

Pentjak Silat

The Indonesian Art of Self Defense



Compiled from various sources by Gary James

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PENTJAK - SILAT

HISTORY

Pentjak- Silat is the national defense form of Indonesia and Bersilat is the defense form of Malaysia. Pentjak- Silat is thought to have been developed in the Sumatran Menangkabau kingdom on the west central coast of Indonesia. Bersilat was developed from Pentjak- Silat influence.

Pentjak- Silat was prevalent in the seventh century during the Srivijaya kingdom and it was at this time (7th - 14th centuries) and the Majapahit kingdom (13th- 16th centuries) that the many different styles of Pentjak- Silat developed.

Originally these fighting arts were the exclusive property of Indonesia's noble ruling class, which kept them a closely guarded secret. But gradually members of the peasantry acquired the skills and were responsible for developing them to a high degree of efficiency. These orthodox systems came in time to be known collectively as Pentjak- Silat.

It is thought by some that Pentjak- Silat owes its origins to the Chinese, because the movements of animals are emphasised and Kuntao is the Chinese art in Indonesia, but legend tells another tale.

It is said that long ago a peasant women went to a river to fetch water. Whilst there she watched a fight between a tiger and a large bird which lasted for several hours before both animals died from their wounds. Her husband concerned at her being away so long, went to the river to see if any harm had come to her. When he found she was well and she was only watching two animals fighting he became most annoyed and tried to hit her. He found he was unable to hit her as she evaded all his blows using the methods of the two animals she had been watching. Subsequently, she taught her amazed husband and the art was launched.

Today, there are still many women expert in the art of Pentjak - Silat.

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There is no doubt that the Chinese had some influence on the development of Pentjak-Silat, particularly in modern times, but because of the Chinese secrecy there is little chance that the main influence was Chinese. It is more likely that the animal base idea came from the Hindu culture, which had featured animals in its fighting forms since early times.

Many guro (teachers) still active in Pentjak-Silat are direct descendants of the early Menangkabau adepts, which is not really surprising because of the strong religious ties in the art. Huang Tuah, of the fourteenth century is generally considered to be the father of the art. He was not the original formulator of the art, but he did travel extensively, learning and teaching and assembling the many different styles.

The history of the Bukti Negara system of Pentjak-Silat shows the changes in the development of the art from its roots to that of a modern art adapted for the latter part of the 20th Century.

The Badui people of Java are a very self-contained Indonesian tribe and shun all contact with outsiders. They are known and respected throughout southern Asia for their deadly fighting skills and are believed to possess mystical powers.

The Indonesian government leaves them alone and during World War II the Japanese would not go near them due to their fierce reputation.

The internal Badui have no contact with the outside world, however, the external Badui do have limited contact with civilization, and serve as a bridge between society and the internal Badui.

Pak Serak (the wise one) was the Shaman of the internal Badui in the early 19th century. He was trained in nine different systems, and he was a master of three. Deprived of the use of one arm and one leg on opposite sides of the body, Serak invented the system that bears his name, and he was invincible in combat despite his handicap.

Mas Djut was Pak Serak's training partner and friend. Mas Djut, an external Badui, learned his complete system and, later in life, ruled over his entire territory. He was virtually unbeatable in combat, and his word was law.

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Mas Djut and Pak Serak combined nine systems to form Serak and it was further combined by Mas Djut and a buddhist monk Kim Bun with Setia- Hati and Tjimande systems.

During the Dutch colonial period, Johann De Vries, a missionary from the Netherlands, became the first westerner to be accepted by the external Badui and allowed to live among them. He married a Badui princess and was befriended by Mas Djut.

De Vries learned the entire Serak system, and he and Mas Djut also trained De Vries nephews. De Vries declined leadership of the system and upon the death of Mas Djut, De Vries' nephew and student John De Vries was appointed Pendekar (headmaster). John's nephew and student, Paul De Thouars, was named Pendekar when John passed away in 1972.

In 1976 Paul De Thouars developed Bukti Negara, a condensation of the essence of Serak. It was his belief that the system of Serak took too long to learn and that for it to be a useful fighting system in the United States (De Thouars bought Serak to the states prior to 1972) it would need to be simplified and most of the traditional forms modified. He also believed that Serak would be useful to the elderly, but they did not have the time or the strength necessary to learn the complete system.

Bukti Negara is an ingenious condensation of the essence of Serak. De Thouars refined the complex Jurus into a series of simplistic movements containing every move in the system, designed to program spontaneous response without thought; the ultimate goal of every martial artist.

