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Informative

Propagating the Filipino Martial Arts and the Culture of the Philippines

Balintawak Basics (abecedario)

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*In Balintawak Eskrima, there is a great emphasis on defense.
There is also a great emphasis on close combat fighting.*



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Sam Buot, Sr., “Student and Enthusiast of the Art”

This Informative Issue brings you the Balintawak basics (abecedario). With the permission of Sam Buot he explains some of the very basics in learning the art of Balintawak.

Sam Buot is a dedicated practitioner and historian of Balintawak, he is a very humble individual, friendly, humorous, honest, proud, and is someone that as far as the notebook is concerned is a privilege to know and associate with.

In Balintawak one must start at the beginning to truly learn and gain the knowledge of the art as a whole. There is no part that does not in conjunction with the other parts when put together, make a most formable art of defense and offense.

In talking with Grandmasters Bobby Taboada, Bob Silver Tabimina, and Sam Buot when they were taught the art, (to put it in good terminology), it was like the school of hard knocks.

However in today’s society a new approach has been implemented; which a student still learns the true basics and skills as when Grandmaster “Anciong” Bacon taught, but it has been toned down in the “hard knocks department,” and continues to be one of the finest arts around with the basics and training that is offered. Now do not misunderstand, if you want to see how these elders of Balintawak trained when they were young it can be assured if asked they will be more than glad to teach you in that way...

Now back to the subject at hand, read and understand that this issue is just a taste of the beginning basics of Balintawak and it is advised “if possible” to obtain Sam Buot cd “Martial Arts of the Philippines - Balintawak International, Cebu. And another note is if possible; seek instruction from a Balintawak practitioner or at least attend a seminar if one is in your area.



Grandmasters Bobby Taboada, Bob Silver Tabimina, and Sam Buot

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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Sam and his son Ryan Buot

Balintawak Basics

(abecedario)

In Balintawak Eskrima, there is a great emphasis on defense. Personally, I feel this is inaccurate because under the Buot Balintawak System, I insist on a simultaneous counter-offensive. The student's first lesson is to defend himself and simultaneously make a counter offensive move. Like any sport, scoring is very important but defense is also important to keep the opponent from scoring on you. It is just unacceptable to be hit with a weapon. There are no gloves or protective gear in real Balintawak Eskrima. The slightest rap even on the fingers, knuckles and head can end the game. Offensive moves are immediately taught to prospective fighters who volunteer in a fight or a tournament.

There is also a great emphasis on close combat fighting. Although stick fights start from distance fighting, upon contact, the fight evolves into close combat fighting. Close combat fighting easily translates into unarmed combat and short weapons and the reflexes learned from the stick fight come in handily. There are more intricate techniques in close combat than distance fighting.

In the defensive stage, the student learns the basics of the art from warm ups, proper form, stances, stepping, delivery of strikes and defenses against basic strikes and their corresponding counter-strikes. Also taught are reflexive groups of movements, that is, to develop certain reflex responses under various situations.

Warm-Up Exercises: In Eskrima, or any other martial art or sports, warm up is crucial, as to avoid injury to tight muscles and ligaments. Always start gradually with warm ups to avoid injury. Repeated strains on the ligaments could eventually lead to arthritic pains or torn ligaments and could mean a lifetime of pain and suffering.

- 1. Wrist** - Eskrima has extensive use of the wrist. Wrist exercises are done by holding the stick in the middle and twisting it in a fan-like manner. Always begin slowly and build up gradually. Other warm up exercises include pressing the palm (fingers up) against each other in front of the chest or the back of the hand (fingers down) against each other, also pressed in front of the chest.
- 2. Arms** - Raise left arm above the head and pull the elbow toward the right. Alternate the exercise with the right arm. Do the same motion. Rotate arms forward and backward on the shoulder sockets to loosen joints.
- 3. Chest** - Hold hands behind the back and pull until you feel chest tighten. Hold hands in front of chest and push against each other. Do push-ups.
- 4. Legs** - Do sit ups, and stretches of the foot, legs, knees and hamstrings for flexibility.
- 5. Back** - Lie flat on the floor, raise butt while keeping back flat on the floor. Raise leg and pull behind the knee to feel stretch of hamstrings. Do each leg in alternating manner. Slowly bend at waist to touch the floor.
- 6. Neck** - Rotate neck slowly in both directions as well as forward and backward. This should be done slowly. Do not snap suddenly.
- 7. Body** - Do slow hip rotation. Keep trunk steady while turning upper torso alternately both left and right. With shoulder width stance, bend forward at the hips and reach toward the floor. Also alternately, reach for opposite toes.

Starting Position

1. Holding the Stick

- a. Hold the stick with a firm grip (not tight) hammer grip, about 1 to 1.5 inches from the butt of the stick. The danger of leaving a long butt is the possibility of being disarmed or controlled by the opponent. This is the basic grip. Alternate gripping techniques will be discussed later. Alternate ways are taught when the student understands the dangers of each situation and has further acquired the skill, speed and training to react in a fast and effective manner. Furthermore, it is unwieldy; it shortens your weapon and lessens your advantage and leverage. The stick must be a 90-degree angle with your arm. Do not bend the wrist while striking. Avoid the limp wrist please! It's too girly.
- b. Clip your elbows loosely, close to your side at a 90-degree angle. Forearms should be in a horizontal position while the stick should be in a vertical position. Avoid the slant forward of the stick (tumbada). It leaves the fighter open to disarm. It further allows sneaking blows or sliding blows. Some masters lean the stick on the side of their neck. They do this when they have the confidence, speed and training.
- c. The tip of the stick must be at level to the top of the head to cover strikes to the head, neck and face.
- d. The left hand must be loose and ready at nipple level as in a boxing stance.
- e. The right foot should be forward at a distance of one regular walking pace. Avoid a wide and inflexible stance. Bend both knees slightly and raise the left heel slightly with the weight very slightly on the right forward foot (55-45 percent ratio) in delivering the blow. Otherwise, the weight must be able to shift either direction very quickly. It must be remembered that one of the abiding principles of Balintawak Eskrima is balance.

