

# Stokes Ju Jitsu and Arnis

## Club (Style) History

### Arnis de Mano

The Philippine Archipelago comprises 7100 islands and inlets. The total area of the country, including inland waters, is approximately 115,600 miles. There are 11 large islands: Luzon, Mindanao, Samar, Negros, Palawan, Panay, Mindoro, Leyte, Cebu, Bohol and Masbate. The island nation is in the Western Pacific and has a population of almost 70 million people with more than 70 dialects spoken. The races, which settled in the many islands, came from India, China, Indonesia and Southeast Asia.

The art of Kali in the Philippines dates back to the 8th century A.D. according to records from the Malay Sri-Vishayan Empire, and is considered the mother of Filipino Martial Arts. Historians state that the Ten Datus of Borneo brought their fighting methods to the island of Panay, where basic reading, writing and Kali were taught to children in a school called bothoan. Kali is an ancient Malayan word, which implies a large bladed weapon longer than a knife. Kali was most likely derived from tjakalele, which is a form of native fencing in Indonesia.

In March of 1521, Portuguese Explorer Ferdinand Magellan persuaded the Chief of Cebu to declare loyalty to Spain. On April 27, 1521, Magellan sailed to Mactan Island in an attempt to claim it for Spain; however, Chief Lapu-Lapu (a Kali practitioner) raised an army and defeated Magellan's invaders. Magellan's chronicler and historian, Pigafetta, recorded that it was Lapu-Lapu who felled the great Spanish warrior Magellan with a bladed weapon. Upon hearing of Chief Lapu-Lapu's success, the Chief of Cebu mounted an attack on the remaining Spaniards and drove them from Cebu. From this date until 1564, many unsuccessful attempts were made by the Spaniards to establish themselves in the country.

Early in 1564, Miguel Lopez de Legaspi landed at Cebu and was cordially welcomed by the native chief Tupas and his warriors. The Filipinos wined and dined the Spanish visitors and put on a show demonstrating their skill in Kali (Arnis). Legaspi was so impressed with the Filipinos skill in Kali that he befriended them fully and eventually founded the first Spanish settlement, which was called San Miguel. The Spanish then began a 400-year occupation of the islands, and in 1596 they began discouraging the study of Kali before finally banning it in 1764 along with Escrima (meaning "skirmish", which the Spanish dubbed the Filipinos' stick fighting) to suppress opposition. The Filipinos were able to hide their art and preserve it in secret, by disguising it and blending it into their native dances and folk plays.

In 1637, the friars introduced the Moro-Moro, a socio-religious play dramatizing the triumph of the Christian Spaniards over the Muslim Moors of Granada, Spain. The play called for the use of fighting techniques using a sword, allowing the Filipinos to continue practicing their art. The plays were performed by Filipinos, sometimes playing Spanish soldiers wearing arnes (harnesses worn over the hands and forearms by the Spaniards as armor during medieval times). The word arnes was eventually corrupted

into arnis, and the name stuck. Though originally called Arnis de Mano, or harness of the hand, it was later simply called Arnis. Over time, Arnis incorporated Spanish fencing methods, which were blended with the native art. In 1853, the word Kali was completely replaced by Arnis; however, some regions in the Philippines retained the word Kali in their vocabulary for this art.

### **Modern Arnis**

For more than 50 years, Professor Remy Amador Presas pursued his passion for the stick, knife, sword, dagger and empty hand - all in the name of Modern Arnis, the Philippine martial art he created.

Professor Presas began his study of Arnis at age 6. He learned his father, Jose Presas, in the small fishing village of Hinigarin, Negros Occidental, in the Philippines. He left home at age 14 so he could pursue his interest in the fighting arts practiced on the many islands of his homeland. These arts were blends of systems from all over the world: Thailand, China, Spain, Indonesia, Japan and India. They had reached the islands as the people of the Philippines interacted, traded and fought with these diverse nations. Professor Presas refined and blended the important aspects of tjakele, arnis de mano, karate, jujitsu and dumog into the art he named Modern Arnis.

