

**The Politics of Inner Power: The Practice of  
Pencak Silat in West Java**

**By**

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## **Declaration**

This is my own account of the research and contains as its main content, work which has not been submitted for a degree at any university

Signed,

Ian Douglas Wilson

## **Abstract**

Pencak silat is a form of martial arts indigenous to the Malay derived ethnic groups that populate mainland and island Southeast Asia. Far from being merely a form of self-defense, pencak silat is a pedagogic method that seeks to embody particular cultural and social ideals within the body of the practitioner. The history, culture and practice of pencak in West Java is the subject of this study.

As a form of traditional education, a performance art, a component of ritual and community celebrations, a practical form of self-defense, a path to spiritual enlightenment, and more recently as a national and international sport, pencak silat is in many respects unique. It is both an integrative and diverse cultural practice that articulates a holistic perspective on the world centering upon the importance of the body as a psychosomatic whole.

Changing socio-cultural conditions in Indonesia have produced new forms of pencak silat. Increasing government intervention in pencak silat throughout the New Order period has led to the development of nationalized versions that seek to inculcate state-approved values within the body of the practitioner. Pencak silat groups have also been mobilized for the purpose of pursuing political aims. Some practitioners have responded by looking inwards, outlining a path to self-realization framed by the powers, flows and desires found within the body itself. Others have developed styles that reflect the demands made upon them by their immediate environment.

Viewed historically these changes in the practice of pencak silat provides insights into the impact of broader processes of social and cultural change at the level of individual bodies and the institutions through which they are constructed; a politics of the body, its potentialities, limits and 'legitimate' use.

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This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my good friend, instructor and *saudara sepeguruan* Valente de Jesus, who lost his life in the struggle of his beloved homeland of East Timor. *Viva Timor-Leste.*

## Abbreviations and Glossary

D: Dutch, Ind: Indonesian, Sd: Sundanese

<i>ABRI</i>	Ind: Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia ( <i>Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia</i> )
<i>aliran</i>	Ind: Style, current
<i>Amengan</i>	Sd: “Play”. High Sundanese term for pencak silat
<i>apal cangkem</i>	Sd: Traditional method of teaching pencak silat in which students must memorise jurus without any verbal explanation from their teacher (Cianjur)
<i>Batur Arek Uring Enggeus</i>	Sd: “They are just ready, we’ve already finished”. A phrase used in Sundanese pencak silat culture
<i>beladiri</i>	Ind: Self-defence
<i>Cianjuran</i>	Sd: Also known as <i>kecapi suling</i> . A musical genre originating from Cianjur involving flutes and a zither
<i>Cikalong</i>	Sd: Pencak silat style developed in Cianjur, West Java in the mid-19 <sup>th</sup> century by Raden Haji Ibrahim.
<i>Cimande</i>	Sd: Pencak silat style originating from Cimande, West Java. Reputedly developed in the late 18 <sup>th</sup> century by Abah Kahir. Considered to be the oldest pencak silat style in West Java.
<i>debus</i>	Ind: Performance art/ ritual involving displays of physical invulnerability
<i>DI-TII</i>	Ind: Darul Islam- Islamic Army of Indonesia ( <i>Darul Islam-Tentara Islam Indonesia</i> ). Rebellion aimed at establishing an Islamic state that occurred in West Java, South Sulawesi, Aceh and South Kalimantan between 1948-1962
<i>GAPSUS</i>	Ind: Special Forces Guard ( <i>Garda Pasukan Khusus</i> ). Specially trained pencak silat practitioners from Banten
<i>GOLKAR</i>	Ind: ‘Work Group’ ( <i>Golongan Karya</i> ). Ruling political party during the New Order period

<i>golok</i>	Ind: Machete
<i>guru</i>	Ind: Teacher
<i>ibing</i>	Sd: Dance form of Sundanese pencak silat performed with musical accompaniment
<i>ilmu</i>	Ind: Science, esoteric knowledge
<i>IPSI</i>	Ind: Indonesian Pencak Silat Association ( <i>Ikatan Pencak Silat Indonesia</i> ). National governing body for Indonesian pencak silat established in 1948.
<i>IPTDI</i>	Indonesian Inner Power Association ( <i>Ikatan Perguruan Tenaga Dalam Indonesia</i> )
<i>jawara</i>	Sd: Champion, martial arts expert
<i>jeger</i>	Sd: Tough, hoodlum
<i>jurus</i>	Ind: Direction, movement or series of movements in pencak silat
<i>kampung</i>	Ind: neighbourhood
<i>kesaktian</i>	Ind: supernatural or magical power
<i>kebal</i>	Ind: Physical invulnerability, usually obtained through ascetic or magical practices
<i>kebatinan</i>	Ind: esotericism, mysticism
<i>KONI</i>	Ind: Indonesian National Sports Committee ( <i>Komite Olahraga Nasional Indonesia</i> ).
<i>KOPASSUS</i>	Ind: Indonesian Special Forces ( <i>Komando Pasukan Khusus</i> )
<i>kuda-kuda</i>	Ind: Leg stances in pencak silat
<i>kuntao</i>	Ind: Term for Chinese martial arts found in Southeast Asia
<i>labuhan</i>	Sd: Term from the Cikalong pencak silat style for movements that involve dropping an opponent to the ground
<i>latihan</i>	Ind: Training, instruction

<i>Nampon</i>	Sd: Pencak silat style developed by Wah Nampon in Bandung in the 1930's. The style focuses upon the development of inner power, referred to as <i>spierkracht</i>
<i>maenpo</i>	Sd: "Lose oneself in play" or "play of punches". Sundanese term for pencak silat
<i>Margaluyu</i>	Sd: 'Path of Harmony'. Pencak silat school focused upon inner power, developed by Andadinata in Bandung.
<i>menak</i>	Sd: Sundanese aristocracy
<i>murid</i>	Ind: Student, pupil
<i>ngadu jajaten</i>	Sd: Contest of strength
<i>olahraga</i>	Ind: Sport, physical exertion
<i>opas</i>	D: Guards employed by the Dutch at government controlled plantations during the colonial period
<i>Pancasila</i>	Ind: The official ideology of the Republic of Indonesia, consisting of: monotheism; a just and civilised humanity; nationalism; representative consensual democracy, and social justice
<i>pendekar</i>	Ind: Honorific title for a recognised pencak silat master
<i>perguruan</i>	Ind: Learning institution, school
<i>pertalekan</i>	Ind: An oath or pledge taken by a pencak silat student
<i>pesantren</i>	Ind: Traditional Muslim boarding school
<i>peupeuhan</i>	Sd: Punch
<i>PKI</i>	Ind: Indonesian Communist Party ( <i>Partai Komunis Indonesia</i> )
<i>PPSBBI</i>	Ind: Indonesian Association of Bantenese Silat and Culture ( <i>Persatuan Persilatan dan Seni Budaya Banten Indonesia</i> )
<i>PPSI</i>	Ind: Indonesian Pencak Silat Union ( <i>Persatuan Pencak Silat Indonesia</i> ). West Java based pencak silat organisation established in Bandung in 1957



