the world head up high against adversity. Positive mindset in itself is a firm strategy.

A positive mindset must not be confused with haphazard

aggressive action. A positive mindset is the product of proper training. A well-trained mind cannot be overwhelmed by fear or defeat. A well-trained mind will enable an individual to execute techniques and maneuvers without consciously thinking about it. In this state of mind, an individual will have no doubt or hesitation. With a positive mindset, the inner self (mind) and the outer self (body) work together in harmony.

Mindset makes the difference when the requirement is above and beyond the common experience.

*"Limitations are only mental blocks and hurdles that can and must be overcome."*



*Underhand thrust with stick to the heart and the eye.*

## Louelle Lledo Forms his Dream with the Mataw-Guro Association

This all began in November of 2008 and as strange as it seems the Mataw-Guro Association had an eerie start, for it was at the wake for Mark Lledo, son of Louelle Lledo when the idea of an association to strengthen the position of teachers of Arnis de Mano as educators in the Filipino martial arts educational system was born.

To offer their condolence, the group of Roland Dantes of the Kali, Eskrima and Arnis Masters, Atty Salvador Dimaisip, President of International Modern Arnis of the Philippines, and Professor Armando Soteco, Training Director of the School of Arnis Professionals, motored to Indang, Cavite at the residence of Louelle Lledo.

While watching Louelle Lledo, conduct his class at the Cavite State University, the group agreed that a standard program of instruction was necessary to upgrade Filipino martial arts to the level of an educational curriculum. Even Arnis Philippines, the national sport association recognized by the Philippine Sports Commission, does not seem to have a well-defined direction towards this goal. One thing led to another. Although nothing concrete came out of the talks, the framework for an association of educators was established.

The need for a term to convey the meaning of a high standard teacher of the martial arts in the academe environment became necessary. The term Mataw-Guro, coined from Mataas na guro was suggested. But the word did not have the “ring” or the “backbone” required. The term was later changed to Mataw, which was coined from mataas ang tanaw (high standard). Thereafter, the

term Mataw-Guro or teacher of high standard came about. Zack Taco, who was born and grew up in Maguindanao, heard the word from Louelle Lledo, Zack confirmed that elders in his hometown always referred to people who are knowledgeable as Mataw. The title Mataw-Guro (knowledgeable teacher or master teacher) thereafter was chosen as the rank of the highest level in the academe.

With the title and the need to form an association of educators agreed upon, it became imperative to set down the qualifications and requirements to be a member. This task fell on the shoulders of Louelle Lledo.

He selected the teachers he knew who have a successful program of instruction. He is aware of the success of the program of Professor Armando Soteco and the School of Arnis Professionals. Rodel Dagooc and Yuli Romo’s programs are also very successful. Jose Sidlacan, a Professor of criminology has a program that is adopted by the Philippine National Police Training Academy.

Among the non-Filipino teachers of the Filipino Martial Arts Education, the names:

- Steven Dowd, the Tagapagmana of Arnis Balite
- Professor Jerome Barber a direct student of Remy Presas and his Original Modified Arnis de Mano, has conducted a successful martial arts education program at the Erie Community College in Upstate New York.
- Alex France
- Zack Taco of Original Teovel’s Balintawak
- Walter and Wesley Crisostomo of Ultimate Eskrima
- Spenser Gee of Panandata
- Michael Giron, son of the Original Giron Eskrima system
- Andy Sanano of the Labing-tatlong Hampas system

Punong Mataw-Guro Louelle Lledo was able to commence forming a foundation for his dream of uniting the teachers of the Filipino martial arts.

In this a category for the main body of Mataw-Guro’s (Master Teachers) was formed and recognized.



Filipino Martial Arts Education for Arnis de Mano

## The Basic Thought Behind Forming the Mataw-Guro Association

Conscious of the need of developing enthusiasm, interest and dedication in the field of Filipino Martial Arts Education, and in order to act as guardians of the noble and beneficial aims of Arnis de Mano and compelled by our desire to establish an Association which shall be the rallying point of all teachers of Arnis de Mano as a Filipino Martial Arts Education, the Mataw-Guro’s hereby mutually agree to unite and associate themselves for such a purpose.

## The Mataw-Guro - A Teacher Above Par

Thoughts by Louelle Lledo

In the English language, the terms teacher and Instructor are used interchangeably and are synonymous with each other. In Filipino, these terms are both translated as guro.

In the martial arts, the term usually used is Instructor. When the term instructor is mentioned, the first thing that comes to mind is Drill Instructor or DI in the armed forces. The term DI suggests a scrappy stern and serious sergeant with iron-hard muscles and a “do it or else” attitude.

The term Teacher carries a deeper meaning and in Filipino, it is normally used in an educational institution.

