

History and Philosophy of Kajuken/mbo

with

Biographies of Richard L Peralta and Peralta's 1st Black Belt Mr. Edward Shepard.

Long before traditional Asian martial arts were exposed to the West, fighting systems designed strictly around American cultural needs were evolving in areas of interest throughout North America.

One of those specific areas was Hawaii, where a melting pot of several different cultures made physical harassment, attack, robbery and even murder, a common occurrence.

For no purpose other than survival in an atmosphere filled with bored drunken servicemen and opposing cultures, Hawaiians such as William K.S. Chow, James Mitose, and Adriano Emperado devised martial art systems. These styles were specifically designed for practical, effective street self-defense.

These efficient street-defense martial styles have made their way to the Mainland, where people have discovered their values as both straightforward specialized self-defense arts and winning tournament styles.

Perhaps the American martial style that sets the best example of practical self-defense that has also become a vehicle for both good health and tournament success is kajukenbo, founded by Adriano Emperado in Hawaii in 1947.

Emperado originally received his martial training from Chinese kenpo's founder, Professor William K.S. Chow. Chow had first learned Shaolin Kung fu from his father, but found that this alone was not sufficient self-defense training for the tough streets of his Hawaiian neighborhood. Therefore, he went to James Mitose to learn Mitose's kosho-ryu kenpo style. From there Chow combined the kung-fu knowledge received from his father with his own training under James Mitose to form his Chinese Kara-ho kenpo system. In 10 years of teaching kenpo, Chow graduated a mere five black belt students, with Emperado moving up to fifth-degree black belt in Chow's system.

Professor Chow was not Adriano Emperado's only teacher. Prior to studying from Chow, he had studied escrima, the Philippine martial art of stick, weapon and empty-hand fighting. He eventually incorporated his knowledge of Filipino stick and staff fighting into kajukenbo.

When Emperado left Chow's school he felt that he had more to learn toward finding the perfect practical self-defense system. For instance, he felt that many kenpo techniques could not protect a small person against the attack of a much larger opponent.

To further refine his knowledge, Emperado formed an alliance with four black belt students of other martial arts. They were Pyy (Walter) Choo, who represented Korean tang soo do; Frank Ordonez, a se keino jujitsu practitioner; Joseph Holek from kodokan judo; and Clarence Chang, a Shaolin kung-fu stylist.

These five men called themselves the Black Belt Society and set out to devise an all-encompassing self-defense system.

They trained together, exchanging techniques to see what worked, over a two-year period. Eventually, they formed a fighting style, not yet open to the public, which they called kajukenbo.

The word kajukenbo is a testimonial to the martial arts of the five original black belt practitioners. This is how it is broken down:

KA – Korean karate (tang soo do)

JU – jujitsu and judo

KEN – kenpo

KEM - Kempo

BO – Chinese boxing

The original five men placed all of their efforts into their new system for a two-year period directly before the start of the Korean conflict. They met secretly to talk and compare techniques. For instance, Choo, the tang soo do expert, would ask Holey what a judo stylist might do to defend against a kicking attack. They tried different techniques against one another and devised the best methods of self-defense to combat each type of attack.

Then came the Korean War. At that time, military obligations caused them to follow different paths that would eventually leave only Adriano Emperado to carry on the new kajukenbo system.

The first Kajukenbo School to open to the public was located in Honolulu's tough Palama Settlement. Emperado and his brother Joe, who also studied with William K.S. Chow, managed this school.

One of Emperado's first students was Marino Tiwanak, a champion flyweight boxer. He became Emperado's student after observing kajukenbo in action. Tiwanak went on to become a staunch supporter of kajukenbo.

This original kajukenbo school was in a section of town so tough that martial arts training was relegated to what Emperado referred to as, "You have to learn to get hit and take it. That way no one will bother you on the street." This was a theory that led to the early kajukenbo philosophy – train strong to be strong.

At that time, the training was so rigorous that Emperado refused to take children into his school. Early discipline was extremely rigid and para-military, being based largely upon Japanese tradition. Students saluted when they entered the training area. They lined up with the highest-ranking students to the right of the instructor, on down to the lowest ranked standing in the far corner of the back row.

