

Those of you who have trained with Grandmaster Danny will know that what you see is what you get. He is totally focused on the task of communicating his vast knowledge of the Doce Pares multi-style system, but he has the unique ability of being able to offer the same high standard of instruction, whether it is to one person or to one hundred... There is no compromise in his standards and it is his aim to provide the recipients with as much information as possible. For we few, who are lucky enough to be trained personally by him, this also includes searching questions and enquiries to further our understanding. As Grandmaster Danny says, "How can you teach if you do not understand?" In fact, a great deal of our training sessions comprise of discussion so that there is total understanding, not only of the techniques, but the application as well.

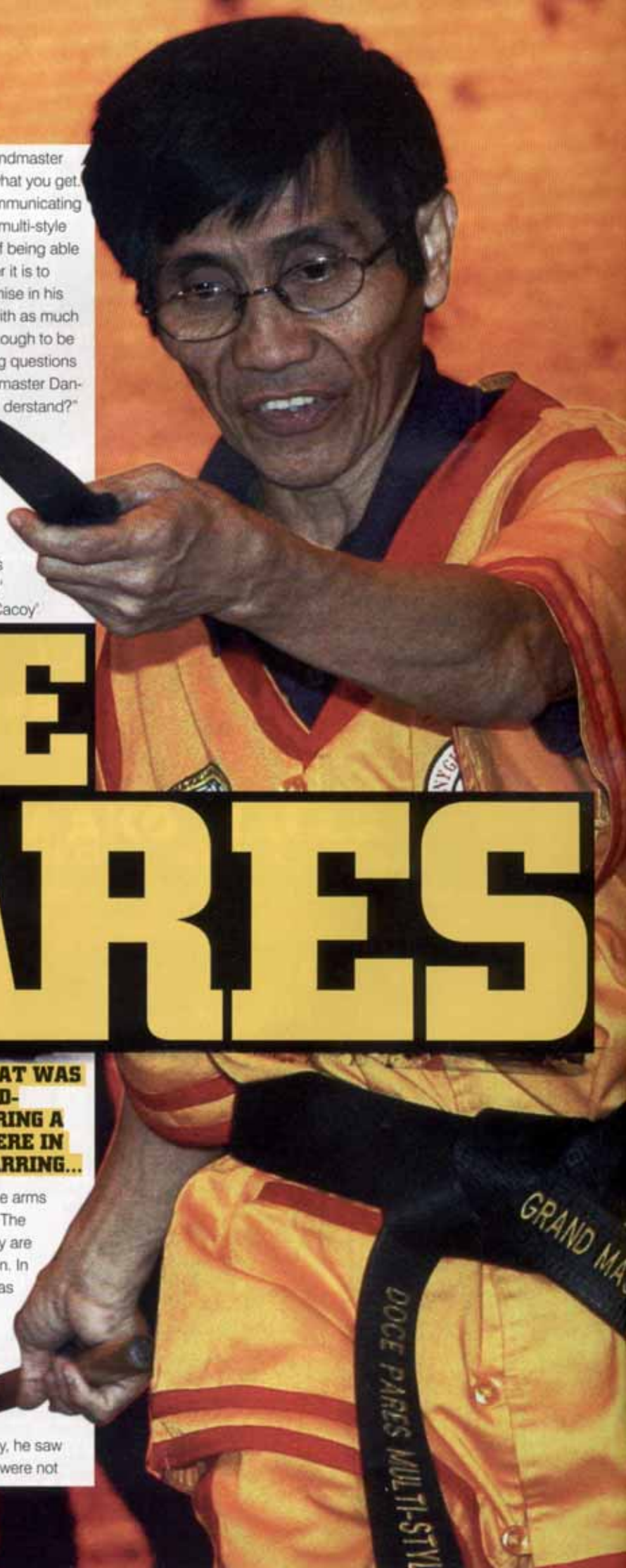
This brings us back to the close quarter sparring... This is one of the specialised areas of the Doce Pares multi-style system from the late grandmaster 'Momoy' Canete which was then expanded by Grandmaster 'Cacoy'

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"IS THERE A NEW TECHNIQUE?" THAT WAS A QUESTION I WAS ASKED BY GRANDMASTER DANIEL 'DANNY' GUBA DURING A RECENT TRAINING SESSION. WE WERE IN THE MIDST OF CLOSE QUARTER SPARRING...