Because of the sophistication of Serak, students are chosen very carefully. De Thouars at the time of this writing teaches only seven people, one being Dan Inosanto. Only two other people know the complete Serak system, Victor De Thouars and Stevan Plinck, who teaches in southern California.

Serak differs from other systems of Pentjak- Silat in that it is not specialised, but, rather all encompassing. The emphasis is on economical body mechanics and control of force.

The upper body and lower body are treated as two separate units. There are upper body forms and lower body forms. The pelvis is considered the centre of the body and the centre of gravity, and control of this central region is integral to control of the rest of the body. By

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controlling your own centre of gravity you are in a position to gain control of your opponents centre of gravity, and if you control your opponents centre, you control his ability to stand.

Most of Serak fighting strategy involves sweeping and unbalancing the opponent.

"The sweeps are downright lethal," claims Dan Inosanto. "They're nearly effortless to apply, and they throw the other guy down in such a way that there's no way he can land safely, even if he's trained."

The fighting stance of Serak is unique and deceptive to the untrained eye. The practitioner will stand with one foot slightly forward, the trunk erect, and the torso leaning slightly forward at the waist, ahead of the body. This allows total stability and control of the centre of gravity and, in an encounter, immediately brings the foe into range of the Serak stylist's elbows and knees. From there, the practitioner flows into a series of moves that are all but impossible to defend against.

Serak is a flowing art where the practitioner follows his or her reflexes, which have been conditioned to respond instantly by repeated Jurus practice. Upon being attacked from any angle or range, the Serak stylist will flow into a kick, strike, lock, throw, sweep or break, using the systems blend of anatomy and balance. There are also sensitivity drills similar to Wing Chun's Chi Sao or Kali's Hubat, which condition the reflexive system to respond without thought.

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OVERVIEW

The meaning of Pentjak- Silat can be broken down into two terms. Pentjak to mean regulated, skilful body movements in variations and combinations and Silat to mean fighting by applying Pentjak or in other words "to fight artfully". There can be no Silat without Pentjak, on the other hand, Pentjak without Silat skills as its objective is purposeless.

The primary purpose of Pentjak- Silat is always self-defense. No conscious effort is made to make orthodox Pentjak- Silat a system of physical education or a sport. Pentjak- Silat's technical fundamentals deal with the use of weapons; no combatant is ever required to enter combat relying only on his empty hands.

Orthodox Pentjak- Silat realistically acknowledge the correct use of weapons in combat. Accordingly, the thorough study of all types of weapons are implemented in the training i.e. blade, stick, staff, throwing weapons and flexible weapons. Skill with weapons is easily acquired.

By the correct and lengthy process of empty hand training all movements learned are convertible to efficient moves with minimum modification. The progression from empty hand to weapons insures that the trainee will be able to handle himself in a situation where he loses his weapon. Too often a weapons expert who loses his weapon, loses his life.

Some observers perceive Pentjak- Silat as a dance, and because Pentjak and Silat can both be demonstrated separately it is erroneous that this is the case.

Almost all Pentjak- Silat technique operates as a "soft" or "elastic" style of fighting- alert, responsive and adaptive, ready to neutralize whatever aggression it encounters. It has an easily recognised, peculiar, pulsating tempo. In fact, although it is not essential to the proper performance of Pentjak movements, percussion music (called gamelan) frequently accompanies training exercises.

This is done primarily for much the same reason that the musician makes use of a metronome, but with Pentjak- Silat the music has the further effect of heightening the emotional

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atmosphere of the training, rather as war drums affect tribal warriors. This training may be performed singularly or with a partner.

Silat when performed against an enemy leaves no doubt that it is a fight, but Silat can be practiced solo and it too could be confused as a dance.

All Pentjak- Silat is traditionally evasive. Its characteristic responses to an attack are light, fast, deceptive movements; it seeks to avoid bone- crushing contact with the assailant's charge. Customarily it does not oppose the force of the assailant but rather blends with it and directs it along specific channels where it may then be controlled, allowing the assailant to be eventually subdued. Thus, by long tradition, it is usually defensive in application: the Pentjak- Silat exponent prefers to await the attacker's movement before taking action. However, this is not an absolute condition by any means.

Indonesia is the world's largest archipelago extending between the Southeast Asian mainland in the west to New Guinea in the east, the Philippines in the north and Australia in the south. It comprises 13,677 islands and over 250 languages are spoken and every part of Indonesia has a form of Pentjak- Silat.

