

“From AFrikan Soil To American Shores....

The Afrikan Discipline Cultural and Combat Sciences
Are Resurrecting From The Obscurity Of The Afrikan Diaspora!

“I appreciate all fighting systems and I don’t believe that one is better than the other. But all martial techniques resemble each other starting with the Afrikan Fighting Sciences that came first!”

Grandmaster Dr. Germon “Mama G” Miller, Ph.D.

This is a humble effort to present an overview of the Afrikan Martial Sciences in 850 words. The experience has been like editing down all the species of Earth to only 10 different types per continent. The dilemma is dealing with a time line of millenims from which to select the most important “creatures” to represent the magjesty of Creation. Yet what I will present is a valiant effort to stir the spirit of all who read these “cliff notes” to contact me for the “War and Peace” version and then begin their personal journey to research the glorious history of the Afrkan Martial Sciences!

Even with the unearthing of the Ishango Bone (dated 25,000 BCE) in AFrika in 1960 – the media has still presented the “Motherland” as a vast uncivilized land mass that was subdued by military and fighting strategies that were created by other cultures.

Yet with the introduction of the internet - Afrika - is being acknowledged not only as the birthplace of civilization but as the fundamental component of the martial combative sciences. These fighting systems were akin to our modern ground, boxing, & gymnastic techniques. Finally our 21st century society is slowly becoming familiar with the Afrikan fighting arts such as **Zuar, Testa, Kalinda, Palo, Zulu Impi, Dula Meketa, Dambe and N’oboro.**

First and foremost – let’s stop the myth that strangers just walked into AFrika and took people at will and no one fought back!

Throughout history, Afrikans have been venerated for their martial prowess. According to scientific timelines - the first widely recognized civilization – (1000 years before Kemet/Egypt) was **Nubia (5500 BCE)** (the present day Sudan) complete with **martial sciences.**

King Taharka (712 -657 BCE) was just one of the military geniuses of the Empire of Nubia - which translates to – “Land of the Bow”. His expert fighting systems (Archery, Wrestling, Stick Fighting) earned him a place of honor in the Bible for fighting as an ally of the Hebrews (2Kings 19:9 & Isaiah 37:9) Though many have been teaching this information about Nubia for centuries – it has finally been acknowledged by the National Geographic February 2008 Edition!

Until present day, one can find in the **Chinese Civilization (4000 BCE)** the lion dance as part of their culture for millenniums... But lions do not originate in China... So where was the connection? A small trivia note: **Mali (a country in Afrika) has the largest Tibetan population** outside of the country of Tibet. Now the war arts of the **Japanese civilization (700 CE)** are better known since they had the most diplomatic contact with the Western societies. Yet there is a Japanese proverb in a Japanese temple that says: **"In order to be a Samurai - one must have a bit of Black Blood"**. To justify this statement all one need to do is research some of the tapestries that hold the image of **"Tieguai - The Iron Staff Immortal"**, one of the venerated 9 of Taoism.

Continuing on our historical journey I wish to introduce Hannibal (247-182 BCE). Hannibal the great military genius was Monarch of Carthage - which makes Hannibal an Afrikan War Superstar! He ruled Carthage (now Tunisia) which was in Northern Afrika. He was a Black Man, a Moor, a General and a royal pain in the behind to the **Roman Empire (500 – 375 BCE)**. His military strategies even today are alive and well often being put to good use by the Pentagon. He outwitted the Roman military machine especially with those elephants over the Alps. The Moorish colonization of Spain and Portugal brought much to those cultures. And from the medieval era there was the **"Black Knight" Saint Maurice**, canonized by the Catholic Church for his honor on and off the battlefield.

Afrikan cultures were established in 10,000 BCE! Imagine that as an equation... Historical antiquity is very much an interactive kaleidoscope of stories, traditions and facts. Physical travel was the only source of communication between cultures and visiting from one country to the next meant people stayed sometimes for years.... Prime example: Marco Polo! And if he hadn't brought those Chinese Martial Arts Performers back to Europe with him then Louis the XVI would never have seen this art and then there never would have been ballet! But that is a story for another time.....