Canete and 'Inting' Carin in the 1950s. It starts with the arms crossed at the wrists and is literally fought toe-to-toe. The strikes are direct, rapid and uncompromising and they are designed to inflict the maximum amount of destruction. In short, they are devastating, utilising all six striking areas of the stick, but especially the butt.

When Grandmaster Danny was taught this in the Philippines by Grandmaster Cacoy, there were only twelve strikes taught. But when Grandmaster Danny sparred with Grandmaster Cacoy, he saw (or rather felt) that Cacoy employed other strikes that were not



"This is of high calibre and the ultimate," Grandmaster Danny also says, "You just refine or modify the style that you have learnt." Grandmaster Cacoy did not teach the close quarter sparring formally as such. He just did it. So, when Guro Jim Smith asked Grandmaster Danny what his first disarm would be, Grandmaster Danny started to put the techniques together in a more formalised order. So it is now "The complete package..." as he calls it.

In fact, most of these movements are what I have practised for years before from the Hulug/saka drills of Grandmaster Momoy Canete's San Miguel form. "Hulug/saka is the system to educate, but this is different... This is how you apply." So when Grandmaster Danny said "Is there a new technique?" My answer was "No, there is no new technique. But new applications." The movements themselves had not changed, but my body angling had to be changed to get the striking point of the stick into the right position. The footwork and arm positioning has changed to create the correct striking area of the stick. This meant that you had to employ what Grandmaster Danny calls 'Awkward Amarra.' It's called this because you have to twist and turn your body to not only avoid the opponent's arm, but get yourself into the correct position to make contact. Another major contributing factor is not only hitting with the correct part of the stick, but that your wrist is also at the correct angle to generate the power in the strike. "The secret of the close quarter sparring is your Amarra, so THAT you improve," Grandmaster Danny says. Although the Corto has been put on [YouTube](#), the only way to truly understand all of this is to learn it directly from Grandmaster Danny. "If you do not spar with me, you cannot get it. If you are not one-on-one with me, you do not understand..." he says.



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covered in the twelve being taught. In fact Grandmaster Danny's first session proved to be a painful one...

Grandmaster Cacoy threw the stick on the ground and Grandmaster Danny picked it up, which was seen as a sort of challenge more than a demonstration. The first thing that Grandmaster Cacoy did was to hit Grandmaster Danny right in the middle of the chest with the butt (Punio) end of his stick, then drag it down his sternum. Other training sessions were equally painful because Grandmaster Cacoy also used the stick as leverage to frequently throw Grandmaster Danny to the floor. Then, someone nearly always said they missed it and asked for the move to be repeated again (that's when you find out who your friends are).

The close quarter fighting (also known as Corto, Korto and Dikit) is, as already mentioned, a specialised area of Eskrima. This takes a very long time to master - if

ever. The style was used in the 'death matches' during the Eskrima wars in the '50s and is still used in 'challenge' matches today. To be allowed learn close quarters fighting is a privilege.

Grandmaster Cacoy's sparring is not just confined to stick fighting - he can be equally effective verbally. When Grandmaster Cacoy was challenged by Ising Atillo back in 1983, Ising said to Grandmaster Cacoy "If you spar with me, you will only last one minute because you are very old." Grandmaster Cacoy, at the time, was in his sixties while Master Ising was in his forties. "Ising, a minute is a long time," countered Cacoy, "You are only ten seconds, I'll finish you." And he did. With their wrists crossed Master Ising took the bait of Grandmaster Cacoy's exposed ribs. As he went for that, he left his head and face open to Grandmaster Cacoy's waiting punio strikes. Ten seconds of that is a very long time... As Grandmaster Danny says, "This is bait, I want big fish." In other words you are set up from the start - 'pro-

gramming' as it's known... You fall into the trap of going for an obvious strike, only to be countered immediately.

