

FMA

Informative

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A Davao City-Based Filipino Martial Arts Group - Established in 1998

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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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The FMA Informative was very fortunate that Master Teacher Manolo Luis del Rosario, the head of the LSAI in Davao agreed to share some of his writings from the Siningbayan Fieldbook (2nd edition).

Mr. del Rosario wrote for Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Project on Social Change called “Siningbayan.” The chapter concerning the Filipino martial arts was included in the Siningbayan Handbook, and part was about Mandirigmang Kaliradman to read the chapter in its entirety in the Siningbayan Fieldbook (2nd edition), which is downloadable and can be found at (www.blafi.org).

Manolo Luis del Rosario

Manolo Luis del Rosario has been into the study and practice of various Asian martial arts traditions for the past 33 years, 23 of which focused on the study, practice and teaching of Traditional Filipino martial arts (FMA) commonly known as Arnis, Escrima or Kali. He holds a Master’s rank in the Filipino martial arts, bestowed on him by the late Grandmaster Ben Lema of Lightning Scientific Arnis in 2001. He currently sits in the Master’s Council of Lightning Scientific Arnis-International. Manolo holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Islamic Studies from the University of the Philippines in Diliman where he is also an Advanced ROTC graduate belonging to the Magiting Class of 1993 and a co-founder of the UP Diliman Red Cross Youth (UP RCY).

He established Mandirigmang Kaliradman (MK) in 1998 in Davao City with the aim of using this as a vehicle to instill National Pride and Cultural Identity amongst interested Filipinos. Mandirigmang Kaliradman has had the honor of representing the country thrice in the Chungju World Martial Arts Festival in Chungju, South Korea and has shared the virtues of our very own complete and highly effective martial arts to people from different corners of the world.

Siningbayan Fieldbook (2nd edition)

By: Joey Ayala and Pauline Bautista

**Note From The Editors:**

In 2009, we published Siningbayan Art of Nation Building Field Book and have since shared this material as readings and process experiences with Academe (NSTP Instructors, UP and SUC Teachers, DepEd Teachers), Business (Corporate Social Responsibility), Civil Society (NGO Workers, Youth Leaders, Young Professionals), Government (CSC Human Resource Management Practitioners, LGU workers), Artists and Culture-Bearers. We have received feedback on its role in bridging gaps-pag-uugnay, ugnayan.

With the goal to contemplate and articulate the “values that transform the inner life of Filipinos” and operationalize the “reawakening of the Filipinos’ capacity to overcome poverty and transform corruption” through conscious experience of the prosperity of our social and natural environment and the integrity of our being and our relationships, we have evolved activities now included this second edition of the Siningbayan Art of Nation Building Field Book. Salundiwa, SuriDiwa

We have enriched Pagsalob with chapters on governance and culture, yoga, and Philippine martial arts, Pagsalinaw with modules from our workshops in Conspiracy and PalayigasKanin writeshops with teachers, and Pagsaganap with a Filipino-oriented human resource paradigm and non-traditional contributions to governance. In the words of the late Br. Roly, here is “a collaborative work-in-progress which you will enrich with your own experiences”.

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Mandirigmang Kaliradman (MK)

Mandirigmang Kaliradman (MK) is a Davao city-based Filipino martial arts group. It was established in 1998 with the following aims:

- The preservation and propagation of the Filipino Martial Arts as a means of reviving true national pride and cultural identity among our people
- To help the Filipino master the necessary skills needed in nation-building and guide their journey towards excellence
- To build up the inherent physical, mental and spiritual characteristics of the Filipino
- To sustain the Filipino's quest for excellence and instill patriotism and the willingness to sacrifice oneself to defend the dignity and honor of the motherland

Mandirigmang Kaliradman is a relatively small and tight-knit group. Mandirigmang Kaliradman is composed mainly of adults, with member's ages ranging from their late teens to early-50s. Most Mandirigmang Kaliradman members are from the working-class. Religious affiliation (or non-affiliation) is likewise quite diverse with Christians, Moslems and Atheists represented. It is the Davao city-based branch of 2 mother organizations- Lightning Scientific Arnis International (LSAI) and the Lema Scientific Kali-Arnis System (LESKAS).