<i>preman</i>	Ind: Thug, petty criminal
<i>rasa antel</i>	Sd: Sensitivity to touch. Principle in the Cikalong style of pencak silat
<i>rasa anggung</i>	Sd: Acute judgement of distance. Term used in Cikalong pencak silat
<i>rasa sinar</i>	Sd: Term for heightened intuitive sense developed by advanced Cikalong practitioners
<i>Sanalika</i>	Sd: ‘In an instant’; pencak silat style created in Cianjur by Raden Utuk Sumadipraja in the early 20 <sup>th</sup> century.
<i>satria (ksatria)</i>	Ind: Knight, warrior
<i>Sera</i>	Pencak silat style from the Bogor/Depok area, reputed to have been created by Abah Sera, a student of Abah Kahir
<i>silsilah</i>	Ind: Genealogy, family tree
<i>SMI</i>	Ind: Indonesian Young Knights ( <i>Satria Muda Indonesia</i> ). Pencak silat school established in the 1980s by Prabowo Subianto
<i>Sumber Daya Manusia</i>	Ind: Human resources
<i>Syahbandar</i>	Pencak silat style reputed to have been created by Mama Kosim (1776-1880). From the Purwakarta area of West Java.
<i>Tadjimalela</i>	Sd: Pencak silat style developed in Bandung in the early 1970s by Raden Djadjat Kusumadinata.
<i>tarekat</i>	Ind: A sufi order; Islamic mystical brotherhood
<i>tenaga dalam</i>	Ind: Inner power
<i>tepak tilu</i>	Sd: Drum pattern used in musical accompaniment to pencak silat in West Java
<i>Timbangan</i>	Sd: Martial arts style developed in Bandung by Raden Anggakusumah. It has many technical and philosophical similarities with the Japanese martial art Aikido
<i>ulama</i>	Ind: Islamic religious teacher/scholar

<i>ulin</i>	Sd: “Movement”. A common term used to refer to pencak silat in West Java.
<i>usik</i>	Sd: ‘Disturb’. The term is commonly used in reference to performing pencak silat in West Java.
<i>Wali Songo</i>	Ind: Nine Saints believed to have brought Islam to Java.
<i>ziarah</i>	Ind: Devotional visit to the grave of an ancestor or spiritually powerful figure often with the intention of obtaining spiritual or material benefits.

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## Map of West Java and Javanese Mainland



## Introduction

This study is about *pencak silat*, a form of martial arts indigenous to the Malay derived ethnic groups that populate mainland and island Southeast Asia. In a more general sense it is about the ways in which culture constructs our experience and understanding of the body. This embodiment of culture, achieved via body techniques, train a set of bodily dispositions that operate within the individual. According to Marcel Mauss, body techniques are a mixture of physical abilities and mental exercises that together form a body adapted to particular circumstances, “the body of a charismatic citizen or of a visionary monk, a mirror image of the world or a reflection of the spirit”.<sup>1</sup> The sets of dispositions trained into the body are social, and are “created, recreated, produced and reproduced through interaction and ‘tradition’ or social practices of memory”.<sup>2</sup> Changes in body techniques and the methods by which they are trained into the body manifests in changes in the institutions through which they are transmitted. From this perspective the body is imbued with social meaning and is historically situated.<sup>3</sup>

The term *pencak silat* itself is a relatively recent creation. In Indonesia it was first chosen as an unifying term for indigenous martial arts at the inaugural congress of the Indonesian Pencak Silat Association in 1948, being a compound of the two most commonly used Indonesian words for self-defense techniques. Prior to that, what has come to be identified as *pencak silat* was known under a variety of regional names such

as *silek* (West Sumatra), *mancak* (Bali) and *pencak* (Central and East Java).<sup>4</sup> In West Java, the setting for this study, pencak silat is commonly referred to as *maenpo*, *ameng*, *ulin*, *usik* and *penca*. In contemporary usage, ‘pencak’ and ‘silat’ are usually interpreted as referring to different aspects of the same practice. According to Mohammad Djoemali, one of the founders of IPSI:

Pencak is attacking and defensive movements in the form of a rhythmic dance done in accordance with traditional custom, that is usually performed in public. Silat is the essence of pencak, the knowledge of fighting or lethal self-defense that cannot be performed in public.<sup>5</sup>

Another interpretation of the two terms common in West Java that places emphasis upon the social is that ‘pencak’ has the meaning of “method of educating” (Ind: *cara pendidikan*) whereas ‘silat’ means “friendship” (Ind: *silaturahmi*). In this sense to do pencak silat is to be educated in how to live harmoniously with others.

Pencak silat includes not only the study of self-defense but also dance, music, religious learning, mysticism, sport, and rules of personal conduct. It is both an integrative and diverse cultural practice. Razha Rashid describes it as follows:

... a set of well-described procedures and practices of achieving honor and respectability through mastery of what is to the everyday person ideologically incompatible or opposing states and conditions; physical force with stylistic elegance, dexterity with humility, self-esteem amidst provocation and rage..<sup>6</sup>

Despite the more recent development of standardized national and international versions of pencak silat, local variations and innovations continue to emerge. The sheer diversity of forms, practices and traditions that make up the silat world can not be overstated. This

study does not attempt a ‘complete’ survey of pencak silat, even within the particular region in which it is set. On the other hand the number of issues addressed here gives an indication of the extent and complexity of the field, and aims to suggest directions for further research. What I have attempted to do is examine the shifting discursive boundaries that make up the subject of “pencak silat”.<sup>7</sup>

A wide range of peoples traversing a variety of social, economic, and cultural backgrounds practice silat. Whilst there are currently no reliable statistics regarding the number of people actively practising pencak silat in Indonesia, it can be conservatively estimated that the number is well over one million. Larger pencak silat schools (Ind: *perguruan*) such as *Tapak Suci* (Sacred Palm) and *Pagar Nusa* (Fence of the Archipelago), claim memberships in the hundreds of thousands.<sup>8</sup> In 1984 IPSI estimated that approximately 820 silat schools were registered with it.<sup>9</sup> Taking this into account, the sheer number of practitioners makes pencak silat a cultural practice deserving of more thorough research and analysis.<sup>10</sup>

The form pencak silat takes varies considerably. According to IPSI pencak silat can be categorized into four fields; self-defense (Ind; *bela diri*), sport (Ind: *olahraga*), art (Ind; *seni*) and the spiritual and psychological dimension referred to as *mental-spiritual*.<sup>11</sup> A particular style (Ind: *aliran*) may place an emphasis upon one or more of each aspect, articulating a particular relationship to the body. One element that can be identified as common throughout pencak silat culture is the relationship between the teacher (Ind: *guru*) and student (Ind: *murid*). The guru is the source of all knowledge (Ind: *ilmu*) in

pencak silat culture. Most styles trace a lineage back to a single individual. In traditional society the pencak silat guru was usually a respected elder, commanding deferential respect from the community. Apart from their martial skill they were also sought for their knowledge of spiritual matters. While the role of the guru in modern society is less central, their influence upon students and their immediate community is still significant. Periods of apprenticeship can last a lifetime, and students often cite their guru as being a far greater influence upon their lives than their own parents. Long after their passing some guru continue to influence students through the techniques they created and oral accounts of their exploits and ethical teachings.

