

# FMA

# Informative

Propagating the Filipino Martial Arts and the Culture of the Philippines

Informative Issue No. 84  
2013

## Words From a Modern-Day Warrior

Observations, Insights and Comments

By TheKuntaMan

# Fat-Cream Martial Arts



**Fat-Cream Martial Arts**

*Martial artists sure are lazy these days*

*7-11 Martial Arts*

*Sleeping on Floors*

**The Strongest Filipino Martial Arts Style**

**Can the Filipino Arts Sustain a Full-Time School?**

**Quantity? Quality? Which Is Better?**

**Signs That You're Attending a "McDojo"**

**"SECRETS" OF THE FILIPINO FIGHTING ARTS**

Words from a Modern-Day Warrior

[filipinofightingsecretslive.com](http://filipinofightingsecretslive.com)

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.

The authors, publisher and owner of this online magazine are not responsible for any injury, which may result from the instructions contained in this online magazine. Before embarking on any of the physical activities described in the magazine, the reader should consult his or her physician for advice regarding their individual suitability for performing such activity.

The ideas and opinions expressed in the FMA Informative online magazine are those of the authors or instructors being interviewed and are not necessarily the views of the publisher, editor or owner of the FMA Informative. The articles are the property of the author's that wrote them and cannot be used without the permission of the author.

The FMA Informative is for the promulgation and promotion of the Filipino martial arts and the Culture of the Philippines. NO issue can be printed and Sold for Monies, without the express permission of the Owner and Publisher of the FMA Informative.

Once again the FMA Informative got a hold of Guro Mustafa Gatdula known as "TheKuntawMan". And he gave permission to publish some more of his articles so the FMA Informative went to work.

Right off the bat the FMA Informative was very interested in "Fat-Cream Martial Arts" which is a 3 part article and the first part was printed in Issue #71. However the FMA Informative thought it would be very interesting to readers to be able to read all three parts and definitely it is an article that will give you some thoughts about not only Filipino martial arts, but martial arts in general.

Then the FMA Informative did a reprint of "The Strongest Filipino Martial Arts Style" which was in the FMA Informative newspaper Vol2 No7. Followed by "Can the Filipino Arts Sustain a Full-Time School?" "Quantity? Quality? Which Is Better?" and finally "Signs That You're Attending a "McDojo".

As a Bonus the FMA Informative has in the past talked about rank, titles etc, so the FMA Informative thought they would add the article "What On Earth Is a "Supreme" Grandmaster Anyway?" also written by Guro Gatdula.

So this issue as the first issue the FMA Informative did on some of the articles by Guro Gatdula will; once again inform you the reader of 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.

**"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](http://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](http://filipinofightingsecretslive.com)



## 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 softee, 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

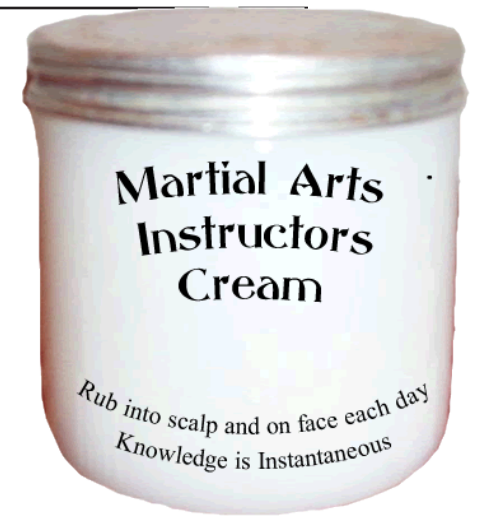
them? Well, I've become that guy. This is why I do not accept new students into my Kuntaw class, and why I don't advertise as much. People watch too much damned

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.

, I'm working on this Fat-cream FMA formula. We are gonna get rich off this stuff!

**Only ! \$29.95**

Special offer order 2 and pay only shipping cost for the second jar.



### 7-11 Martial Arts

AKA, "*Burger King Grandmasters*"

AKA, "*The Whopper*"

AKA, "*Slurpee de Mano*"

easy to find, and when you find it, no one will hold your hand so you can learn, excel and achieve rank in it. If finding a good school was as easy as opening the Yellow Pages to the "K" or "M" section and looking between "Jewelers" and "Kennels", or between "Marital Counselors" and "Masonry"... and then picking the one closest to you—or picking the one who has the biggest "FREE" wording on their ad—wouldn't we all be Black Belters under great Masters?