During these times any number of events (plague, small battles, marriage, birth, and death) could change the leadership thus the entire scope of the mission. So those countries that were the closest in geography were also the closest in culture. Specifically I am referring to Coastal areas of Afrika in relation to Greece and Italy in ancient times. Then came Spain and Portugal – and the diaspora began through the slave trade.

Now lets' "Bite" into the meat of the story with **Alexander of Macedonia/Greece (356-323 BCE) and his dear buddy Aristotle (384-324 BCE)**. This dynamic duo traveled to Alexandria, Kemet and spent a great deal of time collecting information on **EVERYTHING**.... Math, Science, Medicine, History, and of course... **Military hand to hand**. They translated into Greek the military strategies from the Nubian fighting systems that were archived in the Library of Alexandria.

Remember these scientific facts.... The first civilizations were established in Afrika (Kemet, Nubia, Kush and Ethiopia) complete with physical sciences, mathematics, history, medicine, art, dance, x-ray machines, calendars, electricity, irrigation systems, astronomy, surgery, universities, anatomy and martial sciences. These civilizations were the first interactive with the Middle Eastern empires - Persia & Babylon - especially in war.

Quick commercial break:

Are you aware that Aesop was a composite mythical person. He is the Greek version of the **Afrikan culture keeper Luqman who is even noted in the Quran**. The word "Griot" is Greek term for a storyteller and the Afrikan term is "ahadithi milinzi". This information was then absorbed into the Greek culture including the 42 laws of Maat (Honor Code) from Kemet. So by the time **Plato (350 BCE)** got the "word" 20 years later – the fact that the information was found in Kemet was erased. Yet this great skill of "culture keeping" is still very much alive in the great country of Mali!

Now on to the **Great Zulu Nation under the leadership of Shaka**. **Shaka** kept the British at bay for generations. His 50,000 warriors would run 50 miles to battle and run back... Now that is combat ready...He was referred to as the "AFrikan Napoleon". Yet I think that Pathfinder Miriam Makeba said it better, "Napoleon was the white Shaka!" Sadly the movie version of his life cast him as a savage who was subdued by British might and a white woman. Have you heard that story line before?

Then there were certain tribes that were not to be captured. Slave traders **banned the Ibo tribe from their ships**. Ibo warriors would chew off bonds into their flesh to free themselves then would lunge over board with a captor in their grip. Even the Women and Children – once taken off the slave ships – would boldly walk back into the sea in chains and drown themselves rather than live in bondage.

So do not even think that it was an "all male party" in Afrika in the martial sciences - considering that the **first true human remains that were found in AFrika were a woman**. **And since all DNA has been scientifically traced back to that of one woman - I wonder if women were the first martial warriors too!**

Afrikan women warriors are seriously recognized in many cultures. There was the great **Queen Zenobia** who was consistently victorious over the Roman Battle machines. So much so they made her a "consultant" after her capture. Also in ancient times - **the Candaces (Queens) of Ethiopia (Kush)** have stood as a symbol of warriorship throughout time protecting their country.....

Quote – Google Search:

"Though Alexander reached Kemet (Ancient Egypt) in 332 B.C., on his world conquering rampage there was one of the greatest generals of the ancient world also the Empress of Ethiopia. **This formidable Black Queen Candace was world famous as a military tactician & field commander**. Alexander could not entertain even the possibility of having his world fame and unbroken chain of victories marred by risking a defeat, at last, by a woman. He halted his armies at the borders of Ethiopia and did not invade to meet the waiting Black armies with their Queen in personal command."

The prowess of the Afrikan female warrior can also be documented through the stick fighting of the **Ashanti women** during battle. Then there were the French troops who were struck with fear when confronted by the **Dahomey All Female Regiments**. The metal weapons of these women were attached to a rope and were used to decapitate.

There are no such women as Amazons... Just really dedicated female tacticians to the war arts in Afrika. These were the women who sparked the Amazon female legends. Here's a question: If the Amazon River is in South America why are there no stories of warrior women during antiquity (Prior to 4000 BCE) from there? Obviously the Greeks did not travel to South America where these stories mostly originate! Or did they stumble on an Afrikan Female military legion and have a "heart to stone" experience with Afrikan Women who wore "locks" that resembled "snakes" thus the story of Medusa?

