



THURSDAY, JULY 17, 2008

Pamalo: Baston, Garote & Olisi



In FMA, arnis sticks are called with different names. Each language or dialect has its own word for it. It usually means "stick" or "something used like a stick." *Baston* is actually a cane, *garote* is a gallow, and *olisi* is a grade used to gauge a rattan, but they are used as if they are synonymous to "stick". I have sensed that Visayans like to use Spanish words a lot. *Olisi*, at first hearing, sounds Spanish that could be mistaken as a derivative word from *olisca* (scent or smell), but it is not.

Bastons in the Philippines, generally, do not look like the usual arnis sticks. Their handles are bent to form letter "J." Baston is used to mean "stick" because canes are sometimes used like sticks by oldies to beat up mischievous kids.

Payong (umbrella) with letter J handle too was used by Filipino men like a cane in the old days, but it never entered the FMA lexicon. Men bringing umbrellas even during sunny days were common specially in Mindanao before the Spanish arrived. There are ancient Chinese texts that detail the pre-fifteenth century Moro lifestyle in Muslim Mindanao, where umbrellas were fashionably used the way the Hispanized Filipinos in Christianize areas used canes or bastons in colonial times.

Philippines, historically, has a bad memory about garote (gallow). Many of our heroes succumbed to such death machine. It is a chair-like instrument used to restrain and choke an innocent or guilty "criminal" sentenced to die. I had wondered for awhile why *garote*

became "stick" specially in Visayas. I have read in some historical accounts showing that sticks were used to tighten the nooses or loops of garotes-- the barbaric machines brought to the Philippines by the Spanish.

Olisi is not a cebuano word for stick. *It is a lumad word used to gauge the thickness and hardness of a rattan in the lumad areas like Davao Oriental, where rattan is a crop next to coconut and rice. Mandayas are known for their rattans. They usually ship and sell them to Cebu. I think that is how olisi reached Visayas-- through trade.*

Round rod rattans are classified as *palasan, limuran, tumalim, olisi, sika* and *arorog* respectively according to hardness and width starting from thick to thin. *Olisi* basically is medium in thickness and in hardness. It is just right for Arnis, Eskrima, and Kali, although it is not the hardest and the thickest. The thicker the rattan the harder it is. It means it has been in the open field for awhile and has been naturally treated by the sun.

I have been trying to research about *olisi* for years. I have only gotten one explanation. It is from the lumad word, *hulisi*-- meaning, turning a strip of intestine inside out using a stick for cleaning innards. *Olisi* is also the right stick, thickness-wise, to perform such task when pigs, cows, or carabaos are slaughtered. I usually hear that word, *hulisi*, when my folks prepare innards for *dinuguan* (blood stew), a Filipino delicacy.

Tagalogs too have their own linguistic way to gauge the thickness and length of a stick according to function-- from *pangkalikol* (stick for cleaning ears) to *bulusan* (stick used in spider-fighting) to *taluko* (stick used to crank the window open) to *sanga* (stick from a tree). Tagalog as a language is very particular and specific. *Bulusan*, for instance, is a stick but you cannot use it in stick fighting, unless you intend to poke someone's eyes. Cebuano, as a language, is also like that. *Tukog* is a stick but Cebuanos use it for barbecuing.

Even *patpat* or *palatpat*, the right Filipino word for stick, can be classified into several thicknesses and lengths: *tungkod*, a stick used as a staff; *tukod*, a stick used to support a tent or a clothesline; *talungkod*, a stick used to carry stuff, and *tayungkod*, a stick used as a cane-- hence, it's root is *tayo*, meaning, to stand).

There are many words, traditional, foreign, and made-up, used in FMA to mean sticks. Even "istik" is commonly used. I think it is the most common word in the Philippines today that means stick used in fighting. I prefer to use *pamalo*-- it simply means "anything that can be used for striking".