REAL martial arts is not designed for just anyone. It isn't for the lazy. It isn't for the broke. It isn't for the impatient, the hot-headed, the arrogant, and unfocused. It is for the people who want it. Not just those who want to learn, but those who want it so bad they would rearrange their lives to learn from the right teacher after looking for a needle in a haystack. They would do without some things in order to afford it. They would quit jobs, not accept the 10% differential in order to stay on a shift that allows them to



Martial Arts Brothers and Sisters, we have to get out of this mentality. The real martial arts was never intended to be convenient. It wasn't designed so that just anyone can have access to it. It isn't

train. They would travel for hours week after week and even sleep on a classmate's couch, in order to get two days of training. They would train when they're injured—just work around their injury. They often will choose the life of a martial artist, than to stay married to the woman who just doesn't understand how important this role is to you.

The martial arts defines who we are; our occupations are jobs we take just to pay bills—including tuition. Hell, if we could, we wouldn't work. If training could pay the bills, how many of us would do nothing else but train? Even if it meant we couldn't afford any luxuries, and not much more than the basic necessities? My die-hard martial artists are the worst-dressed, old car drivingest people I know. We don't give a damn about retirement: When you make a living doing what you dreamed of doing all your life, you will never retire. Make a living with your passion, and you will never have to work for the rest of your life.

Which of us wouldn't sacrifice for this? The ability to train daily, and spread the art and make our living doing it?

There are many martial artists out here who like to call themselves "martial artists", but they would give up nothing in order to do it. For them, martial arts training is not much more than a yoga class, or a softball team. Sure, you love it. Sure, you've been doing it all your life. But it does not define who you are. People don't look at you and say, "There goes, Mustafa, the pool player!" or "There goes Mike, the administrative assistant!" No more than some people would refer to you as "the Baptist" or "the Catholic"... unless that lifestyle truly defines who you are, people do not know you by that characteristic.

There are many who love the art, and some even make their living with it—but it does not define them. They make no sacrifices for it. If the school was constantly riding the red/black line - they'd close it. They will not miss any meals in order to do it. On a free day off, the first thing in their mind is not "goody, that means I can train all day!" Martial arts for these people is an extracurricular activity, and for others it is an occupation. It is not a way of life, as there is little more than just do what you do, and then move on to other things. School owners, especially. Many of us do not research our art to the point that it consumes us. Yeah, we may purchase books and DVDs and attend seminars—but are we truly researching the art? I have observed that the most knowledgeable martial artists I have met have been poor martial artists. They have made the sacrifice, and often that sacrifice is

at the expense of marriages and a good income. However, they did the dirty work, of experimenting and testing and training and practicing... day in and day out, until mastering the art. A good many martial artists have not done much more than move from the couch to the DVD to the cushions. Probably looking for the remote to press "rewind" in order to get a second look at that neat technique...

I would say that about a third of the inquiries into my school have been students who live out of the area. And I hate to admit it, but most of the out of town inquiries are more likely to come and train with me, than the guys who are inquiring who live within 90 miles of my school. Why is that?

I have a theory. Most of the out of town Filipino martial arts people I have trained live in a town where there IS no Filipino martial arts. So, they value it more and will travel to find a teacher when they see a school they like. And forget what you've heard about Asian martial artists, do you know who the most diligent and loyal students I have met come from?

#### Australia

Europe is close second. Here in America, we have more Filipino martial arts Grandmasters and more Filipino martial arts schools than perhaps the Philippines itself. But for some reason, we still have the least dedicated Filipino martial arts students who will never study the Filipino martial arts if DVDs and youtube were outlawed. Filipino martial arts students would rather take a seminar a few times a year, than study week after week with a local

master. If you are anything less than an Filipino martial arts celebrity master, you might as well advertise as a "Karate/Kung Fu" teacher, like I do.

It seems the more access we have to it, the less we value it. And then when we find it, we will only study it if the tuition is \$10 cheaper than the next guy—or the school is a little closer than the other guy. We will travel 1,000 miles to meet some woman we meet on Match.com, but we won't travel 100 miles to study with a master. And instead, we'll study with the weak Sensei with the add-on Filipino martial arts certificate, because he's closer or cheaper. Amazing.

Then you have the guys with the background in another art, but take seminars for our Filipino martial arts certificate. And did you do as much training for the Filipino martial arts certification as you did your Karate? Hell no. Maybe it took 3 years, but you only took the seminar 4 or 5 times a year - if THAT much. So, now the art that is so admired by much of the Martial Arts world is reduced to the level of a side hustle—sandwiched between Tae Kwon Do or Kenpo classes and After School Karate.

I was invited to lunch with a certain well-known Grandmaster who taught Filipino martial arts along side a bunch of other styles. I came early, to see what was taught in his seminar. What I saw was a roomful of guys and gals, splitting their training time up between lousy Muay Thai, Silat, and Filipino martial arts. Basically, we watched the Grandmaster demonstrate techniques, and then the groups broke out into smaller groups that practiced what they could remember of the demo, and

just as people started to get it... it was time to put down the sticks and play patty cake (sorry, also Wing Chun). About 6 or 7 Filipino martial arts teaching certificates were issued that seminar, and I felt like I needed to vomit. It sure looked like a roomful of beginning Filipino martial arts guys to me. That includes the Grandmaster.