There are over 150 different styles of Pentjak- Silat. The majorities are to be found on Java, though on Sumatra there are 23 major forms. Because Pentjak- Silat thrived on Sumatra, which had a stronger and earlier Muslim tradition than Java, many natives regard it as a Muslim art. But, the anti- Islamic Balinese have developed a leading style of this art as have some Christians in the Celebes and on Java.

Over the centuries the orthodox Pentjak- Silat has been modified and developed differently and now each area has their own traditions and identities, in large due to a combination of social and geographical influences.

Just why this is true will not be easily understood until the arts are studied from the same point of view, but, for the purpose of these notes, it is sufficient to list four distinct characteristics of Pentjak- Silat that are dominant in the following geographical regions:

SUMATRA (foot and leg tactics)

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- Pauh, Strelak, Lintow, Kumango, Harimau, Patai and Baru

WEST JAVA (hand and arm tactics)

- Tjimande, Tjikalong, Tjiandur, Mustika Kwitang and Tjingrik

CENTRAL JAVA (combination arm and leg tactics)

- Setai Hati, Perisai Sahkti, Tapak Suji

EAST JAVA, MADURA, BALI (combination arm and leg tactics plus grappling methods)

- Pamur, Perisai Diri, Bukti Negara, Tridharma

These systems bear striking technical differences to each other and to categorise them as being similar is an over simplification.

The Malayan Bersilat forms, derived from Indonesia, generally divide into the following styles:

Chekak- in which breathing is stressed and little strength is used. The open hands and an occasional forward kick are used.

Kelantan- in which stress is placed on locks and grappling tactics.

Lintan- in which two persons fight without weapons.

Medan- in which weapons are used in mass fighting.

Peninjuan- in which adepts use long jumping maneuvers.

Terelak- in which breathing is stressed and great strength is used.

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TRAINING

A boy wishing to train in Pentjak- Silat first negotiates with a teacher. Next, he is required to make five offerings to the guro at his training pavilion.

1. A chicken whose blood is spread on the training ground as a symbolic substitute for blood that might otherwise come from the student.
2. A roll of white cloth in which to wrap the corpse if the student dies in training.
3. A knife, which symbolises the sharpness expected of a student.
4. Tobacco for the guro to smoke during the rest periods.

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5. Some money to replace the teachers clothes in case they are ripped during training.

Traditionally, the guro could not accept any payment other than the replacement of damaged clothing. His skill existed only to be transmitted to worthy students and could not be used for wealth. An oath is sworn on the Koran and all trainees become blood brothers.

All styles train in different ways, but certain aspects of the training remain constant and include the following.

1. Jurus. The Jurus are the fundamentals of Pentjak- Silat. These train the anatomical weapons useful in the attack and defense that the student learns to locate and form. They include fingers, knuckles, hand edges, elbows, knees, hips, head, and feet. First he learns the general target areas for each strike: the closed index and middle fingers are used to attack the eyes; the closed fist for the solar plexus; the hand edges for the neck and ribs; the knuckles for the temple; the elbows for the ribs; the knees for the abdomen; the hips for the groin, the head for the facial areas, and the feet for all parts. The student then learns how to use these weapons in an efficient manner.

The Jurus are performed as an exercise similar to a kata. They emulate the actions used in fighting, these are the Pentjak in Pentjak- Silat. Jurus are generally trained using Indonesian music called Gamelan.

2. Langkah. The langkahs are the postures and footwork required performing the Jurus. Posture and footwork vary according to the system: a man may move forward, backward, crouch, roll, spring or be upright. The patterns associated with the langkahs are triangular or linear and all footwork in Pentjak - Silat is trained: entering footwork, sweeps, leg takedowns and retreating.

3. Buah. This is the formal etiquette prior to engagements, which is not divorced from self-defense considerations. Within every personal etiquette form are contained the necessary qualities for personal protection in case the person being greeted should attack without warning: posture, distance and mental alertness are being regulated.

4. Sambut. These are sparring exercises or the basic techniques used; they are also a series of Buahs.

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5. Sambutan. These are exercises as a follow on to the Sambut, where the Sambut is countered and re- countered.

6. Kembungan. This is the dance that is taught. The dance is the essence of the techniques which allow the practitioner to develop and train his technique.