The Hebrew culture has given the Afrikan culture their props throughout history especially with the **great union of Queen Makeda of Ethiopia (Sheba) and King Solomon. This great "Candace" traveled with her armies across the desert without fear to consult with a perfect stranger. Now that is a thought to make some light bulbs blink. Their offspring set forth a formidable lineage that can proudly state that the country of Ethiopia WAS NEVER COLONIZED BY ANY OUTSIDE POLITICAL POWER!**

In more modern times we find another incredible military legacy that has spanned generations. **Queen Nzinga Mbanda of Ndongo and Matamba (1583 – 1663)** was monarch and general of her country of Angola until she was 63 years wise. She was royal authority over a vast territory known today as Southern Cameroon, Gabon, Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zambia and Angola. She really aggravated the Portuguese by keeping them out of her country for 3 decades.

"But if Portugal fathered Brazil, Angola was the Black Mother on whose lap the child grew!"

Neves Souza, Da minha Africa e do Brasil que eu vi

The Portuguese and the Spanish were the first slave traders in Afrika and South America forcing hundreds of thousands of Afrikans from their soil. Their brutal treatment of natives is legendary and gave other countries the green light to initiate their enslavement of these cultures.

Yet the N'golo fighting techniques of this great monarch from Angola survived throughout the West Indies and South America. The very word "Ginga" which is the signature evasion technique of Capoeira is derived from her name. Specifically in Brazil the fighting arts of the Angola were absorbed into the culture. **The N'golo is a Bantu combative science that is the progenitor of several combative arts that developed in the Americas.**

The N'golo is also known as the Fight of the Zebras – a combat directed courtship ritual performed by young men of a village to win the hand of a young woman in marriage. **Capoeira** comes from the great Afrikan country of Angola. One tradition has capoeira, named for the slave quarters – capoeiras. Even now visitors to the country of Angola in Afrika can witness young men twirling expertly as they perform the "**n'golo**" while the "**village healing circle**" (roda in Capoeira terminology) pulsates around the participants chanting the "**num**" - **the song from God**. Even the modern day capoeira has the two very distinct styles: Angolan and Regional. No mention of Portugal here!!!

And as with all natural progressions of the culture of Afrika – evolution continued with “Break Dancing”, the great-grandchild of these challenge arts becoming the ultimate international “fight/dance” activity is still making history after its appearance in the 1970’s. This art has eliminated violent gang encounters in countless urban cities. It was the Black youth who brought the techniques to the general population in the “Boogie Down Bronx” with the Puerto Rican youth who took it to the “ground”. “Fever and Spy” were some on the first Black Breakers and “Patch” was one of the first Puerto Rican Stylist. The first “Breaking Crews” were NYC Breakers, Sal Soul Crew, TDD Crew Rock City Crew, Young City Boys and The Dynamic Rockers. And the legacy continues with 21st Century AFrikan combat/dances legacy such as “krump’ng” which can be linked directly to the magnificent was routines of the Zulu nation.

Unfortunately it was the scourge of slavery that limited the Afrikan fighting arts in the Americas. Even Capoeira was outlawed in Brazil for years being tagged as “an activity of black criminals”. One of the most effective styles is called **Jail House Rock** which appeared during this genocide time period. Still in use today - it is most prevalent in the penal system. As an “ahadithi milinza”, (Culture Keeper) I have spent a great deal of time reading literature from many cultures especially my own. Sadly in our country no one mentions anything of the AFrikan culture prior to slavery in the common public education history books in depth. Therefore the world society largely believes that that Black people had no idea of civilization and the components thereof like martial sciences....

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But just in case you are still feeling guilty about using words such as Plague or Holocaust when asked to describe slavery..... Here is a quote to chew on:

“Colonialism is not satisfied merely with hiding a people in its grip and emptying the natives’ brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it.”

Frantz Fanon, On National Culture Colonial Discourse and Post Colonial Theory. (P. 37)

The slave ports that were established in west and central Afrika for 4 centuries were the main source of Afrikans to the world... The combat games that descended from the Afrikan discipline sciences are a very intense list of skills. Here are a few:

Wrestling/Grappling has been a way of life throughout the history of Afrika and are still practiced on the continent.