In case you were wondering, I gave my opinion of what I saw in the parking lot, then in the car, and then at the restaurant. Needless to say, I was not invited back, and the students I had that were also part of that group quit from my school. I no longer accept current students from that organization.

---

**Like I said**, if I could ever figure out a way to invent a cream that you could rub on and instantly become proficient at Eskrima - These guys would never step into a dojo again.

#### Sleeping on Floors

It is said that the student who sleeps on floors is learning the real lessons from his Master. He is the one who spends idle time with his teacher, learning the lessons that are normally not taught in class. He treasures the conversations with his teachers and hears the inner thoughts this teacher has about the martial arts and the role of the martial artist. These things are usually not recalled in the middle of a martial arts lesson, where the teacher is mostly thinking of the technical side of the art. Especially in today's martial arts gym, where we are halfway thinking of our students as customers:

Seems to me that the Filipino martial arts community is hurting for serious Filipino martial arts people. I swear by God, I mean that. We have too many dabblers posing as Guros and serious students. Too many part time Filipino martial artists. Not enough people who want to learn so bad they would travel across town in order to study. And that level of respect for the art is reflected in the skill level I see when I look around at our Filipino martial arts "Masters" and "Guros". The few hard core Guros I see are teaching out of parks and backyards because they have a difficult time keeping students who claim to want to learn. We are no more loyal and

dedicated to learning good martial arts, than we are loyal to the neighborhood 7-11. Wherever we can find a better deal, closer location, or quicker in-and-out, we will change where we get our slurpees and newspapers from in a second.



**Only ! \$19.95**

the money they pay helps us keep the lights on, feeds our children, and pays our mortgage. Therefore, we happen to know that too much lecture in class means our pupils are not burning calories and learning new stuff, and they might go elsewhere.

You might laugh at this, but I knew the community was in trouble when I actually lost a student to a "24 Hour Family Fitness" Kickboxing class. After a sparring session, the student emailed me and said, "Guro, I'm sorry, but I got popped in the nose last night and I realized that I signed up to learn how to fight—not actually en-

gage in fighting..." Don't laugh, many of you have lost students for similar reasons. Just not all martial arts students are man enough to confront you (even by email) and say, I don't like sparring.

I have slept on the floor of every master I have ever studied from in my life, with the exception of two men—a Tiger/Crane Master I learned from in Taiwan when I was 9, and an Espada at daga master I studied from in Dau, Philippines. As a result of that weak relationship, I barely remember their styles and I don't remember their names. But my teachers whom I spent day in and day out with - I know things



about them some of their own children don't know. A few nights ago, I was going through the footwork patterns of my Jow Ga master, Chin Yuk Din, with my intermediate students. As they practiced, I told them of the changes I made, the year I made them, and the first 5 students I taught them to. I also informed them of when my Sifu made his changes, and the year he made them: it was 1983, and I was 14 years old. I explained the old way, the "*new*" (1984) way, and the new "*new*" way, which I made in 1992.

Why is this important? Because students need to understand the logic in the art they are learning, and it sometimes gives value to know the historical and creative DNA of the system you are studying. Some of the changes I made were based on conversations I had with my Sifu, some were based on the White Eyebrow he taught me as well as his friend who also taught me, and some were skills and preferences I developed as a Kuntaw fighter. Does this information change how they execute the techniques I teach them? Not really, but it certainly enhances their knowledge and helps the students understand why we do what we do and give value to what they are doing. Who knows? Maybe one of them will want to change some of

it back?

I always advise my students to struggle in the path of their art. I know it's not always easy. Sometimes you have marital problems and don't feel like training. There are the times that you have monetary problems. You may feel like you're not getting any better, you gained weight, have medical issues or you just don't have time. I had a student who, after competing successfully - even in a contact tournament - joined a boxing gym and lost a match to a beginning boxer. He got depressed, joined several other schools, and then returned after a short hiatus. When he returned to class, he told me, "Guro, I've been all over the place and you have a wierd approach to the martial arts. But no one has your philosophy to the art, and no one's method is better." Or something like that. He is a reader to this blog so I will let him comment if my version is too different to what he actually said.

