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### Big martial arts secret in small kampung

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**Forget Martial Arts!  
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SOLE PROVIDER: Find the country's one and only WonHwaDo expert in Kuala Pilah



FOLK of the small town of Kuala Pilah have more to be proud of than their pre-war Chinese shop houses and Minangkabau delicacies. Not many know that a master of the martial arts master resides in one of the shop houses in Jalan Tung Yen lives. Jorge Cardoso is from Portugal, and he teaches Aikido, Aiki Jujitsu, JiuJitsu and most interesting of all -- WonHwaDo.

He is the only teacher of the Korean martial art in Malaysia. WonHwaDo, which means "the way of circular harmony," was founded by Grand Master Bong-Ki Han in 1972.

The circular motion, on which the martial art is based, was inspired by dance and Bi-Son, the circular movement that comes from being in the praying position with both hands in front of the chest.

With the circular motion, attack and defense become one. This serves to conserve energy and reduce risk of injury caused by forced linear action. Influenced by the elements of nature, the WonHwaDo logo incorporates the "three Taos" (flows of the universe) -- spiritual, physical and natural.

One might well ask, "Why Kuala Pilah?" The reason is a local Nyonya, whom Cardoso married 13 years ago. The small town has been his home ever since. He learnt martial arts to defend himself at 14 because he was always getting into trouble with the bigger boys in school growing up in Angola. And as he grew, he becomes even interested in martial arts as he discovered and learnt to appreciate the cultural aspects of the different martial arts. His vast knowledge of martial arts is evident when he shows his students how to defend themselves against other forms of martial arts. In 1986, Cardoso started learning WonHwaDo, and studied under four masters before he became qualified to teach in 1990.

WonHwaDo's aim is to kill a person's ability to fight -- to control, not to damage. "Before we cut the tree trunk, we must first cut the branches that are in the way," is Cardoso's metaphor. However, this does not mean that WonHwaDo cannot be lethal. "WonHwaDo can be the softest of dance as well as the deadliest of attack when one is pushed to the edge," he said as he demonstrated the soft and hard aspects of the art on his student Tan Chow Li, 24. Cardoso has about 30 students. Some, who have practiced other disciplines, came with doubt and criticism.

Cardoso, who loves all forms of martial arts, is thus able to give unbiased advice, which is to commit and believe in the art that one chooses. "Art is art, there is no right or wrong. It is a form of expression and if a person walks away feeling happy after practicing, he has achieved the purpose," he said. Tan, meanwhile, has been learning from the master since the class opened and is now a red belt. He is training to be a qualified instructor so that he can spread the art to Kuala Lumpur.

Tan describes WonHwaDo as a complete martial art -- one that is never tedious and which does not burden the body. Just by looking at R. Manigandan, 23, one would never guess that the constantly-smiling student had an anger problem. "WonHwaDo's circular exercises helped me control my temper," he said. Subhadra Nadarajah, 31, practices WonHwaDo to release the work pressure of being in the uniformed forces. He also has personal sessions with Cardoso, which are more combative and useful in his field of work. "I need to be able to defend myself and my family easily and effectively should the need ever arise," he said. WonHwaDo has taught 15-year-old Tee Kang Rui self-discipline as he worked to motivate himself to practice alone at home. "Nowadays, in Korea, you can see 11-year-olds with the red belt but I follow the old and tougher evaluation because I want my students to have skills higher than the belts they wear," Cardoso said. Although he has nothing against the rising trend of combat sports like mixed martial arts, Cardoso said such combat could not teach him self-defense because when fighting in the street, one does not win by scoring points. "However, I believe that all styles can co-exist as everything has its place in the world. "I have also plan to develop more modern elements to my teachings so that WonHwaDo keeps up with the times, „Cardoso said.