7. Rahasia. This is an advanced subject taught to the higher student, similar to the Japanese atemi. The student is thoroughly taught the location of vital points on the enemy and how to attack them and at the same time taught how to defend his own vital points. This is the secretive part of Pentjak- Silat and is only taught to the most senior students.

6. Weapons. Next the student is taught how to wield a variety of weapons including the knife, sword, stick or staff, gun, as well as some unusual weapons such as the whip, chain, rope, handkerchief, and chair. Each system of Pentjak- Silat has its own special and sometimes secret weapons which the student must learn and train. Advanced students practice unarmed against armed.

7. Kembangan. This is the final stage and the most difficult to master. This is the spiritual training. Without this final stage the students training is incomplete. The real Pentjak- Silat masters (pendekar) are said to be spiritualists first and technicians last. To such a master the art is regarded as nothing less than a method of answering any problem posed by an adversary.

Through long periods of concentrated study, some masters are reportedly able to withstand a sword thrust on the neck, to touch and disable, and even to kill at distances. Such skills defy reason and verification, but others sound reasonable. For example, some masters defy strength and have such sharpened reflexes that they are able to hold the wrists of the strongest man tenderly, and the strong man cannot disengage himself. And even such a man would say that real Pentjak- Silat is beyond all of us.

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The principles of Pentjak- Silat are described in four short points.

First you learn the way.... after you achieve the way.... it becomes your own way.

You have to go through the way, to understand the way which is your own way.

A system of progression leads to your own way.

To know is good..... but to understand is better.

There is a saying in Pentjak - Silat that describes the true essence of the art.

"There are thousands of options in Pentjak- Silat, that you become the creator of your own way and you own style, because you create and put the options in any order that you want."

"An instructor in Pentjak- Silat is only an interpreter and a translator of the art."

"So many way, but not the way of no way..... it is the way of the way."

"First follow the way"

"Second is understanding the way"

"Third is follow the way.... with your understanding of the way.... and create your way"

Sparring in Pentjak- Silat can be formalised using the Jurus, but more often it is performed without rules or preconceived ideas of what is to ensue. When a public demonstration is performed in Bali using weapons, it appears as a carefully choreographed pattern, but in reality the combatants are sparring, each not knowing what the other is doing. Such is their skill.

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JURUS

The Juru is a form, and the techniques are hidden in the Juru. A lot of people do not understand them, but the Juru is the root of the tree; if a person wants to be healthy and proficient, he or she should practice the Jurus daily. But it doesn't matter how proficient you may be with the Jurus, you cannot fight with them until you learn the next step.

At first the Jurus are practiced in a straight line, then a triangle and they may be practiced whilst walking the Langkah.

There are many Jurus in Pentjak- Silat and each has specific applications, whether it be to train entering to punching, trapping or very close range. Specific strikes are trained i.e. finger jabs, elbow strikes, punches, forearm strikes and knuckles.

Some Jurus are performed with solid contact against the performers own limbs. This slapping action has several functions. These are to help in the toughening process for the limbs, to emulate the lead into trapping and grappling and also to simulate strikes.

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LANGKAH

The Langkah's in Pentjak- Silat are of most importance. It is by training these that the learning and understanding of entering and footwork can be achieved. Langkah allow the learning of the lines of energy used to unbalance an opponent. These can relate to upper body and lower body movements.

The key is to use the opponents' line of force against them in opposition to their line. This can be achieved by using your lower body angles and lines when entering to displace the opponents centre of gravity.

The langkah is used to step into the opponents body line and not necessarily working on the opponents centre of gravity but on the meridian points, which can be the centre of gravity, but can also be the body extremities. These are the energy points necessary to unbalance the opponent.

For example: A simple leg trap using your ankle against the opponents foot can be used to sweep the opponents foot toward yourself by controlling the opponents upper body away from his balance point (which would be above the swept leg). The upper body control would not occur at the opponents centre of gravity, but the meridian point relating to the line of force required, namely, the shoulder or arm. This would displace the opponents' centre of gravity away from his balance point, thereby allowing the sweep to occur with a minimum of exertion.

The formation of the langkahs can be described on paper to explain the form and to teach the fundamentals (refer to separate chapter). This can then be translated to the floor for practice. The patterns show the lines of force and the lines of reaction for any given sweep, or takedown.

The main langkahs that are taught in the Serak system of Pentjak- Silat are as follows:

1. LANGKAH TIGA: This is the fundamental that most of the langkahs revolve around. It is the building block of the more complex langkahs and teaches how to "outflank" the opponent whereby he cannot use his power, yet is vulnerable to leg pins, breaks and dislocations.