This type of stuggle and prioritizing of the art in your life builds character. My teachers have seen me sacrifice a career in the Federal government, bypass a formal education, good jobs, marriages even... for this art. Those who understand this type of pursuit of something you love know how it changes you. It cannot be dupli-

cated with convenience and easily reached training programs. Look at the musician who sleeps in the rain, plays on street corners, writes music in the coffee shops while drinking the one cup of coffee he can afford. No musician is quite like this guy. And he wouldn't give up playing that guitar for all the money in the world. And how the guys who do open mics and takes lessons he finds on Craigslist would kill to have his skills and ability. One guy will tell some woman he loves her, but then you eat peanut butter sandwiches in order to mail her and her children money every month, travel 200 miles by bus to see her every few months when you can afford to see her - and she knows who loves her the most. There is something to be gained by placing your craft at the top of the list of priorities - over cruises, over romance, over that new convertible you are saving for - and it can't be duplicated through a seminar or DVD, and certainly not learned in 24 Hour Family Fitness. There are those who would only do this art if it was easy to get and easy to get to, and they will never be equal to the ones who sleep on floors to get to the feet of their teachers. Some get it, some don't.

## The Strongest Filipino Martial Arts Style

*If you're looking for the strongest Filipino martial art style, I have it.*

*If you are looking to be the toughest Eskrimador - to be the most dominant fighter on the streets - look no further than my gym.*

*If you want a Guro who will guarantee that you will be the best fighter walking the yard, I'm it.*

*Why do Filipino martial arts people claim to be doing traditional Filipino martial arts, yet are afraid to make these claims?*

Have you ever spent any time with a Filipino martial arts Master? Have you ever gotten anything less than what I stated above? In my entire life, I have only met one Filipino martial arts Master who did not tell me he and his style were the best, and that person is Grandmaster Carlito Lañada. But don't believe for a second that Master Lito was a humble man; he is the guy who doesn't "recognize" any style of Kuntaw that is not of his lineage and he questions the validity of any Kuntaw he encounters if they do not display any kind of strength.

And please don't think I am criticizing Mr. Lañada. He is doing what I expect any self-respecting Filipino Master to do: Say that he is the best. He also has the skills to back it up.

Something you have to understand about Filipino martial culture - we brag. We are confident to the point of arrogance. Only tekkie Filipinos who mousse their hair, or marry White girls, or don't want to be seen as too Filipino, or drive only Japanese cars, or have smooth arms with Japanese character tattoos, or participate in Posing Pinoy contests, or spend more money on their cars than they send home - think that Filipino martial arts people are not supposed to act tough. They've been watching too much David Carridine's "Kung Fu" and think that we have to act like neutered monks to be real martial

artists.

These are the same Filipinos who read American martial arts magazines and then try to emulate what they see the porners do. They are the guys who think the Arnis from the province is not exotic enough, so they put on dresses and dance around campfires and talk about how we all should share and no one is better than the other let's just hold hands in some seminar somewhere and exchange hickies and take lots of pictures for Facebook.

Pusses.

The Chinese martial arts is perhaps the only community I've seen where people talk like that, and even in the CMA community, they have contests to see who is the best.

Oh, wait. But we have contests in the Filipino martial arts too!

So what's the problem, Mustafa?

Nothing. See, in the Filipino martial arts, the Masters brag. Like I said, in the Pilipino community (lol), you will never meet an Eskrima Master who will tell you he's just "okay". If you meet an Eskrimador who tells you that he's not all that good, believe him - because trust me on this, he isn't. That's why he thinks there is something wrong with saying that you're the best. Men like Ben Lema, Cacoy Cañete, Boggs Lao,

Nap Fernandez have done this way too long and fought way too many people and beaten way too many people to diminish all that effort and hard work by saying that they're just "okay".

"Screw that, if you want to learn how to fight, join my school - I guarantee no one will fuck with you." These are the words Master Boggs Lao told me when I met him in 1988. That, plus a day of fighting against his Black Belters the day after, was all that was needed to convince me that I'd walked into the right gym. (Actually it was a gazebo in Timog Park) And that is the kind of teacher who will make you a dominant fighter... A guy who is so confident that he will tell you, "I will make you a better fighter than that bozo down the street." See, in the Philippines, teachers will walk to your place and ask if you'd like to have a match. So if you talk tough, you'd better be able to fight tough...

And here we arrive at my point. Filipino Masters talk crap because they can back it up, they have backed it up, and they are willing to back it up again. They talk crap because they have paid their dues and have earned the right to talk all the trash they want. They talk trash because they have taken ownership of this style and are fully aware that some people won't like it, but won't do a damn thing about it. I talk trash in my town because I can and will back

it up; I have earned the right to say that I have the strongest Filipino martial arts in town.

So, a small lesson to the young man (I know he must be a kid) who left me the nasty voice mail this morning: Not only am I willing to back up what I say, neither you nor your Guro will show up at my door and prove that I don't have the strongest Filipino martial arts. Come on down, I even promise not to injure anyone. But something about challenges apparently your Guro has not taught you. When you challenge someone, you don't do it anonymously. You don't \*67 when calling them. You don't invite them down. When

you want to challenge someone, you show up at their door (or call them) and request a match. Not on the internet. Not in front of a whole bunch of people. Use your real name, and you don't say stuff like "post a video on youtube so we can see what you're made of" (last guy before him) or "come to my teacher's tournament". You show up with sticks in hand, or gloves in hand, and you ask for a match.

