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My village, my people...

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My Village, My People...

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Post Script**Glossary, Names and Terms**

The FMA Informative was fortunate enough to be introduced to Anthony Kleeman a Grandmaster of Cacoy Doce Pares Eskrima World Federation through Grandmaster Catherine “Kitty” Canete-Knight the Vice President of International Affairs for the Cacoy Doce Pares World Federation.

The preceding piece “My village, my people,” was written in its entirety by Anthony Robert Kleeman in 2011. Take note that there is a certain passage which is credited to Frank Herbert has also been used and is noted during the story.

This story is fictional, however it is believed that the reader will, “once starting to read the story,” will become involved and imagine that the story could in fact be a story of truth. But the FMA Informative will leave this to the mind and the imagination of its readers.

Anthony Robert Kleeman

I have been involved in the Filipino martial arts starting in 1976 but really began appreciating and getting into these arts in the early 1980’s.

“My Village my People” was written while I was in Cebu in the summer of 2010 when I attended the first Cacoy Doce Pares Hall of Fame and seminar series being conducted at that time. It is intended to be a chapter in a book that I have been writing for several years now...as to when the book will be finished is anybody’s guess.

Many times over the years while teaching, students would ask questions about the ‘old day’s’ and about the use of these Art’s in the Pre-Spanish society that existed in the island chain we know today as the Philippines.

The inspiration for “My Village my People” came as a outgrowth of reading stories from historic legend’s (Lapu-lapu and Spanish chroniclers etc) that related to historic battles and through starting to study historical accounts, writings from anthropologists and knowing the historic context amidst which the society in the Visaya’s flourished at that time.

Many of the Island people of that time were fishermen and traders and there were also other people that would prey of these fishermen, their families and their villages, and so it seemed natural that developing a story that related to the dynamics that existed at that time would be a good starting point for this story.

The story is as historically accurate as I could make it though, it is not possible to know at this late historic date as to how accurate or inaccurate the action may have been; but all references to weapons, customs, beliefs, names and the actions taken by the people of the village and the sea raiders, are historically accurate for the place and period.

This piece is meant to convey a sense of the importance of the native fighting systems to the people of the Visaya’s during this savage period in their history, and furthermore to illustrate a connection between the early days in the evolution of these native martial traditions through to this, our present time.

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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Foreword: The following piece is written as a work of Historical Fiction; there is no intention to depict any particular historical action or any individual, either living or dead, but rather it is an attempt to capture a single fateful day in the life of a fishing village and its resourceful and pragmatic people somewhere in the Visaya’s circa 1500 AD.

My village, my people...



The Beginning

The early morning sun was a bright and fiery ball that had just broken the horizon. Its rays chased the shadows back into the deep forest, streaking the clouds pink and purple and its light just touched the treetops, bleaching away some of the forest's deep verdant gloss.

Hagibis looked back from the foreshore, seeing the longhouses, swathed in the slowly curling smoke of early morning cooking fires. The shadow of his body was elongated by the low sun so that it stretched, making him a giant. His v-shaped torso and strong legs appeared much narrower. The long braids of his hair fell across the nut-brown skin of his back and shoulders. He was tall like his father but he carried more muscle and even though he had seen only eighteen monsoon seasons, he was a man, and had left the games and play of boyhood behind. His strong jaw and steady gaze could reassure or disconcert in equal measure.

He could hear the women calling out and laughing and could see his mother Suga and sister Liwayway. He watched the small dogs and potbellied pigs being chased by the children and wondered where Amihan was. It was a peaceful scene, just the way of village life, bucolic, sedate, a cradle for the people, where the old ones sat and talked and the women tended the taro crop, keeping the pigs close. It was a place where his father and the other men tended to the fishing nets and repaired the Sakayan (canoes) or the larger Paraw (outriggers) - the craft that carried them far out to sea to the fishing grounds where the large schools of Bangsi (flying fish) and Tulingan (mackerel) would amass and the catch would be good.

One evening seven days before, just as the dusk was settling, a large Paraw had cruised past. There were only six men paddling. When calls from the village went unanswered, some of the men took a small sakayan out to investigate. But when they got close, the Paraw gathered speed as men who had been hidden, lying down in the hull, suddenly sat up and used their short wide bladed oars to power away into the gathering darkness.

Uneasiness had settled over the village. Even the small children felt it, the tension making them act up. Often they fell into unprovoked bouts of tears or misbehavior. The people talked about these strange visitors who had come so close but had strangely disappeared into the night. "Perhaps they are just traders" some said, or "They were fishermen returning to their village empty handed."

Tatang Tikarol, the old one, spoke through the confusion of conflicting voices. "They are Manglulunggo, scouting for a prize." His words hung in the air and a chill descended over all the gathered villagers. Manglulunggo was the name for the ones who came as headhunters. They sailed in from the far South West and they spoke in a strange unintelligible tongue. They were raiders who would sweep down on a village to take heads and pigs and slaves, leaving only death and smoking ruins.

The men of the village stayed in the village. The daily ritual of rising before dawn and taking to the sea, heading out beyond the horizon to find the good catch was uneasily laid aside. Sentries were posted, ever vigilant, always scanning the horizon and surrounding forest.

Soon the arguments started, some felt the raiders were not raiders at all but just lost fishermen. Others averred that the size of the village had dissuaded the raiders. And yet others claimed they had only been ghosts, saying, "We all know that ghosts can't talk and when we called to them, they did not speak back to us."