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The basic "beset" or leg sweep is taught within this langkah. Specifically it is taught to "split" the opponent using a 15 degree intersection of the triangle base. Leaning or correct weight distribution is taught flowing from 60 degrees leaning to 70 degrees on impact. The basic stepping and use of power, breath and "crawling" are taught.

2. LANGKAH SUDUT MERING: What is taught within this langkah are the stepping skills utilizing sweeps on the opponent. This langkah can be performed as a solo exercise or better with an opponent. The various sweeps and counters can be utilised and trained as well as the jurus applications.

The opponent may be advancing or retreating and the footsweeps can be entered from the outside line or the inside line.

3. LANGKAH TEMBOK PODJUK: This langkah teaches the square stepping. Advancing or retreating there is always a line that the sweeps or stepping may take. Practiced with a partner this langkah will show the lines of force and the meridian points for the upper body control and the lower body sweeping.

The langkah Sudut Mering can and is joined with the Tembok Podjuk to give many more aspects to the pattern. When combined the sweeping potential is unlimited and all angles are covered.

4. LANGKAH SLIWA: This langkah covers all angles of stepping, that is diagonal and linear. The force lines and sweep lines are shown and application of these can be practised alone or with a partner.

The live horse is the first position of the clash or the invisible lines. This is the first clash or meeting of the two opponents. The dead horse is the clash or the points before the clash.

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KALI- SILAT

Kali- Silat is a derivative of Pentjak- Silat with a blending of aspects of Kali, namely, the locks, some trapping and the empty hand work.

The concept is to enter and follow up using Kali and to finish using Silat.

The entries are of the following types.:

1. Long range: Low kick, arm slap from lead punch (Similar to Pak Sao Da) and drop entry from a kicking attack.

2. Intermediate range: Arm slip inside/ outside, arm control, simultaneous inside control to outside cover and vice versa, long knee to hand trapping and cross hand entries.

3. Close entries: Umbrella entry, salute entry, cross step entry to close cover off rear lateral stepping, snake lead, snake rear, arm crash inside/ outside, elbow crash inside/ outside and short knee.

All entries can be applied using the inside and outside line of your opponent.

As in all aspects of Silat timing is the key essence. Timing is important when entering so that you can defend against your opponents' attack. The applications of sweeps, takedowns and traps all depend on a correct correlation of timing and technique. With timing this does not necessarily mean speed. Fast is not always correct.

The technique being correct will allow the time required performing the technique to be lengthened. But, the timing as to **WHEN** to apply the technique is crucial, particularly when you are controlling the opponent without effort. Remember Silat can be and is used by 80 year old women.

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WEAPONS

There are two types of weapons used in Pentjak- Silat; anatomical (empty handed or unarmed responses, making use of all parts of the body) and implemental (armed responses, making use of tools as well as weapons).

Customarily, the training is devoted to the anatomical weapons and when the trainee progresses to a suitable level he is then taught the other types of weapons. This change does not affect the posture or the training movements, and all empty handed movements can be trained with implemental weapons.

The target points in Pentjak- Silat are based around the enemies body centre- line vital areas, regarding the most vulnerable part of the body as the loop around the longitudinal plane from the top of the head to the base of the groin, the width being that of the opponents head.

ANATOMICAL WEAPONS

A. THE HANDS

B. THE ARMS

C. THE HIPS AND BUTTOCKS

D. THE FEET AND LEGS

E. THE HEAD

IMPLEMENTAL WEAPONS

Since the Dutch colonisation of Indonesia in the 15th and 16th Centuries forming the East Indian Company, the native inhabitants have fought for their homeland. The Dutch bought with them firearms and gunpowder, and it was forbidden for native Indonesians to possess firearms.

It was during this time that there was a much greater emphasis placed on the manufacture of implemental weapons than at any other period of Indonesian history. It is for this reason that there are more types of bladed weapon designs in Indonesia than any other place in the world.

Other types of implemental weapons are used and complement and back up the blade that is the most popular weapon, because of this more detail will be given to the various types of bladed weapons used in Indonesia.