And you don't ever challenge a grown man when you're just a boy. Just might get your teacher's ass whipped undeservedly. Reminds me of a saying, that when a group of Masters discuss

fighting, they are generally in agreement, and when they don't - the dispute is settled in 60 seconds. When a group of the Masters' students discuss fighting, they won't agree on anything and the dispute will drag on all day long. Filipino martial art teachers who brag are doing something very cultural for our arts. It is not just a martial arts thing; it's just in the Filipino's nature to be cocky. But be careful who you call out. Plus, I think I have a student in your age group who would be glad to show you what he's made of. But you'd have to be man enough to reveal who you are first...

I believe, is where most martial artists fail. Nothing happens until you make a buck. You can post Youtube clips until you're blue in the face, but you have to drive traffic towards your classroom.

4. Decide if you will have an empty handed program or not. You don't have to have everything, trust me. I don't see Boxing gyms adding weapons and kiddie classes, and I don't see Fencing academies trying to figure out an empty hand component. But whatever you decide, make sure you have done the research and that you have a solid, strong program available. Too many FMA people are still "exploring", and they don't have that "master's expertise" aura about them. Don't pad your resume with a bunch of stuff you have only scraped the surface of. Don't teach what you "dabble" in. Be a true expert at what you do, and decide what type of expert you will be. Nothing will kill a business faster than having a bunch of people believe you are not one of the best.

5. Get yourself a good business plan and a website, along with a good cheap location. You do not have to be in an expensive loca-

tion, and you don't have to be in a extremely busy location. But with good advertising, reputation and website, you will draw students. You should also have a place that is affordable!

6. You must either have financial backing to keep you floating until you arrive at success, or you must have the drive to keep going until you get yourself there. I have seen many good martial arts teachers fail because they lacked one or the other. Does this mean I have never had financial problems? Of course not, I have moved out of expensive shopping centers and taught in parks until my enrollment allowed me to get back into another commercial location. I have lived in a hotel with two young children (I was a single father for 6 years) while teaching and working a low-paying job at night (and sneaking my babies into the job) before "breaking through" to full-time teaching. Believe me, I am not a very educated or smart man—my wife proofreads, edits and even rewrites everything I post here—but I will do this art until I die. And I will always have a school. If I can do it, I know you can. But you

have to have the fighting spirit to see yourself through the difficulties and the faith to know that you will succeed. Too many martial artists do not, and so they end up tap-dancing in Tae Kwon Do schools for \$75 a pop and certifying beginners as experts to make ends meet. And you shouldn't have to accept 5 year old students, sublease in Kenpo and TKD schools, or spend your entire martial arts career in a community center to have a school.

Of the Filipino martial arts Masters I have met that have made a decent living with their arts, none have a college degree, and most speak poor English. By our standards they should not be successful in the business, but they are. Take a good look at what you would want to remember you did when your life passes before your eyes, and if you would have rather have spent it teaching the arts, pursue it. The Philippine arts are as valid as any mainstream martial art, and there are possibly millions of people who want to learn it. Be one of the teachers ready to take them in when they are ready to train.

---

## Can the Filipino Arts Sustain a Full-Time School?

Let me answer this question with the short version, and then the long version.

**The Short Version:** YES.

**The Long Version:**

I have been hanging around MartialTalk discussing whether or not a full-time Filipino martial arts school is possible... and whether they are needed, bad for the art, blah blah blah. If you check it out, you may notice a few feelings getting hurt, insecurities coming out, and things of that nature, but the conversation and feedback is pretty good. But at the same time, it is also pretty sad.

There seems to be the belief that the Filipino arts cannot survive in a commercial school, unless it is a side dish to something else. There are several reasons why, but the most bothering of them all is that teachers of the art believe this—and it is reflected in how they treat the very arts they teach. In most Filipino martial

arts teacher's resume profiles, the Filipino arts are just one of the arts they do and are often just "sticks and knives" to them. Even the ones who do empty hand use another style for their main form of empty handed fighting. Because of this, I would say that the only way the Philippine arts will survive commercially in this country are (1) as watered-down martial arts, or (2) as a specialty, niche art to be given up on DVD and in one-day seminars.

However, there is light at the end of the tunnel.

I would like to offer my advice to those who would like to take a stab at making this art a full-time job and career:

1. First, you must have good skill at the art. There are just far too many mediocre martial artists and fighters representing the Filipino martial arts - as well as other arts - and no one will stand out who does not leave behind people im-

pressed with the art and the artists. If you want to do this full-time, develop your basic skill and train until your palms bleed and your forearm swells up. This is the first rule to success in the martial arts. Good marketing and slick sales speak only gets you so far...