a. Social Structure/Hierarchy and Interaction

Mandirigmang Kaliradman follows a simple organizational structure. Members are grouped into 4 categories. The head of the organization holds the rank of "Maestro" (Master Instructor). This rank was given to him by the now deceased founder of the particular Filipino martial arts system Mandirigmang Kaliradman practices. There is only one Mandirigmang Kaliradman Master. Under the Master Instructor is the Instructor category. This is further sub-divided into 2 sub-categories: Full Instructor ("Guro") and Assistant Instructor ("Katuwang Guro"). Full Instructors are given permission to create their own group and train them independently. Assistant Instructors on the other hand may only teach or organize groups under the supervision of a Full Instructor. The last category is that of the students ("mag-aaral").

The ranks, particularly those of the instructor and assistant instructor are borne out of necessity. Mandirigmang Kaliradman exists within a greater martial arts community. This creates the need for a reference system other martial arts groups can relate to in terms of organizational structure. Internally however, it is a different story. Walking into a Mandirigmang Kaliradman practice session, one will not find any visible sign denoting some form of rank or hierarchy amongst practitioners. There is no standard protocol or mode of behavior when compared to other martial art traditions (Japanese Karate schools for example requires the student to bow to each and every individual more senior than him/her). When a person does render courtesy through a bow, it is genuine and voluntary since it is not required. Classes are quite informal and mostly open-ended and sessions usually extend way beyond the allocated number of hours.

This is the Mandirigmang Kaliradman way of de-emphasizing "rank" and emphasizing the importance of earning respect. Without any form of rank indication, the only way one will actually earn the respect of others is through the only other visible sign of proficiency- a person's movement. Like pre-Hispanic Filipinos, Mandirigmang Kaliradman believes that respect has to be backed by substance and should not be based on something worn on your person, bestowed by another or written on paper.

b. Personal Development through the 3 Councils of Mandirigmang Kaliradman

Mandirigmang Kaliradman as an organization has 3 Councils. These councils are as follows:

1) Council of Champions

This council is composed of champions of the annual Mandirigmang Kaliradman Tournament. They are in charge of the physical fitness program of the members. They are concerned with the physical mastery of combat situations and application of the Filipino martial arts.

2) Council of Instructors

This council is composed of members who have passed the Mandirigmang Kaliradman Instructorship

Test. They are in charge with the cultivation of techniques and the curriculum of the Mandirigmang Kaliradman. They are also the assigned examiners for the skill level-testing. They are specialists who master the various intricacies inherent in the Filipino martial arts. They are concerned with the intellectual mastery of combat theories and the mental aspect of the Filipino martial arts.

3) Council of Elders

This council is composed of past Mandirigmang Kaliradman club presidents. They are in charge of the direction-setting for the Mandirigmang Kaliradman. They provide the leadership for the organization and ensure the organization does not stray from the Vision under which it was formed.

These three councils represent the 3 spheres needed for balanced and holistic development in Filipino martial arts - the Physical, the Mental/Intellectual and the Spiritual/Moral. The emphasis on substance over form in Mandirigmang Kaliradman is further reinforced by these 3 councils. For Mandirigmang Kaliradman members, the ideal Escrimador is someone who is a member of the 3 councils. This person would have at least earned an "assistant instructor" rank, fought and won in the annual tournament, and served for at least a year as organization President. In other words, the ideal is one who can Train, Lead and Fight. While not all members may realistically be able to achieve this, it remains the ideal most if not all members aspire to.

c. Use of Symbols

A symbol is a thing regarded by general consent as naturally typifying or representing or recalling something by possession of analogous qualities or association in fact or thought.