The instructor knelt then with the students, who tied their belts while kneeling. They proceeded to recite the kajukenbo prayer, devised by Emperado, and saluted the American flag, Hawaiian flag, Emperado (or his picture if he was not present), and the head instructor.

From there on, it was a series of demanding physical workouts consisting of warm-up calisthenics, forms training, and self-defense technique practice. The end of class brought stamina and strength building exercises, such as leg lifts, push-ups, and sit-ups.

After the last exercises were finished, the students saluted again, knelt to remove their belts, passed by the instructor in order of their rank, and went home to recover from the workout.

From the beginning the kajukenbo system was a close-knit, strong martial art in Hawaii. The two Emperado brothers controlled it with a strength based on respect and discipline. As they graduated more instructors, kajukenbo grew to staggering proportions and was known highly and respected by other martial art styles.

The second Kajukenbo School was near the Palama Settlement School at the Kamuki YMCA. It boasted over 100 students. Kajukenbo then branched out to neighboring Wahiawa. In these early days, Adriano Emperado taught at the YMCA's, while Brother Joe instructed at the main Palama School. Emperado's goal was to "Create the most effective street self-defense system and bring it to the public to learn."

Although kajukenbo's popularity was strong in Hawaii, and its practitioners feared on the streets, it had not yet found its way into tournament competition.

This goal was realized when kajukenbo came to the Mainland in 1960. In that year, Tony Ramos moved to Los Angeles from Hawaii; bring his expertise at kajukenbo with him. Ramos had learned from Joe Emperado, and brought with him his own black belt student, Richard Tokomoto. At first Ramos and Tokomoto operated as partners in the Los Angeles school. Later, Ramos stayed in Los Angeles, while Tokomoto moved further south to open his own kajukenbo school.

Tony Ramos moved to Fairfield, California in the central part of the state in the mid-1960's, where he opened a school that is still in operation today. Ramos has trained many successful kajukenbo black belt students.

In 1961, Alejo Reyes opened his kajukenbo school in Fairfield, California, in the central part of the state in the mid-1960's, where he opened tournament scene with their sparring expertise.

Both Reyes and Ramos were directly responsible for the rapid spread of kajukenbo throughout the rest of the United States. The close proximity of military bases to their martial art schools led many servicemen to discover the merits of kajukenbo. Black Belt instructors like Don Nahoolwea and Richard L Perlata who took their Kajukenbo training back home when their stints in the service ended and spread the system throughout the world.

Soon after Reyes came Charles Gaylord from Hawaii to the San Francisco East Bay area to start his kajukenbo school in San Leandro, California.

Also in 1962, Joe Habuna and Al Dacascos moved from Hawaii to open kajukenbo schools in San Francisco and San Leandro.

Dacascos who, learned kajukenbo from Sid Asuncion, also a student of Emperado, brought soft, expressive forms to the Mainland, adding beauty to kajukenbo's functional kata. From then on, not only did kajukenbo stylists easily win in tournament sparring, but they also made their marks in tournament forms competition.

Kajukenbo training on the Mainland was as rugged as it was in Hawaii. After a few years it softened somewhat; however, it was still known as dedicated and rigorous training.

In the late 1960s, with the advent of more public demonstrations of kajukenbo expertise and the fact that kajukenbo stylists were winning many tournaments fighting competitions, kajukenbo became a prominent factor in the American karate scene. At that time few martial artists other than kajukenbo practitioners wore black GIs. When someone with a black gi stepped into a fighting ring, everyone paid close attention.

Tournament sparring was easy for kajukenbo stylists to master. Since they had so much self-defense training and such rigorous workouts, they were accustomed to continuous blocking and countering, a vital factor in tournament sparring.

Besides having a large arsenal of techniques and incredible stamina to go with them, Kajukenbo practitioners were not afraid to take a blow (in those days they did not practice sparring with equipment). When pitted against kickers from Korean martial arts, kajukenbo stylists had the advantage of knowing how to use hand techniques effectively, as well as kicking techniques.