Every FMA practitioner should know that anything can be used in stick fighting. I even tried rolling an entire newspaper tightly and used it to spar with my brother when we were kids. It worked and he won because he was the first one to get hold of the Sunday

paper. Later, we moved on to hangers, plastic bottles we called *litro*, and bamboo strips before we were allowed to play rattan sticks.

Using *olisi* actually means the stick must be rattan. *Garote* is not a stick to me but a painful history. *Baston* is too colonial and snobbish an image for me since rich dons in *haciendas* (plantations) in old days used canes as part of their upper class signature together with their *pipa* (tobacco pipe) and perfect Spanish.

Pamalo is very generic and inclusive. It can be anything useful in striking and hitting. Yes, a *payong* (umbrella) can be a *pamalo* (hit/strike) and *pantusok* (thrust/stab) too like *baston*. Cebuano FMA practitioners should start using *pamunal* or *pambunal*-- it sounds beautiful and traditionally Filipino. Its meaning is the same as *pamalo*. Its root is *bunal*, meaning *lash, strike, or hit*. Belts, ropes, chains, sticks, and tails of stingrays (*buntot-pagi*) can be used as *pamunal* or *pambunal*-- in my dialect, we call them *bubunal*, and our name for stick fighting is *binunalay*.

POSTED BY BAGANING_BALYAN AT 7:33 PM

FRIDAY, JULY 11, 2008

Arabic On Moro Armor



One of the Moro armors that has really convinced me that the Ottoman Turks did reach the Philippines, particularly Sulu, is the armor above made of copper or brass plates (I am not sure what kind of metal chips they are). It almost looks like the buffalo horn armors-- in chip, button, chain, and okir designs. This armor, to me, is Turkish.

What has convinced me is the Arabic inscription, a Quranic passage, on the back of one of the chips. Unlike the Ottoman Turks, Mindanaoan Moros had no tradition of writing Islamic verses in Arabic on armors and weapons. The Moros did not speak or write in Arabic. They had their own Malay-based dialects, and they too used Baybayin, the early Philippine writing system, before the Spanish came.

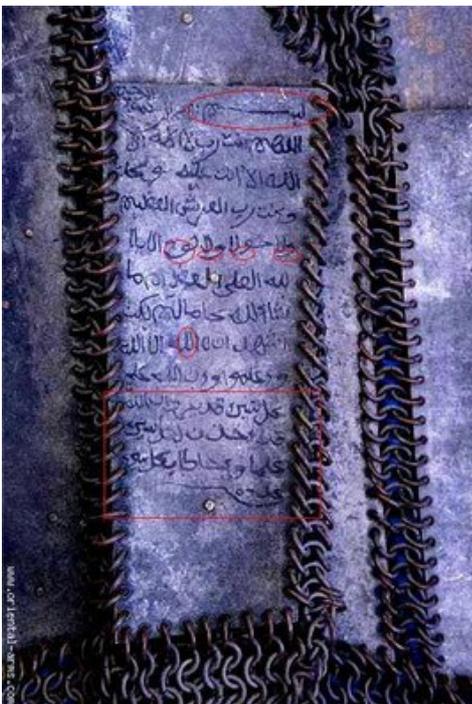
There are historical papers that show Moros wrote in baybayin, but I don't think there are evidence showing that the Moros used Arabic as a medium of communication before the Spanish

colonization. Most Moros could not even write in sixteenth century. According to William Henry Scott, some datus could not even sign their names on affidavits, oaths, and land deeds. If the datus couldn't write, why could the warriors?



Arabic was not even used by the Moros when they first wrote *Darangen*, a Moro epic. It is just unthinkable that they would use it on armors. Nowadays, only few can speak and write Arabic in the Philippines. Its teaching began when the *madrassa* system of education was implemented by the Muslim priests and scholars in Mindanao. It is a twentieth-century literacy development among the Muslims in the Philippines.