Both the Teacher and Instructor’s goal is to make a better practitioner of a particular system or art. Like a Teacher, an Instructor drills students in techniques and maneuvers. However, beyond everything else, a Teacher builds character and attitude. A Teacher invokes virtues that make a good individual great.

In Filipino Martial Arts Education, the term that should be used is Teacher. A Teacher, imparts knowledge to an individual not only on how to be a good martial artist, but more important to be a better person; a person, who not only can execute the techniques skillfully, but also understand how the technique can be skillfully executed; a person who can execute a maneuver with minimum effort but

with maximum result. A Teacher must be a technician of skill, but more important, a designer of growth and development.

A Teacher must cultivate the student’s mind, not only to be excellent in the performance of the techniques, but also to be an exceptional strategist. The Teacher must always impart to the student the desire to always strive for perfection by diligent and constant training and endeavor to build a solid foundation, both mentally and physically. A Teacher must instill in the student the importance of accurate performance rather than just a demonstration of power. A Teacher must teach individuality of behavior. A Teacher must be able to inspire the student not only to be the best, more important to be the best that the student can be.

Learning is much easier than teaching the martial arts. To be a Teacher, one must have learned the art in a level that must be greater than ordinary. Having learned the art, the Teacher must be able to put the techniques into practice and believe in what he teaches. Finally, the Teacher must be able to realize and work on an individual’s characteristics and learning habits.

A Teacher must understand and master the principles and the techniques himself and then be able to impart this knowledge and

mastery to the student. The Teacher must always remember that teaching is also a process of learning.

Patience is a virtue that all Teachers must possess and practice. Not all students have the same learning ability. There are students that are fast learners and naturally gifted. There are students that are slow and awkward. A Teacher must always base the techniques on correct principles, no matter how uncoordinated the student may be. The teacher must adapt the art to the physical limitation of the student. The teacher who follows this attitude will himself make great progress in the techniques he is teaching. A Teacher must constantly strive for correct progress.

A Teacher must not try to stand out as compared to his students by showing off his strength or skill. Strength and skill are different from being a good Teacher. It is very desirable to be technically skillful and be a good teacher at the same time, but sometimes a Teacher may not be skillful at the techniques himself but can successfully teach others to be skillful. Sometimes a practitioner may be very skillful, but cannot successfully teach others, hence is not qualified to be a Teacher.

A good Teacher must not teach students to imitate the techniques alone, but must make the student understand the techniques with each bodily movement that

conforms to the correct principles. By striving and devising a system to teach a slow learner, the Teacher develops discipline and leadership in the basic principles and finer points of his art.

The more complicated things get, the more important it is to keep things as simple as possible. Meeting this goal is not at all easy, but it pays off in a big way. Martial arts education starts with a student's untrained capacities and tries to expand them as much as possible through simple steps to devastatingly effective thinking and techniques.

From the beginning, the student has strengths and limitations. The teacher must be able to work with or around the student's strengths and limitations or the art will never be simple for him. If it is never simple, it may never help him when he needs it most. Instead of adapting the student to the art,

the Teacher must adapt the art to the student. This is going with the flow of the student for the best training results. Correct performance is crucial from the beginning. Simply staying in the same place is of little value. Progressive addition of small steps moves the student along further than he may realize at any given moment. Oddly enough, when the student sees changes in his skill level after so much "simple" instructions, it makes the student more patient and more receptive.

A good Teacher must have the genius to bring out the students' talents and abilities. He does not need to either justify or promote his own actions. He must be respected and not feared by his students.

A good Teacher must always motivate his students to strive for superior performance and be able to unleash all of the

student's psychological and physiological reserves of energy at the right instance.

A student's spirit is a mirror image of the Teacher. If the Teacher has a humble spirit, the student likewise will have a humble spirit. If the Teacher is conceited the student will also be conceited. A mediocre Teacher produces a mediocre student, a good Teacher produces good student and an excellent Teacher produces an excellent student. In the manner of reverse variation, an excellent student brings out the excellence in a Teacher. The Mataw-guro Association Filipino Martial Arts Education for Arnis de Mano was formed by Teachers whose ultimate objective is to upgrade the quality of martial arts education at the same time upgrade the standing of the Teachers in the academe environment.

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**To Note when forming the Mataw-Guro Association the Philosophy of Rank was:** The practitioners of the Mataw-Guro Association are designated with the same title, and the reason is that all are equal in the development of the Mataw-Guro Association which the Association will (once fully established) be comprised of Filipino martial arts practitioners that can properly teach the ABC's (basics) of the Filipino martial arts.