The widespread success of kajukenbo stylists as good fighters is due primarily to the diversity of the system itself. It lets the student develop in the areas in which he is most talented. He's not forced to use any techniques that he is not comfortable with. For instance, if he has a good backfist, kajukenbo allows him to utilize it and improve upon it by adding augmenting techniques and discarding any interfering techniques.

In kajukenbo's early days, promotions were informal and based upon the instructor's observations during classes. A student would often be called to the front of the class, with no prior warning, to be told that he or she was being tested. After the class, the instructor took the old belt and gave the student a new belt color, telling him or her that he/she had been promoted to the next level.

Contemporary kajukenbo schools have advance testing dates of formal promotions with guests invited to watch. Many times the guests are high-ranking members of kajukenbo or other martial styles. They don't judge; however, they do watch and as witnesses the certificate of rank presented to the student from a **certified Kajukembo Instructor** which was a black belt rank above 3rd degree and title of Sifu.

Emperado made it perfectly clear. *“You could not give any Black belt Rank until you Were provided an **Instructor Certificate of Kajukenbo**”* or your black belt status was one under the mentorship of a certified instructor. You can only promote to the level one below your black belt rank, you could not promote to your own level.

Although over the years Kajukenbo has allowed some flexibility, due to economic and social changes, the roots and purpose established by Adriano Emperado have remained the same especially through the lineage like of the Reyes group.

Our K.S.D.S lineage

Sijo A.D. Emperado → SGM Aleju Reyes → G.M Richard Perlata.

G.M Richard Peralta – Kajukembo Self Defense Systems

Kajukembo Self Defense Systems K.S.D.S – formally created 1987 by Richard L. Peralta Mr. Peralta received approval and confirmation letter from Sijo A.D. Emperado in 1989. Emperado officially recognized Kajukembo Self Defense System and granted Richard L. Perlata the rights to create advanced techniques within the system. Sijo Emperado also assigned K.S.D.S as an affiliate to his E.K.A organization and awarded Richard Peralta his 8th Degree Black Belt rank. Interesting and historical point before 1987 Sijo A.D. Emperado and his black belt instructor Aleju Reyes signed a document in 1975 granting the following students: Don Nahoolewa and Richard L. Peralta the rights to restore the Kajukembo System.

Richard L. Peralta

Associate Professor – 8th Degree Black Belt – Promoted June 1988 by **Sijo Emperado**
Professor – 9th Degree Black Belt – September 2000 – **American Kajukembo Assoc.**
Grand Master – October 2003 - Promoted by **American Kajukembo Assoc.**
Martial Arts Style: Kajukembo (Kajukenbo) Self-Defense Systems from 1960-2005.
Chief Instructor – North Texas Martial Arts Training Hall
Founder and **Chief Instructor** of the *Kajukembo Self Defense Systems* 1987-2005.

Mr. Peralta began his training in martial arts in 1961 under the late Grand Master Aleju Reyes, Sr. Master Reyes was one of the original instructors who came from Hawaii, settled in the Northern California area, and brought the Kajukembo system to the mainland. Shortly after Master Reyes began his school, Mr. Peralta participated as a beginning student, alongside his best friend Mr. Don Nahoolewa. Master Reyes developed such black belts as Phil Corin, Gary Forbach, Alan Reyes, Jr., and Joe Davis; who were champions in the 60's and 70's.

Mr. Nahoolewa, like Mr. Peralta, was in the military and stationed at Travis AFB in California. Mr. Nahoolewa and Mr. Peralta were Master Reyes' first and second black belts (respectively). Mr. Peralta studied the Kajukembo system under Master Reyes until June 1964 when he was assigned to Walker AFB in Roswell, New Mexico.

Mr. Peralta opened his first school in Roswell. He then went back to Travis after 2 ½ years of service. After Travis AFB he was assigned a tour of Vietnam (1967-1968), where he taught the Kajukembo system. Out of all his students' only one was to become his first black belt: Mr. Edward Sheppard.