2. You must be committed to staying on the path of promoting good Filipino Martial Arts. This means having the discipline to not add "After School Karate" and "Sticks and Kicks", just to make a buck. If your mission statement is to promote solid, traditional FILIPINO Martial Arts, anything that does not drive towards that direction is working against your mission. Don't do it. Resist the easy money and build on your passion.

3. Study Sales and Marketing. Learn how to promote and persuade. If you don't like doing so, get someone who does. But a business with no sign and no effective advertising is like a car with no wheels. It's just sitting there. This,



## Quantity? Quality? Which Is Better?

### That is the question.

But, before you answer with the clichéd answer, “Of course! Quality is always better!” - I want you to consider the following.

Quality technique is only useful when it has been trained enough (quantity) to have power, speed and timing.

Now consider the answer to this question: Does practice make perfect? Is practice the key to perfection and proficiency in the martial arts?

Sounds like “quantity” to me... But listen to my answer:

No, practice does not make perfect. Only perfect practice makes perfect.

Doesn't matter that you do hundreds of abaniko strikes per training sessions; if you train a weak, sloppy abaniko, your skill at using the abaniko will be weaker.

Now, we return to the original question: Which is better—quantity or quality?

And my answer?

Neither. You must have ample amounts of training with the right techniques, the right way. And then you must have more training with better techniques than your opponent.

It is simply not enough to have a well-thought out system of fighting. Who gives a damn if you have an excellent way to stop a jab, if you don't have the power and timing to apply that technique. And if your opponent has an extremely powerful, but sloppy jab—but you don't have half the amount of strength to stop that sloppy jab—my friend, you are about to experience

the three-shoe syndrome: Two on your feet, and one in your bottom.

That's the nicest way for me to put it; he's about to kick your butt. (*It's Ramadan, no naughty words for me!*)

We must keep this very important (*and wordy, 260 to be exact*) fact in mind when training ourselves and our fighters. You must ensure that your fighters are applying their techniques as cleanly as possible, with the correct type of speed needed for its use, and with the correct amount and type of power. And then they need to apply it enough that the technique becomes thoughtless and instinctive. It must be as natural as answering your name when asked. Being able to demonstrate it in front of a group of people is completely irrelevant. Being able to pull it off against various opponents under various formats is imperative.

A gentleman asked me to take a look at his group's (it isn't a school, believe that) “Apprentice Instructor” “test”, and give my opinion. I think he was halfway asking for my approval as he is a follower of this blog and may be translating it to German if we could get together. But I must be honest, and one thing that honesty has in common with a butt-kicking - if they ask for it, you must graciously grant that request. At least, that's my stance on that issue...

I went to the Organization's website (like I said, it is not a school) and I read the language

This training program is a unique chance for martial artists who do not have the opportunity or time to train regularly with a

qualified instructor of Filipino Martial Arts in their vicinity.

Basically, what this gentleman had enrolled in was a crash-course for people who lack the resources and commitment to become a real Filipino martial artist. Hey, I want to be a millionaire lawyer. But I don't have the money to pay for law school, and I am not smart enough to get into one. Any option I find that will certify me to become a lawyer in “50 hours of instruction over 6 weekend seminars” is a fraud. Period.

I did not need to see the video, and to be honest I watched about 30 seconds of it before I turned it off. As I tell many of you, if you've seen one, you've seen them all. They all have a background in some Karate style, then they “gateway” into the Filipino martial arts through JKD/Kali or Modern Arnis, then branch off to more exotic styles, or they stay within those two. A few will actually go to more traditional Filipino martial arts styles like Doce Pares or Kalis Ilustrisimo or Lightning Scientific, but mostly, everyone is doing the same thing, and they have very little differences one style from the other. Unless you are advocating committing to a school long enough to secure a strong foundation, and then testing yourself on people outside your organization—whether you call this “distance learning”, supplementing, cross-training - you are all doing the same thing.

And this is why people have only argued with me on the internet. Because I am a traditional teacher and the only people who have the nads to drive to Sacramento and call me to the carpet are

people who agree with me. Even Filipino martial arts guys right here in Sacramento won't do it.

The gentleman was hoping to convince me that the “quality” of his stick work was superior or somehow up to standard. Sure, they looked clean, but so does a baton twirler at my kid's football games. And dare I say it—the girls are better. The techniques seem valid when the feeder comes at you a little faster than people in “other” seminars. Your Guros encourage “hit them if they don't block”, so the techniques seem like they'd work. Some of you go home with bruises and lumps, so you believe your certificate is worth a little more than the rest of the “seminar” guys you believe you are different from.

But I have an opinion about what constitutes a good punch, a good technique, and “valid technique” - and the difference between you and me, is that I will prove to you in person exactly what that means.