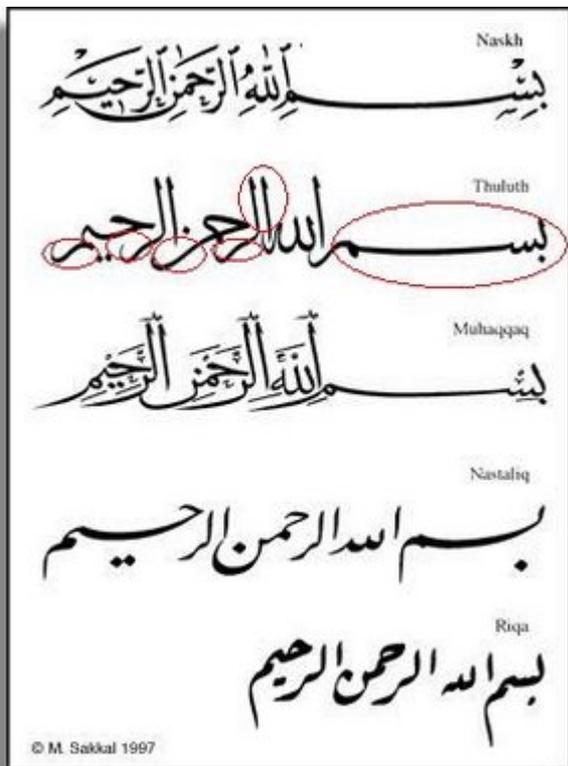
I don't speak Arabic, but I have Arab friends who told me that these Arabic scripts are old. Most of them were not even familiar of the scripts on the metal Armor. They all said though that the writings were related to Quranic teachings since using Arabic in relation to objects used in war is an act of faith. Early Muslim warriors used the *surah* verses as amulets or protective prayers.



I am using the plural "scripts" because two kinds of Arabic writings were used. The first one is *thuluth*, and the one in the box is *nastaliq*. Both Arabic scripts were developed and used by the Ottomans. *Thuluth* is recognizable because of its downward

slopes, while *nastaliq* uses many dots. A tentative translation of the passage supports my two-scripts theory.

The one written in *thuluth* uses the second person singular pronoun "you" while the one in *nastaliq* has the third person singular "he" as its masculine pronoun. There is a possibility that the the *nastaliq* passage was added later. The use of two scripts also suggests that the Turks indeed stayed for awhile in Malay archipelago, Sulu included. We can see the use of two scripts in transition.



A third of every word in *thuluth* script is a downward slope. *Thuluth* means "third" in Arabic. It is clear that *tulo* and *tatlo*, meaning "three", in Philippine major languages came from the Ottoman's *thuluth*. Malay has *tiga*, Sanskrit, *trayas*, *tisra*, and *tri*, and Tamil, *moondru*. It is intriguing why Cebuanos have *tulo* and Tagalogs, *tatlo*. As I see it, it is also a linguistic evidence that the Ottomans did reach Mindanao bringing the *thuluth* script and driving their enemies.

Nastaliq or *taliq* is known for its clear and fluid writing. *Taliq*, which means separate, probably got its name from the *qalam*, a pen made out of reed, which has a nib split in the middle or from the clear, distinct separation, space-wise, in writing. Some Muslims say *taliq* to divorce from their spouse. Interestingly, in the Philippines, *talik* means union, closeness, and sex. I wonder if there is a connection between the two words.

There are a lot of Turkish words in Philippine languages. Most of them are obviously related to violence, raid, and war. Bisaya *Dusmag* (stab) is from *dusmek* (fall). Tagalog *alab* is from *alev*, and they both mean flame. *Siga* means physically powerful in

Tagalog and Turkish. *Iyo* in Tagalog means yours while *iye* in Turkish means owner. *Sabit* for both means fixed or attached.

There is even a word related to tribute or taxation. *Kain* in the Philippines means food or eat while in Turkey, it means poultry or stuff paid in kind by a tenant to his landlord. Turkish *arak* became *alak* in Tagalog. They are drinks. I am still trying to compile Turkish-loaned words in Philippine languages. So far, the ones I have gathered are mostly not nice words.