Pencak silat is most commonly taught within institutions known as a *perguruan*, a derivative of the word guru. A perguruan may vary from of a handful of students living in close proximity to their teacher, to large national organizations with complex administrative structures. The primary focus of the perguruan is upon the *latihan*, the act of training. In the latihan techniques are transmitted from teacher to student, along with the ethical and philosophical aspects of the style. The latihan is also a social forum in which bonds of solidarity and community are cemented between fellow students. Latihan are conducted in a variety of social and physical environments, from secluded beaches and graveyards, private homes, and school yards, to university campuses, large sporting complexes and public parks. Pencak silat techniques are also generally taught in the form of *jurus*, which literally means ‘step’ or ‘to go in a particular direction’. Jurus can be a single movement, as in a punch, or a series of movements strung together in a sequence. A style may consist of only a handful of jurus, or literally hundreds. Training in the use of

weapons, breathing techniques and meditation are also a common component of pencak silat training.<sup>12</sup>

The seeds of this study were sown from my personal experiences beginning in 1993. At that time I deferred my studies to travel around Java and West Sumatra. My interest in Indonesian language and culture, as well as the martial arts, had led me to find an Indonesian pencak silat school in Perth where I studied for several months. As I was keen to find out more about this martial art, which unlike those of Japan, China and Korea remains largely unknown outside of Southeast Asia, I decided to take the opportunity to do some training in Indonesia. On arriving in the town of Yogyakarta in Central Java, I asked a local pedicab driver (Ind: *tukang becak*) if he could take me to a pencak silat school. Leading me down a narrow alley of the busy main road, we came to small shady compound lined with banana palms and rambutan trees. There a group of around 20 youths were silently practising in unison a series of kicks, parries and punches against an imaginary opponent, under the watchful eye of an elderly man dressed in a faded sarong, thongs and T-shirt. The becak driver informed me that the man was Ki Djojo Soewito, the ‘professor’ (Ind: *guru besar*) of the ‘Unifying Wind’ (Jv: *Bhayu Manunggal*) school of pencak silat. The becak driver introduced me to Ki Djojo. Over coffee and *kretek* (clove cigarettes) Ki Djojo agreed to accept me as his student. After successfully applying for a social-cultural visa from the local immigration office, I began six months of intensive training under the guidance of Ki Djojo and two senior instructors.



At around six each morning students would begin arriving at the compound for training. Changing into black, loose fitting pants and long-sleeved shirt, the session began with sweeping the hard earth compound with straw brooms and spraying it with water to settle the dust. After this was done the students and their instructors would sit cross-legged in rows, hands placed on knees, their gaze focused down towards the nose, and begin 10 minutes of silent meditation. The purpose of this was to regulate the breath and relax oneself “into the body”, emptying the mind of thoughts. At the conclusion of the meditation, students would recite in unison the schools five pledges of loyalty (Ind: *panca setia*) and adopt the schools salute.<sup>13</sup> Physical training began with half an hour of stretching and other warm up exercises, followed by various kinds of jumping and rolling. After this the basic steps (Ind: *langkah*) and stances (Ind: *kuda-kuda*) were practiced in a circular pattern, the instructors correcting students when necessary. Ki Djojo observed from the front verandah of his home, as it faced the training compound, occasionally pointing out errors or making suggestions to the instructors. Next students would separate into smaller groups according to their respective skill levels.<sup>14</sup> The basic hand and leg movements, consisting of a variety of defensive, offensive and evasive techniques, were practiced first in a sequential manner, and then again in different combinations of increasing length and complexity.<sup>15</sup> More advanced students would draw a large circle in the earth with eight axis, and then proceed to do improvised combinations of movements, not moving along each axis more than once. After this a short period of sparring, in which body protectors were worn, was carried out. The training session finished as it had begun with another sitting meditation and recital of the *panca setia*.

The rigorous and often monotonous daily schedule of training came as an abrupt and painful shock, and I spent many evenings in the first few weeks tending to an assortment of bruises, grazes and strained muscles. In contrast with my experience of training in Australia, little to no explanation was given regarding the movements and exercises I practiced for an average of four hours each day. It was only later that I gradually realized that the repetitiveness was an exercise in itself, a pattern intended to bring emotions to the surface. After several months, as I grew accustomed to the mental and physical demands of training, I became conscious that my experience and knowledge of my body had altered. I was now aware of a multitude of muscles previously unknown to me. Former thresholds of pain and endurance had been transcended and I felt a new degree of flexibility and ‘lightness’ in my movements.

The physical techniques taught were not restricted solely to martial arts applications, but also equipped one for everyday life in a Javanese town. Squatting on ones heels (Jv: *jongkok*), necessary when using local style toilets or when *nongkrong* (literally hanging around, but more commonly referring to the pass time of chatting with friends) was an essential component of training. Even drawing well water, used to dampen the hard earth surface of the training area before practice, had its own particular technique. Ki Djojo would observe me closely, making sure that I kept my arms straight when drawing water. He emphasized that I must remain conscious (Ind: *sadar*) in all my actions. What was considered to be my “overly upright” posture and “hurried” walking style were also modified. The solid sliding-step style of walking with rounded shoulders that I was trained to adopt was practical, being similar to the *langkah* (steps) I had already learnt.

But it also reflected social relationships. It soon became ‘second nature’ to adopt a slightly bowed posture, leading with an outstretched right hand (Jv: *tunduk*), when passing in front of others, and to not cross my legs when sitting in the presence of Ki Djojo and other seniors from Bhayu Manunggal. In Javanese society this is considered an expression of humility and respect towards elders or social superiors. At the end of my six months of training Ki Djojo presented me with a certificate stating my graded level of proficiency. At the time he also commented, “what is more important than the self-defense techniques you have studied is that you have also learned how to be Javanese”. I realized that I had not only been taught martial arts techniques, but also given an education in a particular approach to Javanese culture. This form of cultural education was not just a mental exercise, as though one of understanding different sets of ideas, values and world-views, but was ‘embodied’ as well.

