

Martial Arts Terms
(A Seven Star Student's Handout¹)

abanico or abaniko	“Fan” in Tagalog/Spanish. An arnis technique using a fanning motion for striking or blocking. Strikes may be <i>abanico corto</i> (short) or <i>abanico largo</i> (long).
arnis cane or arnis stick	A stick weapon usually 26-30 inches in length and often made from rattan (a hard-stemmed palm plant similar to bamboo). Called a <i>baston</i> in Tagalog (pronounced “boston”). A practitioner can fight with a single cane (<i>solo baston</i>) or two canes (<i>doble baston</i>).
Arnis de Mano	“Harness (or armor) of the hand” in Tagalog/Spanish. A Filipino fighting system with an emphasis on stick and blade fighting similar to Escrima and Kali. A practitioner is an Arnisador.
Black Belt Society	Between 1947 and 1949 the five founders of Kajukenbo formed the “Black Belt Society” in the Palama District of Honolulu, Hawaii, with the goal of combining the best of their various martial arts.
Bodhidharma	A Buddhist monk from India called the “father of Zen” who traveled to China around AD 525 to teach Zen (Chan) meditation to the monks at the Shaolin Temple. The physical exercises he also taught them are considered by some historians to be the forerunner of Chinese martial arts. The name <i>Bodhidharma</i> in Sanskrit is <i>Ta-Mo</i> in Chinese or <i>Daruma</i> in Japanese.
bolo	A type of machete used throughout the Philippines, primarily as an agricultural tool and for clearing vegetation, it could also be used as a weapon.
chi	“Energy” or “life force” in Chinese. The same as <i>ki</i> in Japanese.
chi sao	“Sticky arm” or “energy arm” in Chinese. A martial arts exercise of sticking hands/arms/legs where contact is maintained to detect and counter an opponent’s moves. <i>Chi Sao</i> is practiced in Wing Chun Kung Fu and Jeet Kune Do to develop sensitivity and economy of movement. <i>Tui Shou</i> or “push hands” is practiced in a similar way in Tai Chi to unbalance an opponent.
chu’an fa	“Fist way” in Chinese. Same as <i>kempo</i> (also spelled <i>kenpo</i>) in Japanese.
dan-tien	“Sea of chi” in Chinese. The center of concentrated energy or power just below the naval that roughly corresponds with a person’s physical center of gravity. Same as <i>hara</i> in Japanese.
dojo	“Place of training” in Japanese. Literally a “place of learning the way” or “place of awakening.” Same as <i>kwoon</i> in Chinese.
Escrima	“Skirmish” in Tagalog/Spanish. A Filipino fighting system that includes weapons fighting with sticks and blades as well as empty hand combat and grappling similar to Arnis and Kali. A practitioner is an Escrimador.
espada y daga	“Sword-and-dagger” in Tagalog/Spanish. Filipino weapons fighting with a knife in one hand and a sword or cane in the other. Derived from Spanish sword fighting, the sword could be used for blocking and long-range techniques while the knife was used for close range striking.

¹ This is a student handout written prior to 1995 which has been revised by student Edie Alexander in 2016 to include additional information.