But still they waited. Then on the afternoon of the sixth day it was decided that they must go back to sea. The supplies of Buwad (dried fish) were gone and hungry bellies and empty smoke racks needed to be filled with fresh fish.

Hagibis' father, Gahom had taken him aside that night and talked to him. "You will stay here with some of the others", he had said, "the raiders have surely gone by now, but I want you to watch the village and protect your mother and sister. You will all keep watch till we return in the evening". Hagibis wanted to respect his father but he burned with the desire to be a part of the fishing fleet. The strongest and most capable men were always the ones chosen to go to sea. There was always much praise and luck to be gained with a successful trip, but his father had spoken. Hagibis would respect his father's wishes and stay to watch the village.

The men pushed away from the beach on this very morning, leaving before the first rays of sun had reached the sparse low hanging clouds, Hagibis looked around now, looking to the others left behind to mind the village. They were the young and the old, those too young to really be men and those too old to spend the long hard hours sailing and when the wind died, paddling the Paraw's out and back from the deep sea.

Hagibis looked to Tatang Tikarol. He was old, older than any other man in the village. When he was younger he had been known as a hard and ferocious fighter. Many times he had fought against raiders and his reputation of being fearless and skillful was widely known by everyone. Then one day Tikarol's only son had been killed in battle, and though he had died a good and glorious death, Tikarol had never been the same man again. He lost the fire and spirit for which he had been known.

Hagibis looked to his friends, young men of his own age. There was Kusog "the strong one" and there was Ukob "hold fast." Hagibis smiled. Ukob was known by everyone as Tambotsoy "the fat one", because of his girth, his appetite and his general disposition.

Close by sat Matsing "Spider Monkey", named after the tiny palm sized Tarsier, whose huge eyes and tiny body were mirrored in his own tiny frame.

Matsing worked carefully at making new arrows, his small nimble hands finding the imperfections in the arrow shafts. Using a small steel scraper he shaved away any ridges. He used his sharp vision to sight along the arrow's length, using the heat of a low smoldering fire to bend and straighten them. Two of the older men sat there also, fixing sharp flint heads and carefully cut fletching's.

Matsing was small and childlike, younger than Hagibis with a skeletal frame, weak and sickly. He had been born more than one moon early. His mother died during the difficult birth, but barely hanging on to life, he fought with a tenacity rarely seen in an infant, hanging onto life. Though everyone was sure he would never survive, he grew to manhood.

Everything came slowly for him even walking and talking, but his fragility masked a sharp mind and quick wit. Matsing never had the strength of others his age. He couldn't play the rough and tumble games or practice with sticks while Hagibis and the other boys would form up into rival tribes and fight "wars" against each other, often under the guidance of Tikarol or sometimes Hagibis' father Gahom or other men. During these wars, the boys learned techniques and strategies of survival gleaned from lifetimes of action.

Matsing was tiny and delicate like his namesake the "Spider Monkey." When he was five, Tatang Tikarol, the old one, had taken the boy under his wing. Seeing his spirit and sharp mind, he first taught Matsing to use the Tothoo (blow gun). Later as Matsing slowly grew stronger and straighter, the old one taught him the Pana (bow and arrow).

Matsing became so skillful that when the boys went into the forest to hunt birds or monkeys or pigs, he would always be brought along, not for pity, but because he was the best. When the other boys' arrows flew wildly off target, Spider Monkey always made even the most difficult shots. Sometimes to show his skill he would shoot a turtle's egg thrown in the air then knock and draw another arrow before the shattered egg hit the

ground.

Kusog and Tambotsoy were now men. Together with Hagibis they too had passed their manhood ceremonies. Their strength, skill, and endurance were all tested in this rite of passage. They now bore the tattoos and the anting-anting - the Barang (black magic) bestowed upon them by their elders to keep them safe in battle. Here they stood scanning the sea, guarding the village. Hagibis thought “Was the danger real? Were the men who had passed in the outrigger really raiders?” They could not know, he decided. They could only wait and watch.

The sun was well above the horizon and the shadows of the night long gone. Hagibis daydreamed now. The sun’s reflection off the water made his eyes squint. He imagined Amihan, wanting to see her, wanting to watch her move, the sleek muscles of her legs moving her hips beneath the cloth of her Tapis (sarong). In his daydream he saw the swell of her breasts, the finely formed features of her face and her flashing smile. He heard the ringing peal of her laugh.

One of the young boys, looking out to sea from the top of a coconut tree called out, “They are coming back! Soon we will eat!” There was a paraw, but Hagibis, blinking his eyes could see it was not from the village, and it approached from the wrong direction. The outrigger turned now, smoothly arcing around, its bow raising a clean and sparkling wake.

Raiders Approach

But now there were not just six men in the paraw, as had been seen when it passed a week before. Now there were perhaps as many as thirty. The tips of their oars spilt droplets back into the glassy sea as the craft gathered speed. The raiders pulled hard for the beach in front of the village.

A braying, grunting chorus erupted among the men in the paraw. Their hardened faces were painted into frightening visages colored yellow, red and black. Their bright and staring eyes flashed their intent as their sinewy brown arms pulled in union. The bow of the craft seemed to skim the water like a silvery flying fish as the Dayaks (Manglulunggo - headhunters) tore forward. Their cries of intent made Hagibis’ blood run cold.

