

FMA

Informative

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Words From a Modern-Day Warrior

Observations, Insights and Comments

By TheKuntaMan



The Mean and Nasty Old Master
How to Be the Student of a Mean, Old Cranky Master....
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History of De Kwerdas Eskrima
Fat-Cream FMA

The FMA Informative has published a few of Guro Maurice Mustafa Gatdula - known as "TheKuntawMan" articles in the FMA Informative Newspaper. We got a hold of him because he is an upfront in your face type of guy. In his blog where he simply puts his thoughts, he speaks what's on his mind. Not one to mince words but speaks out what is on his mind. Honest, up right and willing to express himself, Guro Mustafa is an traditional martial artists that speaks what he means and backs it up.

In this issue is just a small sample of some of his thoughts and writings. One that has become a popular reading is "The Mean and Nasty Old Master" which both parts have been put together and then you can see his thoughts with "How to Be the Student of a Mean, Old Cranky Master," with a couple more articles that Guro Gatdula is sharing. Make sure to read; "Fat-Cream FMA" because for sure you will think I have seen/heard of that, or you will just shake your head and laugh.

Once you read his thoughts, comments, observations, stories etc,... you will either like him, not like him, laugh, cry, or just say ok that was that and move on.

Each issue features practitioners of martial arts and other internal arts, other features include historical, theoretical and technical articles; reflections, Filipino martial arts, healing arts, the culture of the Philippines and other related subjects.

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"Secrets" of the Filipino Fighting Arts

Words from a Modern-Day Warrior

All the content in this issue was written by Filipino Martial Arts Guro Mustafa Gatdula.

Guro Gatdula is the owner and head instructor of the Typhoon Philippine School of Martial Arts (www.typhoonma.com). Also known as "thekuntawman", he is well-versed in many martial arts disciplines and styles, and possesses a wealth of knowledge and insight.

While often controversial with his opinions, many listeners and readers tend to close their ears to his ideas and wisdom. His blog was created to give him a platform to air his views and share his ideas of the practice, the teaching, and the application of the martial arts. Please check the blog weekly, as he will post a combination of edited postings as well as original writings from one of the most interesting and outspoken of the modern-day warriors!

Guro Gatdula features articles about training, philosophy, fighting strategy, and video review. In the "Observation and Insights", you can read commentary about a variety of topics concerning the martial arts. There are two new sections that he will be adding to his blog: A video review section (look under "categories", to your right) and books you can order from Guro Gatdula.

There is a ton of good, useful information (he has 5 books coming) that you won't find anywhere, and they expound in greater detail much of what is contained in the articles he presents.

For more information, please visit: filipinofightingsecretslive.com

The Mean and Nasty Old Master

Experience has told me that when I meet a rude, nasty old man who appears to not want new students—I should perhaps tolerate his barbs and earn the right to learn from him. Some of you martial arts-consumers probably couldn't fathom what I mean. I will attempt to convey pronto.

Much of the martial arts that is easily found for anyone with a few bucks—whether by seminar, video, youtube clip, or dojo—is decent, good material. However, most of it is not taught correctly and that fact alone renders the validity of the art and techniques irrelevant. I could know how to throw the most vicious and powerful hook; one that Mike Tyson himself would feel all warm and fuzzy about if he saw me hit someone with it. Yet, if I don't properly train you on how to actually DO that technique correctly—if I don't pass on to you the full understanding of how to counter with it, how to counter the counters your opponent will throw, how to force the technique through if the opponent closes his openings, how to generate power with it when I'm exhausted, how to use the technique against a faster opponent... everything that should accompany the knowledge of how to throw that hook, your knowledge will be as useless as your 11th grade Spanish class. It's not in the knowledge, it's in the application. Those things cannot be learned from a teacher or medium that is ill-equipped to ensure you possess those things. In other words, a qualified teacher. And not just a qualified teacher, but a teacher that will not end the lesson just because he needs to get to the next city and collect another

\$5,000 bucks. A teacher who will stay with you until you fully understand all those things—not one who will just drop the technique on you and hope you practice when he gets on that plane. Or a method of learning that is over when the pizza arrives and you have to shut down the computer.

The best teachers you will find are not going to be accepted by the masses. He will be patient with information he imparts to you. He will be an absolute authoritarian in the class room. He will not give you breaks when you feel like you will pass out. He will tell you to shut up and train when you ask to learn those cool weapons on the wall. He will make you train the same techniques until you hurt, train till you get bored, train till you get mad and quit. Because the kind of training one will need to totally submit to in the effort to attain the level of skill that satisfies him enough to promote you will suck. It will be less attractive than anything money can buy. It will be harder to obtain and moment you will be allowed to say that you "know" it is a vague, mysterious point in the future that seems to move further and further away each time you think you're getting closer.

And most people who pursue the martial arts is not wired for this kind of commitment. This is why some martial arts students still have their first set of sparring gear to show friends, and why others (very few others, I might add) can't even remember what happened to their first set of sparring gear because they've owned about 50 sets in their lifetime. I would say that the percentage of martial

arts students who really want the real, serious stuff is about a fraction of 1% of those who actually sign up for a school. Notice I am not including the guys who "self-train" and only work out in small groups and attend seminars: The most serious of martial arts students will actually commit to a teacher and school and stick with it for years—1% of them. Sadly, most of the schools that one would find are not led by a teacher knowledgeable enough to provide this kind of training as well.

So, what happens is that martial arts students will join a school, achieve the Black Belt, train for years after that, then leave to seek out something/someone higher and deeper, go from school to school, style to style, and if he's lucky—one day he may encounter that old man who may or may not have a school.