Eddie Sheppard left Vietnam after being reassigned to Torrejon AFB in Madrid, Spain. While stationed in Madrid, Eddie Sheppard continued to teach the Kajukembo system. Today the Kajukembo system is very active in Spain and has strong organizations.

As Mr. Peralta completed his tour in Vietnam, he was reassigned to Kadena AFB in Okinawa from 1968 to 1971. While stationed at Kadena AFB, Mr. Peralta along with Mr. Nahoolewa opened a Kajukembo school on the base. They became well known throughout the Okinawa Karate Association. During this time they became interested in where the terms kenpo and kempo originated from. Originally the term kenpo was used until James Mitose appeared which then changed to kempo, a Japanese term. In order to retain a little history before William KS Chow's time, it was decided by Mr. Peralta and Mr. Nahoolewa to change the ken to kem, although Sijo Emperado had studied under the term kenpo. Since then Sijo Emperado has accepted the term Kajukembo and therefore is used by only a few schools today. The majority of schools use the term Kajukenbo; and for those who ask why, this explains the reason for using the term Kajukembo.

Upon completing his tour in Okinawa, Mr. Peralta was assigned to Grand Forks AFB, North Dakota where he again opened another kajukembo school. In 1973, he toured the Far East for a second time. This tour was in Udron, Thailand. During this time in Udron, he opened a kajukembo school that had a significant impact upon the area's martial artists and kick boxers. His display of Kajukenbo's reality in terms of self-defense was so well received, he was asked by the Thai Royal Air Force Security to teach the military's security personnel. His tours in the Far East allowed him to travel to Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea, Philippines, and Japan. Every destination was an opportunity to see and learn about the various martial arts of the world.

Through his dedications to the Kajukembo system and the high standards he has passed on to his Black belt students and their schools, Sigung Peralta has become highly respected and admired. He is also well known to the martial arts communities of the Far, East, Spain, Puerto Rico, and Guam. During his martial arts career his commitment to the Kajukembo system has truly influenced martial artists' throughout the world.

Mr. Peralta was the **founder** and **Chairman** of the **Kajukembo Self Defense Systems (KSDS)** until his untimely death in 2005. His principal pupil, Professor Agustin Lopez Campos, 8th Degree Black Belt, heads the KSDS branch in Madrid, Spain. While Grand Master Dan Frazier now a 9th Degree Black Belt Heads the U.S. K.S.D.S group. The K.S.D.S system Mr. Peralta developed is an expression that embraces the traditional techniques as taught by Al Reyes while encompassing Mr. Peralta's philosophy on effective self- defense and backed the founder of the Kajukenbo System Sijo A.D.Emperado.

From 1986 to 2005, G.M.Peralta has dedicated himself to advancing his art further. In the tradition of the Black Belt society, he entered a stage of semi-seclusion. Selecting a handful of dedicated black belts via (Israel Gonzales – Burt Vickers – Willis Norvell – Jay Ortiz – Terry Roach – Agustin Lopez – Dan Frazier) with these black belts he advanced the system by probing for weaknesses, increasing the difficulty of the threat, and incorporating advanced philosophical concepts into the techniques.

Mr. Peralta was **personally promoted by Sijo A.D. Emperado** from 1975-1991 to his 4th, 5th and 8th, Degree Black belt, and then later promoted to 9th Degree Black Belt by the A.K.A association in the summer of 2000.

At the urging of his good friend, Mr. Don Nahoolewa, Founder and Chairman of the American Kajukembo Association (AKA), Mr. Peralta has affiliated his KSDS with the AKA in the Summer of 2000.

The goal of these gentlemen was twofold; 1) to standardize basic Kajukembo techniques across all affiliated schools and thereby restore the Kajukembo tradition, and 2) advance the system through communication and collaboration. This collaboration stopped after the death of Mr. Peralta in 2005. The remaining Black Belts of the Kajukembo Self Defense Systems (K.S.D.S) requested to keep their system identity and broke away from the American Kajukembo Association in 2007. *The sole reason was K.S.D.S was created by Richard L Perlata based on systems of self – defense systems he had learned from his teacher, the late S.G.M Aleju Reyes Sr. and additional self-defense concepts he gathered through his years of martial art training* . The remaining K.S.D.S black belts did not want Mr. Peralta’s teaching to be assimilated into another organizational group and lost in whole.

