

By Norbert Wojtowicz

## Combat

# Kalaki

Browsing through the human history we can note, that since ancient times fighting with wooden sticks was treated as an important item in young people's upbringing. Pole fighting, which was an introduction to swordplay, was quite popular in ancient Egypt. Such a combat is depicted on a painting in the tomb of Amonnos, a priest of Amenofis I, from ca. 1550 BC; also on slightly younger temple paintings from Ramzes I period (1290-1223 BC), or a relief in Medinet Habu from the second century BC. Today this "pole fencing" sport is associated mainly

with martial arts of Far East origin, Malayan Silat or Philippine Eskrima.

Some people claim that Eskrima was born over 25,000 years ago thanks to Negritos Aetas tribe, who invented that combat system for defense and hunting. Undoubtedly a club was in frequent use then, but it is difficult to take seriously any attempts to derive an art from such far-away times. Origins of Eskrima should be sought rather in the period of Malay migration, which around 1500 BC brought to the region among others, an ancient Indonesian pole-fighting style, Tjakatele. Hindi

and Indochinese influence is also visible in the Philippine martial art. With time, original arsenal—a rattan pole—was enriched with other elements. Religious invasion of Islam brought the cult of dagger and sword. Today, Olisi club, Bolo machete and a knife of shape inspired by Kris are basic weapons. Next evolution of Eskrima happened after the coming of Europeans. Philippine people adapted Spanish terminology, movement, style and new techniques, especially dagger and epee combat—"Espada y Daga". Beside armed combat styles, many unarmed styles



appeared, such as Dumog, Sikaran, Kuntaw, Fraile, Pantukan or Yaw-Yan.

Since 1598 the invaders have sought to dissuade the natives from traditional combat styles, and finally in 1764 forbade their teaching. From that time Eskrima had gone underground and was passed in secret from father to son. Very often combat style elements were taught under cover of traditional folk dance in which various techniques were practised without a weapon. This was not difficult, because, as observed by Pawel Zaremba, "there is music in a quick sweep of the pole; pole is playing. Plasticity is in the movement. We have dance because there are steps. All this is enclosed in a circle, which transforms into a fight." Conspiracy into which Eskrima descended and surrounding secrecy resulted in splitting of the tradition into a group of different schools, cultivating family systems. The ban issued by Spaniards was only lifted after taking the power over the archipelago by the US. Since then, many schools started functioning and there appeared public shows. Some people indicate that there are as many Eskrima systems as there are islands in the Philippines. To the number of purely Philippine schools one must add enormous numbers of systems formed in the West, inspired by Philippine tradition and adding elements from other traditions.

Philippine tradition came to Poland in structured form only in 1990s, thanks to rather not too widespread Kalaki Arcanis system. It is true that even earlier there were groups of enthusiasts in Poland, but their activity was in no way formalized. The first system to take shape in an organised form was, as already mentioned, Kalaki Arcanis system brought from Australia. On 26th June 1998, invited by Jan Nycek, president of Combat and Self-Defense School DO.SAN in

Olesnica, there came to Poland Master Christopher Nasilowski, president of an official propagator of the system, "The Millenium School of Martial Arts". The seminars, shows and lectures organized during his stay gathered over 300 persons. During this visit an International Kalaki Center in Wroclaw was established with the aim of promoting the system in Poland and other European countries.

Various systems of Eskrima are based on a set of 5 to 30 basic strokes and blocks. Kalaki Arcanis is an "eighteen" system. The Philippine systems, contrary to other Far East traditions, start with harnessing the weapon by an apprentice. Only later can one put Olisi away and learn such elements as bare-hand punches, kicks, throws and levers. Kalaki is of the same nature. Also, here one learns first pole and knife techniques, which only later are translated into analogous unarmed techniques. Kalaki also incorporates sparrings, during which participants use special "armour" known here under the name of Amez.

Kalaki system is however, contrary to a casual observer's opinion, more than two persons thrashing each other's heads with clubs. The aim is not to cleave the opponent's skull. It is also not, or not exclusively, improvement of one's fitness. Master Christopher Nasilowski stresses that the aim of Kalaki should be "preparing of the body to be a better vehicle, a more perfect biological tool to achieve our most elevated spiritual imaginations in everyday life. We can take nothing physical with us, but our experiences, their energy, feelings, these we have the right to take with us. This is the treasure."