Let me tell you about that old man. If you know or have learned or seen anything about the martial arts—he has seen and learned and knows more. Depending on his age, he may have forgotten more than you have seen. If you truly are the serious student of the arts that you hope to be—he was once a man like you, encountering a man like him. Sometimes, that old man has a school and will be open to taking on students. If you approach him correctly, he will teach you in the manner that is necessary to achieve the skill level you covet. More likely than not, if he takes you as a student, you will get the foo-foo lessons and will have to prove yourself to get the real lessons. You may have to grovel. In this day and age, whether you are in America or the

Philippines (trust me, they are getting pretty bad in the Philippines these days)—students try to control their teachers with power of money and the power of going elsewhere—and you won't grovel. Or on the other hand, he may not want to take on any new students. He believes that today's student is an uncommitted, impatient, lazy oaf who does not deserve his time and knowledge. Your money and flattering compliments mean nothing to him. You must convince him to take him as a student. He had schools, many years ago, just like he had a wife. His students ruined him financially by quitting and/or paying tuition late. His students made him second guess his chosen calling by being far less than appreciative and consistent than he had been in his youth. They were lazy and complained too much. In all these years, he was unable to find a student willing to sleep on floors, sit at his feet, and pay his stinking bills on time. So here he is, at the dawn of his life, with all that knowledge and skill and experiences... and along comes one more asshole who interrupts his nap, talking about he's a *different* kind of martial arts students. Yeah right, go stand in line kid. They all say that.

So he takes you as a student, finally, and shows you his first three hits in his system. He sends you to the back yard or the classroom, and tells you to throw 2,000 strikes and let him know when you're done. After that workout, you attend one or two, but then work gets busy. Or the cost of a plane ticket doesn't justify the four days of calluses and sore joints you experience - just to go home empty handed.

Or you find an authorized representative of a well-known master who will introduce you to a celebrity master or two. For the rest of your life, possibly after that mean and nasty old master had died, you recall that time you got ripped for \$300 worth of shit lessons in some old codger's back yard. You are still searching for the path to mastery, unaware that you had and lost that one brush with the possibility of achieving it. So, like the rest of the guys you once said you'd be nothing like—you join associations, you pad your resume and rank with easy-to-obtain add-on arts, you avoid the younger versions of that old man to hang out with non-confrontational sissies like you. And you wonder if true masters and martial arts secrets really do exist.

They do.

Take a Breath

I want to talk a little more about one of my favorite people in the world: Old people.

I was partially raised by my grandparents, as my mother could not afford child care in those days. My grandfather, then, took that opportunity to hijack my life and raise me to be a martial artist. Despite that I had some other aspirations, like my siblings, who are very successful—I was bred to do these arts. Many of you may go your whole lives and not encounter someone like me whose parents did not give them a choice about what path to take in life. It is a very un-American concept, disallowing your child to make a life decision such as a career path or who to marry. But I assure you it is a practice that is done more out of love and less out of tradition, and it is not one I regret not a

single day of my life.

All my teachers were lifetime martial artists as well. I am not speaking of the guys who just practice and teach the art all their lives. The kind of men I learned from turned down other job opportunities and did this art even if it sent them to the poor house. For them, the martial arts was an occupation, a calling, a lifestyle. Very unlike your military guy-turned martial artist, or your State worker-turned martial artist, or your [insert occupation]slash/martial artist. What I have observed of these kind of teachers, having had 9 such men as teachers, is that they spend their whole lives looking for a student who would treat these arts as a lifestyle just as they had done. The big disappointment for them, as I noted in my last installment of this subject, is that they may never encounter another quite like them. It is no wonder that these men will take their children (or at least their first-born son) and train them, hijacking their lives, to be the perfect product of their teachings.

Let's discuss the difference between the kind old master and the mean old master. There is a difference.

Without wanting to insult or cause offense—cause you know how much I hate to do that—we will focus on the mean old master and I want you to compare him to the nice old masters you most likely have encountered. The truth is, there are far more nice old masters than mean old ones. There is a reason for that, and that reason is why I gravitate towards them. You may disagree with me if your old manong is a nice guy, but despite what you say, my experiences have told me otherwise. So here goes:

- He is competitive. The old master is competitive with other old masters. He takes great pride in having students who are the best in his town or province. When he encounters a fighter who is superior to his own, every mistake you make (as his student) is magnified when you lose. He says to himself, “If you had done what I told you to do, if you had practiced more, or used this/that technique—you would have beat him.” In other words, he doesn’t want any other teacher to say their boys are better than his. The old master has long sized up the other masters and feels he has a better way. One of the things that keeps him in this game is that he is striving to establish himself as the BEST. And now that he is too old to do the things he used to do, he lives through his students to carry the torch. When he is teaching you, he is attempting to recreate himself. He wants you to do the things he can no longer do.
- He wants you to be competitive. He wants you to be better than he was, better than his first generation of students, better than the other guys’ students. He loves a hungry student who trains like a mad man and struggles to make him look good. Because when you look good, he looks good. Yes, even though you are doing the work, and looking good—he is somewhat vain.
- He is not a celebrity teacher. Some masters spend a lot of time talking about what they did when they were young. They highlight their past accomplishments and skills, and therefore many do not want the student to exceed the master. But not the mean old master; he wants the next generation to be bigger and better than he ever was. My grandpa would tell stories about his matches, and although embellished somewhat to make him sound like the Filipino Superman—he always finished by telling me that I would be bigger and stronger and more famous than he was. He picked my friends based on if he thought they would boost or hurt my reputation—or help vs. suppress my skill. My teacher Bogs Lao would force me to fight with bigger, stronger, better fighters because he wanted me to improve. There were a few fighters I feared because they were relentless in kicking my behind, and when he discovered that fear he made me fight them more. He did not want to hear that I was nervous, or hurt, or sore, or tired. Bogs built his reputation off of the skill of his students, and was satisfied only with our best. At the same time, he did not tolerate mediocrity. The celebrity teacher doesn’t care if you are the best or not, because regardless of what you do, it will not affect his status as a well-known Master.
- He was a perfectionist. Notice I said “was”, rather than “is”. Is he a perfectionist? You betcha. But the reason he is mean and nasty now is that he was a perfectionist when he was young, so he knows firsthand what perfection looks like. He can tell when you’re really giving your best, and when you’re just tired. The mean old master knows the secret to 110% of your effort: There is no such thing. It’s just that 99.99% of you will never truly give 100% of your effort. So when you actually DO give it all you’ve got, you feel like you’ve given more. This man knows what you feel like on the 150th pushup, because he’s done it himself, many times. Now take three minutes rest and give me ten more.
- He truly wants you, your skill, your reputation and the system to outlive him. The mean old nasty master knows this absolute truth about the fighting arts that very few know, and does not exist in most other fields: When he is dead and gone, when you have graduated from his tutelage, you will never work this hard again. There is a reason why fighters with 50+ fights still pay millions to their trainers when they themselves are great, knowledgeable fighters. That reason is that the teacher sees the mistakes and shortcomings we often don’t see, and they will not let us quit when our minds and bodies tell us to. They will force us to do what we will not force ourselves to do without our lives being on the line. In a real fight you will pull out all the stops to win. You won’t do it in training. But if you pull them all out in training, when you fight, you will have more in the bag to pull out. Reread this line several times until it sinks in. That was one of the secrets of the Masters.
- He doesn’t care if you like him, or if you’re offended by what he says, or if others don’t like what he has said or how he said it. Because when he is gone, you will love him and appreciate his teaching more than you did when he was alive. This is another one of those absolute truths about the martial arts, that does not apply in many other fields. He is a bitch to learn from, and maybe you didn’t get the training the way you thought it should have gone when you were a pupil, or maybe you didn’t like the way he insulted you or hit you when you got it wrong—but when he is dead, you will miss him and honor him as if he were a parent. I look at the complaining I did when learning Eskrima from my grandfather in the backyard, doing my basic 5 strikes (we have 24, but my first 5 were my daily routine in those days) in 100 degree weather until my hands bled. I longed

to learn the other arts, the forms and sinawali and disarms that I read about in the magazines. And look at me now. My students, family members and close friends know exactly what I’m talking about. I am the 43 year old version of that old man. He died when I was 22, and I never took another class, nor another master, since. Old people are like that, they are the way they are because they feel like they have earned the right to say what they say and do what they do, and they don’t care if you don’t like it. Humility causes even old men to bite their tongues. But the men who have taken lives, saved lives, and walked the Earth with the skill to make a Godlike decision—whether to take or not—know nothing of humility. <— And here you have the main difference between the mean old nasty master, and the nice, sweet one.

But I must make a correction. While searching for clips of old masters on youtube (I had seen an interview with a Master who was the student of Master Lema, bragging that his boys were un-

beatable—to illustrate my points), I found this one and realized that I should say that these Masters are not all men. I especially enjoy this clip, because it shows one of those mean old masters in rare form

interacting with her student. No doubt, her fighters know a different Master than the rest of the martial arts community. Enjoy! And thank you for visiting my blog.

How to Be the Student of a Mean, Old Cranky Master....

Martial arts students today are mostly too soft and fragile to be a student of a real master. They are impatient, too reliant on ill-deserved compliments and require too much darned attention. The old master seems mean and nasty, because he isn’t like your grampa. You’re not his baby; you’re his apprentice. He won’t overlook your weaknesses and faults. He doesn’t think you’re perfect, although he secretly wants perfection from you. He seems like you irritate him, but he is actually proud of you. It’s just that in the process of teaching you his craft, he wants you to suffer and learn things the hard way—the same way he got it.

You must understand that his harsh criticism, his unforgiving way of demanding more from you in practice, your silence, and his endless demand that you practice more and more—and his lack of praise for you—are the only path to true confidence. He is preparing you for the harshest of opponents, and for him to be easy on you when he knows the rest of the world will not is not just unrealistic, it’s unfair. Few masters had an

easy climb to mastery. Most had to suffer and sacrifice for it. It has nothing to do with money. In fact, the best Masters had no money to spend on private lessons and comfort. It is through the steep, uphill climb to learning that you will develop the strong legs to stand on your own ability when you leave the “student” level and become an expert yourself.

When studying with old masters, you must learn about their struggles in order to understand the genetic make-up of your teacher. Each type of teacher and their experiences will determine the method they impart these lessons to you. Far too often, students with potential will leave a great teacher because of his lack of understanding of what it takes to be the student of that great teacher. I recently read a review of Master Wu Bin’s training when he was teaching in Minnesota. The mother of a student had harsh things to say about his “lack of teaching ability”, stating that her son had learned more in a few months and made more progress from a school called “Family Tae Kwon

Do” (or something like that) than from a year of “wasted” training with Master Wu Bin. You must be kidding. I’ll let you read up on Wu Bin and you tell me if any learning would be “wasted” with this living legend.