The Turkish words that entered the languages of the Filipinos are very telling of the violent activities and nature of the Ottomans. I have a feeling that they were not nice people when they were in the Islands. They must have raided, killed, and drove away the Hindus. Thus, only faint traces of Hinduism and Indic culture have survived in the Philippines. Yes, I believe it was the Ottoman Turks who caused the violent decline and demise of the Majapahit empire.

POSTED BY BAGANING_BALYAN AT 8:59 PM

THURSDAY, JULY 10, 2008

Armors in Malay Peninsula



The Ottoman Turks' supply of metal was abundant. They had complex metal arts and crafts. One should not wonder why there is no existing Turkish armors with plates or strips made from buffalo horns. Maybe early on they used buffalo horns but later changed to metals. Thus, there are no existing Ottoman non-metal armors-- so far.

The ottomans had a history of breeding, hunting, and domesticating buffaloes. The population of the Anatolian buffaloes could not be matched by the carabaos of the Philippines. The Ottomans used bull horns in their weaponry specially in making bows. According to some historical accounts, they even melted buffalo horns to be used as ornaments and weapons. They even carved them to make

utensils, jewelry boxes, decors, buttons, etc.

When the Ottomans started using metals for their armors, they must have reused the chips and strips of buffalo horns from their old armors. That is a plausible reason why there are no existing Ottoman buffalo horn armors. Some people think that since there are Moro armors made of buffalo horns, the said armors are indeed of Mindanaon origin as if early water buffaloes or carabaos were of distinct Philippine or Mindanaoan breed.

Carabaos are not endemic to the Philippines. Genetically, they can be traced to the wild water buffaloes of India. The Madjapahit Hindus must have brought the cattle with them. Ibn Batuta, a 14th-century Moroccan explorer, wrote about the systematic transportation of cattle in Asia and India. Carabaos must have come directly from Java.

The only bovine that is endemic to the Philippines is the dwarf tamaraw. It can only be found in Mindoro, which is not in Mindanao. Besides, their horns are too small to be considered for armors. When the early Filipinos started domesticating carabaos, they were mainly for farming and milking. Until now, slaughtering a carabao is extremely rare in The Philippines.

The limited population of the domesticated Philippine carabaos also suggests that there is no way their horns could be used in armors that needed pairs and pairs of horns. It also shows that there was no systematic mass breeding or hunting then. If there was, there should have been a lot of wild and leashed carabaos in the Islands before the Spanish came. Historical accounts by Spanish chroniclers wrote about carabaos as farmers' "beasts of burden." They were already domesticated for farm work not for their horns.

Limited supply does not mean more demand. I don't wonder why I only see bull horns used as hilts or handles of bladed weapons by the lumads of Mindanao, Visayans, and Tagalogs. Carabaos are just useful in Philippine traditional economy when they are alive not dead. I don't think slaughtering them for their horns is a tradition among the people in rural Philippines.



The existing Moro armors made of buffalo horns are in good condition. Their gold okir designs are thick and complex. Even the chain linking was obviously not simple and old. They mean that the said armors are not as ancient as the metal armors of the

Ottomans. I believe that those buffalo horn armors were from Borneo, which has a tradition of hunting and slaughtering buffaloes for meat, hide, and horns. They are definitely of Turkish influence, even though horns were used.

Until now, there are even water buffalo parade and racing in Malaysia and Indonesia. Some Bornean ethnolinguistic groups still use buffalo heads as economic status symbol. Unlike Borneo, Sulu has no carabao culture. It is not even known for rice farming where carabaos are useful. There is no specific breed of buffaloes in Sulu, and it is not known as the place for hunting wild buffaloes.

Philippine carabaos must have come directly from Madjapahit Java. They were transported by the Hindus to Caraga region, then to Visayas, and then Luzon, the rice granary of the Philippines, where the population of domesticated carabaos is a lot. Also, lumads of Mindanao, Visayans, and Tagalogs have folk tales involving carabao. I don't think Muslims of Mindanao have one. I am still researching. So far, I have found none.