The Grandmaster knew very little English and one of the terms he always used was center balance. That is, maintaining balance on both feet with the ability to shift weight forward, backward or sideways, considering of course the physics and dynamics of power strikes.

2. Use of Eyes: Look straight into opponent's eyes for eye-to-eye contact (some martial arts look at the chest or the neck) and for the following same reasons:

- Using peripheral vision to guard against attack with hands, feet and the stick in case grappling and infighting. Guard against elbows knees and head-butts. Do not attempt to follow the stick with your eyes as in watching a ping pong game. Use peripheral vision and "Feel" in sensing the stick and body movement and inertia.
- As part of the psychological warfare - to instill fear and intimidation, hesitation and even panic and even terror and to show confidence, resolve and determination this often unnerves a fainthearted foe.
- Some martial arts advocate focusing of the chest and just use peripheral vision.

3. Maintaining Distance:

It is important to maintain the proper fighting distance between you and your opponent. The reasons are to keep your balance, deliver power blows and maintain control over your opponent. This is achieved by proper stepping. The following are basic rules. They are NOT set out in concrete but learn first the basics. When a fighter knows what he is doing, he may break the rules, often as a ruse to trap his unsuspecting foe into thinking he has an open blow.

- a. When the Stick is not in Motion:
 - 1) If the opponent's right foot is forward, withdraw your right foot to maintain proper fighting distance.
 - 2) If opponents' left foot is forward, withdraw your right foot to avoid being stepped on, kicked and to maintain distance. The same rule is true with your left foot.
 - 3) In the same manner, if the opponent withdraws his left foot, make a forward step with your right foot, that is, to maintain the proper fighting distance and so as not to lose control of your opponent.

b. When Stick is in Motion:.

- 1) If opponent's stick is on your left side, withdraw your left foot to avoid a "dropping strike" (patagakan or dakdak). Do not turn your back to the strike.
- 2) If opponent's stick is on your right side, withdraw your right foot for the same reason.
- 3) If your opponent delivers a strike to your left side while your foot is withdrawn, do not withdraw your foot any farther. Instead, turn your left shoulder (takilid) farther left and away from the blow to face the strike.
- 4) If your opponent delivers a strike to your right side and while doing so he makes a simultaneous backward step, do not withdraw your right foot if it is in a forward position. Instead, step forward with your left foot to maintain control and proper fighting distance.

4. Maintaining Balance:

In Eskrima as in any martial art, balance is considered of primordial importance. Effective delivery of strikes and effective defense against blows, kicks or punches depend very largely on balance. For this reason, we advocate normal balanced steps, short and low snap kicks and a balanced delivery versus the fancy high kicks. The late Balintawak Grandmaster "Anciong" Bacon always spoke of Center Balance. This has been referred to in other Asian arts as the chi, said to be located above the navel. When the person is hit above the center of balance, his tendency is to fall backwards and when hit below the center of balance, the tendency is to fall forward. Thus, boxers hit below the center of balance falls forward, gravity adds tremendously to the up-percut blow. I suspect the exception is, when hit on the jaw in a knockout punch. When the power goes out, the man just slumps and falls wherever his weight is tilted at the point of power failure.

5. Face the Strike: Even if struck at an oblique angle, turn your body to face the strike.



General Principles and Exercises

The student must learn to deliver the basic twelve strikes and the variations. These consist of slashing strikes, hammer blows, thrusts, horizontal and flicking or fan blows (paypay or abanico). The latter is used more for exercise or distraction rather than as a power strike. It is also used in ruses (lansis). Regardless, if you are hit by any strike, it will sting. In doing these exercises, power, balance and accuracy is emphasized.

1. Shadow Fighting - The student must practice delivery of strikes and thrusts with proper footwork in forward and backward motion. One way to practice in delivery of blows is by hanging a string or small rope and tying a knot at the end of the rope. Practice hitting the knot from various angles and at different heights. In the Philippines, where vegetation is lush, we would pick the tip of a particular leaf and practice hitting just the tip of that leaf from different directions or practice abrupt stops.

2. Power Strikes - Power blows are the result of a combination of proper weight shift, hip twist, shoulder and forearm with wrist action creating torque with the fullest speed at the point of impact. The stick is held firmly but not tight. A tight grip loses power from forearm tension. The stick must be at 90-degree angle with the arm. The wrist should not be limp and bent. The greatest ripping power is at the tip of the stick. It will tear off the flesh. There is a "sweet spot" on the stick when delivering the blow for power strikes. The best impact point will be about from three inches below the tip to about eight to inches from that point above the middle of the stick. Strike through the target for maximum power as you would do in block breaking. A good power strike obtains maximum impact on contact. A good power strike will end the fight abruptly. Work on it!

3. Bladed Weapon Concept - To hit with power, it is important to think of the stick as a machete. After all, the machete is substituted today with the Eskrima stick as a training tool for machete fighting. Imagine that you are slashing with the blade hitting at the point of contact. The blade of the imagined machete would be in line with the second digit of your gripping fingers. Regardless of the direction of the blow, the same rule applies, whether the strike is downward upward or sideways. It must be remembered that the stick was used as a training tool for the bolo, sundang or pinute', machete duels. Upon closer analysis, it has been discovered that it was indeed the

power strike. At the end of the strike, it must however be observed that the striker must roll or pronate the wrist; otherwise, it will cause great strain and eventual damage on the wrist and elbow and even induce permanent injury. Thus in delivering strike number 1, it is a palm up to palm down delivery. Correspondingly, a number 2 strike starts with a palm down start and ends up with the palm-up.