Sijo A.D. Emperado accepted “K.S.D.S” as a system under his **root teachings** by Sijo and Aleju Reyes. Sijo A.D. Emperado provided his blessing and officially recognized Kajukembo Self Defense Systems in the years 1987. Sijo Emperado also assigned Peralta the Texas to be his E.K.A “Emperado Kajukenbo Association” represented for Texas. Sijo A.D. Emperado officially accepted K.S.D.S as a branch system under his Emperado Kajukenbo Association group.

It is under the KSDS banner that Prof. Peralta has developed an expression of Kajukembo that embraces the traditional techniques as taught by Grandmaster Al Reyes while incorporating Prof. Peralta's philosophy on effective self-defense.

Grand Master Peralta spent the last several years perfecting his concepts and applications to the Original Method he learned from his teacher, the late GGM Aleju Reyes with his Black Belt students. Mr. Peralta was known for his lightning fast hands, Grand Master Peralta added his own flavor to Kajukembo to create an explosive and effective method of application by shortening the moves and moving efficiently while using his entire body to generate power at short ranges. Sijo A.D. Emperado admired Peralta's commitment to the art and supported K.S.D.S. "Kajukembo Self Defense Systems".

Professor Peralta was the chief instructor of Kajukembo Self-Defense Systems (KSDS) from 1986 – October 28, 2005. Friday, October 28, 2005, Our Grand Master Richard Peralta passed away after suffering a severe stroke and heart attack. He left with us a legacy that is instilled in our hearts, minds and souls. GM Peralta was a man who led by example and not just words. He was a humble man who valued friendship and would give the shirt off his back to help someone and not expect anything in return. To be accepted as a student of GM Peralta meant you were adopted into his family and he would not only teach you his art, but also lead you through life, building a relationship that only a parent could understand. He was not just our teacher; he was our friend, mentor and dad.

As we move forward, after the death of our Grand Master, our goals go beyond keeping his martial spirit alive in Kajukembo Self-Defense Systems; we will aspire to embrace his spirit of giving and helping. Our lives are better because Grand Master Richard Peralta was our friend and surrogate father. We can only hope to have as positive and fulfilling a life.

The expressions and traditions are carried on dedicated Black belts mentioned above, Kajukembo Self Defense Systems will carry on and you as a student have a responsibility to see that his dedication and devotion to the system is carried on for generations forward through his black belt students and the newly formed Kajukembo Self Defense Systems International Organization formally formed August of 2015.

In ending we would like to express our respect to all the senior Grand masters, Professors, Sigung's and Sifu's with the system. Collectively each branch makes our system strong. Going forward we should never lose sight of our roots and to always pay respect to all the senior instructors within the system.

Next the biography of our first black belt from our Grand Master Richard Peralta.

Richard Peralta' First Black Belt - Edward Shepard.

Biography of Edward Shepard Born
May 24 1942, Cincinnati Ohio

I started my training in Kajukembo as a white belt while in the US Air Force in 1964 with GM Tony Lasit while deployed on temporary duty to Ubon AB Thailand. Prior to that time I had no formal martial arts training. After only three months of training with GM Lasit I returned to George AFB in the United States. In 1965 I returned to Ubon and continued my training under GM Lasit's disciple, Sifu Precha Mahatanavong. My training with Sifu Precha was the Kajukenbo taught to him by GM Lasit with Aikido and Thai boxing added to the training later by 'Precha. I left Thailand in 1966 and was awarded a green belt by Sifu Precha.