After six months in Yogya I decided to travel to the provincial capital of West Java, Bandung, inspired by the stories I had heard about West Javanese silat styles such as Cimande and Cikalong. As I had done in Yogyakarta, I asked becak drivers, as they are significant repositories of local knowledge, at the Bandung train station if they could take me to a nearby pencak silat school. This time I was taken through a crowded food market in the Dulatyp neighborhood of central Bandung to a narrow two-story house next to a truck depot. The house was the head office of the Tajimalela pencak silat school. I began training there later that afternoon. While my previous training in Yogya had given me a high level of dexterity and endurance, I soon found that in many ways it was as much a hindrance as a help. In contrast to the lithe, graceful and flowing movements of Bhayu

Manunggal, the Tajimalela techniques were sharp and direct, employing an economy of movement. When under pressure, in the context of sparring, I found that my previous training would take over, despite my conscious efforts to counter it. My reflexes had been trained to respond in accordance with a particular system of movement. Likewise the deferential disposition I had come to associate with silat was considered “excessive”, not in keeping with the less informal atmosphere of training sessions at Tajimalela. Having trained my body to act and respond in a certain way it was extremely difficult to change it. Even though the training was still ‘pencak silat’, the demands it made upon my body were radically different to what I had experienced in Yogya.

### **Pencak Silat as Body Culture**

The human body is not to be viewed simply as the passive recipient of ‘cultural imprints’, still less as the active source of ‘natural expressions’ that are ‘clothed in local history and culture’, but as the *self-developable* means for achieving a range of human objects- from styles of physical movement (for example, walking), through modes of emotional being (for example, composure), to kinds of spiritual experience (for example, mystical states).<sup>16</sup> (Talal Asad)

From my experiences in Yogya and Bandung I realized that pencak silat articulated a holistic perspective on the world, centering upon the importance of the body as a psychosomatic whole. In this sense it can be considered a culture of the body. Borrowing from Marcel Mauss and Pierre Bourdieu, Susan Brownell, in her analysis of sport and other body practices in China, defines body culture as “everything that people do with their bodies and the elements that shape their doing...bodily practices as a process of habituation by which everyday practices train a world-orientation into the body”.<sup>17</sup> In this sense body culture reflects the “internalization and incorporation of culture, its embodiment”.<sup>18</sup>

Pencak silat training begins and ends with the body. Through physical and mental training the silat practitioner seeks to literally embody particular cultural and social ideals, a specific orientation to the world. The reproduction of the social is realized in the very movements of the body. It is both a representation of culture and a means of transmitting it, participants reflecting “on society, and the relations between the microcosmos, their own body, and the macrocosmos”.<sup>19</sup> Culture is incorporated consciously within structured social contexts (as through training), acquired through the demands posed by environment and everyday life (techniques adapted to local conditions) and “organized by an underlying symbolic logic that is often unconscious” (as in the bowed posture as a sign of social deference).<sup>20</sup>

As a form of traditional education, a performance art, a component of ritual and community celebrations, a practical form of self-defense, a path to spiritual enlightenment, and more recently as a national and international sport, pencak silat is in many respects unique. It traverses a number of social and cultural fields and, like sport, “mediates between the private world of everyday body techniques and the public world of shared performances”.<sup>21</sup> Viewed historically changes in the practice of pencak silat provides insights into the impact of broader processes of social and cultural change at the level of individual bodies and the body techniques through which they are constructed. Throughout this study I shall approach pencak silat both as part of the broader culture of the body in which it is situated, and as a particular and unique type of body culture in its own right, with its own techniques, theories and world views.

### **Techniques of the Body, Habitus and Somatic Nationalism**

There are a number of concepts informing my approach to silat as body culture. Of central importance is the concept of body techniques first used by Marcel Mauss, and that of the *habitus*, also used by Mauss and since elaborated by Pierre Bourdieu. In his essay, “The ethics of Gesture”, Jean-Claude Schmitt argues that since Mauss’s ‘Body Techniques’ essay it has become generally accepted that “gesture, attitude and comportment are social acquisitions, the purposive or unconscious products of processes of learning and imitation”.<sup>22</sup> In Mauss’s seminal essay, first published in 1922, he seeks to describe the process of corporeal apprenticeship that bodies undergo as they acquire the body techniques particular to their culture. Mauss argues that the transmission of these techniques from one body to another is done mimetically, “the individual borrows the series of movements of which he is composed from the action executed in front of him, or with him, by others”.<sup>23</sup> Society inscribes itself upon the human body. This concept of body techniques shifts our attention away from the way in which the body is represented towards its modes of construction.

The process of internalizing or embodying body techniques involves the development of what Mauss refers to as a *habitus*. According to Bourdieu, the habitus is “a set of dispositions that are created and reformulated in the unification of objective structures and personal history”, the body knowledge that we acquire by living under particular sets of circumstances as well as through conscious efforts to transmit them.<sup>24</sup> Lessons

regarding manners, customs, technique and deportment become so ingrained in the body that they are forgotten. As Bourdieu states:

What is learned by the body is not something that one has, like knowledge that can be brandished, but something that one is. Such knowledge is never detached from the body that bears it and can be reconstituted only by means of a kind of gymnastics designed to evoke it, a mimesis which implies total investment and deep emotional identification.<sup>25</sup>

As the habitus operates beyond consciousness, it is extremely difficult to change, and is implicitly fundamental in reinforcing social order as well as dominant notions of ethnicity, national identity, gender and class.<sup>26</sup> In this way society and culture are ‘written’ into the body. Yet this process also empowers the individual to act back upon society, as social practice is the product of a dialectical relationship between personal agency and social structure in which the body is viewed as a site of social memory.<sup>27</sup> The making of bodies is a contested territory. According to Bourdieu, the habitus operates as a strategy generating principles within the body that structure but do not determine actions:

...the habitus, the product of history, produces individual and collective practices, and hence history, in accordance with the schemes engendered by history. The system of dispositions – a past which survives in the present and tends to perpetuate itself into the future by making itself present in practices structured according to its principles...<sup>28</sup>

The theory of habitus seems particularly relevant when applied to silat, as practitioners themselves frame the progression of training in similar terms. For example, from the perspective of the Sanalika style from Cianjur, West Java, training involves three stages, *olah raga*, *olah rasa* and *olah jiwa*. *Olah raga* (in Indonesian, literally to ‘process the body’, but more commonly understood as ‘sport’) is the initial physical, external aspect of training where movements are memorized through rote repetition, but

not yet understood. At this stage movements tend to be formal, rigid, and awkward, as students have to ‘think’ about their movements. Gradually, through repetition, the degree of synchronicity increases. Self-conscious control over movements decreases. Simultaneously, movements become more flowing and continuous. The next stage of ‘processing feeling’ (Ind: *olah rasa*) involves developing a ‘feel’ for the movements. The “accumulative practice of the same”, to borrow a term from Wacquant, ensures that the silat practitioners motor schema is drawn on intuitively when the situation demands.<sup>29</sup> The movements become ‘second nature’. In the third and final stage of ‘processing the spirit’ (Ind: *olah jiwa*), having embodied the underlying logic of the techniques, the practitioner is free to play, within the confines of a system that has no closure, to improvise creatively. The internalized system operates as a generative principle within the practitioner, enabling them to adapt to ever changing situations.