Amihan stood frozen. At this moment only the slight breeze that moved her hair made her look anything more than a beautiful statue. The usual calm of the village descended into chaos, cooking fires died in clouds of steam as pots and other vessels were overturned. Amihan ignored the cries and screams of the other women, staring intently at her grandfather Tikarol and at Hagibis, her betrothed.

The women were in a panic, knowing that they, the children and the pigs would be the target of these Dayak raiders. Women and children were good for trading as slaves, and pigs were almost as valuable as gold. The Dayaks were here because this village was rich and ready for plunder. The old Manangs implored the young ones to run, taking as many possessions as they could into the deep forest. The pigs squealed and children wailed as the women, eyes teary with panic and fright, hurriedly gathered as much as they could and retreated to the dark thick glades to evade and hide.

Tikarol, the old one, wizened and lined, his mouth almost toothless, lips stained red with the juice of beetle nut he always chewed and a voice usually little more than a croak, thrust his chin at the incoming raiders and yelled back cursing them, his voice cracking but strong. His defiant look of intent and determination, made him seemingly shed years of age, his back straightening, fists clenching. “Amihan” he called, looking back to her, his youngest granddaughter, “bring Leg-biter”. “Leg-biter” was the name of his old and war scarred Kampilan, his heavy war sword.

Hagibis shook his head trying to clear the fog of fear, seeing old Tikarol stride forward now, calling for his sword. Hagibis remembered all the stories his father and other men of the village had told. All the young men and boys would gather, hearing tales of daring and blood shed, of victories and the devastation of defeat.

He looked back at Amihan as she ran toward Tikarol’s longhouse. Her strong and beautiful body moved with grace and power like the wind. A growl grew in his throat, he wanted to call to her, to tell her to run to the forest, but he knew she would obey her grandfather. She would bring the Kampilan, and like her grandfather she would sooner fight than run.

He rubbed the “Anting - anting”, the amulet that had hung on a cord around his neck. It had been his constant companion since his manhood ceremony one year before. Hagibis’ fingers traced the contours, feeling the Baybayin characters carved into its smooth surface. The Triangular green stone, warm, burned away at the cold numbing panic that had gripped his heart and wrapped itself around his gut. He heard the words of power again, the incantation, a magic spell of strength and power...

“I must not fear. Fear is the mind-killer. Fear is the little-death that brings total obliteration. I will face my fear. I will permit it to pass over me and through me. And when it has gone passed I will turn the inner eye to see its path. Where the fear has gone there will be nothing. Only I will remain.” *

The Dayaks were closer now; close enough for the old men and boys on the beach to hear the Dayak chieftain barking orders, a battle plan, and the incoming raiders calling back their acknowledgements.

Old Tikarol called to them all, looking at their stunned and frightened faces, “Wake up! Catch them in the water. Don’t let them get to the sand!”

Defend the Village

Matsing stepped forward, the gentle tide lapping at his knees, his bow and arrows in hand. Matsing was small, but the steely look on his face showed a strength that was always there inside him. Spider Monkey drew his bow to full draw and let fly an arrow, its tip seeking the heart of the Dayak chief whose face was painted into a grotesque and hateful mask.

The arrow fell short and struck a startled oarsman just in front of the Chief. The arrow’s sharp flinty tip sank deep, biting into the knotty muscle of the man’s shoulder. The man broke rhythm, the tip of his oar gouging into the smooth glassy surface of the sea. His mouth opened in a silent scream and his face contorted into a rictus of shock and pain. He tried to find the rhythmic stroke of his comrades but dropped his oar, the rushing water pulling it from his weakened grasp. A bright red river of blood began a steady flow down his arm and across his chest, splashing down into his lap.

The old men and boys on the beach surged forward, the fear beginning to dissipate. Hard adrenalized cries came from their mouths, eyes widening, a hardness set their faces into stony looks of determination. The sight of first blood, the attacker’s blood, unlocked a primal hate, the drive to vanquish the incoming hoard.

Amihan reached her grandfather in the knee deep water, her hand holding his Kampilan, “leg-biter.” The jagged “crocodile jaw” of the tip gave the black-hued blade the unmistakable look of a weapon of war, not the same as the more common design of the Barong that Hagibis and the other men, young and old alike, clenched in their hands.

Hagibis stepped close to her. “Go now!” he said meeting her steady gaze. “Keep the others safe in the forest.” “No!” she said quickly, a steely undertone in her voice. He saw from her expression and the fire in her eyes as she stared hard, looking to the incoming Dayaks, that she had no intention of running, she would stay close, and if necessary, fight.

The lead oarsmen in the outrigger stood now. Their dropped oars clattered as they landed in the shallow hull of the outrigger. Their chests heaved as they whooped and screamed and their eyes were fiery with blood lust as they unsheathed their Goloks and Parangs and brandished them above their heads.

Matsing knocked another arrow. He came to the full draw again and released the arrow. This time it flew in a shorter, flatter arc, striking a wildly screaming Dayak with a yellow painted face cleanly through the throat. The Dayak clutched to the arrow as he toppled forward, crashing off the forward prow and rolling sideways overboard, his body entangling the oarsmen that were passing his still convulsing corpse.

Hagibis put the Anting - anting in his mouth. The smooth green triangle was hot on his tongue. It burned away the cold and heavy fear that had gripped his heart and calmed and centered his mind.