Learning from a young teacher, or an inexperienced teacher is quite different from an old, experienced master. Young teachers focus on curriculum and a large number of techniques. Young teachers value the amount of knowledge they have, and look at factors such as athleticism and agility to gauge progress. Old teachers, on the other hand, value a student’s ability to fully understand the art and through application. Inexperienced teachers put a lot of effort into promoting quickly and political affiliations. Fighting teachers value proven fighting skill. Teachers whose base of knowledge consists of mostly forms will value forms ability over other skills in the art. Knowing what kind of master you have will help you become the appropriate type of student for that teacher. The old Master can either be an

old fighting teacher, and old forms teacher, or an old political teacher.

- The old fighting teacher will talk of fighting skill most of the time and will encourage you to get in front of many opponents
- The old forms teacher will talk of perfecting form in order to gain the key to all martial arts ability
- The old political teacher will talk of lineage and inheriting and preserving the system

Often students who want

I Am an Eskrima Hermit

One of the strongest images I have of my maternal grandfather is his claim of being a martial arts “hermit”. Those who have met him walk away with the impression that he is unfriendly and introverted. Not just because he didn’t speak English, but surprisingly he was a walking contradiction: my Grandfather was a very giving man, but when it came to his martial arts he was very selfish; he was fiercely patriotic, but didn’t seem to like many Filipinos (just like my mom, more on this later); was a lifelong martial artist, but really disliked martial artists. When I speak of old-school martial artists looking another up and down, thinking “I can take this guy”, my Lolo takes the cake. As a young man, he taught me to train hard and out do my peers and to look down on them as inferior martial artists. Does this make you uncomfortable? Good. That’s what warriors do. If you’re looking to get along with someone, go hold hands in some seminar somewhere...

I begrudgingly complied with many of his requests to keep my distance from most other

one type of training will spin his wheels with a different kind of master. Or perhaps you will want what that Master has to offer you, but you have chosen to be the wrong kind of student to get it. Know what makes your master tick, and what it will take to absorb his lessons. Learn all you can about your teacher before you decide if this is the school for you. It may just be a bad match.

And most of all, under-

martial artists. After attending a few Filipino martial arts seminars with my old friend Billy Bryant, I stopped going when my grandfather objected. Although I was somewhat rebellious and independent thinking as a youth, I was obedient when it came to martial arts, because I really did look up to him and I truly believed that my grandfather was better skilled, more knowledgeable, and could make me into a superior fighter if I followed his lead. Now in my 40s, I am a spitting image of my Lolo in looks, build (he was actually leaner), lifestyle, and outlook. I hope that in the next 30 years, I am equal to who he was as a Master and as a man.

At the heart of this old man’s philosophy was his belief that in order to gain martial arts mastery, one needed to become a martial arts “hermit” in order to grow—even if only for a short period of time.

The hermit is one who has isolated himself from the rest of his community. For whatever reasons—religion, art, intense self-reflection—a man who lives this lifestyle is destined for wis-

dom or insanity. Our greatest human minds have lived the life of a hermit at some point in their lives. By disallowing distractions and frivolous activity to enter our lives, we enable ourselves to develop, reflect and perfect whatever it is we focus on during our solitude. Many of the things martial artists do, such as rub elbows with other teachers in the political world, put on demonstrations, write meaningless “look-who-I-am-and-what-I-know” articles for the magazines—do nothing at all for one’s skill in the martial arts. The true martial artist has no interest in such things, which has no place in one’s martial arts path. You want respect in the martial arts? Then make your skill unrivaled by most, and then you will earn respect. This is the old-fashioned way of building one’s reputation: standing on the merits of actual ability.

I consider myself an “Eskrima” hermit because I did not have classmates, family or friends in Eskrima while I was learning (besides my brother). In Kung Fu and Karate training, I had schools full of classmates, friends on the tournament circuit, and other

school owners as friends. Even in Kuntaw, I had friends from all over the world who practiced Kuntaw and Silat; but my Eskrima experience is all to myself. This would seem odd, because my grandfather was not an “eskrima guy”, he was an empty hands guy, and his second weapon of choice was a bolo. But I took to the stick because this was the weapon we sparred with, and it was also the weapon I had the most difficulty learning. As I started to get out and meet other arnisadors and eskrimadors, I learned that—like my grandfather—I found most of them weak, sheepish, into politics, poorly skilled and I simply tended not to like them. In fact, most of my friends in the martial arts are Tae Kwon Do practitioners and boxers. I find martial artists egotistic, insecure, poorly skilled and undisciplined. This is not say that I am a monk either; but I treat my martial arts with much more respect than most martial artists. Confidence and antagonism seem to frighten most FMA people, so they seek strength in numbers or to simply avoid any forms of in-person confrontation. This is very disappointing because I know that back home, Arnis practitioners are not this way. Most have no rank and are happy with that. But most Filipino Arnis fighters are highly capable of defending themselves and will try you out at the drop of a dime, and you have to respect that. I consider anything less than that to be a weak representation of our arts. What I see of Filipino - Filipino martial arts people in America is that most of us have bought into the commercialization of the West—we like money, nice cars, rank and things to show off. This is what my mother and grandfather

never let us become... coconuts. It is no wonder that we find that many Filipino - Filipino martial arts people look down on FOB Filipinos and many FOB Filipinos look down on western Filipinos. There is a lot lost in these arts when you lose the culture. The practice of isolating oneself—the training and the secrets we hold—is a very old-school, cultural thing for Filipino Masters. Many of the benefits from practicing the art of seclusion cannot be duplicated in a classroom or seminar.