After centuries of domestication and mutation, the horns of the Philippine carabaos changed. They are not as long and wide as the Malaysian buffaloes that still exist today. The horns of Bornean buffaloes which are definitely enough to make armors also suggest that they were once wild, and being hunted and slaughtered for the use of their horns, besides meat and hide.

POSTED BY BAGANING_BALYAN AT 4:03 PM

WEDNESDAY, JULY 9, 2008

Moro Armor is Ottoman's



Another reason why Moro armors are not Mindanaoan is the chain linking design. Ottoman metal arts produced different kinds of complex chain designs. Such designs can be seen in Turkish dresses, jewelries, hats and helmets, weaving, decorative arts,

drawing and painting, architecture, and even in geometric Arabic calligraphy. The Muslims of Mindanao have no tradition of chain mail and linking designs. Even their jewelries do not have complex designs like the ottomans'.

It would be easy to consider the armor above as Moro due to the inlaid okir leafy designs in gold on the chest part since okir is considered as the traditional art form of the Mindanaon Muslims, specially among the Maranaos. Actually okir is not traditionally unique to Mindanao. Indonesia and Malaysia also have ukir- an art form that uses the same floral and leafy designs found in Mindanaoan drawing, carving, dyeing, architecture, etc.

Okir or ukir is also a proof that supports the idea that the Ottoman Turks reached the Malay archipelago and Sulu. Okir designs are the same arabesque art symbols and images found in Islamic arts of Turkey that can be traced back to Persia. A sixteenth century Ottoman ax below shows leafy curlicues. Leaves and flowers were often used in early Turkish arts because images of humans and animals were forbidden in Islam.



Even the word *ukir* or *ukil* is also a linguistic proof suggesting that indeed the Ottoman Turkish and the Madjapahit Hindu cultures met and mixed. There are historical accounts that suggest the participation of the Ottomans in the demise of the Majapahit empire in Java in 1500's. The Sultanate of Demak, the enemy of the Javanese Hindus, had ties with the ottomans.

Ukir or *ukil* is Tamil for fingernail or claw. No wonder okir floral and leafy designs are in curves, curls, and curlicues. In Mindanao, *ukir* became *okir* or *okkir*. This also proves that the Turkish influence and the people who originally made and wore the Moro armors did reach Sulu and the surrounding areas. *Ok* is turkish for arrow, tongue, pole, shank or quill. It denotes points, curves, and lines which are present in okir.

Basically, the Turkish *ok* linguistically changed the Tamil *ukir*,

which resulted to the Mindanaon *okir* or *okkir*. The change of *uk* to *ok* is significant since in Malay and Philippine languages, the *u* sound is not changeable or replaceable. In early Cebuano or Visayan languages, *o* was not even a vowel. There were only three: *a*, *i*, and *u*. The use of *o* in *okir* or *okkir* shows a foreign influence-- in this case, Turkish.

Next: Similarities among armors of Sulawesi, Brunei, Mindanao, and Ottoman Turkey.

POSTED BY BAGANING_BALYAN AT 9:43 PM

TUESDAY, JULY 8, 2008

Moro Armor: Is it Moro?



A lot has been written about Moro armors. Some say they are Spanish in origin while others claim them to be Moro in every chain, chip, and detail. Moro is usually defined as the people of Mindanao although the people of Borneo were also called Moros by the European explorers in pre-twentieth century and by the Americans in 1900's.

If Moros traditionally made and wore armors a long time ago, Muslims of Mindanao would have a lot of armors in their closets as inherited items from their old folks. They must have also influenced the Lumads (non-Muslim natives) of Mindanao in making and wearing armors centuries ago. Unfortunately, those cases, at present, are non-existent.

Maybe only a dozen of armors exists today. That tells us that only a handful of Moro warriors wore armors. Maybe the leaders were the only ones who were protected. It also suggests that these armors are not actually Moro in origin. They were not made in Mindanao. A

group of foreign warriors must have brought them there. I have a hunch that the Ottoman Turks brought those with them together with Sunni Islam, Arabic language, and their genes that reached Sulu. The available pieces of evidence- archaeological, linguistic, and genetic, say so.