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A. BLADE

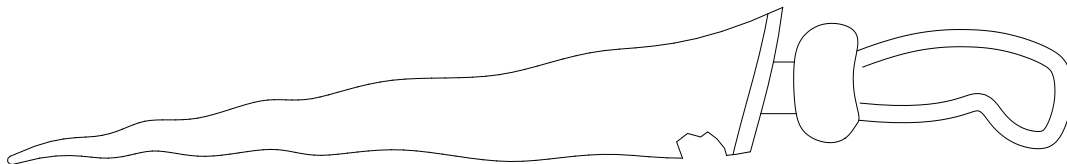
The various islands and cultures in Indonesia allowed for a diverse number of types of bladed weapons and many different styles of fighting with these weapons were developed. A brief description of several types of bladed weapons is outlined below.

1. KRIS (KERIS). This is the national weapon of Indonesia and the oldest distinctive weapon in that culture. It is found throughout Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines.

Kris blades are manufactured by hammering together three bars containing nickel, iron and meteoric iron. This allowed various degrees of hardness within the blade. By hammering and folding and hammering again the blade was actually a series of laminations and the strength and sharpness was actually formed into the material, thereby the blade needed no grinding or further honing after manufacture. Sometimes during the manufacture rust or poisons were beaten into the metal to make the blade deadlier.

Chants were muttered during the hammering to instill the blades with "*magical properties*". The curved blade appeared around 300 AD and the number of curves is always odd.

Each part of the kris blade has a name, as do the handle and sheath. The blade is attached to the handle by a short tang, which is not a disadvantage in a weapon used primarily for thrusting.

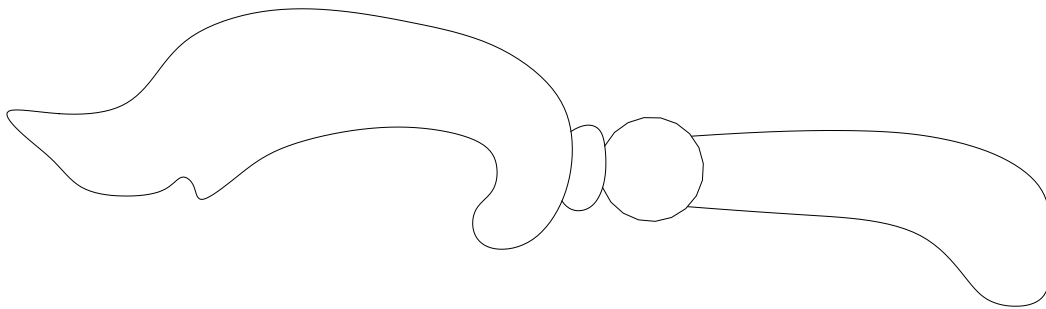


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2. KUJANG. According to tradition, the kujang with its curved blade, was the weapon of West Javanese kings. It is said to take its shape from the antler of a deer.

Many Indonesians believe it has mystical powers and can bring good luck (of course only to the user).

It is a thrusting and slashing weapon.



3. GOLOK. All Indonesian Silat masters use the golok, especially in West Java. The blade length of this bolo- style weapon is usually between 30-60 cms (12-24 inches). They are sometimes coated with scorpion or cobra venom to increase lethality.

Golok practitioners begin training by strengthening their wrists and hands. They do this by swinging sand filled bottles between the thumb and forefinger. When they move onto the golok, they first practice techniques against bamboo stalks or banana trees.

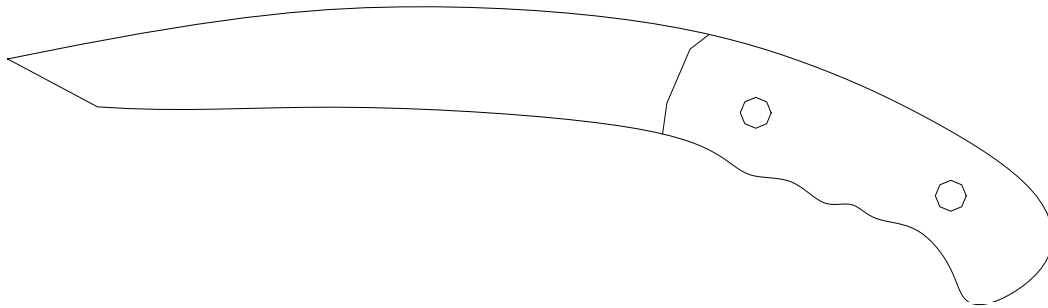
As a jungle knife, the golok is unequalled. Even the British military issued its own version of the golok since its commando operations in Malaya and Borneo.