gi	Japanese martial arts uniform. Same as <i>sam</i> in Chinese.
Judo	“Soft/gentle way” in Japanese. A Japanese grappling art that uses nonresistance or yielding, balance and leverage to defeat an opponent.
Jujitsu	“Soft arts” in Japanese. A Japanese grappling art that uses an opponent’s own weight and power to defeat the opponent.
Kajukenbo	The name Kajukenbo was created by co-founder James (Joe) Holck in 1949 from the arts from which is derived: <i>KA</i> for Karate and Tang Soo Do (Korean Karate), <i>JU</i> for Judo and Jujutsu, <i>KEN</i> for Kenpo/Kempo and <i>BO</i> for Western and Chinese boxing (Shaolin Kung Fu or Sil-lum Gung Fu).
karate	“Empty (<i>kara</i>) hand (<i>te</i>)” in Japanese. The Japanese characters meant “Chinese hand” until the 20 th century when the meaning changed to “empty (as in egoless) hand.”
kata	“Form” in Japanese. Same as <i>kuen</i> in Chinese and <i>pinyon</i> in Okinawan.
kempo	“Fist way” in Japanese (also spelled <i>kenpo</i>). Same as <i>chu’an fa</i> in Chinese.
Kenpo Karate	A hard style of karate brought from Hawaii to the U.S. mainland in 1954 by Grandmaster Edmund Parker, the founder of American Kenpo Karate. Grandmaster Parker received his black belt from William Chow.
ki	“Energy” or “life force” in Japanese. The same as <i>chi</i> in Chinese.
kiai	“Spirit meeting” in Japanese. A martial arts shout used to generate power. <i>Ki</i> means spirit or breath and <i>ai</i> means harmony.
kodokan	“Hall of teaching the way” in Japanese. The Kodokan was a major judo school in Tokyo. Founder James (Joe) Holck trained in Kodokan Judo.
kote-gaeshi	“Forearm return” in Japanese. An externally rotating wrist lock taught in Aikido and grappling arts. <i>The joint lock we do in Punch Attach 7A.</i>
kuen	“Form” in Chinese. Same as <i>kata</i> in Japanese and <i>pinyon</i> in Okinawan.
kung fu	“Skilled person” in Chinese. The Chinese characters can be translated as “hard work/labor/achievement,” “time/energy/effort” and “man/person/worker.” Skill or merit acquired through hard work. Used as a generic term outside China for many Chinese martial arts styles. Same as <i>gung fu</i> in Cantonese Chinese.
kwoon	“Place of training” in Chinese. A training hall or school. Same as <i>dojo</i> in Japanese.
Modern Arnis	A style of stick fighting developed by Filipino Grandmaster Remy Amador Presas who combined the stick arts of Kali, Arnis de Mano, Escrima, and Tjakalele (Indonesian fencing) with footwork and takedowns for better self-defense. He made arnis safer and more accessible to students by substituting stick-on-stick striking rather than strikes done directly on the body.
nikkyo/nikyo	“Second teaching” in Japanese. An internally rotating wrist lock taught in Aikido and grappling arts.

nunchaku or nunchuck	“Wooden flail” in Japanese. An Okinawan weapon derived from a farming implement and originally made from hardwood held together with horsehair. According to tradition, nunchaku came into use after 17 th century Japanese invaders banned the indigenous Okinawans from owning bladed weapons. Rope or chain has replaced horsehair.
NWMAF	The National Women’s Martial Arts Federation, established in Pittsburgh, PA, in 1982.
pak pai	Northern Shaolin style (or way) in Chinese. A style of kung fu which emphasizes long-range kicks, extension in kicking and striking, expansive, flashy movements, deep stances, fluidity and mobile footwork.
PAWMA	The Pacific Association of Women Martial Artists, established in Berkeley, CA, in 1985.
pinyon	“Form” in Okinawan. Same as <i>kata</i> in Japanese and <i>kuen</i> in Chinese.
punyo	In Tagalog, the bottom,ommel or butt end of an arnis cane or sword which may be used for striking or hooking.
sam	Chinese uniform worn by martial artists. Same as <i>gi</i> in Japanese.
sanchin	Sanchin is a kata that uses muscular tension coordinated with controlled breathing to generate physical power and mental focus. Sanchin means “three battles” in Japanese and is sometimes interpreted as the battle to unify the mind, body and spirit. Same as <i>sanzhan</i> in Chinese. <i>The forceful exhalation of breath we do at the beginning on Pinyon 11 is sanchin.</i>
sensei	Teacher or martial arts master in Japanese. Same as <i>sifu</i> in Chinese.
shaolin	“Young forest” in Chinese. The <i>Shaolin Shu</i> or Young Forest Temple was a monastery built around AD 495 near a forest in the Honan Province of Northern China. It is traditionally considered to be the birth place of kung fu. <i>Shaolin Kung Fu</i> in Mandarin Chinese is the same as <i>Sil-lum Gung Fu</i> in Cantonese Chinese.
shuto chop	Knife-hand strike (or <i>shuto uchi</i>) in Japanese. An open hand strike done with the edge of the hand. <i>We do shuto chops at the end of Kata 3.</i>
sifu	Teacher or martial arts master in Chinese. Derived from <i>si</i> meaning teacher and <i>fu</i> meaning father. A woman instructor may be referred to as <i>simu</i> or “teacher-mother” but this can also mean the sifu’s wife. Same as sensei in Japanese.
sigung	Your teacher’s teacher in Chinese. Derived from <i>si</i> meaning teacher and <i>gung</i> means grandfather, your sigung is your “grand-teacher.”
sijo	The founder of a martial arts system. In Chinese <i>sijo</i> means “great-grandfather” or great-grand-teacher. Adriano Emperado is the sijo of Kajukenbo.
sil-lum pai	“Southern Shaolin style (or way)” in Chinese. A style of kung fu which emphasizes close-range fighting, low, stable stances, low kicks and continuous powerful hand techniques and strike combinations.