When we talk about metal armors, the first thing that should come to mind is the image of warriors on horses. These armors are heavy so riding a horse is a great help. Exhaustion is the weakness of any warrior. I just don't think that a Moro warrior would wear a heavy metal armor and walk along the mountainous terrain of Mindanao under the tropical heat of the sun. It would also be a drag to wear one during wet season while marching on slippery, muddy fields. They would need horses for these armors to be helpful.

The Moros of Mindanao were not known traditionally as warriors on horses. They had no history of breeding horses, going to war on horses, and celebrating something related to horses. They were not comparable to Turks and Mongols with horses. Spanish and American accounts do not say anything about Moros riding horses, fighting with their krises and kampilan, and wearing metal armors.

Maybe a few leaders did, but wearing armor was not a cultural thing among the Moros. Even the Spanish Chroniclers who witnessed the death of Magellan did not write anything about Lapu-Lapu in armor. They wrote about the natives' spear, I don't think they would miss the shining metal armors of the early Filipinos if they had and wore them. Those early leaders in armors, I think, were influenced by the foreign warriors who visited them.

Even the Americans in their campaign against the moros in 1900's never encountered Moros in armors in many battles they waged. However, there are existing photos taken by the Americans during peace time where a handful of Moros donned and modeled armors. The way I look at them, they were prodded or forced to wear them for the camera. I think those armors were actually collections or inherited possessions by the high-ranked datus or even sultans not normal or usual protective wears traditionally used by just any Moro warriors.

Next: Turkish not Moro Armors

POSTED BY BAGANING_BALYAN AT 10:16 PM

SUNDAY, JULY 6, 2008

The Re-Sanskritized Kalis



After checking available archaeological evidence, linguistic proof, and historical accounts, I am confident to say that *keris*, the Malaysian and Indonesian kris, is from the Turkish word, *kilich* (sword). Even the genetic map, made from several human genome projects, supports my contention that Turkish influences, including their genes and weaponry, reached Mindanao before the Spanish came to the Philippines in sixteenth century.

In Malay, *ch* usually becomes *s* and *l* replaces *r* (and vice-versa). Thus, from *kilich*, it evolved to *kiris*. I suspect that the Sanskrit *kera* (coconut) and *ker* (to cut) entered the Malay lexicon and influenced the evolution of *kiris* to *keris*. *Keris* is not entirely a Sanskrit word. The suffix *-is* cannot be found in Indian languages. For this reason, the Turkish *kilish* makes sense.

There are Malay words whose *e* was *i* originally. In Visayan languages, for instance, *e* usually becomes *i*, whose sound is hard and stiff. That's why Visayans are known for their "hard tongue." In short *i* and *e* are interchangeable. However, Malay languages are sensitive when it comes to a vowel change. Once it is changed, its meaning or its being a part of speech is also affected.

In Philippine languages, *ibon* is not the same as *ebon*. The latter is egg and the former is bird. I suspect that *kiris* and *keris* have the same linguistic similarity-- *kiris* might have been the general word for sword with no specific meaning and later it became *keris*, a special sword with a particular meaning and use. Linguistically, the meaning of a word evolves from general to specific.

In Mindanao, *keris* is *kalis*, the word used by the Muslims for kris. Deep words in the Philippines have Malay origins, and some Malay words have Turkish-Arabic beginnings, and most of them have Sanskrit etymologies. I have observed that foreign-influenced Malay words that entered the Philippine languages are re-Sanskritized. That it is also one of the evidences supporting the presence of Hinduism and early Indians in the Islands before the Spanish colonization.

Tagalog *dalita* (poor) is from *derita* (suffering), which is from *dharta*, the Sanskrit word for "restrained." *Derita* became *dalita* after early Filipinos re-Sanskritized *derita* by incorporating *dal*,

the Sanskrit root word for "suppressed." It is the same linguistic explanation with *salita* (word) from the old Malay word *serita* and Sanskrit *cerita*. The Sanskrit word *sali* or *salit*, which means "including," obviously a function of a word that includes meanings, images, and sounds, became part of the re-Sanskritized Filipino *salita*.