Grandmaster Danny saw that Grandmaster Cacoy used the 'Korto Kurbada' or curving strikes to make contact. These move around the opponent's stick, arm and body to strike around the exposed areas such as the kidneys and back of the neck. Also the 'Korto linear', which is the movement of the stick in a straight line... Although Grandmaster Danny learnt this from Grandmaster Cacoy, it was his own research that has made this all possible. There are three things that make up the effectiveness of the close quarter sparring. Palakaw (How you run the stick and create your amarra), Padagan (how you use and understand the options available at any given moment)

and Palusot (how you enter the target areas to hit). Observing this and the other strikes used, Grandmaster Danny devised his own close quarter system that is made up of five different elements. First are the twenty-two close quarter Amarra techniques. These include Abaniko (fan movements), Plansa (horizontal movements), Korto linear (X pattern movement) and Korto kurbada (wrist snapping movements). The twelve entry techniques for disarms, the twelve checking techniques to the opponent's arm, the fourteen application drills and, finally, your own Amarra (in which - as Grandmaster Danny says, "it will come out.") - when these are all combined, there are nearly a thousand movements.



At last year's Doce Pares British Championship 'Quest for the Best' tournament, Grandmaster Danny asked that the close quarter sparring be included. Two weeks prior to that I heard Ian Forster, of The Kobukan Institute of Warrior Arts (Doce Pares - Medway) in Kent, saying that Grandmaster Danny wanted us to fight in the inaugural close quarter sparring competition and he asked, was I up for it? This seemed like an ideal opportunity to try out what I had recently been practising.

On the day, Grandmaster Danny explained and demonstrated on Ian what was expected in the close quarter sparring. When he asked who would fight, sixteen people put their hands up. When it was time for the close quarter sparring, Grandmaster Danny called Ian and myself over - it was then that Ian refused to wear any rib, elbow or hand protection and stated he would wear only the headgear. I agreed too, that I would fight only with a head protector and this has since become accepted practice. Had I not been fighting someone who, like me, wanted to show our skills and not just hit each other, then I would not have been so willing. I had come to know Ian quite well over the last year and knew that he was participating for the challenge of this new and, as yet, uncharted area, with the same spirit. This also presented me with a new problem. I had always wondered how I would react to fighting in a competition against someone who I not only knew, but whose friendship and skills I held in high esteem. I was soon to find that Ian was not struggling with the same question...



As Ian and I squared up to the starting position with our wrists crossed, I realised that in the six-foot square area, there is nowhere to go. You cannot back off for a breather nor have a little jog round the ring to waste some time and, whilst three 30 second rounds with only a ten second break sounds short, at the pace that was about to be unfurled, it was a very long time indeed. Grandmaster Danny asked the judges and us if we were ready, and with the word "Go!" we were off. As I turned my stick to strike at the side of Ian's helmet, I instantly felt a searing pain across my ribs as Ian simultaneously hit me horizontally with a Planca strike. "Dash, that smarts a bit!" I thought (or words similar). We continued to exchange blows, alternating from high to low, trying to check each other's arm whilst striking at the same time. The speed was amazing as our sticks twisted and darted around the body and my ribs felt as though they were attached to electric cattle prods. Then Ian not only seized the moment but my stick as well and executed a superb 'number three' disarm. He grabbed my stick, turned his body one way and then turned back on himself to create the leverage for the disarm.

During the fight I had what I can only describe as a sartorial type moment. As I learnt to accept the pain of the strikes, I began to not concentrate on my techniques, but rather to flow with what was happening and then

I started to blend with Ian's movements. I found a sort of inner peace in amongst the speed and rapidity of what was going on. A freedom of expression I had only experienced before when I had been practising my other passion of dancing. Then, after three thirty second rounds, which have the same feeling as if you have sprinted that long, we finished. Exhausted, bruised and exhilarated from the effort, Ian was named the winner, not only for his disarm, but for his superior skill as well.

The other folks who had earlier put up their hands, strangely declined to participate. Oh, what they missed! I took away not only the thrill and experience of the match, but I have moved along a great way in my martial arts. As Grandmaster Danny always says, "You just refine or modify the style that you have learnt. That's how you improve yourself."

So, in answer to Grandmaster Danny's original question, "Is there a new technique?" Again, my reply is "No, but a much greater understanding."

GURU JONNY WESTLEY

For further information on Doce Pares Eskrima in Europe please visit www.docepareseurope.com - the home of Grandmaster Daniel 'Danny' Guba - and feel free to contact a Council member.