Hagibis’ eyes locked now, engaging the stare of a red painted Dayak, his face a demon mask of hate. The

Note: * Quote taken from the Frank Herbert book “Dune”, after playing around with half a dozen attempts at trying to write something either similar or better, I instead elected to use this passage just as Frank Herbert had written it, I felt it said exactly what I wanted the words of power to say, acting as a mantra against the power of fear.

man jumped and whooped in the bow of the outrigger. Hagibis knew in this moment the Dayak wanted his head, wanted to take his prana, capture his spirit and enslave his soul so that it could serve the Dayak in the next “spir-it” life.

Matsing let fly with another arrow. A Dayak tried to smack it aside, using the flat of his Golok but his timing was off and it punched a neat hole through his sternum leaving only the fletching projecting.

The old men and boys on the beach were thigh deep in the softly lapping waves. Now a young Dayak jumped too early into the water and disappeared below the surface. His head bobbed up and he began swimming strongly toward the beach following in the wake of the outrigger.

Old Tikarol commanded some of the young men to position one of the old leaky canoes between them, its bow aimed at the incoming outrigger. “Ram them!” he cried. His voice quavered with age but the steely undertone in his voice bolstered the spirits of the young men. They lined up four to a side and gripping the cracked and holed hull, ran hard into the shallow water, focusing on the incoming Dayaks. If they could smash into the outrigger and stop it while the water was still hip deep then they would have an advantage. The Dayaks would not only be caught in a crush as they tried to jump down to fight, they would also be caught in the hip deep water which slowed down movement, robbing them of quick footwork and making defense and evasion much harder.

Matsing and two of the old men continued to shoot well-aimed arrows at the Dayaks. The fletchings fluttered as the arrows sped low past Hagibis and the others. An arrow struck a Dayak headhunter, piercing his left cheek, just below his eye. The arrow had stuck fast in the bone; the Dayak wrenched it sideways, breaking it off. The tip and a short section of the shaft remained embedded in his face.

Another Dayak had been gut shot. He dropped his Golok and it clattered in the hull of the outrigger as the dying man clutched at the deeply embedded arrow. The grunts and hard breaths of the Dayak oarsmen could be heard clearly now as they now pressed closer.

With one last heave, the young men of the village pushed the old canoe straight at the oncoming raiders. They rapidly started to fan out to the left and right to outflank the incoming outrigger. The worm eaten and rotten wood of the old canoe shattered as the Dayak outrigger slammed into it, breaking it in half. The outrigger began riding up and over the wreckage but the sharply projecting prow punched a hole and then snagged in the hull of the canoe so that the broken but impaled old vessel now acted as a sea break and brought the speeding outrigger to an abrupt stall in the water.

The sudden loss of forward motion caused the Dayaks standing in the bow of the outrigger to lose their balance and fall forward. Some clutched to the prow breaking their fall but three others plunged headfirst into the hip deep water. One Dayak, his face painted yellow and black stood up, water streaming from his hair and nose. Hagibis was close by and struck now, delivering a heavy forehand cut focused at the man’s head. The Dayak, his eyes half blinded by the stinging salt water, instinctively raised his left hand to shield against the incoming blow.

Hagibis and the Barong

The Barong was a stout and simple weapon. Its two graceful curves intersected at the tip, giving the heavy leaf-shaped blade a smooth utilitarian look. The flash of sun on its cutting edge showed its razor keenness as the smoothly curved edge of the Barong cleaved cleanly through the man’s forearm and the tip of the blade caught the recoiling man’s chin, opening it like an overripe papaya.

A look of complete shock came over the man, as he stared at the stump of his arm. Droplets of blood sprayed out and pulsed through the air, some of them splashing onto Hagibis as he completed the arc of the cut and immediately pressed forward into a hard backhand blow. The Barong caught the Dayak just below the right ear. The diagonal angle of the cut sheared almost completely through the man’s neck as the Barong exited at the lower left and embedded itself deeply into his shoulder.

The Dayak fell back, his eyes rolling back into his skull, showing just the whites of his eyes. The look of shock was gone now, leaving just a slack opened mouth gape. His head tilted back, blood erupting in a misty

spray of red. The Barong was firmly lodged in the dead man’s shoulder and the collapsing body tore the blade from Hagibis’ grip. The dead Dayak and Barong both disappeared under the water.

The red faced Dayak who had locked eyes with Hagibis earlier leapt into the air. Golok above his head he jumped in a high leap, his legs coiled up tight under him. As he began his decent he directed two crushing heel kicks at Hagibis’ head. One heel caught Hagibis a glancing blow to the head and the other foot passed low, smashing squarely into his chest thrusting Hagibis backwards and pushing him under the water.

Hagibis felt his ribcage had been crushed and his mind exploded in a flash of blinding white pain. His eyes filled with the sandy green of the water and his nose and throat flooded with the choking liquid.

He blindly kicked his heels into the sandy bottom propelling himself backwards. Staying down and pushing away from the Dayak, his body felt broken. His head was bursting, his lungs were burning and his throat was choking.

Hagibis burst upwards, wiping the salty water from his stinging eyes, sputtering trying to draw a breath. He looked to spot the Dayak and avoid his Golok, knowing the Dayak wanted his head. Hagibis could hear old Tikarol, shouting orders and saw him close now, brandishing the Kampilan above his head as he advanced. Tikarol was encouraging the old and young alike, helping to put up a coordinated defense, always pressing forward and taking the fight to the raiders. His knowledge telling him that to put the enemy under pressure was the only way.