If you look at my school, I have the windows boarded up and covered with a mural. We do not allow visitors during class times. We only attend tournaments and scrimmages, rarely social events. I do not put on demonstrations for strangers; in fact, I rarely even demonstrate for my own students. My personal training sessions are alone—as they were when I was younger—and I am usually only seen in uniform when I am fighting. If I ask another martial artist to train with him, I am only planning to spar (not show, explain or hang out). My martial arts are for my students, so I rarely guest-teach in other Guro’s schools... even in those schools owned by my friends. I do not post Youtube videos. My skill and my reputation are all I care about; I could care less whether I am a popular teacher, or if people like me in this community. To be known for skill, knowledge and teaching ability if all I care about. In my community, you will find three groups of martial artists who know me: those who have seen me fight or teach (competitors or former students), those who have never seen me but have only seen my students fight, or—the majority—

those who have heard of me but never seen me or my students; you would be hard pressed to find folks in my martial arts community who do not know who I am. And of those people, they either admire me (whether or not they’ve met me or seen me), or they loathe me (whether or not they’ve met me or seen me). Me and my school’s reputation have traveled long and far, without the use of magazine articles or advertising. And this is with me being isolated from this local community.

I once ate with my family in a restaurant in San Francisco, when the waiter noticed my school’s name on my credit card. He returned with three fellow employees (all Filipino martial arts students), asking to take pictures, sign an autograph and promising to visit my school 100 miles away. As usual, they commented on how young I was, thinking I was some old man with along beard, lol. I get that a lot, because my ideas are old school and my attitude came from old men. But I tell you, I would not be the man I was had I joined the rest of the community.

Being a hermit does not require you to go live in a mountain or in the marshes. All it does is have you focus on yourself and your martial arts 99% of the time, and reject everything that lends nothing to your skill and knowledge: publicity, rank and ego, affiliations, unnecessary attention. My students fight in tournaments every month, but I am almost never in attendance. Why? Because I am at the school teaching, and that is most important. It’s not even necessary for me to attend and coach, because the preparation was done in the gym. When I am in attendance, I am sitting with my

family and school, not walking around passing out business cards. You must keep your arts in your school and keep to yourself when you are away. The time to get with other people is when it's time to test out what you've been doing. My students are allowed to attend seminars and train in other schools, but we keep our information in the house. As a teacher, I cannot focus my attention outside our circle because it takes away from them.

I have rejected several offers to write articles about my school. We attempted to get some articles published years ago through Black Belt and Inside Kung Fu magazine, and all were rejected because my views either offended or were contradictory to what the rest of the community believed. While I originally thought my philosophy could help some in the community, I realized that most of them do not want to listen. I still have an email forwarded from my old student that he received from Inside Kung Fu magazine:

Sunday, January 4, 2002 3:10 AM

From: "Xxxx Xxxxx" <XXXXXXXXX@cfwenterprises.com>

To: "Xxx XXXXXXXXXXXX" <XXXXXXXXX@xxxx.com>

Xxx,

After reading your articles several times, I find that "I Am Now FMA" would be too harsh for our magazine. While the points made may be true, they are presented in a way that probably would offend many of the Filipino styists. I still have not made a decision on the other article, but I'm leaning toward not printing that one also. Sorry for the delay.

xxxx xxxxx

ikf

I guess as they say that the truth hurts. But what probably hurts more is if you piss off some their

most consistent advertisers. Some folks really don't want to know the truth, and this is why they don't fight... it is better to sit back and think you can protect yourself than to throw on the gloves to see if you are right. After I had experienced this treatment from the magazines and even some of the forums, I decided that it was time to keep my martial arts close to home. I realize now that the magazines are not there to share knowledge or teach, but to advertise and brag.

But I digress.

The same way a husband is only here for his family, a teacher is only here for his students. I think back to when Bruce Lee was acting, his students must have felt neglected. Perhaps many of them were there just because he was Bruce Lee the actor, they are certainly benefiting from being able to say, "Bruce Lee was my Sifu" when in fact their Sifu was Dan Inosanto. And excuse me for

making this observation, many of those students couldn't hold a candle up to Masutatsu Oyama's

students. But Mas was there for his guys all his life, and there you have the difference. Did Oyama go out and politic? Sure he did, after a lifetime of hermitage. Okay, so maybe it wasn't a lifetime, but he preceded his teaching career with perfecting the art himself by training in the woods. By the time he was ready to take Kyokushinkai to the world, he had focused on himself and his art enough that it was perhaps the "strongest Karate" on the planet. And how many people around can argue with that?

So, my question to you is, are you in pursuit of making your martial art the "strongest" of the styles? Are you attempting to make yourself the "strongest" teacher? Training your students the "strongest" fighters?

I have once heard that if you can't be the best, get out of the business. We should all be striving to be the best; at least if we are serious martial artists. Casual training should not be in the vocabulary of the Guro... we are training people to be able to defend themselves and their families. You can't promise them protection with mediocre, unambitious martial arts training. But it all starts with you, the Master. This has nothing to do with who has abs, who can run a 3-minute mile, who holds the highest degree Black Belt, who is world-famous or not. All that matters is the knowledge, skill, and experience level of the teacher, and how he passes that down to his students. Isolating yourself from all that does not matter in the effort to perfect oneself is a good way to get started on that path.