So I am telling you without

hesitation, that no skill is valid skill without thousands upon thousands of strikes - at least hundreds per session - and no knowledge is valid that has not been put to the test by doubters, many times, over several years. And several years of such training and testing, too.

Do you know how long it takes one of my students to get in 50 hours of classroom training time? About 3 to 4 months. And you are taking a year to do it. It doesn't matter how much practice you do on your own, you're barely in kindergarten. So you can write your ABCs a little cleaner than the guys who go to seminars and watch videos and your organization is pretty good at making sure you have good handwriting with a stick. But to call oneself a “Guro” is akin to calling oneself a scholar in the martial arts, and no amount of distance training is sufficient.

Do you know what I consider “distance” training? A guy who comes to my school from another place and stays for several days or even weeks at a time. And

because he chooses this method of training, it will take him a decade before I will consider him serious enough for teaching. Because what do you say about a kid who says he wants to go to law school, but won't move to a city with a law school?

You'd say he's just blowing hot air.

This Organization is not in the business of developing serious Filipino martial arts Guros; they are in the business of certifying people who lack the commitment and will to become real Guros. They say it themselves.

Filipino martial arts Guros are not determined by organizations. They are determined by neighboring schools and opponents. That's all their is to it. Those of you who wish to establish yourself should seek out other fighters—not necessarily Filipino martial arts fighters, either - to test your skills.

And before you do so, I hope you have a high quantity of quality training before shadowing someone's doorstep.

## Signs That You're Attending a “McDojo”

There is a joke, that one in every group of four friends is an idiot. So, if you have three friends, and none of them are idiots... you're it.

The sad thing about people who belong to fast-food martial arts schools is that they are always the last to know that their school is a McDojo. Well, never fear! TheKuntawMan is about to help you figure out if you're one of them. Without wasting time, let's get started.

Your school is awarding the Black Belt to people who can't

fight. That's right. The only martial artists who say that martial arts is not all about fighting are martial artists who can't fight. The Black Belt means that one is an expert, and “expert” means you know what you're doing. Not what you know - what you're doing. If they are producing people who can't do what they are supposedly experts in, and lowering the standard of what an expert is - that school is a McDojo. At

a bare minimum, a Black Belter should be able to defend himself on demand. Not speak in theories. Not give demonstrations. Defend himself.

Children are getting the Black Belt. This is such a given,





no explanation is necessary. If a child can attain Black Belt in your school, (in my Cobra-kai karateka voice) “Your teacher’s Karate is SHIT, Russo!”

Required uniforms change as you move up in rank. The uniform has nothing to do with the school or the skills. I will spare you the speech of my opinion about whether or not uniforms are even necessary; but this practice is nothing more than a way to make more money. A close second reason is to motivate students to work harder to wear the esteemed uniform (which I think is silly, especially if we’re talking about adults). Distinguishing students from instructors, however, is understandable.

Musical forms and XMA. Okay, you’re probably confused.



[To See Video - Click Here](#)

Here, let me help you out:

Pretty hilarious, huh? Actually this guy was a lot better than many others I’ve seen. Well, we don’t need much of an explanation for this one either.

Your teacher barely mentions his own teacher, and his teacher’s teacher. Commercial schools usually employ instructors, so often there is no lineage to discuss. The owner of the school is not necessarily the teacher, and the teacher has no familial tie to

another master. Whenever there is an absence of a family tree in a martial arts school, respect and loyalty become very selfish, self-absorbed and egotistical. When a teacher credits his teachers, and makes references to the lessons he learned from them—he is not taking credit for his knowledge, but giving credit to the ones who taught him. In the absence of it, you become like the only child whose parents do not deserve respect (in his mind, of course).

Testing is given almost as quickly as you learn the material. My school does not issue tests in the way most schools do. When students are ready for promotion, I simply begin teaching them the next level’s material. In the commercial school, they believe that students will quit from boredom if they are not promoted and rewarded fast enough. As a result, those schools promote as soon as possible—often, before the student has even had a chance to master the new techniques. There is a mutual reward too: Those exams cost money \$\$\$.

A whole lot of “yes sir/no sir”. They call this “respect”. But respect in the martial arts is so much more than acting like you’re in the military. To these martial arts teachers who have very shallow knowledge of the philosophy of the art (and their equally misinformed students and students’ parents), they don’t have much more to teach outside of that. The easiest thing you can do to have the appearance of a “disciplined” school is to have people bowing and blurting out “Yes sir!” But come on, some of these guys are grown ups. Are you

serious?

Using teenagers as instructors. To them, the martial arts is not much more than a physical skill. As long as they can demonstrate and teach a punch, kick or kata, in the commercial dojo’s mind, a KID can teach a class. If I have to explain this to you any deeper - you should consider a different business.