<u>Type/Style/Skill</u>	<u>Country</u>
Wrestling	Nubian, Nigeria
Moringue	Reunion, Madagascar
N’golo, Liveta, Kabangula, Kabetula, Bassula	Angola
Borey	Gambia
Gidibo	Yoruba
Beri	Senegal

The empty hand systems survived the Middle passage were assimilated into the local culture and survived in American “plantations” as a secret legacy from Elder to child.

Type/Style/Skill

Ladja, Damye
Broma

Country

Martinique, Guadeloupe
Venezuela

Still the stick fighting arts have many AFrikan offspring

Type/Style/Skill

Kalinda
Luta de Baton
Stick Licking
Jogo de Palo
Maculele
Dula Meketa
El Matreg

Country

Trinidad, Tobago
Haiti
Barbados
Venezuela
Brazil
Ethiopia
Algeria

Mixed Marital techniques can be found in the Massai Nation, Musangwa System of South Afrika and the Gwindulumutu from the Congo known as Head Bash.

While other systems returned to the Creator with the Ancestors no longer to be taught.

Type/Style/Skill

Mani, Bomba

Country

Cuba

Presently there are many hybrid systems that claim they follow the traditions and systems of Afrika. But wearing red, black and green does not an Afrikan system make! When I am asked to recommend schools that are authentic in their Afrikan historical value – I cringe. From my personal experience, I can only acknowledge these individuals as Afrikan Discipline Elder/Teachers:

First and foremost – Much respect to my Ancestor and Mentor - Baba Kweme Ishangi
Mwanzo Mwalimu Umeme Mpingo – Vita Saana Afrikan Fighting Arts – Philadelphia, PA
Ahati Kilindi Iyi – Tamerrian Martial Arts – Detroit, MI
Mfundu Tayari Casel - Kupigana Ngumi – Silver Spring, MD
Mestre Dennis Newsome – Afrikan Angolan Capoeira – San Diego, CA

Many times what I practice is ridiculed because of the ignorance of the other person and their laziness not to take the time to research – their mind is closed from “FEAR” that the information is right. No one likes to discover that what they have been taught all their lives is not true. Kinda shakes ones mental foundation about life.

The media can artfully manipulate visual images and words in a controlled setting as a way to alter or deconstruct historical human occurrences. I mean look how Cleopatra was depicted on the HBO series "Rome" - completely Caucasian and not shown to be a "classical linguist" and a famous diplomat. She was shown only to be a sex crazed female.

Just like “Imhotep”, who was shown to be a monster in the movie “The Mummy” rather than the mathematical genius and designer of the first pyramid in history! He could not have killed Pharaoh Seti since they lived years apart. Trust me that was one movie theatre my students carried me out of hysterical.

The one type of fighting art I display with my dagger is from Kemet (4500 BCE) a preferred weapon of women. In fact in the movie “The Mummy - Part II - the fight scene in Pharaoh’s chamber between his daughter and his girlfriend is fairly acceptable. The powers that be have hidden so much history away. My bi-racial background afforded me the blessing to know my paternal culture of Judaism very clearly and remembering the pain of the Holocaust. Building on this passion to never forget your “roots” I have searched out my Black Heritage. There have been AFrikan Popes, a Black (Moorish) American President of the United States, whose stories are seldom told and the list is endless. Fascinating how the Jewish and Black Communities share the word "ghetto" which means a low class place to live.

It is very simple... **If the Wolf in the story "Little Red Riding Hood" had a better publicist then public opinion of him would have been better.**

I have studied 37 Afrikan martial science systems and that isn’t even a finger snap in the greater scheme of things as AFrika is over 47, 000 years old.

“One who does not know him/herself, having never tested him/herself or their limitations does not know what they can do. The “First Law of Knowledge” states that knowledge multiplies when shared.”