History of De Kwerdas Eskrima

(My Version)

A Side Note: *Before writing this, I tried looking for the history of this group on the internet and could not. Perhaps it is just an oral tradition from an old man to his grandson, or this is a lost piece of history. But this is the story I was told as a kid. Just wanted to share my version.*

A few weeks ago, I attended a Karate tournament in Stockton, CA., and overheard a young man telling his students about the history of his Eskrima which is the De Cuerdas style. Because I was at the tournament to support my students, I didn't care to talk FMA and I resisted the nosy urge to join in. The gentleman then proceeded to tell the students about "other" versions of the history of De Cuerdas that were not valid or untrue. I made myself a mental note that the next time I saw him, we would talk. So, I went from pretending not to listen to actually not listening—as difficult as it was.

I would like to share with you the history that I am told about this style of fighting.

During the late 1800s, Filipinos in the Visayas were planning an overthrow of the Filipino government supporting Spanish occupation. Many Filipinos at that time were losing pride in themselves and their culture, dropping their own people's practices in favor of European practices, adopting Catholicism and their ways over the Filipino's own ways. There was a large group of people wanting to preserve the old ways and kick the Spaniards out of Filipino politics. Many of them were bitter to the wealthy Filipinos who wished to both hold onto their riches as well as eliminate competition for wealth. They were equally resentful of the wealthy and educated who looked down on the poor man

and oppressed them as badly as the colonial masters. There was too much corruption and betrayal for revolutionaries to be effective, so the groups became secret societies and armies.

One of these armies was known as the Dyo-dyos. The Dyo-dyo had a three-part philosophy that was their strength:

1. fierce loyalty to preserving and observing Filipino culture, language and spirituality,
2. physical prowess and fearlessness, and
3. a rejection of wealth, power, fame and lust.

They were mostly Catholic, but many practiced local religions and all were very superstitious. They believed that Eskrima practice strengthened the body and the spirit, and as proof of their indominability—performed feats of strength and displays of courage, such as diving off of cliffs into water, cutting themselves with knives, and fighting blindfolded. The Dyo-dyo also believed that because the Spanish and the Church had ordered so many Filipino deaths, any life they took was repayment of those deaths and that they could take lives for 100 years and the debt would not be repaid. Because of this, the Dyo-dyo felt justified in killing anyone they saw as a traitor to the Filipino people, including women, children, and old people. If you harbored an enemy, you were fair game.

They never revealed real names and often wore turbans,

bandanas, and scarves to make themselves difficult to identify.

They believed wearing white during the day, black at night, and red in battle would protect them. Underneath their clothing they bound their bodies in hemp rope to resist cuts on the body and bullet wounds. They wore coconut shells in their turbans and bandanas to resist bullets to the head. Some covered their bodies in coconut shells and husk underneath clothing to resist bullets. Others wore red to hide bleeding injuries, but carried a white cloth in the left hand, believing the cloth could protect them. In fact, many cited being able to get close to their enemies in order to use their blades because of those rags. (I was recently told by a friend, that many soldiers would hesitate to shoot a man waving a white flag, because this was seen as a sign of giving up.) They prayed before combat, and came to fight swearing to take as many lives as possible before dying. In case you haven't read it, check out my article on the "Spiritual Warrior"; no warrior is more dangerous than one who has already embraced the possibility of his death. These men took the cake. They are the Filipino Kamikaze. The Suicide Bombers with a machete. The story of Filipino "Juramentado" is incorrectly assigned to Muslims, in which being a Juramentado is a sin; the men who did this practice are the Dyo-dyo.

When it came to their martial arts, which was top-notch, the Dyo-dyo were almost unbeatable

in man-to-man combat. They practiced their Eskrima to kill, they practiced their bladework to inflict as many life-threatening injuries as possible, since they were often outgunned and outnumbered. In battle, one warrior could run amok into a camp and take out 20-30 men by hacking limbs, necks, sides (below the rib cage), and insides and tops (pelvis) of thighs—before being killed. A preferred time to do so was after midnight while soldiers slept. One man would wake the camp, and another would run between the tents and inflict the injuries on the waking soldiers, from man to man, until he was either satisfied, or until he was killed. Even if not every man was killed immediately or later by the cuts, survivors could not stay and fight, and those who were unharmed were afraid to sleep. If the Dyo-dyo lost a man, it was no more than 1 man a night fighting this way.

They practiced their art at night, which improved night vision, sharpens the mind (since most people are groggy and tired at this hour) and made fighting at night easier. “Rusted iron doesn’t give you away like muzzle flash does.” “Learn to fight when most men yearn for the bed.” These are rules I learned when I was very young, which is why to this day, I prefer dark blades to shiny ones. And why my advanced class also got their training late at night.

The Dyo-dyo had two styles of fighting, the Eskrima is called “de cuerdas” and the empty hand is called “karate dyo-dyo”. There were other names, but I cannot remember them, they were in a

Visayan dialect. The Karate Dyo-dyo, is a local style of fighting and I cannot remember why the name was called that. But here is where the name “de cuerdas” originated.

In order to join the Dyo-dyo, you had to prove that you were tough, unafraid of death and pain and torture, and willing to push forward regardless of the danger involved. Before being accepted, there were different tests you went through, and the final one was to be beaten by all the members of the group. The last test would be held in a secret location, like a cave or a secluded area in the jungle. The new member was either blindfolded or not, but a rope is tied around his waist, and he is pulled between the group, armed with nothing but a stick. The group also have sticks and you could fight them back. You could stop the beating at any point by refusing to move forward, or stopping. But once you went back, you never got another chance. When you made it through, you were now a member of the sect, and received your new nickname. Each group knew next to nothing about the next group, and each group had its own martial arts teachers. The Dyo-dyo was replaced by the Katipunan, who had more money and better weapons and no requirement of suicide, but those who were originally Dyo-dyo were held in very high regard as superior fighters and fearless. Few Dyo-dyo members would admit to being so, as they were still wanted by the government and offended many Filipinos through their many murders. In fact, so respected was their fighting skill that

many Eskrima masters claimed publically to be Dyo-dyo members or trained by a dyo-dyo member.