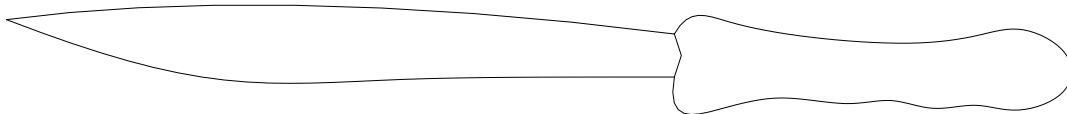
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4. RENTJONG (RENCONG). The L- shaped rentjong has a 7-25 cm blade made from white iron or yellow metal, with a sheath of buffalo horn, ivory or exotic wood. The pistol like grip allows powerful one or two handed blows as well as kick thrust.

The kick thrust was developed by the Atjehnese people of Sumatra whereby they inserted the rentjong upward between their first two toes with the handle curled under the others. This was developed to combat the superior length of the bayonet of the Dutch invaders. They parried the bayonet with the golok and the rentjong was kicked upward into the groin. Some rentjongs were not even sharpened since they were designed for stabbing. Sometimes it was left impaled in the victims belly or groin, held by the barbs at the base of the blade. When used with two hands for a rib strike, the handle could be turned into a coffee grinder to produce a more destructive wound.



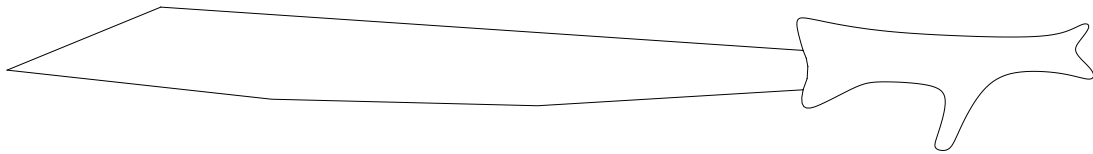
5. PISAU BILATI. The pisau bilati is the universal kitchen utility knife in Indonesia. With a blade length of less than 17 cm, it is legally sold in any open air market. It is carried everywhere by street vendors, fruit sellers, meat cutters, etc. It is the knife most likely to be available when a fight breaks out. Because of its ubiquity, it is used as one of the training knives by most silat masters.



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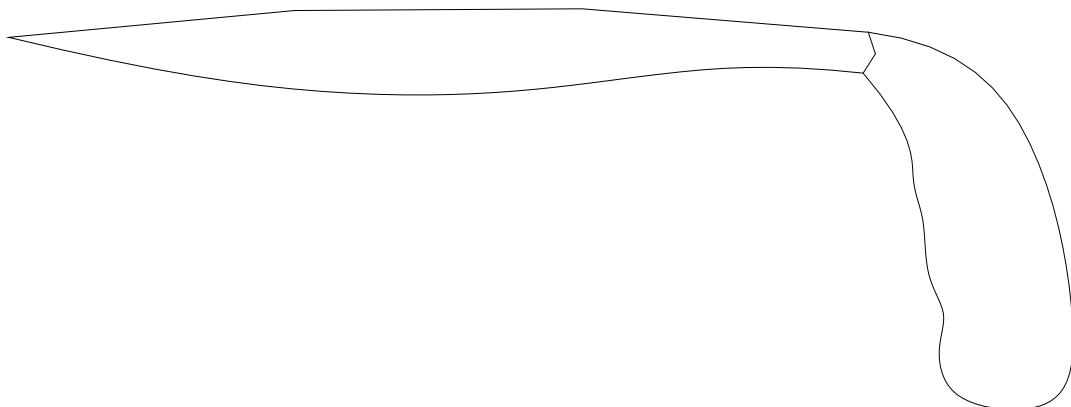
6. MANDAU. The mandau comes from South Borneo, the land of the Dyaks. The mandau is a jungle knife as well as the traditional head-hunting sword. The handle is usually decorated with goat hair or human hair.

The mandau may be used in combination with a shield, and the blade may be coated with poison for special occasions.



7. BADIK. The badik comes from Celebes and is a weapon for infighting. Its blade is usually 12-17 cms. in length. The Bugio people of South Celebes are most noted for using it.

The Bugio fighting style emphasises quick and fatal strikes to the heart, stomach and kidneys. They practice by tying a sash around the waists of two fighters so that each must sidestep to avoid the stomach thrust of the other. In combat the badik blade is usually poisoned.