Learning the body is cultural, varying and changing over time and space. As I will show, changes in body techniques associated with silat have involved the articulation of new configurations of the body, new habitus.<sup>30</sup> As Foucault has argued, the rise of modernity required the ‘disciplining’ of ‘docile bodies’.<sup>31</sup> Earlier techniques of disciplining the body, such as those found in monasteries and armies were fundamentally different in that, “although they involved obedience to others have as their principal aim an increase in mastery of each individual over his own body”.<sup>32</sup> In contrast techniques of bodily discipline in modern industrial societies have linked ‘docility’ with increasing the utility and productivity of the body, transforming it into an efficient cog in the economy.



Foucault's emphasis upon the body as the "place in which the most minute and local social practices are linked up with the large scale organization of power", is revealing when attempting to understanding the relation of pencak silat practice to broader processes of social and political change in contemporary Indonesia.<sup>33</sup> His approach is a useful framework to think within, for certain parallels can be drawn with the development of silat practice. Traditional silat training regimes, such as that of the Sanalika style, aimed to provide the practitioner with a degree of self-mastery that would enable them to adapt creatively. The student was *dibekali*, 'given an inheritance' by their teacher. As we will see in chapter five, the New Order states implementation of its ideology of modernity and 'development' (Ind; *pembangunan*) corresponded with the 'sportization' of silat practice. The Western model of sport has been linked to the production of loyal, productive and disciplined bodies. Techniques were standardized. Sporting values such as 'fair play' were conceptually linked to the New Order's reinvention of the ethics of the "knight" (Ind: *ksatria*), central to traditional concepts of martial virtue, that also constituted one element in its ideology of 'national personality'. In contrast to traditional training regimes, contemporary practices are often framed as "making/forming" (Ind: *membentuk*) the body. From a Foucauldian perspective, the New Order period saw the birth of the silat body as a disciplinary regime that renders the body increasingly docile and productive. This was achieved through a 'political technology' of the body: "a 'knowledge' of the body that is not exactly the science of its functioning, and a mastery of its forces that is more than the ability to conquer them".<sup>34</sup>

Responses to the New Order's modernization and nationalization of silat followed two distinct lines. The first was outright rejection. The difficulties in adapting local techniques into the Western model of sport highlighted fundamental differences in logic, that in some quarters prompted a traditionalist backlash. The other response was rooted in indigenous somatic theories. In his work on north Indian wrestling, Joseph Alter argues that the wrestler's concept of nationalism "is so intensely personal that both discipline and rhetoric begin and end with the body".<sup>35</sup> This form of 'somatic nationalism' centers on "the importance of the body as a psychosomatic whole that needs to be built up and maintained in balance with the larger socio-political environment".<sup>36</sup> Similarly in Indonesia some silat practitioners incorporated the New Order's ideology of 'development' into a utopian vision of nationalistic reform that took the body as the primary object of discipline. As Uberoi states:

Somatic nationalism *may* be manifested in hypermasculine aggression and in organized physical training programs.... but it may also take the form of self-discipline and controlled masculinity, where self-perfection has a definite (if ineffable) relation with national well-being.<sup>37</sup>

The emphasis upon external form and competitiveness in the sport version of silat prompted a renewed interest in the 'inner' dimension of practice and the dynamic process of self-development it entails.

### **Fieldwork**

Most of the data that informs this study was gathered during a 12-month period of intensive field research in West Java in 1999-2000. This was supplemented by my own experiences of training in pencak silat in West and Central Java that spans a period of eight years. All of my research for this study was carried out within the province of West

Java. My choice of West Java was based upon the consideration that the province, along with West Sumatra, is considered by many in the pencak silat community to be the ‘birth place’ of many of the oldest and most influential styles (Ind: *aliran*). As such it is home to approximately twenty aliran, each with its own unique traditions and practices. Rather than being a marginal sub-culture, the practice of pencak silat is widespread throughout all strata of West Javanese society and elements of its philosophy, techniques, spirituality, art and music permeate the culture of the dominant ethnic group, the Sundanese. To this day it is still commonly performed at life cycle rituals and community celebrations such as weddings and circumcisions, and taught at schools and universities. Prowess in *maenpo* is taken as a gauge of ones “Sundanese-ness”, along with the ability to recite the Quran (Sd: *ngaos*) and traditional poetry (Sd: *mamaos*).

Most of my field research was done in Bandung, the provincial capital of West Java and home to around five million people. Situated in the Priangan highlands, Bandung is also home to nearly all of the aliran found throughout the region. As such it has also acted as a ‘melting pot’ for silat practice and culture resulting in the creation of an array of composite styles and teaching practices as well as being the birthplace to numerous innovations and developments. As I had made numerous visits to Bandung since 1993 to continue my training with Tajimalela it also seemed practical to choose it as my main research site, as I already had a well established network of friends and contacts within the silat community there, facilitating easy access to a culture that can be at times secretive and closed to outsiders. I also spent substantial periods of time in rural areas

surrounding Bandung (Cianjur, Garut, Sukabumi) and Bogor (Caringin), as well as in Banten, on the far west coast of Java, and in the national capital, Jakarta.

In my research I employed both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Most of my data was obtained via both structured and unstructured interviews with silat teachers, trainers, practitioners as well as artists and officials involved with the silat community, alongside members of the general public in West Java. My method was to arrange an introductory meeting with the informant, often via the agency of a contact within the silat community, in which I would try to facilitate an open dialogue in the hope that the informant would reveal the issues and aspects of silat practice that they considered most important. During the course of the meeting I would make brief notes that I would then write up in detail at a later date. In the case of follow up interviews I built up loose sets of questions with the intention of either obtaining specific information (ie. dates, names etc.) or pursuing particular issues brought up in the first meeting. I soon found that informants would often give me the names and addresses of other potential informants whom I would often meet via an introduction from them.

During interviews with silat teachers I noticed a recurrent pattern. The person interviewed first would tell me a mentally prepared history/ account of pencak silat in general and his or her own particular school. It often had the feel of something learned from books or speeches. Once this was over and done with the interviewee usually relaxed and began to informally recount a variety of anecdotes and trivial facts. After

becoming aware of this pattern I tried systematically to gather such anecdotes, belonging to an oral tradition linked with a number of influential figures, aliran and perguruan.