High on technique and drills, low on strategy. Now, it’s not put here to get you to judge your school’s curriculum. I am simply saying that teachers of Mc-Dojos usually have very little experience and can only teach from a curriculum standpoint and not from experience. So the student wants to know about how to deal with a boxer. The experienced teacher tells you how to beat the boxer with the same techniques he’d been showing you all along. The inexperienced teacher will drop his main art and show you something he learned in a boxing seminar. The worst fighters try to learn everything under the sun because they never learned to adapt, and they never learned their art at the deeper levels (aka, “never bring a knife to a gunfight”). The experienced fighters will have you winning gun fights with a knife.

Titles, titles and more titles! I’m referring to your teacher. If he is big on titles: Guro, Punong Guro, Dakilang Guro, Tuhon, Datu, Supreme Grandmaster, Great Grandmaster, Great Great Grandma Grandmaster... then he’s usually low on skills. McDojos, even those who aren’t very good at making money (no one said that all McDojos were lucrative), love to make themselves sound big. Why “sound” big? Because their skills

speak softly.

Associations and long resumes and certifications out the yin yang. When you’re weak, you find strength in numbers. Numbers of Black Belts and degrees. Numbers of associations that validate you. Numbers of people who pat you on the back and tell others that you’re good. Bottom line, the best fighters you will ever meet only represent a few arts, they have only a few teachers and peers, and they don’t need validation because their knowledge and skill speaks for itself. A Filipino saying is that a martial artist’s reputation is best when spread by his opponents, not his friends. Perhaps you should reflect on that one, because apparently your teacher has not. In the 30 plus years I have studied the art, the best fighters I have met came from little-known schools

and styles, while the worst fighters came from the most well-known schools and styles.

You have been studying for more than two years and you don’t feel like you can lick any man in the room. The martial arts shouldn’t take ten years to make a fighter out of you. But many schools simply do not have the recipe to making strong, dominant fighters. MOST schools do not have this recipe for success. After two years of training two or three hours a week, you should be stronger, more fit, hit harder, and more agile than the average drunk or weed-smoking thug on the street. So if you don’t feel like you can fight, why are you paying this guy?

It took you longer to get your high school diploma than it took to get your Black Belt.

They like to say “Black Belt is the beginning”. It is... but only if your Black Belt is awarded to beginners. There is so much to learn in the martial arts, and if a teacher is bestowing the expert status on people who are not experts - or he thinks they are experts, but they have a high school diploma’s level of knowledge—he or his own knowledge is lacking. Sounds like you need to stop fooling with the kiddie karate school and find yourself a real Master.

Hope this article didn’t shame you. I am only shaming the ones who know better and are trying to fool the student. It is never too late to find a good teacher, but you must first admit to yourself that you don’t already have one - if you don’t. Hope this article was eye-opening (*or at least made you smile*).

### Mustafa Gatdula’s How to Build a Dominant Fighter in 12 Months:\

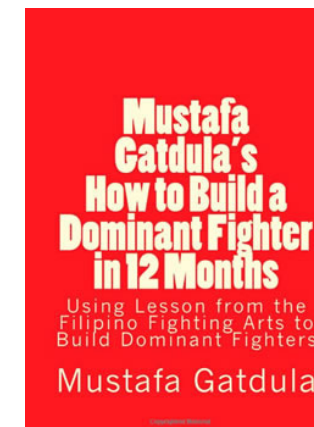
#### Using Lesson from the Filipino Fighting Arts to Build Dominant Fighters

By Mustafa Gatdula

This book is for Martial Arts teachers, coaches and fighters. We are NOT teaching the martial arts in this book. Instead, I give you the steps needed to modify your system and teaching/training process to produce the highest quality martial arts fighters. Using this method, which is based in the Philippine Martial Arts, can enhance any martial arts program—regardless of style.

[Paperback] Price: \$29.00

[Amazon.com](#) - Click Here



### Philosophy of the Martial Arts:

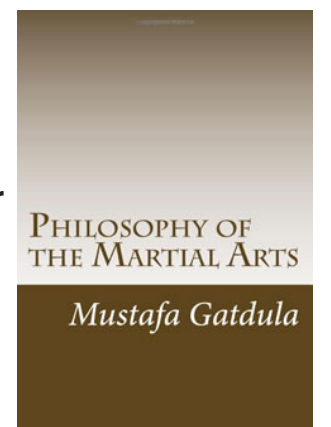
#### From the Perspective of the Philippine Martial Arts Practitioner

By Mustafa Gatdula

Collection of essays about the philosophy of the martial arts, from the point of view of the Philippine Martial Artist. Some essays can be found on the Filipino Fighting Secrets Live blog.

[Paperback] Price: \$29.00

[Amazon.com](#) - Click Here





### ***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.



To submit Forums [Click Here](#). To submit advertisement for products and/or Services [Click Here](#)

### ***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 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.