The red-painted Dayak stared at Hagibis now and rapidly advanced toward him, wading through the hip deep water. Just then Tambotsoy “the fat one,” who like Hagibis was strong in body but not as strong in mind, rushed forward at the Dayak, creating a wake behind him. Holding his Barong in front of his chest Tambotsoy screamed at the man.

The Dayak checked his forward motion, glanced at Tambotsoy, gave a cold eyed grin, and used a back-hand parry with his Golok to deflect the clumsy and poorly-timed swing of Tambotsoy’s Barong. The Dayak suddenly pressed forward and with a lightning fast snap cut halfway through Tambotsoy’s hand. Tambotsoy screamed as blood erupted from the deep wound. The Dayak laughed and struck again, the heavy-bladed Golok hacking deep into Tambotsoy’s arm and dropping him to his knees.

The Dayak grabbed Tambotsoy by the hair, pulling upward and stopping him from slipping beneath the water. With a practiced precision the Dayak executed a rapid smashing blow to the side of Tambotsoy’s head, stunning him. The Dayak pulled Tambotsoy’s head to the side and delivered a slashing draw cut to his neck cutting through to the spine. He twisted Tambotsoy’s hair in his hand and using his knee to help spin Tambotsoy around, raised the Golok and delivered another slashing cut, completely severing the head. The Dayak jumped and whooped swinging Tambotsoy’s head by the hair, holding it high, as blood streamed down his arm. Tambotsoy’s dead and staring eyes rapidly blinked as the last of his life blood drained away.

Hagibis surged toward old Tikarol, needing to find a weapon, anything with which to fight. A charging Dayak was close to Spider Monkey now, his small frame almost doll-like beside the muscular, screaming, fast moving headhunter. As Spider Monkey began to raise his bow, drawing one of his last arrows, the Dayak reached him and smashed the bow aside, hacking viciously at the boy. The wickedly sharp edge of the Parang cleaved through his tiny body, cutting from his right shoulder to his left hip, making his body fall into two pieces.

A bloody vicious cry rose from the attacking Dayaks who saw Matsing die. He had killed at least five of their number, and had to be stopped. One of the old Manongs standing beside Spider Monkey shot the Dayak cleanly through the neck. The arrow passed completely through before the Dayak collapsed, blowing out bloody bubbles from the jagged torn wound and reddening the white, crystalline sand.

The young men were fighting well, but they lacked the cunning and experience of the Dayaks. But fear and hate were great motivations to them. They knew the Dayaks would show no mercy; give no quarter and wanted heads and slaves and pigs.

Hagibis was only six feet away from Tikarol, when the old one was struck by an arrow. Two Dayaks had remained in the outrigger. They were picking targets, and seeing the spirit and command of the old one they had started to target him. Tikarol crumpled now, the arrow embedded in his chest. His face was blank as Hagibis reached him, catching him and snatching his Kampilan before it slipped beneath the water. A seething rage burnt

through him now, as he cradled the old one’s head. The water around him was red with blood.

The two old Manongs on the beach stood strong, using their bows with smooth unhurried precision. Now they targeted the two Dayaks in the outrigger. One Dayak was struck simultaneously, two arrows slamming into his chest and he fell backwards, disappearing over the side. Immediately after, the other Dayak was struck. One arrow embedded in his thigh and another hitting him high in the chest. The man crumpled down into the hull of the outrigger. His bow fell into the sandy green water.

Hagibis yelled encouragement to the others, using the back of his hand to wipe tears from his eyes. He felt no fear now, no doubt, just an absolute sense of focus and cold hard rage. Time seemed to slow and his vision sharpened. The heavy-bladed Kampilan seemed light in his hand. The tiny knicks that scarred the blade’s cutting edge reflected bright flashes of sunlight, accentuating its razor-sharp edge. He pressed his forehead to old Tikarol’s lifeless cheek. “I will come back for you, Tatang,” he said as he let old Tikarol slip beneath the water.

He powered forward now straight toward a Dayak who was fighting with two of his young friends. The Dayak had wounded one of them with a bloody shoulder gash that made him hesitant and caused him to give ground. Hagibis looked to find the red-faced Dayak - the one who killed Tambotsoy. But Hagibis could not see him among the skirmishing groups. He focused his attention back to the nearby fight.

The water was midway between Hagibis’ knee and hip when the Dayak became aware of his rapid approach. The Dayak spun to face him, his Parang cutting a wide, blindly swung arc as he turned. Hagibis feinted back, and let the cut pass by. Then he quickly pressed forward, running the long cutting edge of the Kampilan through the Dayak’s bicep and upper arm.

The Parang slipped from the Dayak’s crippled arm, his face blanching to a pale bloodless white, eyes staring huge like turtles eggs, mouth open soundlessly. Hagibis flicked a snapping backhand cut at the neck of the Dayak, gashing open his cheek and carotid artery. He then arced the Kampilan up and over into a vertical downward blow, directed to the top of the Dayak’s head. The heavy sharp blade of the Kampilan was meant to cut through almost anything - wood, flesh or bone. The blade cleaved cleanly through the Dayak’s skull, stopping only when it reached his sternum. Hagibis twisted his hand sideways breaking the deeply-embedded cutting edge free.

