

## Script



Dear friends at Nagoya University in Japan. Before proceeding, I would like to request the confidentiality of this footage as all rights are reserved. This clip gives you an insight into an ancient traditional martial art native to Sri Lanka, which is called Angampora.

Angampora is a martial art of combat techniques which combines self defence, sport, exercise and meditation.

I would like to give you a brief history of this art. According to Sinhala folklore and literature the art existed since thirty three thousand years ago when it originated amongst a tribe known as the Yaksha tribe, which lived in Sri Lanka back then. The ancient Sinhala kings of Sri Lanka were well versed in Angam techniques and trained

ranks of fighters to defeat invading forces. These details are recorded in ancient “Ola” leaves. Believe it or not, the art is unique and very much a part of our cultural Heritage

It is said that not everyone is destined to be an “Angam” fighter. After consulting the horoscope of a prospective candidate, male or female, a decision is taken by the Master. Most often the training begins at a very young age.

With the spread of Buddhism in Sri Lanka over 2300 years ago, Angampora received religious balance and the fighters follow a deeply religious disciplined lifestyle. As a result Angampora fighters became leaders and authorities of the village with close relationship to the temple.

Before the practice session commences, the student is expected to meditate and offer merit to the master. The student lights three lamps as he enters the “Angam Madua” which is a specially constructed mud hut and place of worship. He also has to make a pledge not to use the technique for anything except for self defence and the defence of his family and country.

As you can see there are many rituals performed in preparation for the lesson. Every session commences with homage to Lord Buddha followed by meditative- yoga warm up exercises.

The “Kundalini Meditative Exercise” is popular in this regard. “Kundalini” means serpent power where the energy lies coiled at the base of the spine. The kundalini meditative technique consists of 7 stages. A person who accomplishes all 7 stages is said to reach a very high level of mental strength suitable for combat.

The toning of the body is a very important practice for all selected candidates. This is basically the strengthening of the spinal cord and the muscles. Warmed Medicated herbal oils specially extracted for this purpose are massaged into the body using a Betel leaf, under the direction of the master. As seen, this form of toning also includes rigorous exercises.

The costumes worn by the fighters are also in keeping with the Sinhala culture, whilst a flair for traditional drumming is also important. The Angampora martial art consists of three techniques. The first is the Anga technique. Anga in Sinhala means fight involving parts of the body. Foot movements are the corner stone of this art of

fighting. In this the student is disciplined not to make even a simple mistake. The next is the hand fighting process, where the student is taught to observe the weaknesses of the opponent and to attack those weak points so that the opponent cannot escape.

The next fighting technique is called the “Illangam” which involves the use of a variety of traditional weapons including spears, shields and staffs in complex forms of battle.

The third technique is the “Maya Angam” which involves spells, witchcraft and black magic. Higher levels of Angam attacks involve the nervous system of the human body. If executed properly they can stop blood circulation of vital organs leading to paralysis or even death. Therefore alongside these techniques students also learn indigenous medical practice for reversing the effects of such strikes.

This practice of this martial art is limited only to those of Sinhala Buddhist origin of our country. Sri Lanka was colonized by the Portuguese, Dutch and the British. The British occupied the entire island in 1815 and in 1818 banned this practice. All training huts were burned and people found practicing the art were shot below their knees. Thereafter, this technique was kept alive only in traditional dancing which can be witnessed even today in our culture. A few families however, continued with this martial art secretly succeeding to make this very much a part of our heritage.

On behalf of all of us here at the University of Sri Jayawardenapura, Sri Lanka we thank you for your kind interest. Have a nice day ☺