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Currently a Mataw-Guro Association handbook is in its final preparation for printing. All of the original members of the Association were asked for input to ensure this handbook would reflect the very basics of Arnis de Mano for Filipino Martial Arts education. It contains ready reference data for use in planning programs in teaching Filipino martial arts or Arnis de Mano. Although all the lessons in this handbook are also practical for live blades, sword and a knife, other alternative weapons or even empty hands, the main scope is the use of double sticks or *doble baston*. Use of double sticks is not only encouraged but also mandatory in learning Arnis de Mano in order not to be a one-sided fighter.

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The Mataw-Guro Association is designed to teach the basics of Arnis de Mano. This is the very basics as would be taught in schools Kindergarten to Universities. Once the program is completed then the student can decide on which style they wish to continue their educational knowledge.

The question has constantly been asked: **How Early Should Martial Arts Training Start?**

There are two schools of thought on how early one should start physical training. One school advocates starting early because most successful athletes who achieve international success and fame or who possess the ability and skill for international competition have anywhere from 5 to 15 years of training and competing experience.

In most athletic events, athletic maturity is attained between the ages of 20 and 30. There are gifted ones who have extended their staying power to 40 years or even way past that age. Once in a while there are exceptional athletes who stay on top of their sport even at the "ripe old" age of 50 years.

The "earlier the better" school of thought insists that it is good to instill the competitive spirit in the child at an early age. But not every youngster has the inclination or discipline to achieve international fame. Those who are impressed, mostly by their parents, and by other athletes to be great and successful set a specific goal and work hard to perfect their style and technique. They work hard towards peak form and strive to improve and develop in every training session.

Then there are some who

train just for their own satisfaction and enjoyment. Some medical professionals agree that imparting the interest to participate in physical training at an early age is very good not only for the health of the body but also for the total well-being of the child.

The other school of thought does not encourage training at an early age and takes a more conservative albeit cautious approach. This school maintains that children below 10 years old still have underdeveloped motor nerve and muscle coordination. At this stage, the body is undergoing a lot of changes and adjustments. The body structure changes somewhat and a heavy and strict regimen of exercise is not advisable or practical. When the motor nerve is still in the developmental stage it is very easy to develop bad habits and "out of sync" techniques which may be very difficult to correct later on.

On account that not everybody is the same, the best gauge in how early martial arts training should start, must be the youngster's reaction, enthusiasm, enjoyment and individual development. Stimulate the child to have fun



and enjoy the training as a game. However, even at the early stages of a youngster's training, correct procedure and good form must be emphasized at all times and must take precedence over speed and power.

The medical field may always be divided on this matter, but Amara Arkanis martial arts Education Program was designed with practitioners of all ages in mind. The program is basic enough for youngsters to understand and enjoy, yet progressive enough for advance students to enable them to attain superior performance.

*"Start a child on the right path while he is young, and when he is old, he will not forget what he has been taught" ...Proverb 22:6*



### ***School Submission***

The schools listed teach Filipino martial arts, either as the main curriculum or an added curriculum.

If you have a school that teaches Filipino martial arts, or you are an instructor that teaches, but does not have a school, list the school or style so individuals who wish to experience, learn and gain knowledge have the opportunity.

Be Professional; keep your contact information current. - **Click Here**



### ***Event Submission***

Submit your event whether - Seminar, Workshop, Training Camp, tournament, or Gathering - **Click Here**



### ***Advertisement Submission***

Advertising in the FMA Informative Website is FREE.

An Ad in the FMA Informative can create Business. Your Advertisement for Filipino martial arts forums, blogs etc, can be included in the FMA Informative. Advertisement is for the Filipino Martial Arts and the Philippines.

**Click Here** and fill in the information. Additional information and .gif, .jpg, .bmp, or .tiff.

Email to: **Advertise@fmainformative.info**



### ***Article Submission***

Finished manuscripts should be accompanied by color or black and white photographs. Though we take care of materials, we can not be responsible for manuscripts/photographs and accept no liability for same. Every photograph or graphic must be accompanied by a caption Carefully key photos to caption information with a letter or number.

We reserve the right to use any photo(s) as cover material or additional compensation. We also reserve the right to edit material and to crop photographs.

We reserve the right to use articles or parts of articles that are given and approved from time to time as needed to promote the Filipino martial arts and the Culture of the Philippines.

Physical manuscripts should be typed in black, double spaced, and set to 1-1/2 margins (right and left).

Emailed manuscripts should be typed in Ariel or Times Roman, on programs such as Notepad, Wordpad, Microsoft Word, Word Perfect and can be sent as an attachment. Photo(s) can be sent as a .jpg, .gif, .bmp, or .tiff to **Article@fmainformative.info**

We welcome your article, ideas and suggestions, and look forward to working with you in the future.