Having arrived to the Polish ground, Kalaki underwent thorough modifications. Retaining original Kalaki Arcanis content, it incorporated elements from Doce Pares, Aiki-Jitsu Spirit Combat

International by Soke Brian Dossett, Taekwon-Do, boxing and kickboxing together with direct contact combat system BAS-3 devised by dr Andrzej Bryl for special army and police units. The real combat system resulting from these modifications is, in distinction from its predecessor, called Combat Kalaki. The training program is supplemented with special techniques preparing for combat and defense, and enriched in gymnastic elements improving and stabilizing the effort of the organism. It is a universal and complete system teaching combat with maximal utilization of human body powers. Combat Kalaki teaches defense with hands and legs using punches and kicks, interceptions, levers and wrestling holds. It is a universal system of long, intermediate and short distance combat. The teaching program contains both perfectly devised defense against knife attack and pole with knife combat. Knife and rattan pole, readily used in Philippine systems, constitute superb additions to hand and leg techniques helping in their better understanding. Combat Kalaki, which is based to a large extent on armed combat techniques, is also an excellent supplement for people learning other martial arts, such as Taekwondo, Aikido, Kung Fu or Jujitsu. This system is based on simplicity, naturalness and economy of movement. Combat Kalaki is an alternative martial art allowing an adept to learn effective self-defense based on natural moves and rhythm of human body, regardless of age and sex. Simplicity of basic techniques used in this style makes an adept to master practical and effective forms of defense in short time. Combat Kalaki is regarded as a very powerful combat style. It is a training for combat and sporting competition, healthy gymnastics, but also in specialized courses for men, women and uniformed forces.

Combat Kalaki is an author



project of Master Jan Nycek, who currently holds, also, the office of the President of The Polish Federation of Combat Kalaki, Chief Executive of International Combat Kalaki, Director for Poland of World Eskrima Kali Arnis Federation and Representative of Cacoy's Doce Pares Federation in Poland. His first contact with martial arts happened in 1977, and since 1979 he started systematic Taekwon-Do ITF trainings lasting 13 years. He obtained III Dan of this system, but he searched further. In Australia he met Vince Palumbo, Master of Doce Pares and Arjukempo, thanks to whom he came to know Soke Brian Dossett, who supervised him while obtaining IV Dan of Aiki-Jitsu. Another important point of his life was meeting with Yun Jung Do. During his stay in Australia he also met the founder and president of Millennium School - Christopher Nasilowski.

Because of enormous interest in this combat system, there arose need to establish an organization which could promote Kalaki on both domestic and the international arena. Since 1999 attempts to establish a Polish Federation of Combat Kalaki had started, and the Federation was eventually registered in 2000.

The basic statutory aims of the Federation comprise, among others, giving help to instructors in propagatory, medial and training areas. For this reason, a book entitled "Combat Kalaki jako alternatywna sztuka walki wywodząca się z tradycji wojowników filipińskich" (Combat Kalaki as an alternative combat style stemming from Philippine warrior tradition) was issued in 2001, and shooting of educative video is being prepared. Systematically organized seminars, chaired by Master Jan Nycek, enable the members to improve their abilities. Additionally, beside several invitations issued to Master Christopher Nasilowski,

International Kalaki Center and, later, Polish Federation of Combat Kalaki have attempted to prepare teaching sessions with other Masters from abroad. In May 1999, on invitation from Master Jan Nycek, the founder of Spirit Combat International, Soke Brian Dossett came to Poland and gave a series of seminars on S.C.I. Aiki Jitsu. In May 2001 a disciple of Bruce Lee, coworker of Cacoy Canete and Dan Inosanto, co-founder of Inosanto Kali system, Grand Master Richard Bustillo led training seminars in Warsaw, Krakow and Wrocław. One year later, on 20-21 April 2002, the town of Olesnica witnessed a seminar of the last living co-founder of Doce Pares school, Grand Master Ciriaco C. Canete.