Exception: When the strike is a flick (abanico or paypay), or in case of a thrust. Most Balintawak practitioners do not use abanico as a power strike since it is easy to block although this has been demonstrated as an effective tool in ruses. With correct technique and practice, it can in fact be a powerful strike.

4. Berada or Pull Back - In striking, do not pull back or swing the stick back before delivery of the blow. If you must pull back for power, do it before initiating the strike. Pulling back telegraphs your move, and you lose valuable split second time in the delivery of the blow. This split second time means a lot in the hands of an expert. Obtain torque and power from the legs, hip, shoulder, forearm and wrist. Some exercise moves for loosening up, does this. This is precisely why the Balintawak masters were vehemently against the amara that will be discussed in a later segment.

5. Retracting the Stick - Another basic principle in delivering a strike is to retract the stick immediately after the strike. In other words, do not extend your hand, stick or any part of your body to be within reach or control by your opponent. This principle is followed in bare hand combat and knife fighting. Never allow any part of your body or weapon to be controlled by your opponent. An expert Balintawak practitioner can easily capture an opponent's stick upon contact, thus the need to immediately retract your weapon.

6. Amara Dance Style - It is the fancy stick twirling including the flicking, whipping, fan blows (paypay or abanico). It looks fancy, circuitous and actually exhausting. It is also the signature move of old style and ornate Eskrima that still find currency in some styles. This would be equivalent to the rococo style if this were an art. It is ornate and fancy but adds little to its utility. It was used as an intimidation dance that exhausted the wielder. Balintawak Eskrimadors are not impressed or intimidated. Balintawak moves are practical, economical and effective. The idea is to conserve your energy for the battle. The Balintawak masters were not too excited about it and ridiculed it. As an exercise, it may have its merits but even then, it may lead to tennis elbow and other arthritic pains. The best argument for it is that it also sells seminars and video tapes, thus it find adherents. I have noticed that among US students, they love the stick twirling for demonstrations. Who can argue against that? As we have learned in grade school science, the shortest distance between two points is a straight line. This also applies in Eskrima. Thus, avoid the circuitous amara. For your education, information and for academic discussion, however, it goes in the following manner:

- a. Horizontal fan blow or flicking blows repeated five times.
- b. Horizontal blow as in number three, then drop hit to the floor followed with a dagger thrust from left to right and then from right to left.
- c. Diagonal fan blows similar motions as in (a).
- d. Twirl snap down, twirl snap up
- e. Double sticks
 - 1) Strikes from the same side - left and right.
 - 2) Strikes from opposite sides, one arm higher and one arm lower.
 - 3) Vertical up and down parallel blows alternating.
 - 4) Diagonal up and down parallel blows from both left and right alternating.
 - 5) X or V strikes crossing in front of you with repeated.
 - 6) Circular diagonal fanlike movements with your right hand on your right and your left hand on your left.
 - 7) Figure of eight with dagger on the left hand - Strike with a slashing number 1 strike, then a slashing number 2 strike:
 - a) Repeat the procedure above
 - b) Repeat strike number 1, and then number 3

f. Hit the floor in a down motion and then a perpendicular strike upwards in a stabbing motion to the groin followed with a dagger thrust.

This is purely for academic discussion. Balintawak purists will never be caught doing these jazz; they have a visceral dislike for these moves. As I have suggested earlier, some younger masters in their effort to promote the art have adapted this elaborate moves in promoting their videos and seminars. For exercise and warm up, I will concede to its use. It can develop fluidity and grace of motion.

Safety Caution: During practice and drills, thrusts to the eyes and even to the nipple are aimed outside the body area for safety to avoid injury. Safety cannot be over emphasized in practice and drill sessions. This warning will be repeated from time to time to warn of possible injury. An accidental thrust to the eyes can cause severe injury and even blindness and a thrust to the throat can be fatal.



Delivery of Strikes

Balintawak style frowns on chambering or berada in delivering strikes. We advocate economy of motion with direct strikes. There is a split second loss in the pull back or chambering move. After a strike, the stick must be quickly withdrawn to avoid control by the opponent. In addition, as earlier said, it is a well-accepted scientific fact that the nearest distance between two points is a straight line. Thus the need to minimize circuitous stick twirling. Power is derived from the legs, the hip, the shoulder and then to the arm, hand and stick. Hip twist and weight shift powers the strike. Based on that principle, Balintawak avoids fancy moves made popular by other styles, more particularly, the amara or fancy stick twirling. It is an intimidation dance without any practical effective purpose. Besides, countering it is easy and simple.

There were basic strike targets or angles for training and actual strike targets for combat. A strike targets in practice are different from those in combat.

Eyes: Eyes should be focused on opponents eyes or his chest area with peripheral of offensive moves from any angle.

Strike Number 1: Right foot forward with weight slightly on the right foot (front foot), assuming the striker is right handed, with both knees slightly bent as in a boxing stance. Deliver blow to the left side of opponent's head. Remember to shift your weight to the left side as you complete the strike. Regain balance quickly. Derive torque from the legs to the uncoiling of the upper torso through hip, shoulder, arm and wrists in explosive strike. Remember the bladed machete or bolo concept with the blade in line with the second digit of your fingers. The grip starts with a palm-up grip with the stick in a vertical position. End the strike with the palm-down. Clip close to the left side of your body (assuming you are right handed). The stick is at 90-degree angle with your arm and remains at the same angle. In other words, the wrist does not bend or go limp.