Hagibis looked around, surveying the skirmishes. He saw Kusog leading charges and clashes. He yelled encouragement to his friends, calling to them as he viewed the battle, alerting them to dangers and directing the fire of the old ones on the beach. The defenders’ sharp arrows sped into the melee, biting into the headhunters. The fight was even and Hagibis could see that the outcome was uncertain. Old Tikarol had been right to press forward. Taking the fight to the enemy was the only way. Set the terms of the battle; make them fight in the hip deep water, take away their mobility. Don’t let them run their outrigger up onto the smooth white sand, where they could rapidly fan out, running, screaming, killing, burning, taking.

Taking the Fight to the Enemy

The villagers’ only hope was to keep the Dayaks in the water, keep up the pressure and continue attacking. Two old men on the beach stood straight. The bloody and broken body of Spider Monkey lay between them. Their keen, bright eyes were always questing, spotting targets at which to loose deadly arrows. Hagibis could see their supply of arrows was running dangerously low; he looked to the stalled outrigger floating in the incongruously gentle tide. He could see the Dayaks’ arrows were standing in a bunch near the prow.

Making his way forward, a wash of bloody water pressed away from him. When he reached the outrigger he could see an injured and bleeding Dayak lying unconscious, curled into a fetal position, with long arrow shafts punched through his body. The man’s long plaited hair splayed out around his head was decorated with feathers and shell and paint. . Hagibis took one of the long braided strands, using the Kampilan to cut it free. Then he quickly gathered the arrows, using the hair to tie the bunch together.

Turning back to the beach, he whistled loudly to the old men, calling to them. Taking the Kampilan in his left hand, he held the tied bunch of arrows in his right. He reached far behind and threw them in a long

tumbling arc. The arrows splashed down only feet away from the old men. The old ones snatched them up, cut the hair, and each took half of the sharply-pointed arrows.

The Red Faced One

There! There was the red faced one. The one who had taken the head of Tambotsoy! The Dayak was in a group of seven ferocious and brightly painted warriors who were pressing hard toward the beach. They deliberately bypassed the skirmishing groups. They were in a triangular formation with the Dayak chieftain at the apex. Behind the formation was a trail of the villagers - young and old, bloody and broken, some headless, floating still and lifeless in the green and blood-stained water.

Hagibis could see the string bag that swung heavily from the red painted one’s hip, bulging with a head - the head of Tambotsoy, his facial features distorted by the press of the string.

Another Dayak carried a burning torch, the flames licking the air, a pall of black, oily smoke trailing the rapidly advancing formation.

Hagibis whistled to the two old men, signaling for them to focus their fire on this group. This spearhead was advancing on the beach intent on killing and burning. The old ones raised their chins in acknowledgment, smoothly drawing their bows and fired together.

An arrow struck the warrior just left of the chieftain, transfixing him through the skull. The arrow punched into his head slightly in front of his left ear and burst out through the right side of his jaw, dropping him into the water.

Another Dayak raised his shield, catching the other arrow. The shield’s long rectangular shape provided cover. Using the shield’s deep, shovel-shaped cutouts and ready to catch any other incoming shots, the Dayak looked from behind it at the old men with their bows. The formation continued to press forward, using shields and positioning for cover, making for the beach.

Hagibis could see the danger and knew that he would have to press forward now - press forward and intercept this attack. If the Dayaks made it to the sand, they could run to the longhouses and set them aflame and then fan out and attack the weak and the defenseless. Their success would perhaps break the spirit of the defending villagers but would surely rally the other Dayaks locked in battle in the water.

Kill the Datu

Hagibis surged forward, calling to anyone that could hear, “Take them! Stop them! Come now and kill the Datu!” Hagibis used the Bisayan name for “Chieftain” - pointing with the jagged tip of the Kampilan. Some of the young ones began to rush forward at the Dayak triangle, breaking away from other skirmishes, closing in from different directions. The old ones fired again but their arrows were ineffectual. The Dayaks’ shields and extra caution made them difficult targets.

Hagibis ran hard now, lifting his knees high, trying to minimize the drag of the hip-deep water as he powered toward the chieftain and his formation. Using his knowledge of the beach and these waters to pick the easiest way, he found submerged banks and ridges where the water was shallower and he could move faster.

He watched for shadows in the water, the rocks and broken old coral that could break a toe or tear open a foot. Still he was trailing the raiders. He would reach the engagement after several of the bigger, older boys closed the gap and came to blows with the determined invaders.

The older boy called Habog “the tall one” reached the Dayak triangle first, coming in from the side of the formation. As he drew close, he started to circle to the front to outflank the fast moving Dayaks. The water was only shin deep now and the Dayaks were moving almost at a run. Habog was moving quicker though and Hagibis could see that he had circled to the front of the fast-moving formation, planted his feet, and was beginning to move his Barong in a weaving figure-eight pattern while yelling insults at the Dayaks.

Hagibis was closing in. Several other older boys now had closed and made contact. An old man called Manubo, his long hair streaked with silver and white, was running to the front of the formation to stand with Habog and blunt the charge of the fast-moving Dayaks. Hagibis pushed as hard as his strong legs would move

him. The water was washing just below his knees. He knew that these Dayaks were battle-hardened killers that would stop for nothing. They would not check their forward charge. They would smash through and kill anyone in their way.