The other main method employed was ‘observant participation’.<sup>38</sup> I attended training sessions of a number of schools on a regular basis, often joining in. In conjunction with this, I continued my training with Tajimalela, assisting as an instructor at a branch in a local junior high school. This participation was in many instances crucial, firstly for opening up communication between my informants and myself and, secondly, as it provided me with an experiential, bodily understanding that could be compared with that of other practitioners. From this I was able to put together a clearer picture of the variety of training techniques and methods employed, how they have changed over time, as well as the ways in which these were conceptually linked to other spheres of discourse, i.e. religious knowledge, ethical teachings, ethnic identity etc. I attended tournaments of the art and sporting aspect of silat at the local, regional, provincial, and national level, as well as participating as a competitor in the 2000 world championships in Jakarta. I also observed performances of *kendang pencak* at government ceremonies, cultural festivals, and local celebrations, as well as numerous performances of traditional arts that incorporate elements of pencak silat such as *debus*, *kuda renggeng*, *jaipongan*, *tepak tilu*, *rampak kendang*, *kecapi suling* and *benjang*.

It is a common tradition in West Java when attending social events in the pencak silat community to *kaul*, to perform silat for those present as a way of introducing oneself. Doing so helped facilitate immediate rapport with informants, creating a common point of

understanding. A comment by one master that, “in performing *kaul* you reveal aspects of your self normally hidden”, sensitized me a dimension of embodied communication prevalent amongst silat practitioners that was equal if not greater in significance to that of verbal communication. As Michel Freher states, “by observing the features and postures of an individual one can catch his soul in the act and discover his true nature by interpreting what it demands of his body”.<sup>39</sup> In other instances informants communicated ‘bodily’ rather than orally, answering my questions by demonstrating silat movements or other forms of *ilmu* (Ind: esoteric knowledge).

### **Chapter Outline**

In the Priangan region, the Sundanese heartland of West Java, there are a number of styles that are considered to be the foundations of authentic Sundanese pencak silat; Cimande, Syahbandar, Cikalong as well as the sub-styles Kari and Madi. Tales and legends regarding the founders of these styles are part of an oral folk tradition that is not confined to the silat community, but also informs more general discourse regarding proper conduct and custom. In chapter two I examine the origins and development of these styles, paying particular attention to the social and historical setting in which they have evolved, as well as the method of training and the demands it makes of the body.

Chapter three looks at pencak silat in the urban environment. Just as the traditional aliran were shaped by the cultural and environmental of the historical period in which they developed, so new aliran reflected the modern environment. As I will show new styles and types of organization emerged that reflected the prevalent social and political

forces. During the 1970s and 80s large influxes of migrants from areas surrounding Bandung led to new social pressures as people struggled to scratch out a living in increasingly crowded urban *kampung* (neighborhoods). In such environments martial prowess was an essential life skill, a form of physical and social capital. One school to emerge from this environment was Tajimalela. With its roots in both the traditions of the Sundanese aristocracy and the gang culture of inner city Bandung, the school, under the guidance of its founder, Raden Djadjat Kusumadinata, quickly grew to become an influential force in the pencak silat community. In this chapter I examine the development of Tajimalela from its inception in the 1970s into the present. The establishment of sporting pencak silat competitions in the mid-1970s by IPSI led to a shift in the orientation of the school that involved a ‘civilizing process’ at both the technical and philosophical level.

Around the same time that schools such as Tajimalela began to establish themselves another new type of pencak silat derived practice began to emerge, gaining widespread popularity amongst the educated urban middle-class. In chapter four I will discuss *tenaga dalam* or inner power practices that revised and rationalized traditional practices associated with the ‘internal’ dimension of pencak silat, via a syncretic discourse that blended Western science and medicine with indigenous spirituality and orthodox religion. In contrast to the ideological appropriation of pencak silat by the New Order via the sporting forum, many inner power schools articulate a utopian somatic ideology that incorporates New Order rhetoric into an experiential practice of self-development. I begin by exploring the historical roots of breathing and meditation techniques as well as the

general theory of inner power, before doing case studies of some of the most significant contemporary schools. Originally conceived as an integral part of pencak silat, practices aimed at developing supernatural power (Ind: *kesaktian*) became increasingly marginal as pencak silat became more secularized. The growth of inner power techniques in a sense articulated a re-enchantment of the body and its potentiality, and a ‘re-humanizing’ of cultural practices banalized by the ideological interventionism of the New Order state.

In chapter five I discuss in greater detail the significant developments that took place in the silat world during the 1970s, which involved new configurations of the body. The chapter begins with a brief historical account of the organization of pencak silat prior to Indonesian independence in 1945. I then move on to discuss the history and influence of the Indonesian Pencak Silat Association. From its inception in the late 1940s IPSI pursued a self-conscious mission to “nationalize” pencak silat. Recognized by the government as the sole official pencak silat organization, IPSI acted as the representative of state ideology in the silat community. As a manifestation of “national culture”, defined as the “pinnacles” (Ind: *puncak-puncak*) of regional cultures, silat was subject to numerous “guidance” (Ind: *pembinaan*) and standardization programs aimed at codifying a national style.

The greatest move towards standardization came with the introduction of sporting competition in 1973. As Alter has noted, sport and athletic ability are accorded a prominent place in the ideological rhetoric of various types of nationalism.<sup>40</sup> The promotion of sporting competitions coincided with a change in direction of New Order



ideology. The early 1970s were a consolidating period for the New Order government. After the alleged communist coup of 1965 and Suharto's subsequent rise to power, youth who had been mobilized to eliminate suspected communists presented a particular problem for the new regime. Many returned to neighborhood gangs and life as *jawara* or *preman*. Via the establishment of 'youth organizations' with an emphasis on sports, the New Order endeavoured to 'civilize' potentially troublesome youth. The military's 'patronage' of sporting and youth organizations, including many silat schools, and their dominance in the central administration of IPSI, saw a crossover between civil and military discourse. Amongst some military figures sport in general, and silat in particular, was viewed as a means of installing military type discipline and loyalty to the state amongst the general public. Ideologically sport was also seen as having an important role to play in the New Order project of developing 'human potential' (Ind: *sumber daya manusia*), a euphemism for a docile yet productive populace, necessary for implementing its five year plans for economic and social reform. The sporting values of "playing fair" and "by the rules" were seen as essential for developing an orderly market driven economy.