sinawali	“To weave” in Tagalog. Rhythmic blocking and striking patterns done with one or two arnis canes or with empty hands. The name is derived from the woven pattern of bamboo matting (called <i>sawali</i>) found in traditional Filipino homes.
sinulog	A Filipino mock battle dance which disguised combat training by the indigenous Filipinos after invading Spanish conquistadors banned martial arts in the Philippines in the 16 th century.
sumbrada or sombrada	The Six Count Sumbrada drill in Modern Arnis was created by Grandmaster Remy Presas to teach his students how to fight with flow, alternately striking and blocking with slice blocks. <i>Sumbrada</i> is derived from “shadow/shade” in Spanish and refers to the final block which is an umbrella block to an overhead (#12) strike. <i>What we call “Six Count.”</i>
Tagalog	The indigenous language of the Philippines. Most arnis terminology is based on Tagalog, with strong Spanish influence since the Philippine Islands were once a Spanish territory.
Tang Soo Do	“The Way of the Chinese Hand.” A Korean martial art similar to Tae Kwon Do that includes influences of Chinese Kung Fu and Shotokan Karate.
tekubi gatame	“Wrist lock” in Japanese. A lock forcing the wrist into hyperflexion by pushing or pulling the hand towards the inside of the forearm, taught in Aikido and grappling arts.
tum pai	“Central style (or way)” in Chinese. In the 1960s Sijo Emperado, Sifu Al Dacascos and Sifu Al Dela Cruz experimented with blending northern and southern kung fu styles into Kajukenbo, creating a variation of Kajukenbo which they called <i>tum pai</i> . In the 1970s, with Sijo’s permission, Sifu Jon A. Loren combined the art of tai chi chu’ with Kajukenbo and introduced it as “Tum Pai.” It was officially recognized as the soft-style branch of Kajukenbo in 1984.
uke	In the Japanese martial arts, the one who is receiving the technique, the receiver, the one who falls. The partner who performs the technique may be called the <i>nage</i> (“thrower”), <i>tori</i> (“grabber/defender/taker”) or <i>shite</i> (“doer”).
ukemi	In the Japanese martial arts, the action of <i>uke</i> is called taking <i>ukemi</i> or being the receiving body. It is the art of knowing how to respond correctly and safely to an attack during partner training.
wu shu	Martial or military arts in Chinese. Literally “war techniques/methods.” Now used in China as a term for many martial arts styles and martial arts sports.
Wun Hop Kuen Do	A branch of Kajukenbo created by Sijo Emperado’s student Sifu Al Dacascos between 1967 and 1969 by blending Chinese and Filipino martial arts into Kajukenbo along with modern street-fighting defenses. Wun Hop Kuen Do translates to “combined fist art” in Cantonese Chinese.
yin/yang	“Dark/light” in Chinese – <i>yin</i> (dark/passive/feminine) and <i>yang</i> (light/active/masculine) are complementary opposites that need to balance and continually flow into each other to achieve harmony in the universe.