Symbols exist for several reasons:

1. It serves to identify a particular organization.
2. When worn on the body, it serves as a visual reminder of an individual's association to a particular group.
3. It serves to identify an organizations ethos and worldview.



The Mandirigmang Kaliradman logo

The Mandirigmang Kaliradman logo serves those these purposes. It is heavy with symbolism. It also tells the story of the group: who Mandirigmang Kaliradman is and what Mandirigmang Kaliradman is all about. Here is a primer on the logo of MK:

The Mandirigmang Kaliradman logo symbolizes the aspects of the art and the ideals of its members. All elements of the logo, as well as its placement hold specific meaning:

• **The Red Triangle:** The triangle represents several things:

- It symbolizes man as his three aspects - Spirit, Intellect and Physical Body.
- It symbolizes the three aspects of time - Past, Present and Future.
- It symbolizes the three island groups of the Philippines - Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.
- It symbolizes the three aspects of holistic development – Spiritual/Moral, Intellectual and Physical.
- It symbolizes the three combat ranges - Largo (long), Media (medium) and Corto (short).
- It symbolizes the three weapon formats - Bladed, Blunt and Empty hands.
- It symbolizes the three councils of Mandirigmang Kaliradman - The Council of Instructors, Elders and Champions.
- It symbolizes the footwork integral and essential to the system.
- It symbolizes the wide base of knowledge distilled and unified by principles and strategies.

• **The Yellow/Gold Lightning:** Lightning encompasses and encircles the three points of the triangle. This represents power, dynamism, fluidity and flow. This encircles the three points of the triangle to emphasize the inter-relatedness of each point to the others.

• **The Blue/White Inner Circle:** The inner circle represents integrity, wholeness, insight and focus. It is colored blue on the edges (representing peace) which slowly fades into a white center (representing peace). This emphasizes the need for clean intentions in one’s core and the peace that stems out of this.

• **The Yellow/Gold Weapons:** The Kris is crossed with the Stick, representing both Bladed and Blunt weaponry. The Bladed weapon however takes precedence over the Blunt, representing the Bladed origins of the art and its ultimate goal in training.

The Fist underneath represents the empty hand aspect of the art. It is placed below the weapons to emphasize that empty hands are merely incidental as the art is primarily weapons based.

• **The Baybayin (*Visayan*) Script:** The Alibata Script represents the name of the FMA systems practices:

- The Left Side Baybayin says LSAI (Lightning Scientific Arnis International)
- The Right Side Baybayin says LESKAS (Lema Scientific Kali Arnis System)

• **The Colors:** The colors used come from the colors of the Philippine flag - Red, Blue, Yellow (or Gold) and White.

- Red symbolizes Struggle, Blood and Warfare.
- Blue symbolizes Peace and Freedom.
- Yellow/Gold symbolizes Nobility and Power.
- White symbolizes Purity of Intention

The Red Triangle encompasses the Blue-White circle. This is to emphasize that peace and freedom is not without cost and that we must be prepared to struggle either internally or externally, for that which we aim to achieve and that which we value. Peace is not without sacrifice. Philippine freedom was gained at the cost of the blood of our forefathers. The center which is white represents the pure intentions of the person should the necessity to use the art (red) arise.

d. Mandirigmang Kaliradman “Community”

Mandirigmang Kaliradman members interact with one another on a very informal basis. While there are seniors - those holding an Assistant or Full Instructor’s rank, this distinction is not easily observed within the group. Nothing is worn to indicate any form of rank or hierarchy.

The development of each and every individual within the group is held as the responsibility of everybody else. Mandirigmang Kaliradman subscribes to the saying that “the strength of the chain is determined by its weakest link.” Thus, each member looks after the welfare of his or her fellow members to ensure that everybody reaches the acceptable level of proficiency in the art that they practice. Observers will see this on a regular basis, with members teaching other members what they know. Oftentimes, members will agree to meet regularly outside of the stated meeting times just to practice. Helping others develop themselves is seen as part and parcel of the Mandirigmang Kaliradman experience. Members recognize their initial dependence on others for their development. This experience allows them to see the dependence of others on them as well.