The Dayaks reached Habog and Manubo. The Dayak who held the shield pressed forward first using the dense hard wood of the shield as a battering ram. Hagibis could see him smash the edge of the shield up and under Habog's jaw, driving his head back. Habog had sent a powerful cut at the shield bearer but the blow slammed harmlessly into the battle- scarred face of the shield. At the same instant under the cover of the shield the Dayak sent a heavy cut to the lead leg of the rapidly-recoiling boy.

The Golok bit deep and Habog, concussed from the shield's smashing blow, collapsed. His leg was ripped through to the bone and his Barong summersaulted through the air. Another Dayak stepped in and delivered the finishing blow, cursing when the cut he delivered caught Habog just above the left ear. The Golok tore into the side of the skull, making the brain begin to spill out. The Dayak knew that a damaged skull was worthless; the spirit escaping into the air, leaving just an empty shell, containing no spirit, no slave to serve him in the next spirit life.

The shield bearer directed several smashing blows at old Manubo, but the old one used footwork and evasion to escape the blows. Hagibis was charging in now, coming at them from behind. Several other boys were pressing attacks from both sides of the formation, their cuts and slashes, meeting steel and flesh. An arrow caught the shield bearer, as he tried to grab old Manubo. The arrow punched into the front of his left shoulder and projected from his back, between his shoulder blade and spine, causing him to drop the shield.

Then Hagibis saw her. Amihan was running in also, coming from behind old Manubo. She carried a Barong. Her face was set in stone, her eyes were burning and her cheeks were flushed. Hagibis had seen this look on her face before, when they were younger and she played like the boys. Fighting with rattan sticks, her spirit and speed made her a formidable opponent and made many a boy yelp and cry out. Sometimes they would drop their sticks when her lightning fast slashes and strikes found their marks. She would not back down. She would fight. She would win!

The Dayaks stopped their forward charge and the oily black smoke from the burning torch began to envelope them. The boys and old men pushed in from all sides as the Dayaks tried to form a tight defensive circle. Manubo directed a lightning fast series of cuts at the exposed and injured shield bearer. The man had slowed by the pain and shock from the arrow. Manubo cut a deep gash into the man's shoulder. But the man still clutched his vicious Golok and tried to edge away and fall back into the protective circle of Dayaks where he would not be so exposed.

Amihan Enters the Battle

Amihan, still sprinting forward, passed close by old Manubo. She ran straight at the shield bearer. Barely checking her forward charge, she swung a high and lazy backhand cut at the Dayak. Hagibis' heart sank, she was cutting too slowly! Her sword arm was an easy target, even for the injured shield bearer. As the Dayak snapped a rapidly rising intercepting cut at Amihan's arm, she abruptly changed the line of the attack. From a clumsy horizontal slash she dropped below the attempted interception to deliver instead a vicious, diagonally-descending heavy cut to the Dayak's leg.

The Barong tore through the man's leading leg and bit through the upper thigh muscle. Amihan used the energy of the cut to follow through, arcing up and over into a downward, descending cut. The Barong cleaved through the Dayak's face, cutting from the left eye and exiting through the lower jaw, ripping into the ribcage at the collar bone and tearing out at the floating rib.

The result was devastating. The collapsing Dayak was attempting to scream, but blood gushing from his destroyed face was pulsing into his throat so that it sounded like he was underwater. The muscle and bone of his torso was laid open and the dying man's entrails burst out, dropping under his falling body.

Amihan barely looked at the body as she stepped over it, her focus never wavering. The Barong she held cut a graceful series of figure eights as she directed some probing cuts at the tightly packed Dayaks testing their

reactions. Hagibis reached the tight knot of headhunters and using a tactic similar to Amihan's, directed a high line cut from the Kampilan, inviting a defensive counter. Then he slashed downward hard with the long- bladed "leg-biter" and ripped through the thigh, cutting away at the foundation of the Dayak he faced. Then he sent a second, more lethal blow to the man's head, dropping him dead into the blood-stained water.

The Raiders Lose Heart

The tightly knotted triangle now comprised only five men. The red painted one, the Chieftain, the torch bearer, and two younger, leaner warriors whose fear was visible beneath their war paint. The Dayaks were tightly packed but were too few to break out. But they were desperate and experienced and would fight to the last. One of the old Manongs from the beach had come close now, bringing his bow to bear.

He loosed an arrow that slammed into the Chieftain, burying itself into his chest and dropping him to his knees. Old Manubo was closest; he stepped lightly forward and delivered a short snapping cut toward the Chief's head. The Chief managed to duck his head and received but a glancing blow. The blade ripped through his scalp, making his long plaited hair peel away to one side, as if attached to a cap that sagged over and covered the left side of his brightly yellow-painted face. The sight of the dying Chieftain brought out a blood lust in all the villagers and they fell upon the raiders with a great savagery, cutting with swords and thrusting with spears.

Now the situation changed quickly! The Chieftain was killed. His bloody and broken body fell into the shallow water. One of the young Dayak warriors was cut down as an arrow punched through his body. The torch bearer swung the torch as a club in one hand and his sword in the other, but the young villagers showed no fear now and pressed forward, attacking from all sides. They cut through the torch bearer's defenses and fell upon him, leaving his body torn, bloodied and unnaturally contorted, the torch hissed in a cloud of evilly-black smoke where it had fallen.