Strike Number 2: Side step to your left with most of your weight on him left. Grip your stick with your palm down. Start your slashing strike with the stick starting at about your left shoulder ending at your opponent's right ear. Simultaneously shift your weight to your right foot with the uncoiling of your upper torso for full force delivery. Regain balance quickly. The point of impact would again be as the blade of a machete land in a slashing strike. The grip ends with palm up and finally resting in ready position right of center.

Strike Number 3: This is a strike to your opponent's right rib cage or to his elbow, if his arms are clipped, using the same principles described above in strike number 2.

Strike Number 4: Resume position as in strike number 1 by pivoting obliquely right. Deliver the blow to opponent's left floating ribs or to his left elbow if arms are clipped. Follow the same principle of power delivery, weight shift and balance.

Strike Number 5: (Thrust to the abdomen). Step forward with your left foot. With your palm down and with the stick at 90-degree angle with your arm, thrust the stick to opponent's solar plexus (advanced variations to breastbone, throat and groin. The wrist remains firm at 90-degree angle, No limp wrist, please. It is weak and

looks terribly unmanly and even girly. Do not bend your thumb forward. The thrust is done with a lunging movement. Again, obtaining power from the leg thrust and torque from hip and shoulder explosive twist for optimum power.

Strike Number 6: Withdraw left foot; withdraw left shoulder (takilid) in sideways stance. With palm up at 90 degree angle, thrust the stick below opponent's right nipple. For beginners, remember earlier caution of aiming outside the body for safety. Accidents do occur when the eyes are accidentally poked. Again, this is done in a lunging manner with proper hip and shoulder movement.

Strike Number 7: Step left foot forward. With oblique sideways stance, palm down, thrust stick below opponents' left nipple. (For drills and workout, thrust outside body as in strike number 6, to avoid accident injury). Do this in the same lunging manner as in strike number 6, with the same hip and shoulder torque.

Strike Number 8: Withdraw left foot and bend knees. Do not bend at the hips as this will get your hair and head within opponent's reach. With palm up, deliver a slashing strike to opponents left knee. Do not bend forward or you could be hit with a punch or your hair could be grabbed.

Strike Number 9: Pivot and sidestep left. With both knees bent, deliver a slashing blow to opponent's right knee. Again, keep your hair and head away from opponent's reach. Also, remember to keep your eyes from being poked.

Strike Number 10: Withdraw you left foot. This time in a standing, sideways stance (left shoulder withdrawn), are aimed outside the body area for safety to avoid injury. Palm-up, with your arm at arm at right angle with your stick. The eyes are target only in actual combat.

Strike Number 11: With left foot forward and palm down, withdraw right shoulder in a sideways stance and deliver thrust to opponent's left eye. Again, practice safety as in strike number 10.

Strike Number 12: This is a hammer strike to the opponent's head. Power is attained by the downward weight shift coordinated with the usual hip, shoulder, arm and wrist action in a chopping action. Again, the wrist remains firm at 90-degree angle with your stick. Optimum speed and power should be at point of impact. The greatest ripping effect however is at the tip of the stick. (Experiment by making your opponent hold a piece of paper. Hit it first with the middle of the stick, then hit it with the tip of the stick, see which one tears the paper).



Parrying of the Twelve Basic Strikes Delivered by Instructor

with Corresponding Counterstrikes by Student

As earlier discussed, in Balintawak Eskrima there is a strong emphasis on defense but as earlier proposed by this author to develop a simultaneous defense and offense and which I would call a counter-offensive move. As in other martial arts and games, the best defense is a good offense. So, both go hand in hand. Martial artists as a rule do not or should not start a fight; he may therefore defend against an aggressor before attacking. This does not mean that a martial artist should always be on the defensive nor does it mean that he should always wait for an attack. Personally, as a little man, if in my judgment, the attack is imminent, I will strike first with a caveat that I would make sure that people observing or watching know that I did not want a fight nor did I start the fight. In Eskrima, the application of this is that when a strike is delivered to your head, you do not go for a tie and simultaneously deliver a blow to the opponent's head. Rather, you should defend first against the strike with a good counter-offensive move. One very important principle to remember is to do a simultaneous offensive strike with your defensive move as will be later discussed. As for now, learn basic defenses.

As a preliminary statement, it must be remembered that a full power strike with the stick is difficult to block with a stationary stick. The force could be so strong that your stick could bounce off to your face or head. Thus, the strike must be:

- (a) Met with an equal or stronger force, otherwise, your stick must be cushioned with your forearm

(elbow tucked in) or your palm heel or both then: control opponent's stick to clear.

(b) Deflect the blow in a glancing manner.

(c) Absorb the blow as in catching a fastball. Anyone who has caught a strong baseball pitch or a strong football pass knows that it hurts your hand if you do not know how to absorb the power of a strong pass. The same is true in an Eskrima strike.

Again as earlier said, keep your eye on the opponent. Do not follow the stick with your eyes. Use peripheral vision and senses in watching stick movement. Retract your stick immediately after delivering a blow. Never allow opponent to control your stick. On the other hand, if you are on the defense, immediately control your opponent's stick. In practice, do not hold your instructor's stick since this will slow down training. Just feel instructor's stick simultaneously with your counter-strike. Another important habit is to face the strike.