Members view themselves primarily as a community as well. Inter-action between members go well beyond the doors of the training hall or the training session hours. These informal socialization events often turn into informal practice sessions as well.

Mandirigmang Kaliradman members value their community and actively strive to safeguard the integrity of the community. When recruiting individuals, MK members take pains in ensuring recruited members have what it takes to integrate well into the group and are more likely to accept the values and ideals adopted by the group.

e. The Physical Practice of the Filipino martial arts in Mandirigmang Kaliradman

The physical practice of Filipino martial arts by Mandirigmang Kaliradman is like any other Filipino martial arts group. All the elements which makes Filipino martial arts what it is, is there. Skills development is primarily through inter-active partner drills. These drills and all aspects are unified under a set of principles and strategies. The drill covers all ranges and types. There are semi-freestyle and freestyle drills, long and short weapons, covering the various ranges of combat. What is interesting to note is that even in the drills, the basic philosophy and Filipino view of inter-relatedness applies.

In the Filipino martial arts system which Mandirigmang Kaliradman practices, drills tend to be “generic.” A case in point would be a core drill called “Bigay-tama.” Bigay-tama consists of a feeder and receiver. The feeder executes strikes to which the receiver responds. While the feeder’s strikes are random in that the receiver does not know which angle it will be coming from, the receiver’s counter strike (executed after the initial block or parry) is set. It has to be a half-strike aimed at the temple. In this respect, this drill is considered as a semi-freestyle drill. What makes this drill interesting is that it can be applied to various formats and weapons combinations. The basic principles governing the bigay-tama drill when executed, applicable in a single-versus-single stick format is also applied in single-versus-double stick, double-versus-double sticks and even “Baston y daga” formats. All variations are called “Bigay-tama.” This makes the drill very versatile in training practitioners on proper physical responses to a variety of circumstances. More importantly, it unconsciously allows students to grasp the concept of underlying unifying principles using physical movement as a reference point.

Effect of Filipino Martial Arts on the Individual Practitioner

a. Reinforced Sense of “Filipino Self”: Cultural Identity and Nationalism

Filipino martial arts practice has profound effects in the lives and mindsets of practitioners. Immersion in the Filipino martial arts sub-culture creates sense of self for many individuals. This is true in the Filipino society of today, where the cultural influences from other countries is strongest. This slowly erodes what is distinctly Filipino and leaves many of our countrymen with a crisis in identity.

In the past 15 years that this author has been teaching Filipino martial arts through Mandirigmang Kaliradman, the end result is always the same. Members, tend to develop a reinforced sense of Filipino “self.” This is especially so since Filipino martial arts is widely considered as among the most effective martial art systems in the world. As a result, many come from the different corners of the globe to learn this distinctly Filipino art. The kind of respect and awe these foreigners show towards our own cultural heritage gives practitioners a sense of pride, in that with regards to our own martial arts tradition, we stand on equal if not higher footing with other nationalities.

This re-acquaintance with the Filipino identity likewise develops a sense of national pride. More often than not, practitioners show a sudden interest in subjects such as Filipino History and Culture. They tend to be more involved in the present issues of Filipino society as an off-shoot of the development of a Filipino ideal. It is almost like a counter-movement to the cynicism which tends to grow in a country with many social issues such as ours.

b. Worldview: Both Idealistic (“*What should be*”) and Realistic (“*What is*”), and the Concept of Inter-Relation

The profound effects of Filipino martial arts practice in the mindset and worldview of its practitioners cannot be understated. Through the practice of Filipino martial arts and the immersion in the culture which comes with it, individuals tend to develop a sense of the ideal and relate this to the present. Being re-acquainted with the Filipino philosophy of the inter-relatedness of all things, members tend to be consciously aware of one’s own actions and its effects on the whole. When the concept of the “ideal” is super-imposed with the present, this awakens a need to act and be a positive creative force in Filipino society. After all, when all things are inter-related, then social issues affects everybody. Nobody is exempted.

