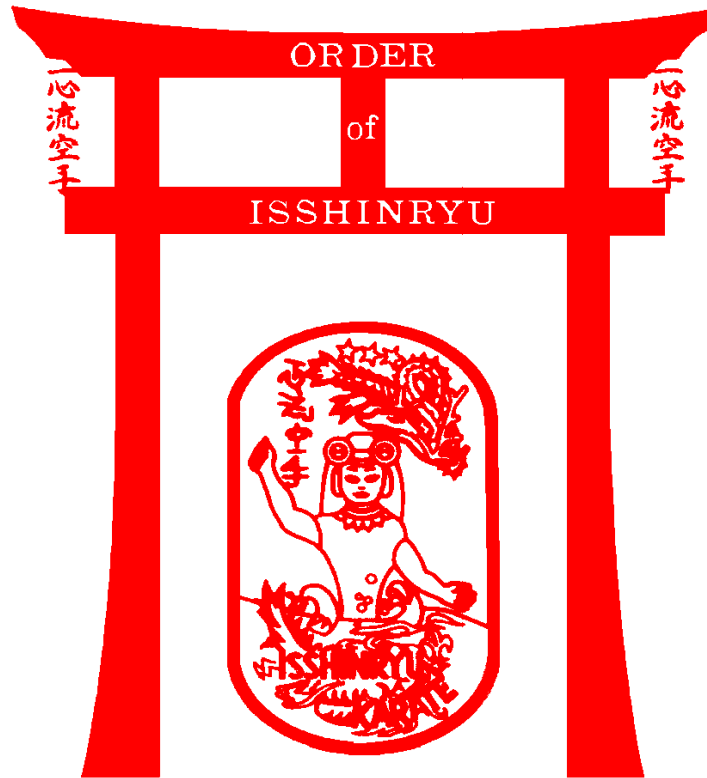


Order of Isshin-Ryu

Founded January 15, 1971



Modern Arnis Seminar

*Hombu Dojo
April 26, 2008*

Modern Arnis

Brief History of the Founder

Modern Arnis was founded by Remy Presas (1936 - 2001) in the Philippines and is a collaboration of various Filipino martial arts. Today, the art is being carried on by his eldest son. Master Presas studied various forms of Kali, Escrima, and Arnis. All of these terms are used interchangeably to refer to martial arts from this region, of which Kali is the forerunner. Presas left the Philippines in 1975 on a goodwill tour sponsored by the Philippine government to spread Arnis to other countries. Many people in the United States received exposure and ultimately their teaching certifications in Modern Arnis through attending various seminars conducted by Master Presas. Within the Order of Isshin-Ryu, Master Latimer and Sensei McDonald received their certifications in this manner. My exposure to Modern Arnis stems from the early to mid-1980's while training with John Malaro, who received his certification in this fashion.

Brief History of Philippine Martial Arts

The Spanish began a 400-year occupation of the islands late in the 16th century. To suppress opposition to their rule, the Spanish banned the teaching of Kali. Elements of the art were hidden in folk plays and native dance. When the Spanish invaded and noted how quickly matches ended (within tenths of a second), they called the art Escrima, meaning skirmish or quick encounter.

Arnis historians have cited as many as 200 systems or styles of Kali/Escrima/Arnis. Terminology describing the range of fighting include Largo (long distance), Media (medium range), and Corto or Serrada (close range). Names based on movement include Abanico (fanning), Palis-Palis (go with the force), Ocho-Ocho (figure 8), Lastico (snapping), and Decuerdas (winding up). Further levels of terminology include Solo Baston (single stick), Sinawali (double stick techniques meaning "to weave"), Espada y Daga (sword and dagger), and Mano-Mano or de cadena (empty hands).

Unlike many traditional martial arts, the Modern Arnis student first learns how to handle and defend against weapons. This is due in large part because of the culture of the Philippines, which is a blade-oriented society. The main weapon used in Modern Arnis is a 26-inch stick (generally) made of rattan. The student progresses to empty hand combat. Most martial artists use/learn Modern Arnis to complement the style they already practice. Master Presas modified his seminars in order to give novices a tangible amount of self-defense skill through specific drills.

Drills

The learning of Modern Arnis is progressive through the application of various drills. The following are brief explanations of the drills a student would learn in this style of martial arts:

Stance: The basic stance includes the usage of the solo baston (single stick) and somewhat resembles han zenkutsu with the feet. The tip of the stick is aimed at the opponent's chudan area. The empty hand is held near the solar plexis and is used for checking and trapping immediately following (or simultaneously with) a block or strike with the stick. The empty hand is referred to as the "alive hand". It is noted that the stances of Modern Arnis are not fixed, nor should the student remain flat-footed. Stances are fluid and the usage of hip movement will create movement with the feet during practice, especially during double stick drills.

12 Basic Strikes: Can also be referred to as the 12-zone striking system. The student learns the 12 angles of attack with the single stick. The targets include the neck, ribs, knees, head, etc.

12 Zone Striking Defenses: Students progress to defenses (using a single stick) of the 12 angles of attack. As noted earlier, the student will progress to using empty hand defenses (disarms) of these same 12 angles of attack.

Trapping Hands: Termed de cadena (of chains), this is an empty hand drill for both partners. A punch is delivered to the face area, the student reacts with a check/hold/strike sequence. The person who delivered the first punch reacts with same movement and the drill continues in a flowing manner, non-stop.

Single Sinawali: Using double sticks, this flowing drill makes use of high/low or head/knee strikes. A "two" count drill which is also referred to as basic sinawali.

Double Sinawali: Again using double sticks, another flowing drill that is more complex. A "six" count drill. There are various double sinawali exercises used in the practice of Arnis.

Reference Materials

The intent of this paper is to provide information and reference material as an introduction to Modern Arnis. You are encouraged to further your research and study. The following references will get you started on your journey:

Modern Arnis: The Filipino Art of Stick Fighting

By Remy Presas

©1983 Ohara Publications, Inc.

The Secrets of Giron Arnis Escrima

By Antonio E. Somera

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