After a brief stint in the U.S. I deployed to Clark AB Philippines in 1967 and started my training in Kajukembo with GM Peralta. I spent nearly 18 months training with GM Peralta and was awarded a first degree black belt in late 1968. My training with GM Peralta was at times sporadic because both he and I were at different times deployed all over Southeast Asia in support of the Vietnam War effort. After another short stint in the United States I deployed to Udorn Thailand in 1971 and guess who was there? GM Peralta. I continued my training with GM Peralta and worked hard to refine the techniques that he had shown me over the years. GM Peralta was adamant that the techniques and forms first be learned in their basic format to preserve the integrity of the Kaiju art. 'Peralta then taught additions or slight modifications to the techniques that he called adlibs. These techniques emphasized the economy of motion, multiple simultaneous quick hand strikes to joints tendon and pressure points, and maximum striking power generation from the hips. I left Udorn Thailand in 1972 and was stationed at Luke AFB Arizona.

In January 1974 I was assigned to Torrojon AB Spain. In February of that same year I started a Kajukembo(M) school in a vacant barracks on the air base. On 9 May 1975 GM Peralta awarded me a second degree black belt. Both Spanish and American Students were in my class and we trained every day. There were two other martial arts schools on the base along with my school. The other schools were Shotokan and Tae Kwon Do. In June 1976 after a lot of negotiating and planning with high level U.S Air Force base officials the base commander declared an open house so that Spanish citizens could enter the Air Base and allow the three schools to host the first joint Spanish/American martial arts tournament ever held on a Spanish military base. The tournament was an

overwhelming success. Our school demonstrated both Kajukembo (M) form and self - defense against multiple opponents'. The demonstrations of self -defense unique to Kajukembo (M) and the fact that there were both Spanish and American students training together in my school caught the attention of the Spanish Ministry Of Defense. My class size doubled with Spanish Army and Air Force personnel joining my school.

From those roots Kajukembo (M) flourished and is now one of the premiere forms of Martial Arts taught in Spain.

I left Spain in October 1977 and went to Cannon AFB in Clovis NM. Shortly after arriving at Clovis I was severely injured and almost killed in an auto accident. After a very long recovery from the accident I taught Kajukembo to a small group of students on the campus of Eastern New Mexico University, worked out at home, but remained in a state of inactivity and did not actively teach Kajukembo because of declining health and physical condition. I retired from the Air Force in 1981.

In June 2014 while surfing the internet I saw my name mentioned on a Kajukembo Self Defense System school web site in Houston Texas that stated that I was GM Peralta's first black belt and that I was no longer living. Sadly I also found out that my teacher and friend GM Richard Peralta had died years earlier. I called the school instructor Sigung Burt Vickers, introduced myself, told him that I was alive and well and updated my status. After many phone calls, cross checks, verification, and messages Sigung Vickers told me that I was indeed GM Peralta's first black belt, was credited with starting the first Kajukembo school in Spain , the starting point for all Kajukembo/nbo in Europe, and that I was internationally known all over Europe. I was overwhelmed, humble and excited.

In July 2014 I participated in a small training seminar at Sigung Israel Gonzales's KSDS training facility in Fort Worth Texas and was formally accepted into the KSDS organization with the rank of 9th degree black belt awarded by SGM Dan Frazier with the approval from the Dechi Emperado and the K.S.D.I board of Directors.

After my active status became publicly known I started receiving phone calls and messages of respect, long life well wishes, invitation requests from Kaiju Grand Masters, instructors, and students in the U.S. and all over the world.

It has been a long martial arts journey from the jungles of Ubon Thailand in 1964 to my acceptance into KSDS in 2014.

I cannot complete this Bio without paying tribute to my first Kaiju instructors' GM Tony Lasit and Ajarn Precha Mahatchanavong ; a very special tribute to GM Richard Peralta, my teacher and friend that showed me the way forward in Kajukembo (M, to Professor Burt Vickers, Israel Gonzales, GM George Jackson, SGM's Dan Frazer and Don

Nahoolewa for making it possible for this old warrior to find his way back to Kajukembo after a long period of inactivity.

Salute... Rey

I hope this information has provided you with a better understanding of Kajukenbo and Kajukembo self-defense martial art system.

Thank you.

Professor Burt Vickers.

K.S.D.S (Kajukembo Self Defense Systems U.S.A.)

K.S.D.S.I (Kajukembo Self Defense Systems International Organization)