My role as a “torch bearer” is quite clear. I am not a pugilist who needs to battle to the death in a cage to prove my worth as a warrior. **(besides it is not covered by my HMO...LOL)**

I have traveled and trained internationally with people who wouldn’t have the slightest idea what a DVD is let alone the Ultimate Fighting Challenge... But I guarantee they will amaze you with techniques that would be deemed “aggravated assault with intent to kill” without breaking a sweat. **Keep in mind though that I am a 53 year old domestic abuse survivor – who searched out warrior men to teach me how to survive - mentors and instructors - pioneers in the martial arts - this includes “Jail House Rock”... But how and why I studied that system is a story for another time....LOL**

Yes I have concerns with this information being hidden away for so long. Imagine this thought, “Why are South Americans, Afrikans, Native Americans, Australian Aborigines, Alaska Inuit, Hawaiians and East Indians only shown as natives running around naked waiting for someone to rescue them. Bottom line there was no Tarzan swinging through the jungles. **And if they remake "King Kong" just one more time I will just scream!LOL** These peoples had mighty warriors and monarchs who developed martial sciences just as efficient as the systems that get top billing in the media. Their stories are never told.... Could it have to do with fear if the truth does get out would people begin to train in the arts of their culture?

I understand that truth is difficult to deal with if the messenger is a stranger to the “audience” receiving the information. After prayer and reflection, what are the top 10 priorities in your life noting which is a “ball” priority and which is a “sword” priority. Write on the following your “Way of Life” (the path/guidelines you follow) in regard to Afrikan Heritage and Traditions in the 21st Century in education and health wellness and personal image.

The concept of legacy is that the knowledge/consciousness is passed on. I am always available to share this torch. If this knowledge is so important then we need to be passionate and generous about this experience so that others may feel encouraged to participate and become enlightened. This is not a sport activity or an exercise class. Behind the glimmer of the trophies – are hours of blood, sweat and tears.

The Afrikan traditions should not be picked over like food on a buffet line!

The purpose.... Ordinary people who became extra-ordinary by dedicating their lives despite having jobs, families and their own dreams to keeping the knowledge alive. They are living history. Even when it wasn’t fashionable.... And all those other people who “settled” for riches and fame?? Interestingly... Many of these super stars are long gone and Mwanzo (the original Afrikan Martial Scientist) is still going strong....

One must be at peace with ones own spirit as well as live in the flow of the practical and scientific application of combat. The AKERU basic martial principles are: **(1) Repetition (2) Concentration (3) Comprehension and (4) Reflection.**

Principle 1: Repetition (TAKIRI) - It is through repetition of the physical movements and science of the movements that I can accurately manifest the martial effect that I intend to create. The repetition of any learned movement allow my muscle mass to build the memory of the movement as the movement then becomes part of my mind, my body and my spirit. When it is necessary to use a particular umbo (form) or wendo (movement), the movement will come as natural to me as breathing.

Principle 2: Concentration (MAKINI) attention, concentration, attentiveness) - Concentration creates the single minded focus that I need to properly execute all umbos, and wendos that are necessarily in martial science. Without makini, I will be subject to errors that could result in costly consequences for me or someone else.

Principle 3: Comprehension (Fahamu know, be acquainted with, perceive, understand; COMPREHEND; GRASP) - Complete fahamu of umbos and wendos force me to understand both the cause and effects of any wendos performed. For example, when I properly execute an umbo, I am aware of the reason for the umbo and the effect that this umbo could have. I also am aware of the cultural and historical significance of an umbo. For example, when would this umbo have been performed historically? What is the natural consequence for this action? Does my intent (cause) produce the exact effect that I intended?

Principle 4: Reflection (Kumbuka memory; recollection; thought; refelection)

Kumbuka provides the space for me to review my actions and question myself as to the appropriateness of my actions, intent and execution. It is through the process of reflection that I mature and grow as a warrior. Proper reflection of what can initially be perceived as an error creates the space for a learning opportunity that allows me to evolve as a martial science practitioner.

Bottom line.... Combat is not supposed to be pretty.... So why do we refer to the fighting systems as “martial arts”. My definition of the word “art” is something that is connected with dance, music, sculptures, paintings, theatre... Like things that are housed in a museum.