The second aim of the Polish Combat Kalaki Federation is to help its members to participate in various domestic and international competitions. The activity of the Federation is meant to support significantly individuals and regional clubs in organization of competitions of any kind. Until now, there have been several country-wide Championships, e.g. for three times - Annual Polish Combat Kalaki Championships (Wrocław-25 Nov 2000, Wrocław-10 Nov 2001, Łódź - 9 Nov 02). Despite a relatively short time of existence, the organization was recognized also abroad, where in 2000 during World Eskrima Kali Arnis Federation Championships on Cebu (Philippines) Polish contestant won silver medal and Vice-Master title. One year later, during Cacoy's Canete Doce Pares Federation Championships in Los Angeles (USA), Polish team won two World Master titles. In the same year Polish contestants took two first places during World Eskrima Kali Arnis Federation European Championships in Bristol. In 2002, during 7th WEKAF World Full Contact Stick Fighting and Forms Championships in London,

Polish team won 6 medals, among them-two gold ones. At this event the Congress of National Directors of WEKAF decided to award to Poland the right to organize European Championships planned for 15-16 June 2003.

Master Jan Nycek has often stressed that in a system containing real combat elements "a very important role in combat elements introduction is played by proper control and experience of an instructor, and these components are carefully cared about in our Federation". For several years since Federation was established, Combat Kalaki trainings have been supervised by over 50 instructors throughout the country. Their technical merit is assessed every year and each year certificates empowering them to represent the combat system are issued.

Besides systematic trainings and periodic seminars for Federation members, workshops for military and civil services, Frontier Guard and police, there happen quite extraordinary training programs. In 1999 media published photographs of Master Jan Nycek surrounded by young people on wheelchairs holding sticks in their hands. The circumstances of taking these shots are worth mentioning. On 18 and 19 August of that year Master Jan Nycek, having been invited by Sport Club "Dan" of Zamosc and Lublin region, led a workshop for international Taekwon-Do meeting in Zamosc. At the same time and place a group of impaired basketball players from rehabilitation center in Konstancin happened to stay. The Master said later, that these young people "told me with sorrow that they were often bullied by hooligans. Therefore I taught them how to defend themselves against an attacker trying to grab, strike or pull them down from the wheelchair. They have

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very strong arms, so they are able to surprise an attacker, bring him down and get at his throat, strangle, use lever technique or break attacker's hand. I showed them how to use sticks and their hands for that purpose".

In the spring of 2002 a small group of instructors left the Polish Federation of Combat Kalaki. Because of divergence of opinions on further development of the Federation. Master Christopher Nasilowski, during his second stay in Poland in May 2002 established a second, parallel structure to promote Kalaki Arcanis. In the wake of this splitting, instructors Mirosław Osytek and, previously discharged from P.F.C.K. because of actions harmful to the Federation, Paweł Zaremba the formed Polish

Association of Kalaki Arcanis. Coming of this new structure to life did not affect the activity of Polish Federation of Combat Kalaki, which still carries out its statutory aims.

Philippine systems appeared in Poland just during last decade, but their dynamical development on relatively saturated Polish combat sport market can not remain unrecognized. Proposal of armed combat teaching and extremely spectacular championships, when contestants fight in colourful armour, are like a magnet for many people. Even if systems of that tradition are not wide-spread around the world and cannot compete in terms of numbers with, Japanese, Chinese or Korean systems, judging from their rapid start on our ground they will remain with us for good. The second, besides Kalaki school of Eskrima to appear in Poland was

Rutano Estokada System. It was planted here by Master Dariusz "Kaktus" Cieszyński, and his Polish Academy of Arms in Szczecin is an official promoter of this system nation-wide. One should mention here also, school of combat arts Budo School in Jabłonowo Pomorskie, whose leader, Paweł Jagusz, started in 2001 to propagate in Poland Doce Pares Multi-Style System Grand Master Dionisio Canete. Besides schools of Eskrima listed above, Andrzej Skreczko, official representative of Rapid Arnis system for Poland, is giving training courses in Białystok.

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