About the Black Martial Arts Series

Black Martial Arts (BMA) is an open-ended series that attempts to identify and describe various manifestations of courage created by peoples of African, Melanesian, and/or Dravidian descent around the world. Presently the series consists of six volumes, namely:

(1)

Combat Games of Northern Nigeria

BMA 1 (1994) is (with its 126 pages and 55 accompanying photographs) perhaps the most comprehensive work written on African Martial Arts to date. It introduces the reader to the traditional African games that give Northern Nigerian youth not only a sanctioned outlet for the aggressive tendencies inherent in man, but also the opportunity to demonstrate to friend and foe their courage and virility. The book (a companion volume to Hausa Combat Literature (for which see below), contains detailed descriptions of traditional boxing (***dambe***), hunting confrontations (***farauta***), wrestling (***kokawa***), wristlet fighting (***shanchi***), ritual flogging (***shadi***), and tough-skin competitions (***tauri***) each of which are discussed in separate chapters. It also contains an introduction which describes the setting in which these games may have originated, and a concluding chapter dealing with other lesser known Northern Nigerian games involving daring and risk-taking in competitions with men, beasts, and / or the elements of nature. Both color ($50) and black & white copies ($35) are available.

(2)

Combat Games of the African Indian Ocean

BMA 2 (2001) introduces the reader to those traditional combat games that give African Indian Ocean (AIO) youths not only a sanctioned outlet for the aggressive tendencies inherent in man, but also an opportunity to demonstrate to friend and foe their courage and virility. The book contains descriptions of the following competitions each of which involves daring and risk-taking in confrontations with either man, beast, or the elements of nature: 1) ***Moringue*** (kick boxing) from Reunion; 2) ***Morengy*** (kick-boxing), ***Doranga*** (boxing), ***Ringa*** (wrestling), ***Savika*** (bull riding), ***Halats'omby*** (cattle stealing), ***HARTEMA*** (a mixed genre combat), and other now extinct combat games such as ***Daka / Diamanga*** from Madagascar; and 3) ***Mrengé*** (kick boxing), ***Hele*** (cliff diving), and ***Baholagnombé*** (bull fighting) from the Comoros. This volume, with its 283 pages and 231 accompanying photos, is the most comprehensive work ever written dealing with traditional martial arts in the AIO region. Price: $200.00 (with color photos) & $30.00 (black and white photos only).

(3)

Capoeira & Congo

BMA III-A (2002) describes Brazilian Capoeira in detail and then compares it with the Congo dance of Panama. In addition to providing summary answers to such basic questions as the "what, where, when, how, who & why" of each art, this 206-page volume with its over 200 accompanying photos includes additional information and photos dealing with the a) land, setting, and target populations; b) musical instruments; c) songs; d) weapons; e) apparel; f) physical movements; g) aims & strategies; and h) philosophy, secrets & symbols. The black and white version is priced at $30 and the color version goes for $90.

Danmyé / Ladjia / Ronpoin

BMA III-B (2003) deals with a danced martial art of African origin (somewhat similar to Capoeira) practiced in the Caribbean island of Martinique. In addition to providing summary answers to such basic questions as the "what, where, when, how, who & why" of the art, this 94-paged volume with its 30 accompanying photographs includes additional information dealing with the a) land, setting, and target population; b) musical instruments used; c) songs; d) weapons; e) apparel; f) physical movements; g) aims & strategies; and h) philosophy, secrets & symbols. The black and white version is priced at $20 and the color version goes for $50.

(4)

African Arts of Stick-fighting, Part I: Northern Nguni

BMA IV (2002) is divided into three parts, namely: Part I - which deals exclusively with the art of stick-fighting as practiced by the Zulu (of South Africa), the Swazi (of Swaziland), and the Ndebele (of Zimbabwe). Part I has 51 pages together with 30 photos of stick-fighting practitioners and postures. Part II (not yet published) will deal with the stick-fighting arts of the remainder of the eastern coast of the African continent (i.e. Mozambique, Tanzania, Kenya, Ethiopia, Southern Egypt, and Somalia); and Part III (also not yet published) will deal with other stick-fighting arts on the African continent (e.g. Xhosa, Lesotho, etc.). The price of Part I is $30 (color), $10 (black and white).