Instructor Delivers Strike Number 1

a. The student faces the strike and blocks the stick with equal or superior force. (In actual combat, the strike would be to the hand). The forearm, palm heel or both should be behind his stick. The block is a semi-downward stroke with the stick upright and in right angle to the instructor's stick. The student's left hand should simultaneously control instructor's stick for a retaliatory strike. The operative word is "simultaneously". This move is a crucial move and will be explained later. The student twists his body to the left, with his body weight shifting mostly on his retracted left foot. The stick should be forming an X with the student's hand now touching near the end of the instructor's stick (For purposes of training, the student must not hold the instructor's stick, for reasons to be explained later. He must however feel the stick with his left hand).

b. In this position, the student clears the instructor's stick with his left hand in a downward motion. He delivers strike number two to the right side of instructor's head. Simultaneous with his strike, student's weight should shift to his right foot upon completion of his blow. The shift has implications in obtaining a power strike.

c. He must proceed to regain balance and retract his stick to starting and ready position.

Instructor Delivers Strike Number 2

a. The student again faces the strike and blocks the instructor's stick with a semi-downward slashing block, as he simultaneously withdraws his right foot. (As in number 1 strike, in actual combat, the strike would be to the hand). The student's left hand should simultaneously control instructor's stick for a retaliatory strike. Student twists his shoulders to the right and transfers his weight to his right foot, retaining balance. Both sticks should now be forming an X. The student's left hand should control instructor's stick and clears instructor's stick with a downward movement with his left hand.

b. After the student clears the instructor's stick, he delivers strike number 1 to the left side of the instructor's head. In delivering strike number 1, student's body weight should shift to his left. He obtains torque power from the simultaneous weight shift, unwinding of the hip and shoulder, in coordination with the arm and wrist. Student should quickly regain his balance. (During basic training, student should not hold the instructor's stick for a more fluid movement during basic instruction. In basic training, holding slows down reaction time, thus prevents the development of quicker reflex. This will be understood better later on as student advances).

Note: Eskrima masters, most especially Anciong Bacon would rap a student that grabs his stick as a penalty for disobeying training instructions. The author's theory is that it delays the instructor's own reaction thus slows the sequence (palakat) and tempo, the instructor then loses control. This was never explained and discussed - only obeyed. Teddy Buot had a similar disciplinary rule. No explanation - only obeyed!

c. The student quickly retracts his stick and executes a ready fighting stance. Student's right foot should be withdrawn to the back.

Instructor Delivers Strike Number 3

a. The student this time does not block the instructor's stick but instead blocks the instructor's right wrist with his stick except when the opponent/instructor is far. (In practice, the student blocks the stick). The student's left hand is simultaneously transferred near the butt of the instructor's stick with student's weight mostly on his right foot. The left hand transfer is for the student to feel and control the movement of the instructor's stick.

b. From this position, the student delivers a slashing strike to the left side of the instructor's head, maintaining the same position of both feet. Again, follow the same weight shift and body twist as earlier described.

c. The student quickly retracts his stick and tries to regain his balance as he assumes a fighting stance with his right foot at the rear.

Instructor Delivers Strike Number 4

a. This has the same execution as strike number 1, except that the strike is lower. The student's left foot is withdrawn. The strike is directed lower at student's left elbow or floating ribs. The student bends his knees with his body straight. Student's weight is shifted to his left side in order for student to obtain power in delivery of a retaliatory power strike. Further, he moves himself farther from a possible punch with opponent's left hand. The student strikes the wrist and in practice blocks the stick. His left hand should simultaneously feel the instructor's stick. This very important training cannot be over emphasized. This will be very important in the control of the fight. In training, the traditional way was not to hold the stick since it slowed down the training. The teachers over-emphasized the "no hold" policy to the point that it distorted the true essence in the fight. In a real fight, there is no such thing as "no holding". Anything goes! In Balintawak, there are no foul blows we Master the foul blows.

b. With both sticks forming an X, the student's left hand feels the stick for control. The touch of the stick is a very important training tool in Balintawak Eskrima. This is the basis of control and timing of the fight. The beginner will not understand this completely until he advances in his training. During my training, we just obeyed as told without asking questions for fear of a possible rap on the knuckles. In these United States and in modern marital arts training, we do explain to students the importance of this part of training. It is part of the tapi-tapi or checking hand. It is one reason why Bacon opted for the one stick or solo baston instead of the two sticks as in the old style Eskrima).

c. From this position, the student clears the instructor's stick with a downward stroke of his left hand to clear and parry down instructor's stick for a retaliatory strike number 2 to the right side of the instructor's head.

d. Most of student's weight is transferred to his right foot upon delivery of his strike. He twists his body and shoulders in coordination with his arms and wrists to deliver his blow.

e. Again, the student should immediately retract his stick to regain his balance and to avoid the opponent's control as earlier discussed.

Instructor Delivers Strike Number 5

a. The student parries with the similar execution as parrying strike number 1. Since the thrust (totsada) is lower, the student bends his knee, his left foot at the back in a firm and balanced position.

Note: You must remember this is a thrust to the abdomen, with variations to the groin, solar plexus or the throat. Also, remember to practice safety with these thrusts.

b. The student evades the thrust in three ways:

1) By twisting and rotating his body to the left to avoid the thrust. The twist narrows the target area and avoids the thrust. Student's weight fall mostly on his left foot to avoid being within reach for a punch, butt or eye poke.

Note: Do not over rotate to turn your back to the opponent. Weight should be on your left foot, balanced, body slightly lowered. If the weight is on your right, you will be drawn closer to your opponent within distance for hair pulling or a punch. Keep eyes focused on your opponent and not on the stick.

- 2) The student blocks the instructor's stick with his stick.
- 3) Simultaneous with the evasive body twist and the stick block, the student parries the stick with a scooping in and out movement with his left hand, the palm facing out and his fingers pointing down. This will require some practice. The three moves described above are especially useful in a knife thrust.