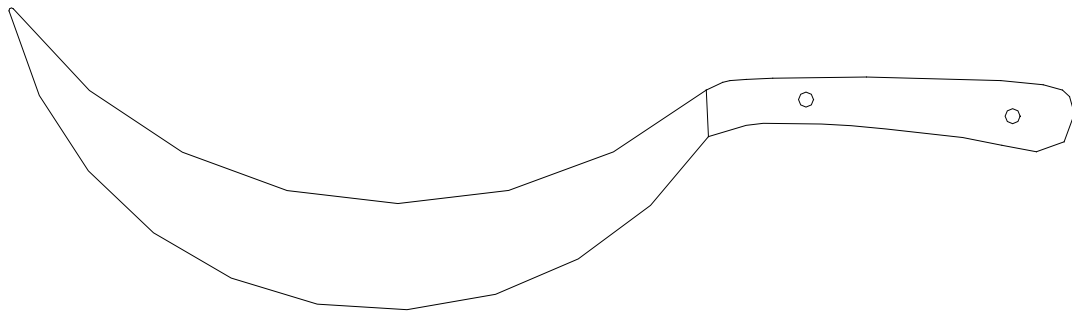


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8. CELURIT. The Madura celurit is shaped like a question mark. The Madurese use it as a sickle to cut grass for their cattle, but also employ it in self defense as part of a martial art called Pamur Silat.

The celurit is difficult to evade because of its flexibility, and hard to disarm because of its multiple directions of attack. It is sharp enough to cleave skulls or decapitate heads.

The celurit has killed often enough to be notorious. The Indonesian government now punishes without pardon individuals who carry one in public.



B. STICK AND STAFF

The chief weapons of this type are the tongkat and the gada, which are short sticks, and the gala and the toya, which can vary in length from 1.2 to 1.7 metres.

The wood that these sticks and staffs are made is from the rattan palm (called roton in Indonesia), although hardwoods are also used.

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C. FLAIL

Here are included both chains (rante) and whips (the chemeti and the penjut). Chains in use show a great diversity of linkage patterns and overall length, both of which are, of course, determined by the user; the ends of the chain are usually weighted. As a weapon, the chain is chiefly used to beat the enemy, but it may also serve to entangle him and whatever weapon he happens to be wielding. The chemeti is the longer of the two types of whips.

D. PROJECTILE

The most important member of this family of weapons in Indonesia are the bow and arrow (panah and anak panah) and the blowpipe (sumpit). Their diversity and ingenuity of design are truly astonishing. Although not used for infighting, the stances and postures adopted in using this sort of weapon are modelled on the Pentjak- Silat training and exercises.

The projectile category also includes weapons that can be thrown as well as used in hand-to-hand combat. An example is the spear (tombuk) which is used in most Silat styles. In the old days it was used from horseback or for long distance fighting on foot. Most traditional spears today are kept at home for decorations, but as late as 1945 they were used in combat against the Japanese. Even sharpened bamboo spears were pressed into the fight against Japanese and Dutch oppressors. Sharpened bamboo makes for a slow death, and most enemy soldiers would have preferred to be shot or stabbed with a sword.

The spear could also be used effectively against a bayonet. They were not meant for throwing, like a Roman pilum, but for stabbing like a Zulu assegai.

The piau (a small knife for throwing) has many varieties throughout the country, and there are also weapons of the boomerang type as well as plain throwing sticks.

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E. COMPOSITE

Weapons in this category may be used with equal facility for a wide variety of actions. One such is the (tjabang) an ancient Indonesian weapon of the truncheon type. It is made of iron and has double tines fastened at the juncture of shaft and handle.

The Pentjak- Silat exponent is never, in fact, "empty- handed", for almost any object within his reach such as a chair, a bottle, or a stone, may become a weapon of expediency in an emergency.

In studying Pentjak - Silat, the trainee must sooner or later take into serious consideration how to cope with an armed assailant. He must, whether under conditions of training or actual combat, learn the capabilities and limitations of the armed enemy. This he must do whether he is armed or not.

The stress on combative reality cannot be overemphasized when the trainee is practising the methods and exercises of Pentjak - Silat. He must do nothing in his training routine that he would not do in fighting an enemy who is trying to kill him. By concentrating on this in training he will be able to adapt the methods he has learnt with complete facility when a real combat situation occurs.

How well or how safely the trainee effects the outcome in dealing with an armed enemy is entirely dependent upon his understanding and abilities in meeting an unarmed enemy. If you can do that well, the transition to coping with the armed enemy is only a matter of application.