A central figure in both urban and rural kampung life across Indonesia has been the *jawara*. Local strongmen with a reputation for mastery of martial arts and the supernatural, they have occupied an ambiguous role throughout history as both defenders of the weak and oppressed, as well as ruthless opportunists and thugs. Chapter six begins by looking at the figure of the *jawara* in traditional and colonial society in West Java, especially the region of Banten. Traditionally a marginal figure, the period since

Indonesian independence has seen an increasing institutionalization and politicization of jawara by the state and the military. Disliked but useful, jawara were frequently employed throughout the New order period as political thugs and stand-over men. In the popular imagination, the jawara find their antithesis in the figure of the *pendekar*, who represents the social ideal of one who has mastered pencak silat. The historical ambiguity between *pendekar* and jawara directs attention to some of the central tensions evident in pencak silat culture between issues of self-control, proper personal conduct, self-interest and violence. Pencak silat seeks to embody in the individual social and cultural ideals, but it is also a form of social and political capital that can be readily used and abused.

Each chapter looks at a distinct discursive dimension of pencak silat which, when viewed together, forms a composite yet necessarily incomplete image of pencak silat culture, history and practice over time. The diversity of pencak silat is not reducible to a single propositional argument. What I refer to as the ‘politics of inner power’, points to the shifting configurations of the body found in pencak silat. As we will see, these configurations and modes of construction have changed throughout history but also exist alongside each other in the present, within social institutions such as the perguruan and also within the bodies of individual practitioners. Whilst definitions of its constituent nature, potentialities and limits may vary, the constant underlying thread within pencak silat, or rather point of convergence, is the body itself. It constitutes the *prima materia*, to be disciplined, refined and explored, the point of departure of practice and its ultimate end.

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<sup>1</sup> Michel Feher, 'Introduction', in Michel Feher, Ramona Naddaff and Nadia Tazi (eds.), *Fragments for a History of the Human Body: Part One*, Zone, New York, 1990, pg. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Dougherty, 'The Balance of Practice', online essay [<http://www.sas.upenn.edu/~edougher/essays/practice.html>], University of Pennsylvania, date unknown.

<sup>3</sup> Margaret Lock, 'Cultivating the Body: Anthropology and Epistemologies of Bodily Practice and Knowledge', in *Annual Review of Anthropology*, No.22, 1993, pp. 133-155.

<sup>4</sup> For more information on the various regional terms referring to pencak silat see O'ong Maryono, *Pencak Silat Merentang Waktu*, Pustaka Pelajar, Yogyakarta, 1998, pp. 2-3.

<sup>5</sup> In Murhananto, *Menyelami Pencak Silat*, Puspa Swara, Jakarta, 1993, pp. 1-2.

<sup>6</sup> Razha Rashid, 'Martial Arts and the Malay Superman', in Wazir Jahan Karim (ed.), *The Emotions of Culture: A Malay Perspective*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1990, pg. 65.

<sup>7</sup> An approach inspired by John Pemberton's work on 'tradition' in Java. See John Pemberton, *On the Subject of "Java"*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1994.

<sup>8</sup> *Tapak Suci Putera Muhammadiyah* was formally established on 31 July 1963 in Yogyakarta. Part of the school's popularity is due to its formal affiliation with the large modernist Muslim organization *Muhammadiyah* (the way of Muhammad).

<sup>9</sup> This does not include those schools affiliated with the rival organization *Persatuan Pencak Silat Indonesia*, as well as other schools and individual teachers not affiliated with IPSI.

<sup>10</sup> Recent academic studies on pencak silat include H.T. Cordes, *Pencak Silat. Die Kampfkunst der Minangkabau und ihr kulturelles Umfeld*, Griedel: AFRA Verlag, Frankfurt, 1992 and U.U. Patzold, *Blute, Frucht und Kern. Bewegungsfprmen und Musikstile im Bereich des Pencak Silat in West-Java und West-Sumatra*, Holos-Verlag, Bonn, 2000.

<sup>11</sup> More recently IPSI has added a fifth category of 'health'. See Pengurus Ikatan Pencak Silat Indonesia, 'Bahan-Bahan Musyawarah Nasional Ikatan Pencak Silat Indonesia: Bidang Teknik', material produced for the 10<sup>th</sup> National IPSI Congress, 16-18 September 1999.

<sup>12</sup> Weapons commonly used include the machete (Ind: *golok*), the long staff (Ind: *toya*), the trident (Ind: *trisula*) and the *kris*, a short wavy dagger.

<sup>13</sup> The *Panca Setia* of Bhayu Manunggal is as follows:

1. Loyal to the Republic of Indonesia (*Setia Kepada Negara Republik Indonesia*).
2. Loyal to the Perguruan (*Setia kepada Perguruan*).
3. Loyal to the Guru (*Setia kepada Guru*).
4. Loyal to ones parents/elders (*Setia kepada Orang Tua*).
5. Loyal to ones fellow perguruan members (*Setia kepada Saudara Seperguruan*).

For more on an offshoot of Bhayu Manunggal, see O'ong Maryono, *Pencak Silat Merentang Waktu*, Pustaka Pelajar, Yogyakarta, 1998, pp. 271-277.

<sup>14</sup> Bhayu Manunggal differs from the majority of pencak silat schools in that it uses the Indonesian term *gerak dasar* (basic movements) rather than *jurus*.

<sup>15</sup> In the Bhayu Manunggal system there are five basic step patterns, 15 basic hand movements and 16 basic leg movements.

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<sup>16</sup> Talal Asad, "Remarks on the anthropology of the body", in Sarah Coakely, *Religion and the Body*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997, pp. 42-52.

<sup>17</sup> Susan Brownell, *Training the Body for China*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1995, pg. 10.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, pg. 11.

<sup>19</sup> Bart Barendregt, 'Written by the Hand of Allah: Pencak Silat of Minangkabau, West Sumatra', in van Zanten and Marjolijn van Roon (eds), *Oideion, The Performing Arts World-wide 2*, Research School CNWS, Leiden, 1995, pp. 113-130.

<sup>20</sup> Brownell, 1995, pg. 10.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, pg. 28-29.

<sup>22</sup> Jean-Claude Schmitt, 'The Ethics of Gesture', in Michel Feher, Ramona Naddaff and Nadia Tazi (Eds.), *Zone: Fragments for a History of the Human Body, Part Two*, Urzone, New York, 1990, pp. 128-147. An overview of theoretical debates regarding embodiment within anthropology can be found in CSORDAS as well as AM ANTHROP.

<sup>23</sup> Mauss, Marcel, *Sociology and Psychology: Essays*, Routledge, London, 1979, pg. 102.

<sup>24</sup> In Grant Jarvie and Joseph Maguire, *Sport and Leisure in Social Thought*, Routledge, London, 1994, pg. 190.