The blocking stroke with the stick should be in an upright position (stick point up). This is also under the assumption that the thrust is delivered at the normal fighting distance. There will be variations on this rule as the student advances. If the opponent/instructor is far when he delivers the thrust, the student would block the stick instructor's stick with a downward stroke. This is done with a strike to the hand or wrist. Adjustments are made for distance to opponent and opponent's height. It should be mentioned in passing, that distance fighting is another ball game. This will be covered later when the student reaches a more advanced stage in his stick fighting training.

Assume that the thrust is to the abdominal area. Also, assume that both the instructor and the student are approximately the same height. The student's left hand scoops the instructor's stick toward the end, down and out (fingers pointing down, palm out), to deflect and divert the thrust away from the abdomen. This could be a life saving exercise if there were a knife thrust.

- c. The student then clears the instructor's stick with his left hand and proceeds to deliver strike number 2. Again, the student should not hold on to the instructor's stick, as previously explained, that is, to achieve a more speedy and fluid motion. Also, remember the weight shifts, to attain optimum power delivery, balance and grace.

Instructor Delivers Strike Number 6: (*Practice safety. For workouts, deliver thrust (totsada) outside the body to avoid accidental injury*).

- a. This has the same execution as in parrying strike number 2. The instructor's left foot must be withdrawn and student's right foot must be withdrawn with his weight on his right foot, retaining balance. The student must make an emphatic twist back of his right shoulder without turning his back to his instructor/opponent. It must be remembered that this is a thrust. The body turn avoids and deflects the thrust and narrows the target area.

Note: In twisting the body, be careful not to move within the reach of your opponent. He could grab your hair or hit you with a punch. To avoid this, be sure your weight falls on your right foot as you twist your body.

- b. After blocking the thrust with his stick, the student clears or parries the instructor's stick downward with his left hand. Student delivers strike number 1, that is, a slashing strike to the left side of the instructor's head. Again, remember the basics in weight shift from right to left, retracting the stick after the blow delivery and keeping student's eyes at the instructor/opponent and not on his stick.

Instructor Delivers Strike Number 7: (*Practice safety. For workouts, deliver thrust outside the body to avoid accidental injury*).

- a. This has similar execution as the defense against strike number 1. Except that, this is a thrust and not a slashing blow. As in strike number 6, there is an emphasis on a sharp twist of the left shoulder. This is done to elude and escape the thrust as well as to narrow the target area as earlier explained. Again, transfer your weight to your left foot as you turn sideways, to avoid falling within the reach of your opponent.
- b. Simultaneous to your twist, block opponent's stick, with a semi-downward slashing strike. Your left hand should be ready to clear, parry and control opponent's stick.
- c. In this position, student delivers strike number 2. Again, follow all basics in strike delivery, that is, weight transfer, retracting your stick keeping your eye on opponent's eyes.

Instructor Delivers Strike Number 8

- a. The student's left foot is back and steps with his right foot forward to reach the instructor's striking

hand. Student bends both knees since the target is his left knee. He does not bend forward otherwise his hair will be grabbed or he would be within punching or eye poking range.

- b. His left palm heel blocks the instructor's hand as he strikes instructor's forearm or elbow with his stick. Student's left hand should be below his stick. (If the instructor/opponent is striking from a far distance, the student strikes with a slashing downward strike at the wrist).
- c. The student proceeds to deliver strike number 1 to the left side of the opponent's head applying the usual fundamentals described earlier.

Instructor Delivers Strike Number 9

- a. With the student's right foot withdrawn, the student bends both knees without bending forward. This is done to avoid having his hair grabbed, his eyes poked or his face punched. His eyes should be fixed on opponent's eyes with peripheral observation of the movement of the stick. Never follow the stick with your eyes.
- b. The student steps with his left foot forward and left, slightly toward opponent's back. This is done to be closer to the opponent/instructor, to have better control and to be away from any retaliatory blow. Student's left palm heel blocks opponent's hand, close to the grip, as he strikes to opponent's elbow. The strike will be above his left hand.
- c. Student proceeds to deliver strike number 2. Follow all fundamentals of delivery of blows.

Instructor Delivers Strike Number 1

- a. The counter is similar to the counterblow to strikes numbers 2 and 3, except that this is a thrust (totsada) to the right eye. (As a precautionary reminder, always aim away from the eye in practice sessions. Accidents do happen and it could be disastrous. Sometimes, students dock towards the thrust instead of away from it).
- b. The student should also execute an emphatic right shoulder twist with the corresponding head movement away from the thrust while keeping his balance. His weight should be transferred to his right foot. As earlier explained, the student must keep his eyes on his opponent/instructor.
- c. The student then clears the instructor's stick with his left hand in a downward manner and proceeds to deliver strike number 1, observing all fundamentals of blow delivery.

Instructor Delivers Strike Number 11

- a. The block is similar to strike numbers 1 and 4. Remember this is a thrust to the left eye instead of a slashing blow. (It cannot be over emphasized to execute safety. For workouts point thrust outside the head area, especially thrusts to the eye).
- b. The student again pulls his shoulder back with his weight transferred to his left foot. His head should also move in an evasive manner away from the thrust, although keeping his eyes on his opponent/instructor, meanwhile, maintaining his balance.
- c. The student then clears his instructor's stick in a downward stroke with his left hand and proceeds to deliver strike number 2, still observing all fundamentals of blow delivery.

