The area now known as the Republic of the Philippines comprises about 2,000 inhabited islands. Its initial inhabitants were afro-asiatic, but waves of indo-malay settlers became the demographically largest group. There has been a good amount of Indian and Middle Eastern influence culturally, religiously, and even ethnically. Naturally, because of the Philippine Islands' location, there is also a long history of exchange with China, Japan, Taiwan, and Okinawa.

There have been two historically prominent empires which encompassed the Philippines: the Sri Vijaya, a Buddhist empire, and the Majapahit, a Hindu one. These empires included parts of Indonesia, Malaysia, mainland Southeast Asia (Thailand, Burma, et al), and even further abroad into the Pacific and Indian Oceans. Thus intercultural trade occurred between these regions and their martial arts became fairly closely related.

In 1521, the Spanish explorer Magellan landed on these islands and was beheaded in battle by the Visayan Chief Lapu-Lapu. But subsequent waves of Conquistadors saw the islands claimed as a colony by Spain and named “Las Islas Filipinas”, after the Spanish prince Felipe. The Spanish governed in the Philippines for nearly 400 years, and Spanish culture (including martial art) exerted a significant influence on the islands. In 1899, Spain ceded its claim over the islands to the U.S., after losing the Spanish-American war, and that is when they became known as the Philippine Islands, an Americanization of “Las Islas Filipinas”.

The martial arts of the Philippines can be referred to broadly as “Kali”. This refers to practice with weapons, as well as unarmed combat. Many Filipino Martial Artists also refer to their art as “Escrima”, or “Arnis”. Two of the distinguishing features of the arts of the Philippines are the emphasis on training in weapons from the very beginning of one’s practice, and the survival of a number of masters, into recent times, who had to rely on their martial skills to survive bladed and unarmed combat in battle. “Silat” is also a term used to describe some martial systems from the Philippines, as well as the arts of Indonesia and Malaysia.

One of the men who played a key role in bringing these arts into American awareness is Dan Inosanto. Tuhon (a title given to the leader of a tribe or system) Inosanto is a Filipino-American, born in 1936, who began as a youth studying with a number of the Filipino Masters. He also earned high credentials in Indonesian Silat, Muay Thai, Jun Fan Gung Fu, and more.

**Our practice of Kali and Silat is descended from the blend of Filipino and Indonesian arts that Tuhon Dan Inosanto teaches.**

To Americans who aren’t familiar with Filipino Martial Arts, Tuhon Inosanto is probably most famous for being close friends and training partners with Bruce Lee, as well as primary spokesman and inheritor to Bruce Lee’s Jeet Kune Do (JKD) organization, philosophy, and martial “system”. At the time JKD was developed, the martial arts world was stuck in what Mr. Lee famously termed “the classical mess”. That is, a bunch of choreographed moves that were sacred cows, but had limited application to combat, as well as an “our way is the best” attitude, despite a lack of testing against other ways of fighting. JKD was groundbreaking in recognizing that combat preparedness demanded learning how to strike, grapple, throw, and wrestle on the ground. A look at the early years of MMA and the UFC later brought into the public eye the problems with the “classical mess”, as well as the realization that no-holds-barred fights required a breadth of skills, that were not well covered by any one “style”. Something that Inosanto, Lee, and JKD recognized long before. Some martial historians credit JKD with being “the first modern MMA”.

Another of our primary influences is one of Inosanto’s early students, Burton Richardson. Guro Burton earned full instructorship in Filipino Martial Arts under Tuhon Inosanto, the rank of Guro in Penjak Silat under Pendekar Paul De Thouars, Instructorship in Kali Ilustrisimo under Grand Master Ilustrisimo, as well as a 3rd degree black belt in BJJ under Egan Inoue, and a number of other credentials. At a point in his career when he was already a recognized international figure in Kali and Silat, Guro Burton realized that too much of what he emphasized departed from practical combat application. So he went back to the woodshed, for nearly 20 years. He re-worked his curriculum, testing it with other world-class martial artists, and included only what he found to be practical against resisting opponents. From this experience he structured **the** **philosophy of JKD Unlimited, whose four core principles are:**

1. **Train first and foremost for street self-defense.**
2. **Train with progressive resistance.**
3. **Train as complete self-defense athletes. And...**
4. **Keep training fun!**

**We keep this JKD approach with our practice of Kali Silat. Much of our specific Kali and Silat curriculum is directly from Guro Burton Richardson’s *Silat for the Street*  and *Battlefield Kali* curriculums.**

My own instructorships in Kali and Silat are under Guro Burton and JKD Unlimited. My other martial arts credentials are a 2nd degree black belt in Japanese Jujitsu, Instructorship in Nei Jia Quan, and 1st degree black belt in Japanese Sword. I’ve trained a number of other arts to a lesser degree, and have trained collegially with martial artists of other styles often.

At FMA Tucson we keep a primary purpose of self defense for the street. We train all ranges of combat; striking, clinch, and ground; with weapons and without. We have a JKD / mixed-martial-art approach of training in methods from different “styles” that are good in these ranges. We also want to keep training, and life fun! ...and improve the quality of life for others, as well as ourselves. To this end we aim to train students of good character, with integrity, determination, and a desire to help and serve others.