Professor Presas' experience and prowess were unsurpassed. By 1970 he had created a sensation in his country. His Modern Arnis Federation of the Philippines boasted more than 40,000 members. In 1975 he left the Philippines on a goodwill tour sponsored by the government to spread Modern Arnis around the globe. Since arriving in the United States the art has grown rapidly.

Modern Arnis is often referred to as "the art within the art." The techniques are based on patterns and theories of movement, instead of static moves and drills. Rather than learning complex forms and one-step sparring drills for each weapon, students learn the fundamentals of natural movement and use the same patterns of attack and defense in response to each direction, type and intensity of attack. This is true regardless of whether they are holding a sword, dagger, stick or no weapon at all. In addition, all the techniques lead into a countless variety of disarms, throws and locks using the maximum leverage available from whatever weapon is being utilized.

At the advanced level, patterns give way to a continuation of movement. This facet of the art is often referred to as the "flow". Flowing refers to the way in which arnis practitioners transition effortlessly from one technique to the next as they sense the movements and attacks of their opponent and respond automatically and continuously.

Modern Arnis teaches students to become proficient and comfortable in all ranges of combat. Each one of the 12 striking angles that define the system has a basic block, disarm and counter to the disarm. Once these building blocks are in place, they can be applied to movements known as sinawali, redonda, crossada, abanico and others. Numerous joint locks, spinning throws and takedown techniques lead to grappling positions with still more control and submission techniques.

### **Arnis de Leon**

For almost 30 years, Guro Anding de Leon has been practicing and teaching Modern Arnis under the late Professor Remy Presas. Guro de Leon began his commitment to Modern Arnis as a child in the Philippines, and continued as an adult here in the United States. Guro de Leon spent many years as the Texas State Representative of the International Modern Arnis Federation and assisted the late Professor at his seminars.

After the death of Professor Presas, Guro de Leon decided to draw upon his vast training and experience in the Filipino martial arts and create his own system, which will revive the traditional efficiency of movement and fluidity that sets the Filipino arts apart from the rest of the world. Guro de Leon has named his art *Arnis de Leon* and has created the *International Arnis de Leon Federation* (IADLF).

### **Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (BJJ)**

Jiu-Jitsu arrived in Brazil when Mitsuyo Maeda first introduced it during his visit to Brazil with the hopes of establishing a Japanese colony/community in the country. It was further developed by the Gracie family during the mid-20th century. The most important difference of Brazilian jiu-jitsu compared to Judo and Japanese Jujitsu is that BJJ is much more focused on ground fighting than their eastern counterparts. While Japanese Jujitsu and Judo does have extensive training in ground fighting (*newaza*), with some schools favoring ground techniques over throwing, no Japanese school put so much emphasis on ground techniques as is done in BJJ.

A Japanese judoka, prizefighter, and former member of the Kodokan named Mitsuyo Maeda emigrated to Brazil in the 1910s where a local influential businessman named Gastão Gracie helped him get established. In return for his aid, Maeda taught judo to Gastão's son Carlos, who then taught the art to his brothers, including Hélio Gracie. Through their own study and development, Carlos and Hélio are regarded as the originators of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu as a style distinct from Judo.

Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu emphasizes ground fighting techniques and submission holds involving joint-locks and chokeholds. The premise is that most of the advantage of a larger, stronger opponent comes from superior reach and more powerful strikes, both of which are largely negated if wrestling on the ground. BJJ includes many techniques to throw or tackle opponents to the ground, these are notoriously difficult to resist even for people who are trained in their countermeasures. Once the opponent is on the ground, a number of maneuvers (and counter-maneuvers) are available to manipulate the opponent into suitable position for the application of a submission hold. This system of maneuvering and manipulation can be likened to a form of kinetic chess when utilized by two experienced practitioners. A submission hold is the equivalent of checkmate.