But the word “science” invokes images in my mind of.... Mathematical executions, the inter-action of kinetic energy throughout the body, the strategy of movement – like a well timed sweep!! Therefore, when people ask me what type of fighting “arts” do I study I take the opportunity to share the above definitions. As participants, it is quite contradictory for us to combine these 2 words together (“martial arts”) as these two words are “cousins by marriage” but not through blood. Like the phrases... “Almost pregnant” and “not quite dead”.... Either something is or it isn’t.

I am a tactician.... My area of expertise is in the AFrikan discipline and combat systems. The Afrikan fighting styles were developed specifically for war as in the word martial.... In the urban environment – my energy level is geared toward neutralizing all threats to my self-preservation. Strictly maiming or killing the enemy.

Specifically one does not have to be angry to defend ones self. In fact, emotions never even come into play. At the moment that the first technique is physically in motion – my mind has already mapped out the strategy for the entire series of execution. Just like in a game of chess. One should always be focused on the future moves for oneself and their opponent.

As an life long Afrikan System Practitioner, I must credit those Elders and Ancestors for maintaining a cohesive concept of combat (mind, spirit and body) rather than allowing fragments of the system to be isolated and taught individually as an art of presentation. Because of the martial sciences – I was able to survive a near death domestic attack and protect my sons into adulthood.

For the sake of education specifically – I have embraced tournament venues to introduce the martial minded community to the long buried Afrikan Martial Sciences. I am most appreciative of those promoters who have allowed me to compete around the world. And with the blessings of the Creator – and with great humility – I wish to announce that these efforts have not gone in vain.

So again I ask.....
Is what you practice an “art” for self-presentation or
a “science” for self-preservation....?

Definitely a personal philosophy is the fundamental core of behavior... I agree with this yet wish to expand the thought to include the concept of a "way of life". Yet the mechanics (physical techniques) of any system can be addressed as either "presentation" arts (teaching/displaying/experimenting) or "application" sciences (engagement/combat/point of no return) which are the decisions that an individual must make when pursuing such a lifetime activity as we have chosen for ourselves.
Ye ole "ball or the sword" dilemma of which path to follow.

I envision science as action... Such as the science of mathematics - 1 plus 1 equals 2... Straight punch into mouth moving at "X" velocity results in broken teeth if scientific technique to move has been subdued by ones philosophy of mind to be calm. It is the kinetic energy in the sciences that motivates the results.

I believe that it is ones “cultural” philosophy that lays the foundation for mental growth therefore, it is the crucial aspect of self-awareness and the initiation of discipline. Yet the opportunity to execute said knowledge is the essential motivation to determine the need for physical self-preservation in an individual. Therefore, the martial sciences rather than martial arts. In any society there are healers, peace keepers, warriors, sages etc. Self-preservation requires that the body be whole in order that the spirit has a safe vessel to reside in. Therefore again I ask when one must engage in battle/self-preservation, which would have been the more productive philosophical/way of life" method..... Personally, the scientific method rings most true for me.... Peace for me is my state of mind and combat is my duty to eliminate that which would disturb it.... “Come in Peace or Leave in Pieces!” It is nothing personal..... My self-preservation system of choice is strictly a North Philly system called , “Urban Environmental Go For What You Know With Whatever Is At Hand!”

In the 1970's, I began my journey in the AFrikan discipline Sciences under the tutelage of Mwanzo Mwalimu Umeme Mpingo. The Vita Saana System was the first Afrikan Based combat Shule (School) who stepped beyond the walls of their building and executed those "drills, etc..." into application in public venues and circuit competitions. There was no "creative energy” to our craft considering the VS philosophy has always been about the fighting. I feel that executing a technique against a skilled assailant definitely can be appreciated by both parties though of different concepts.

I have many special memories of "giving and receiving" techniques that often drew blood yet was followed with "high fives" and comments such as “That was a good technique!”! What one practices is how one will perform when the moment of truth arises. To me, art is something to be admired and science is something to maintain life.

Having given birth twice – I feel that it too, is a fine example of warriorship at the basic human level. The struggle to reach past pain to achieve the miracle of life - to remain focused though ones body is being ripped apart..... And speaking about "ripping apart" I feel that history acknowledges that it is the Lioness who demonstrates true "raw instincts" when it comes to a strong example of survival. Take the hunting scene in “I Am Legend”.