Dyo-dyo members identified each other by referring to their Eskrima training as “de cuerdas” (“from the strings”), their nicknames, and scars on their bodies. If you encountered someone with a scar or some other marker, one could “start” a conversation by placing the right hand over the heart (a gesture very common with muslims as well as Eskrimadors) while greeting him, and if a certain hand sign was given, you knew he was a member. Then there were other signs. Some Muslims Dyo-dyo members would tattoo “la illaha il allah” on their bodies, so they could be identified as muslim for a muslim burial if they died in combat (tattooing is forbidden in Islam). Others would tattoo a Christian prayer if they were Christian. And then some others scarred or branded themselves. Outside of your own local group, however, few Dyo-dyo members knew each other, except for the leaders.

Over time, it became fashionable for some Eskrimadors to claim to have been a member, in order to give their Eskrima more notoriety. But there are still many Eskrimadors who did learn from a Pulau/Pulahan (another nickname, meaning “red”), but did not find out until the teacher was an old man. I am positive that wherever you hear this name, “De kwerdas”—the origin of the art is rooted in the Filipino Revolution, whether they were actually from the Dyo-dyo, or just inspired by them.

Fat-Cream FMA

Martial artists sure are lazy these days.

I was talking to a potential student yesterday who, after brown-nosing me to death about how much he admired my school and my philosophy and the Filipino fighting arts, he insults me by asking, “Do you have anything on the north side? The south area is pretty far...”

You must be frigging kidding. You are looking for this kind of martial arts to be right around the corner from you? You’re not willing to drive 20-30 minutes for a real martial arts class? Instead, what do you suppose would be the alternative: perhaps join another McDojo and raise your McDojo count to five? Obviously, you don’t want to study the real art.

Oh, I let him have it. In fact, I let many potential students “have it”. After all, I gotta be me, and these guys really need to get it raw, with no vaseline. I don’t sugar-coat anything—just ask my students. See, the martial artist of today is such a softie, he really doesn’t deserve to be called a “martial” anything these days. They are cut from the same cloth of lazy bastards who collect Tae Bo videos, Insane/P90X DVDs, dusty-but-brand-new exercise equipment, and fat-burning creams. The kind of guy who might purchase a gym membership and never use it. The kind of guy who eat super-sized meals at the fast food joint, but also take fat-burning-while-you-sleep pills and drink natural fat-zapping drinks. And never lose any damned weight.

Martial artists only stick with a program if they get quick rank and don’t have to train too hard and never spar. They like to

wear “I’m a fighter” tee shirts and put up pics on Facebook and talk about how pussified today’s martial artist is, yet never duke it out with another fighter. The martial artist of today attends seminars rather than schools, finds tournaments too safe yet does not engage in “unsafe” sparring events, studies youtube clips and instructional DVDs and books and is always good for a demo, but won’t spar for shit.

If they sold a cream that you could just squeeze a tube and rub on some stuff that gives fighting skill, they would never step foot in a dojo again.

I use to travel by bus (non-air conditioned bus, I might add) for hours every week to study with one of my Masters. I had to stay in Manila at least two or three days at a time, and slept on the floor of the school, or with a class mate when space was available. There are many people who have traveled 1 – 3 hours one way to study with me every month for years. Out of my Kung Fu students in the Intermediate class, none live near my school. Two travel 30 miles to class and make this trip 3 times a week, and have been doing this for several years.

If you want the art, you do what is necessary to learn it. I have had students come to class monthly from Canada and Texas. I have a student who use to save his money, and travel to California every few months just to train for a few days at a time. I have a student who lives in Washington, DC, and trains with me whenever I get to the East Coast. We talk by

phone at least twice a month and I guide his training by phone and email. He has flown out here a few times as well.

Like I said, many of today’s martial artist knows nothing about stuff like this.

And I will not try and convince a lazy student such as this guy to join my school. He will be lazy, impatient, unfocused and undisciplined, and will be a waste of my time. To make matters worse—he might not even be the kind of guy who will pay his tuition on time.

We all know guys like this. Guros everywhere do what they can to obtain and keep such students because we have bills to pay. There is nothing wrong with that; we all take undeserving students. Sometimes we even take them hoping that we just might be able to turn this lousy student into a good one; I was one of those. But in my “old” age of 42 (actually I turn 42 next week on the 12th), I have been there, done that and can forsee such wastes of floor space. So I make it difficult for such students to join by suggesting that they are not suitable matches for our school and in these cases I will recommend the shopping center McGuro.

Hey, as Harry Callahan would say, a man’s gotta know his limitations (nod to Patrick)—and as an experienced teacher, I know when a student is wasting his time as well as mine. You know the grumpy old fart who has all the secrets to the art but won’t share them? Well, I’ve become that guy. This is why I do not accept new students into my Kuntaw class,

and why I don't advertise as much. People watch too much damned TV and Youtube, and if I have one more asshole coming in my school

asking about buffalo wrestling and chicken blood and secret arts—I'm kicking his ass.

In the meantime, I'm working on this Fat-cream Filipino martial arts formula. We are gonna get rich off this stuff!

Typhoon Philippine School of Martial Arts

Full-Time Training

Guro Maurice Gatdula would like to share a new program he is offering at his school, and perhaps you may wish to offer a similar program in your school.