(5)

Dravidian Displays of Daring -

BMA V (2005), the sixth book in the *Black Martial Arts* series, presents a 210-page "journey of discovery" to India and Mauritius to witness various manifestations of Tamil bravery in confrontations not only with other armed or un-armed men (***silambam***), but also with fire (***theemithi***), sword ladders (***kathi poosai***), fierce bulls (***jalli kattu***), oiled poles (***kalugu maram yettum***) and even the inner self (***kavadee***). Supported by over 175 recent color photographs taken by the author in late 2003 and early 2004, this is perhaps the most comprehensive publication ever written on the subject. In it, I discuss the aforementioned "deeds of daring" in detail and also include separate sections dealing with: 1) the Tamil people; 2) their origins, culture, and history, and 3) a justification for including both them and other Dravidian (Melano-Indian) peoples in the "Black Martial Artist" family. The journey is presented in the first person plural so that you, the reader, will feel that you are actually with the author as he discovers, step by step, the substance and intricacies of these marvelous manifestations of Tamil courage.

Part II of this volume will deal with the "Dravidian Displays of Daring" of Kerala, Part III with those of Kanartaka, and Part IV with those of Andhra Pradesh. Both Color ($98) and Black & White ($32) copies available.

(6)

BMA VI (2006) **Hanuman's Warriors** – This 365 pg. volume, a sequel to my Dravidian Displays of Daring, comprises Book VI of the Black Martial Arts series. The first 60 pages of the book deals with Hanuman, the Hindu patron god of martial artists and

gymnasts and the remaining pages present five Dravidian martial arts closely associated with the Monkey God and his descendants that are still practiced enthusiastically in Tamil Nadu and Southern Kerala, namely: 1) silambam; 2) southern kalarippayattu; 3) northern kalarippayattu; 4) mallar kambam; and 5) sadúgudu (kabbadi). The chapters dealing with silambam and mallar kambam are greatly expanded and updated treatments of what was presented in Book V and the material on Southern Kalari, Northern Kalari, and Kabbadi are completely new as are all the photos. This volume, with its 359 photos and optional DVD, is perhaps the most comprehensive presentation yet dealing with the Dravidian Martial Arts of Southern India. Price $35 (B&W) / $150 (Color photos).

Note that the author is currently working on the 7th volume of the BMA series which will be entitled Cosmic Combat Yoga: The Sixth Face of Hanuman. which This volume should be ready for publication sometime before the end of 2008. Other projected books in the series include: *Martial Arts of Mozambique*, *Martial Arts of Mali*, and *Martial Arts of Angola*.

Another book of great import to those interested in Black Martial Arts is Dr. Powe's Ph.D. dissertation entitled **Hausa Combat Literature: An Exposition, Analysis, and Interpretation of its Form, Content and Effect** which presents a discussion and analysis of Hausa Combat Literature (HCL) which he defines as "the aggregate of highly stylized linguistic behavior associated with the performance of such Hausa competitions as ***dambe*** (local boxing), ***shanci*** (wristlet fighting), and ***farauta*** (hunting)".

For purposes of presentation, he divides the literature into three categories: *take-takye* (drummed literature), *kirari* (stylized boasting), and *waka* (song / chant), each of which is discussed in detail in separate chapters. A fourth chapter develops a theory of HCL which attempts to account for the form, content, and effect of the literature as a whole. The discussion and analysis is supplemented by a series of appendices containing hitherto unpublished materials from each of the three HCL categories.

The study hypothesizes that Hausa Combat Literature can be viewed as a product of verbal sympathetic magic (VSM), and that its form, content, and effect derives from a VSM stratagem, here called "iconic linkage", which establishes linguistic (phonetic, syntactic, and semantic) parallelisms between two or more propositions in order to foster credible illusions.

The argument based on a systematic discussion and analysis of nearly sixty hours of combat literature which he collected in northern Nigeria, and on existing literature, maintains that *take-takye* are largely metonymic and that they correspond to the invocation of an individual chosen to undergo a transformation; *kirari* is characterized by metaphor and corresponds to the actual transformation process; and *waka* consists largely of a juxtaposition of metonymy and metaphor resulting in "myth", the celebration of the transformation of an individual or entity into a cultural abstraction.

The study concludes with the suggestion that perhaps the hitherto mysterious and unexplained effects of poetry and song upon modern man may possibly be viewed as the subliminal survival of a former belief that reality could be shaped and influenced through the practice of sympathetic magic. Price: $150.00 (Hard Cover Grimm's Bind).

The Adventures of Dan Aiki

Another series of books related to the Black Martial Arts (BMA) series is The Adventures of Dan Aiki which is based on the "Hausa Combat Literature" tradition. There are 10 fully illustrated books in the initial series and, if interest merits, that initial series can be expanded. All of these books are in verse and conclude with rhymed morals. The books are presently sold in two volumes. Volume I (Books 1 – 5) is appropriate for pre-pubescent children, whereas Volume II (Books 6 – 10) is appropriate for adolescents and adults. The reason for this is that, Dan Aiki (the protagonist of the story) ages from volume to volume such that by Book 6 he is developing an acute awareness of sex.