Amihan was attempting to engage with the red painted one, but he was quick, strong and too cunning to be caught. Rather than being forced into some defensive error, he pressed forward at her attack with a vicious downward arcing forehand cut. Amihan could not evade the cut so instead she intercepted the incoming line with the soft steel of the spine of the Barong she held, intending to deflect the cut away from its target.

The Dayak, with this simple direct attack had set a trap. With a subtle but lightning fast twist of his wrist, he went from a palm up cut in which the cutting edge of the blade was leading to a palm down line in which the dull but tough steel of the Golok's spine smashed into Amihan's blade. The speed and unchecked power of the blow smashed the Barong out of Amihan's grip and sent it spinning through the air. The red painted one exploded forward, snatching at her arm and smashing her in the face with the butt of his Golok.

Hagibis ran straight at the Dayak, knowing he would show no mercy, knowing he would fight to the last. The Dayak was attempting to catch Amihan in a headlock, so that he could use her as a shield. Perhaps he could use her to escape and make his way back to the Proa (large outrigger), where some of the other Dayaks were beginning to congregate, readying their escape. After seeing their Chieftain die, they had lost heart. Their fire had been quenched and they were about to seek the safety of the open water.

Amihan, face bloodied and half stunned was using her arms to push at the crowding Dayak. She fell, landing on her knees in the shallow water. The red-painted one grabbed a handful of her long black hair and pulling her toward him, began to raise the Golok to deliver a killing blow. He was no longer thinking of using her as a living shield.

Hagibis directed an intersecting cut at the sword arm of the Dayak, just as the red-painted one began the blow, descending toward Amihan's neck. The Kampilan tore through the Dayak's arm and Hagibis arced the Kampilan for another cut. This time the Kampilan's razor blade ripped through the muscle and bone of the man's leg and dropped him into the water next to Amihan. The third cut was directed to the man's head. It caught him just above the left ear, cleaving through the skull and tearing out through the right side of his jaw. The top part of the skull and brain tumbled in the air, splashing down in the ankle- deep water. Some strands of his long plaited hair, cut through by the Kampilan, began to unravel, fanning out in the shallow water. With their

decorations of shell and color they looked like exotic weeds.

The Battle Ends

Hagibis handed “leg-biter” to one of the young boys standing nearby, bloodied and sweating amongst the carnage of battle. Reaching under her slumped form, he cradled Amihan behind her knees and around her shoulders. He picked her up using the strength of his body to lift her lightly. Her long hair streamed in the bloody water.

He carried her, her face bloodied and bruised and lower lip cut through. Her breathing was shallow and her eyelids fluttered as she tried to stay conscious. Her legs were unconsciously kicking and her arms pushing, fighting against the now dead Dayak. He spoke softly to her, reassuring her as he took her up the beach, toward the longhouses. Behind them the last of the Dayaks boarded their Proa and began to pull away, heading back out sea, back to the safety of open water.

The village would recover from the trial of this day. The men returned from fishing. They gathered their dead and buried them with honor. They disposed of the Dayaks at sea, a feast for the hungry tiger sharks. Hagibis and Amihan would marry. He would be praised by the people and would become a Datu. She would give him strength and certainty and, in time, she would give him two strong sons and one strong and beautiful daughter.

Kusog was celebrated for his bravery and selfless actions and became a respected leader in the village. This day would be long remembered in the oral history of the people. Legends of sacrifice and heroism were made and recounted. Within twenty short years, on another beach in another village, raiders of a different kind with white skin and shining steel armor would come. With the arrival of these Spanish conquistadores, a new chapter would begin in the life of the people and these islands.

Glossary

Sea Dayaks - Today known as the Iban people of Sarawak, have long ceased their Headhunting and piratical ways, today many Iban people are practicing a rural farming lifestyle, and increasingly the younger generations are becoming more urbanized.

The people of the Visayas continue to prosper today in the central Philippines; some still work as fishermen but today they are equally known for their expertise in manufacturing and more recently, development in the IT industries.

Names:

Liwayway - Dawn (female) Sinta - Love (female)

Suga - Light (female)

Amihan - North Wind (female)

Hagibis – Speed; also name for “Filipino Tarzan” (male) Ukob - Hold fast (male)

Gahom - Power (male) Habog - Tall (male) Kusog - Strong (male) Manubo - (male)

Terms:

Manang - respected elder woman. Manglulungo - Headhunter.

Buwad - Dried fish.

Matsing - Tarsier (Spider monkey or Bush Baby) Sakayan - Canoe in the Visayas.

Barong - common sword used throughout the Visayas and southern Philippines. Paraw - Outrigger in the Visayas.

Pana - bow and arrows.

Kampilan - heavy Visayan war sword.

Barong - common Visayan sword, often used for combat and everyday tasks. Toothoo - Blow gun, that often shot poison tipped darts, mainly used in hunting.

Proa - Outrigger used by the Dayak people, sail powered but often paddled with oars in close to land.

Parang - a popular sword design used by the Dayak people. Golok - sword design, often used by Dayak headhunters.

Post Script:

It is not possible to know at this late historic date as to how accurate or inaccurate the proceeding action may have been; but all references to weapons, customs, beliefs, names and the actions taken by the people of the village and the sea raiders, like the aforementioned Dayaks are historically accurate for the place and period.

This piece is meant to convey a sense of the importance of the native fighting systems to the people of the Visayas during this savage period in their history, and furthermore to illustrate a connection between the early days in the evolution of these native martial art traditions through to this, our present time.

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.

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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.