For those interested in learning to become a Filipino martial arts teacher, Guro Gatdula is offering the only residential Filipino martial arts Instructor Candidate program in Northern America. This is a full-time program to train future teachers in the Filipino arts of Kuntaw and Eskrima. [The Typhoon Philippine School of Martial Arts is pleased to announce a full-time training program for those interested in learning Filipino Fighting Arts and becoming a teacher of the arts. This is not a seminar series! You will attend classes 5 - 6 days a week, 1/2 day Mon - Fri, and all day on Saturdays. Your training will be rigorous and strenuous. However, your fighting skill will be unrivaled by any FMA program in existence. This is a TRUE Stick/Knife/Empty Hand program, as you will study Kuntaw and Eskrima.

Training is 10 months per year, with the months of July and December off, and after your second year you will be eligible for Instructorship. Tuition will not be charged past your second year if you are not ready for promotion

All students will learn from Guro Gatdula personally, and you will be introduced to all aspects of our style.

At the Typhoon Philippine School of Martial Arts, I have been planning a full-time, in-residence martial arts program. Just as one who wishes to enter Business, Law or Medicine would go to school full-time to pursue those goals, the martial arts should be no different. This is perhaps the only industry where so-called "experts" study a total of 10 - 100 hours of training to gain certification, but require his students to make commitments into the thousands for their certification! Is the goal of martial arts instructor not worth similar commitment to achieving a college degree? Remember that not only is the study of the martial arts a fulfilling career, it is a life-changing endeavor that can lead to better health, increased self-esteem and one of the best forms of self-protection in ways a gun or knife cannot!

And it's not for everyone. Some people really aren't interested in doing what needs to be done to become an expert in this craft. Few want to teach this art to entire student bodies, besides a few guys in their backyards... or to unknown people on the internet. In the martial arts school, you will take men who can barely pee straight and turn them into indomitable supermen. You will take female victims of domestic violence and turn them into strong women who will never be bullied by their men again. You will take kids who

were once the object of teasing and aggressive children, and pull them out of their shell—even turn them into meat-eating athletes. You can't do this while studying two hours a week.

So, for those who are serious about learning and excelling in the art—as it was meant to be studied, not through a superficial introductory course—we are pleased to introduce perhaps the first full-time, residence Filipino martial arts program in the U.S. You have the a mixture of 1/2 day training (4 hours) weekdays and full-day training (8 hours) on Saturdays, 10-months per year. I have not done this before, so I am estimating about 2 years of training to achieve instructorship if you study without a break—other than the two months we are off (December and July). This is for serious students only, ages 18 and up. I prefer that you came with a prior background in the martial arts, but it is not mandatory. Our tuition is \$3,990 per year or \$499/month, and will include all necessary training equipment. With this program you will be able to work and train, even if you only work part time. You are responsible for your own housing and food.

Training will be more rigorous than anything you ever experienced, but your skill will surpass anything you ever thought you would achieve as well. We have a four-part philosophy:

1. Skill development
2. Fighting experience and

- knowledge
3. Teaching philosophy and technique
4. Business model

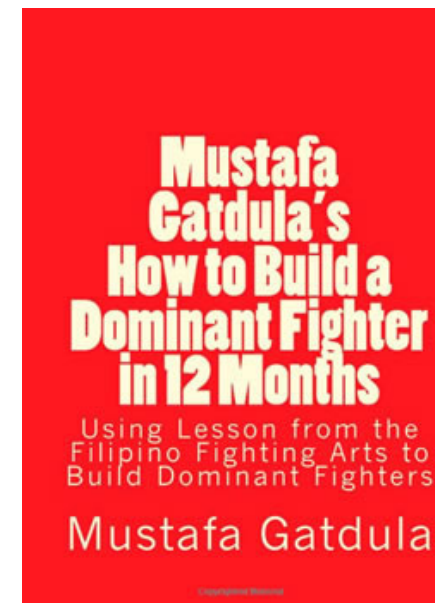
There is no Filipino martial arts program similar to this in Northern America. Serious students only inquire.

For more information, and to contact Guro Maurice Gatdula visit:
Typhoon Philippine School of Martial Arts

www.typhoonma.com

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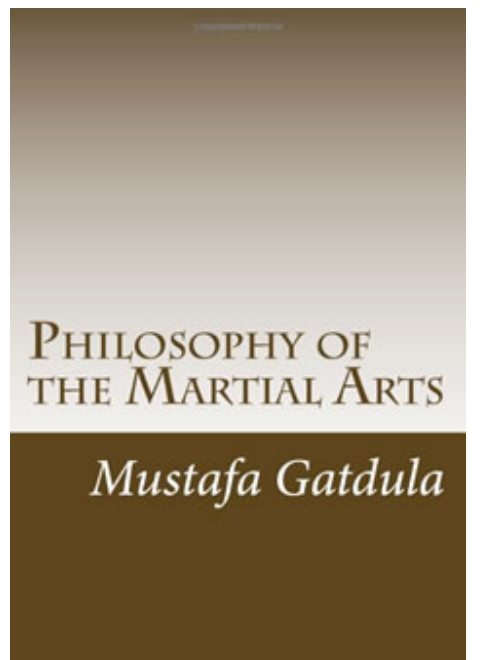
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School Submission

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](#)



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Submit your event whether - Seminar, Workshop, Training Camp, tournament, or Gathering - [Click Here](#)



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Advertising in the FMA Informative Website is FREE.

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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 submit material for either the FMA Informative Newspaper or an Issue [Click Here](#)

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