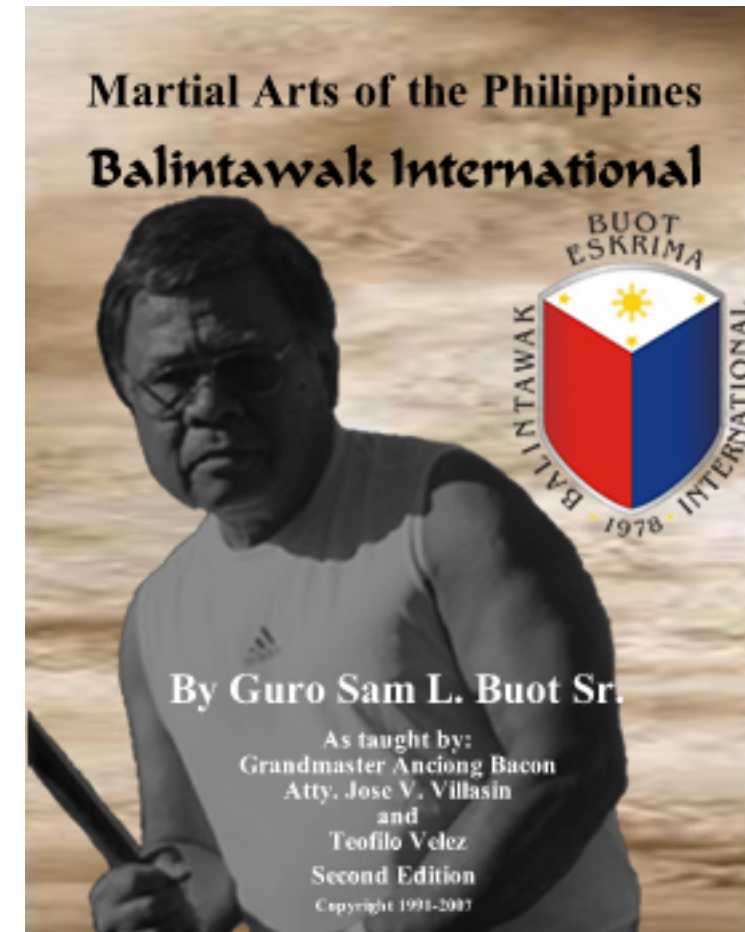
Instructor Delivers Strike Number 12

This is a hammer strike to the head. The counter to this strike is unique and involved. It is a very important counter and carries many implications and applications, especially in bare hand combat and knife fighting. There are three ways the student may evade and defend against the blow as described in the next three moves:

- a. The student ducks the blow, moving his head left and forward. (Avoid the natural tendency to pull the head backward).
- b. The student parries the instructor's fist (not the stick or the arm), towards the right and out. This movement is also very crucial. The parry is like catching a strong pitch of a ball. The power is absorbed and deflected to your right. The student controls the base of the instructor's stick with his thumb, his four fingers latches on, inside, on the instructor's thumb. Otherwise, the instructor/opponent's stick could go wild and hit the student's head.

**Martial Arts of the Philippines
Balintawak International
Cebu**

By Sam L. Buot Sr.



United States - \$25 USD - this includes Shipping & Handling.

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c. The student delivers a simultaneous slashing strike to the instructor’s wrist. This is not a lazy rap. This is a full strike with full power derived from the uncorking of the hips, shoulder, arm and wrist. (All three previous moves i.e., a, b and c are simultaneous. Remember the blade concept, i.e., as if you are striking with the blade of the machete).

d. The student jerks the instructor’s hand with his weight behind his pull; drop down toward his right side, using both his hands and body weight. He simultaneously withdraws his right foot and transfers his weight balanced on his right foot. The jerking motion and dropping down and back breaks the opponent’s balance.

e. The student transfers control by his left hand to instructor’s wrist, in front of student’s stick. This is done to free his stick and remove the obstruction for a full blow.

f. The student proceeds to deliver strike numbers 1 or 12 to instructor’s head. Again, follow all fundamentals of strike delivery for optimum power.

Note: Correct repetition of properly executed delivery of strikes and counter- strikes should be mastered until drilled into the student’s muscle memory. Correct, quick and automatic reflexes are crucial in the martial arts.

After the mastery of the strikes and counter-strikes, delivered in the order from 1 to 12, the student is drilled in the delivery of blows at random order. That is, the delivery of blows will no longer be in the order from 1 to 12, but at any random order. This is to teach and test the student’s reflex response to any blow coming from any direction. This part is called palakat or walk-through

The student is then drilled in blocking upward - left and right, sideways - left and right, and downward - left and right.

Touch and Feel (hikap): is another area in the instructional process that is emphasized in Balintawak Eskrima. The Grandmaster Anciong Bacon knew very little English and among his few English words was - feeling and center balance. A martial artist should have a sense and must feel inertia as to where his opponent’s hand and body movements are directed. He should feel pressure or slack. Feel and touch is an aid to what the eyes cannot see. A highly developed sense of feel and touch can sense openings from the pressure, slack or release in the body or hand in his contact with hand and/or stick. In the hands of a master or an expert, pressure, inertia or power of an opponent can be made to work against said opponent.

This is more extensively covered in Sam Buot Book!



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Sam Buot, Sr., *Student and Enthusiast of the Art*

Sam Buot, Sr., was born in Cebu City on March 24, 1936, eldest son of Alfredo and Susana Lagrito-Buot. He grew up in the rough neighborhood of Katipunan Street in the Labangon District of Cebu City. He learned the rudiments of Eskrima from first cousin Teddy Buot, who lived next door. Sam left home at the tender age of twelve to study at Silliman University in Dumaguete, Negros Oriental, from high school through law school. He was a working student. Eskrima was limited to the summer vacations. Except for some neighborhood boxing, with smelly gloves and old-fashioned bare-knuckle brawls, serious studies of the arts did not occur until after college. Besides education, the university polished his dull edges with some culture. However, the enduring Darwin's theory of the "survival of the fittest and elimination of the unfit," never totally left him. After college, he found himself heir to his father's struggling real estate business. He built up his business to an extraordinary success. He developed subdivisions, acquired real estate and had the most successful brokerage firm in Cebu City at that time period.