Notice that the Lioness pounced on her prey and paid Will Smith no mind... Then "Dad and Child" came strolling into the picture. I rest my case....LOL

I chose the title AKERU for my educational system. This ancient female elder personifies the true concept of self-preservation. She has a dual personality... Peaceful until provoked... My energy is "Oya" and that is not joke! Always perceiving the enemy before the attack! "Come in peace or leave in pieces" to quote vital warrior wisdom.

I attest that the Afrikan martial systems are so intense that there are no words to ever describe them in an "artful sense". Take the close quarter fighting art of "Jail House Rock" which personally I would recommend since I have experienced this science in its natural environment but for that story one must be patient until my manuscript is available in August, 2008.... These systems cannot be philosophically or spiritually cataloged as they were designed to be physically executed for total impact. Like back to that birthing experience.... Or the use of a technique on a battlefield..... It just ain't the same as in a book.

As a Behavioral Scientist, I teach that people learn from experiences and not theories. My best executed techniques (whether empty hand or with a weapon) are the ones that have left a scar or bruise on my body during a practice session. People just learn to "duck quicker" once they have been hit by the fist, the foot or the stick..

I am alive because I was taught that warriorship must be cared for like a leather whip. Never let it just hang on the wall to be admired for what it did. Take it and oil it often. Stretch it out with several quick snaps. Otherwise it will dry out and become brittle and be of no value when one needs to use it.

So let's get back to the topic: Does your system require a "ball or a sword" mentality?

I agree that there is never just one aspect to anything.... Yet isn't it a scientific fact that no two things can occupy the same space at the same time.... For example... According to recent studies (no matter how quick) a person can only have one thought at one time. Then there are those recessive and dominant impulses that will take the lead a person's behavior pattern.

As Elder instructors who have learned to blend those lines of thought and action - it would seem that there is a "convergence" of the spiritual, philosophical and the physical. Yet the fact still remains that only one thought/reaction existed at any given moment. Though the decision is made as to what technique to use and to what degree - there still is a moment in time when that single thought stands alone. And that is the question that I have presented to the site... What is the single purpose of a system....??? The "Ball or the Sword"?

In the workshops I have been blessed to teach - I make it priority to explain the difference between self-defense and self-preservation. Many novice students (male and female) have no problem with "defending one's self" if it does not require preserving one's life with deadly force. Until I introduce the concept of protecting ones family or friends... Then the real energy comes to the surface and all that "poetic art" dissolves.

Now I am not advocating "maim and kill" as a first level course yet pretending that just "locking the gun away separate from the bullets" is going to keep someone from getting hurt is a fantasy. The key principals in combat training are personal accountability and responsibility.

For example, as there are many good uses for "fire" – yet it is first and foremost a deadly force that is not "user friendly" and should be given total respect at all times. Just like the punch or a kick - what was it originally developed to accomplish? Therefore some people should never be taught combat since they will only cause themselves or others to become victims of stupid choices.

Our youth especially need to be impressed with the fact that when embarking on a study of martial arts and martial sciences that the ultimate duty is to remember that there will always be a moment in a confrontation that a decision must be made to apply philosophical concept or a physical strike. And that is the core of the training that most students receive from their instructors – The Honor Code – our 42 laws of Maat!

Sadly in the media through violent cage matches and video games - all too often it is encouraged to "bust 'em up" for no apparent reason other than "he disrespected me". So if this is the mentality of our society – then we are between the sword and the fire. Should we be teaching martial arts or martial sciences???? Is there hope that the level of inner peace in our systems can ever return to the forefront?? All hail to the energy that appears when our youth execute forms, spar, break dance, krump, or step... The energy with their feet and hands... Yet, we as Martial Elders just have to make sure the path is lit correctly with discipline so that they use this knowledge with good common sense whether it is martial arts or martial sciences.

One of my favorite wisdom statements for better understanding of a topic is to request that the person explain it to me as if I were a "child"! We must share the information without the shroud of prejudice from ones own personal negative experience.

Again I am most honored to share information with such esteemed Elders.... Truly we are blessed because many years ago this communication medium was not available. Finally, the "drums" have returned to our hands!!! May we continue to use it wisely, with respect and appreciation for each other as the world now sees and hears all!