While Books 1 – 5 were illustrated by a number of Afro-American artists, Books 6 – 7 were illustrated by an African artist from Senegal, and books 8 – 10 by a team of artists from Madagascar. Each book of the series costs $3.00 and so both the first volume and the second volume are $15.00 each. The price for the two volumes together is $30. There is also a comic book version of Book IV that costs $7.00 per copy.

The Adventures of Dan Aiki is a series of ten didactic adventure poems about Dan Aiki (pronounced Don – **I** – Key), a courageous African youth who overcomes many obstacles (both natural and supernatural) on his way to becoming a legend. Though the stories are especially written for growing children, people of all ages will find them both enjoyable and instructive.

What follows is a complete description of the contents of each of the 10 books which make up the series.

Volume I

Book I – [includes the prophecy (when Dan Aiki was only 5 years old) as well as an introduction to the series]. In this book Dan Aiki (age 8), while daydreaming, is chased away by a piece of cloth, a baby, and a dog. His father scolds him for being cowardly, but when a real lion comes Dan Aiki chases it away using the same tactics that his daydream adversaries used to scare him.

Book II, Dan Aiki Goes Hunting, Dan Aiki (age 9) is sent to kill a deer. In route he meets three strangers on the road: a warrior, a beggar, and a beautiful woman who try to distract him from his mission. The moral learned here is "when you have a goal, don't deviate from it until it is accomplished."

Book III Dan Aiki's Magic Charm, Dan Aiki (now 10) is taught the arts of man and beast for one year in the forest. When his instruction has ended he is given a magic charm which he uses in subsequent books.

Book IV Dan Aiki Meets Duna the Sorcerer, Dan Aiki (now 12) engages in a battle of wits with a shape-changing sorcerer. The moral here is: "the race is to the swiftest."

Book V, Dan Aiki Kills a Tunku – Dan Aiki (now 13) kills a *tunku*, a mongoose-like shape-changing creature, without observing traditional rites. As a result he is obliged to flee his native land. The lesson here is that "if you break the law, you must pay the price."

Volume II

[Note that Books VI – X is the post-puberty continuation of the series and contains some elements of sex and a great deal of violence and is thus not intended for children but rather adolescents and adults. This volume has very graphic illustrations.]

Book VI, Dan Aiki Seeks a Wife – deals with Dan Aiki's coming of age, his quest for a bride, and his encounter with the "ten-headed she demon." The moral learned here is "perseverance will overcome hardship."

Book VII – Dan Aiki's Marriage – deals with Dan Aiki's quest for the bridal wealth needed before he can marry. He (now 18) collects the wealth but is robbed when he returns to the home of his betrothed. The lesson here is that "sometimes one must fight to make a wrong a right."

Book VIII – Dan Aiki Goes Off to War – deals with Dan Aiki's efforts (now 20) to regain his stolen fortune. Here the moral is that "there is strength in union."

Book IX – The Enemy Army / Dan Aiki Betrayed **–** deals with the enemy hosts that array against our hero. Little does he know that his own general will betray him;

Book X – The Mother of All Wars / Dan Aiki Returns Home – deals with Dan Aiki's victory over the enemy and his subsequent betrayal. The lesson here is that one must know how to "take the bitter with the sweet."

About the Author

Born and raised in Paterson, NJ, Edward L. Powe has a Ph.D. in African Languages and Literature (specializing in Hausa) from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, an MA in Linguistics (minor in Arabic) from Indiana University-Bloomington, and a BA (with distinction) in Spanish (minor in Portuguese) from the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. He has traveled extensively in Africa, Asia, the Indian Ocean, Latin America, Indonesia, and Melanesia and has occupied various administrative and teaching positions in the US and abroad. He was at one time proficient in 8 languages (English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Arabic, Hausa, Kiswahili, Indonesian), and also acquired sufficient knowledge of Malagasy, Quechua, Tagalog, Xhosa, Zulu, Kiché and Tamil to conduct meaningful research in which limited knowledge of these languages was essential. He has been working almost exclusively as a writer since 1992.

About the Company

Founded in 1987, by Dr. Edward L. Powe, *DAN AIKI PUBLICATIONS* (DAP) has as its major goal the propagation and popularization of the cultural and literary heritage of peoples of African, Melanesian, and / or Dravidian origin. *ARMCHAIR TRAVELERS*, a subsidiary of DAP, deals exclusively in phenomenological ethnographic travelogues aimed at creating a greater awareness of the history and rich cultural heritage of the target populations. The company has published 64 titles to date. For a complete listing of published works see the Published Works of Dr. Powe site article. The author can be contacted using the addresses provided below.

Contact Information

Edward Powe
530 W Johnson St. #202
Madison, WI 53703

Telephone #
(608) 283-6357

e-mail address
edpowe1@hotmail.com