Salamat (thanks) is from *seramat* or *selamat* (survive or safe), which is from the Sanskrit word, *sala* or *salam*, meaning, house or pavilion, which denotes safety. *Seramat* or *selamat* became *salamat* after the Sanskrit root word *sal* (sea) was incorporated. Early Filipinos in coastal areas were seafarers, and the sea surrounding them was the source of their worries and object of their prayers for safety. There are rituals that are still done or prepared to calm the sea in the Philippines.

I see the same pattern of linguistic evolution in *berita* to *balita* (news), *aremat* to *alamat* (legend), and *berat* to *balat* (skin, peel, or cover). It is also the same word change that happened to *keris* when it became *kalis*. *Keris* became *kilis* or *kelis*, and then the Sanskrit *kal* or *kali* (dark) entered the equation. Thus, *keris* became *kalis*.

POSTED BY BAGANING_BALYAN AT 6:18 PM

FRIDAY, JULY 4, 2008

Uno-Dos-Tres Triangle Attack



Tres or three is synonymous to triangle in Filipino philosophy and traditional martial arts. Lethal and immobilizing points in the body are in the clusters of three and in the forms of triangle.

There are wet triangles for weapons such as spear, knife, and sword and dry ones for impact strike from stick, kick or punch.

A strike on a wet triangle usually targets veins, blood vessels, or arteries. On a dry one focuses the impact towards internal organs such as heart, lungs, kidney, liver, etc. Attacking dry triangles is usually done first to immobilize an opponent. That is the rule, so that one has time to think if he wants to finish his opponent off by using weapons to thrust, cut, or slash his opponent who is down and in pain. His opponent can also rethink if he needs to continue fighting.

People who go directly with the lethal wet points usually regret after killing their opponents. They forget the rule of killing, which is to think twice before doing it. A good martial artist should know how to control his rage. If anything can control him like fear, rage, and vengeance, then he is weak, coward, and dumb.

Those who are controlled by their feelings usually end up in hospital, cemetery, or jail. Fighting also belongs to the realm of the mind. One should think before he hurts someone. That's why there are mapped out lethal points in the human body, so accident can be avoided and dumb killing won't happen. Killing should be done when one really knows what he is doing and if he really thinks about the consequences. Blaming adrenaline rush and psychological blackout is a weak reason. A real martial artist knows how to control his feelings because he uses his mind.

Even the triangles of death have points that are semi-lethal or not lethal at all. Their role is for warning. If continued, stabs, slashes or cuts to other adjoining points would result to death. A good example is the belly-femoral triangle. Stabbing the belly area is not always deadly. The adipose tissues or fats in that area are thick and slippery. That belly point serves a good warning though to a fallen opponent that his attacker can still continue and complete the triangle by doing the same thing to both femoral veins.

Uno, dos, tres attack is basically a controlled way to kill. *Uno* is a warning, *dos* is to kill, and *tres* is to overkill. Counting *uno, dos, tres* in relation to trouble, fight, or fisticuff is common in Philippine culture. We count one, two, three to warn bullies, calm down our obnoxious brothers, and give our enemies time to shut up, leave us alone or run as fast as they can. Intelligent killing requires time for both individuals in a fight to really make sure that one is ready to kill and the other to be killed.

Had that Filipino guy who killed a club bouncer in New York learned *Uno-dos-tres* attack, dry and wet triangles, and warning and killing points, he would not have been in jail full of regrets and suicidal thoughts. If you look at it deeper, Filipino martial art is not senselessly savage. It warns and gives time to someone to stop the fight, run, and go to the nearest emergency room. *Uno* as an expression in Philippine languages is synonymous to warning.

Yes, a Filipino warns before he unlocks, flips, and thrusts his balisong.

POSTED BY BAGANING_BALYAN AT 12:27 PM

Ref.: <http://12fma.blogspot.dk/>