c. Conflict Management: Ethical and Moral Compass and a Culture of Restraint

Lastly, as a martial art, people tend to wonder how the knowledge of something inherently violent is reconciled with the goal of creating a peaceful society. The Filipino martial arts by definition; is not an art for self-defense. It is a combat art. The focus on weapons attests to that fact. In Mandirigmang Kaliradman, the combat focus of the art is not down-played. On the other hand, it is emphasized. This is because, realistically, any full-blown physical conflict is a combat situation regardless of who initiated it. Members are therefore trained to “fight” as against being trained to defend one-self. It is with this mindset that students learn. Nothing is held back and the full combative potential of the art is taught.

While this may seem counter-productive to building a culture of peace at first, it has been the experience of countless Filipino martial arts teachers that this is not so. A full knowledge of the implications of any form of altercation tends to keep Filipino martial arts practitioners grounded. In fact, Filipino martial arts practitioners tend to avoid physical conflict as much as possible. This comes from the fact that Filipino martial arts practitioners are well aware of the implications of physical combat and its potential to do irreparable damage both to the self, or to the other party. Knowing that their knowledge can potentially kill another person develops a culture of restraint and avoidance. Thus, in conflict management, Filipino martial arts practitioners tend to exhaust all peaceful means of conflict resolution before resorting to the application of what they have learned.

Mandirigmang Kaliradman however uses another tool as a frame of reference to help guide members when faced with this dilemma. Mandirigmang Kaliradman has adopted a set of virtues meant to act as a balance against the potential to unnecessarily use the art on another person. These virtues are the following:

The Code of Mandirigmang Kaliradman

1. Karangalan- Honor for the self and country.
2. Katapatan- Trust, Honesty and Loyalty
3. Kagitingan- Valor, to be unafraid to dedicate one’s life to a cause greater than the self
4. Katapangan- Courage, to control one’s fear
5. Hustisya- Justice, to treat all equally and never to take a life without just cause.

This code is recited in every Mandirigmang Kaliradman session to remind members of the virtues each and every Mandirigmang Kaliradman Escrimador must aspire to possess.

Possible Cross-Discipline Applications

While Filipino martial artists potential in nation-building has been firmly established at this point, Filipino martial arts culture and methodology offers several insights applicable to other disciplines as well. One thing readily apparent is the effective use of Filipino worldview to ensure that the art is easily understood and that the learning process is effective. Filipino martial arts, has successfully utilized the traditional Filipino worldview of “inter-relatedness” towards this end. The integration of this worldview is so effective practitioners grasp it on a subconscious level. This is achieved by ensuring that all aspects of the Filipino martial arts experience points towards this central concept. Social interaction, teaching methodology and actual physical drills all reflect the same principle. Through this, the Filipino martial arts Masters of old have managed to take an otherwise diverse body of knowledge, simplify it and make it readily understandable in layman’s terms. This gives students of Filipino martial arts the tools by which they can explore their full potential in the art. By distilling Filipino martial arts into a set of principles and strategies, they were able to open up an almost infinite set of possibilities. This integration is also both an expression of and a means to reinforce this worldview.

This strategy can be adopted by other disciplines as well. A case in point would be the academic disciplines. More often than not, subject matter is presented in a compartmentalized and distinct manner. Students learn the natural and social sciences in a manner whereby these are seen as distinct fields of knowledge. Very few teachers (if any) take the time to try to relate these subjects and distill them into a set of unifying principles. Even more so, these subjects are taught without regards to the underlying culture as well.

Culture is also not just a learning aid. It can be reinforced or even created using the principles Filipino martial arts has been using for centuries. By integrating the desired culture and worldview into all aspects of the learning experience the same way the Filipino martial arts integrates Filipino culture into the various aspects of Filipino martial arts practice, it is this author’s belief that education can be more effectively used as a tool for nation-building.



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.



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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.