After college, he resumed his Eskrima studies, although business and his law practice competed

for his time. During martial law in the Philippines in 1972, owning firearms was a capital offense, punishable by death. The only legitimate way to defend one-self was through martial arts. This intensified Sam's interest in the martial arts, most especially Eskrima. Self-defense became an urgent matter. He was smitten by the sophistication, finesse and elegance of the art, especially since it was indigenous to the Philippines. In the age of colonial mentality, nothing home grown was deemed good, only foreign made goods and imported ideas were believed worthy. It dawned on Buot that the Philippines had something original and native, which was comparable and arguably even better than many concepts of self-defense. As a staunch nationalist, he wanted to promote the Filipino art. This time he could afford to hire the best instructors. He proceeded to hire all talents in Eskrima and other martial arts – including Anciong Bacon. He worked out during and after office hours until near curfew hours at midnight and more intensively and extensively on weekends. This went on until Martial Law triggered his departure for the United States. Eskrima obsessed him. It was a way to escape his frustration with the oppressive and dispiriting Martial Law regime of the conjugal dictators Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos.

He wrote his book on Eskrima as an expansion of his notes on Eskrima when the author, under the tutelage of Jose Villasin. The author had his own black and white dark room and took pictures

with Villasin to capture the subtleties of the moves. It was an attempt to record and organize the voluminous material dished out every day in workouts. Immigration to the US aborted the effort but the idea never left the author. Serendipitously, with the collapse of the real estate industry in the late 1980's, the author found time to regroup, focus and intensify his efforts in finishing the book. Publication fell again into dormancy with the constant addition of notes. With constant demand from internet readers of his site, he played with the idea of placing them on CD's in accord and in keeping with modern technology.

Other than this study, at the original time of this writing, there were no credible efforts by original students of the masters to reduce the Balintawak style of Eskrima into writing. This work was originally copyrighted in 1991, and recent surfing of the internet has shown that portions of this book have been flagrantly quoted and/or reproduced and rehashed without acknowledgment as to the source of their material. Balintawak is now very much in the internet. There has been a proliferation of "Balintawak Eskrimadors". Thanks for the interest of many martial artists in Balintawak Eskrima. Balintawak continues to grow worldwide. In a larger picture, despite apparent club rivalries, all promoters of Eskrima should be applauded. After all, it still is an infant in the martial arts world.

Buot has adapted the more open, progressive and tolerant attitude towards innovation and the

growth of Eskrima - although he is vigorous in the defense of the integrity of Eskrima as a Philippine art. He does not however believe in rigid and narrow-minded inbreeding. Inbreeding is discouraged in the propagation of the species, thus the forbiddance of incest. It is discouraged at schools of higher learning. Otherwise, there is no infusion of new knowledge and ideas. It is seldom that the student can excel beyond his teacher if the student is not innovative and original in his thoughts. Unless he is willing to learn beyond what he has learned or even to question what he has learned. His knowledge will be stagnant and stunted. That was what Anciong was, an innovative

originator. As much as unadulterated Eskrima is much desired, it cannot be denied that a majority of our students have had their basic martial arts experience at and from other arts. Many of them are martial arts instructors, black belts and school owners. It is thus necessary to know the defenses against the strengths of these other arts and to take advantage, power and control over their weaknesses. Sam believes that although Eskrima does not have all the answers, it does provide a lot of the answers and defenses to these other arts. When Buot's students learn Eskrima, he encourages them to apply their knowledge in either offense to or defense against Eskrima. He

encourages them to apply their own art in attacking or defending against Eskrima. He also believes that for every counter, there is a corresponding counter. That is integral in Balintawak Eskrima. Only practice and mastery of your art can lead to confidence, poise and reflexive counters. Buot has researched and innovated techniques but refuses to take credit - always crediting his teachers for his knowledge.

In his sunset years, he still teaches Eskrima sparingly and selectively to those genuinely seeking knowledge.

Aside from his interest in Eskrima Sam has distinguished himself in other fields.



He has been:

- Past National President, Philippine Association of Realtors Boards and as such has organized Realtors Boards nationwide; drafted the Domestic Trade Order No. 1, Series of 1975 (The law licensing real estate brokers and salesmen in the Philippines); submitted national policies creating the National Housing Authority and submitted policies and proposals to the National Association of Registers of Deeds that have been adapted.
- Member, Philippine Bar Associate & Integrated Bar of the Philippines.
- Three-term President, Cebu Realtors Board.
- Institute of Philippine Real Estate Consultants, Member.
- Institute of Philippine Real Estate Appraisers, Member.
- International Real Estate Federation, Vice-president, Philippine Chapter.
- Asia-Pacific Real Estate Federation, Member.
- Outstanding Alumnus Award - bestowed during its Diamond Jubilee in 1976 by Silliman University, from where he graduated his High School, Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Laws.
- First place, Real Estate Brokers Exam in the Philippines.
- First place, Real Estate Appraisers Exam in the Philippines.
- Charter Member, Metro Cebu Rotary Club.
- Lt. Governor, Philippine Kiwanis.
- Founder and Charter President of the Cebu Kiwanis Foundation.
- Realwealth Investment Corporation and Realwealth Investment Co., President, Owner and Broker (Engaged in acquisition, development, appraisal, syndication of real estate and commercial, industrial and residential brokerage and syndications of real estate both in Philippines and the USA).
- Consistent multi-million producer in real estate sales.
- Golden Life Achievement Award by the World Head of Family Sokeship Council, a worldwide black belt martial arts organization.
- FMA (Filipino Martial Arts) Digest Nobility and Knowledge Award for 2009.

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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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 Article@fmainformative.info

We welcome your article, ideas and suggestions, and look forward to working with you in the future.