<sup>25</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1977, pg. 168

<sup>26</sup> Brownell, 1995, pg. 13

<sup>27</sup> Jarvie and Maguire, 1994, pg. 186

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, pg. 82

<sup>29</sup> Wacquant, L, 'The social logic of boxing in black Chicago: towards a sociology of pugilism', *Sociology of Sport Journal*, no 9, 1992, pp. 221-54.

<sup>30</sup> Throughout this thesis I shall use the term 'configurations' to refer to the nexus between the perception and experience of the body and its modes of construction.

<sup>31</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punishment: The Birth of the Prison*, Penguin Books, 1977, pp. 135-169.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, pg. 137.

<sup>33</sup> Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1982, pg. xii

<sup>34</sup> N. Poulantzas in Barry Smart, *Michel Foucault*, Ellis Horwood, Sussex, 1985, pg. 75

<sup>35</sup> Joseph S. Alter, 'Somatic Nationalism: Indian Wrestling and Militant Hinduism', in *Modern Asian Studies*, 28, 3, 1994, pp. 557-588

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, pg. 572.

<sup>37</sup> Patricia Uberoi, 'Body, State and Cosmos: Mao Zedong's "Study of Physical Education (1917)", in Tan Chung (ed.), *Across the Himalyan Gap: An Indian Quest for Understanding*, Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi, 1998. Online at [<http://ignca.nic.in/ks-41.htm>].

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<sup>38</sup> Borrowing from Waquant, I use this term rather than the more commonly used ‘observant participation’ in order to place an emphasis upon the bodily, participant dimension of fieldwork.

<sup>39</sup> Feher, 1989, pg. 12.

<sup>40</sup> Alter, 1994, pg. 559.

## **Origins, Aliran, Silsilah and the Latihan**

The origins of pencak silat are shrouded in mystery. The lack of adequate written references makes it impossible to ascertain any detailed information regarding the way in which it was practiced, or even if it existed in a form resembling that identifiable as pencak silat today prior to the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. In so far as it constitutes a ‘body culture’, the body itself has necessarily been its primary medium of transmission. Consequently any theories regarding silat’s early history must build mainly on forms of evidence that are not at the core of practice. With these limitations in mind, in this chapter I will outline the history of pencak silat. I will then go on to examine in detail the origins and spread of some of the styles that have been historically prominent in West Java. These details are significant, for together these aliran have come to form the foundation for pencak silat practice in West Java, in terms of technique, method, lines of transmission, ethics, as well as underlying attitudes and assumptions regarding the nature and potential of the body. They continue to act as the major point of reference for gauging authenticity and defining identity by proceeding generations of silat practitioners.

In order to grasp the way changing silat practices have subsequently reinscribed or reconfigured ‘body awareness’ we must begin by looking at some of the key components of ‘traditional’ or ‘original’ praxis. Through the examples that follow, I will be suggesting ways in which early practitioners implicitly related to the natural world, the metaphysical realm, the physical senses and other human bodies.

Creation myths surrounding pencak silat, where they exist, fall into a number of distinct types. The first type posits silat as a product of the interaction between humans and the natural world. The observation and mimicry of the movements of animals or natural elements; witnessing fights between tigers, the snatching of a monkey, swooping eagles, the flow of a river or a gust of wind is developed into a fighting system. People learn from the environment in which they live and apply it to the human body. The second traces a vertical line between the human and supernatural world. This may be in the form of divine inspiration (Ind: *ilham*) obtained through prayer or asceticism, an 'heirloom' (Ind: *pusaka*) from ancestral spirits, or contact with *djinn* and other types of lesser supernatural beings.

Then there are myths that trace lineages back to a historical person. These lineages (Ind: *silsilah*) may follow familial lines, genealogies of teacher and student, or may transcend conventional notions of time and space. In traditional society in Java, martial prowess was a form of social and political capital. The fear and awe inspired by those who had mastered fighting arts and obtained physical invulnerability was a foundation upon which political power could be built. Invulnerability especially had a potent symbolic value as a type of spiritual mandate, and was stressed within rural leadership. It along with martial arts also constituted a basic survival skill in an environment where violence, banditry and social unrest were common.<sup>1</sup> The 19<sup>th</sup> century traditional historiography *Sajarah Sukapura* describes the ideal *menak* (Sundanese aristocrat) in terms of martial prowess: "Whoever has supernatural powers, strong skin, an effective

sword and is brave, they will be considered a menak who is loved and exulted by their inferiors, and whose every desire will be accommodated".<sup>2</sup>

In pre-Mataram Sundanese tradition, power was believed to emanate from sacred sites (Sd: *kabuyutan*).<sup>3</sup> They could become the ruler of a certain area if they gained control of a sacred site, usually an ancestral grave. The text *Amanat Galunggung* states that if a ruler gained control of a *kabuyutan* and performed ascetic exercises they could obtain supernatural powers that would ensure their victory in battle, wealth and success.<sup>4</sup> According to Nina Lubis the Sundanese *menak* also obtained supernatural powers through the study of various esoteric sciences (Sd: *elmu*) such as *elmu kawedukan* (invulnerability) and *elmu kabedasan* (superhuman strength).<sup>5</sup> Lubis also notes that it wasn't until around the 19<sup>th</sup> century that the concept of *kasaktian* and temporal power were separated. *Kesaktian* came to be identified as a personal quality, whereas temporal power was considered to rely upon military strength.<sup>6</sup> Physical coercion, or the threat of it, was one of the primary foundations of economic and political power.

Ricklefs argues that military power was the basis of imperial politics, in a society where violence was a central social fact.<sup>7</sup> Upward mobility was possible, especially through success in battle. As Hobsbawm notes in his study on bandits, kings and emperors in Europe often started their lives as bandit chiefs or warlords.<sup>8</sup> Java was no exception in this regard. Ken Angrok, the founder of the 13<sup>th</sup> century kingdom of Singosari in East Java spent his early years as an outlaw and thief. Wandering aristocratic warriors (Ind: *satria lelana*) and bandit groups were also a common feature of the Javanese landscape,



being a regular source of political and social unrest.<sup>9</sup> One pencak silat expert suggests that:

Those who were strong and had a talent for fighting were given a good position in society, to the extent that they often became head of the tribe or a warlord king. Over time the science of fighting became more organized, eventuating in the emergence of a martial art known as pencak silat.<sup>10</sup>

There are a number of theories regarding the early history of the spread of pencak silat throughout the region. Donn Draeger, in his study of the weapons and fighting arts of Indonesia, suggest that the island of Riau played a pivotal role in the spread of pencak silat throughout what is now the Indonesian archipelago.<sup>11</sup> Beginning from the seventh century Riau acted as a major port for the Buddhist kingdom of Sriwijaya, whose power extended from Southern Sumatra through the Straits of Malacca, and to Banten on the coast of north-west Java. Its economic influence reached as far as southern China, Cambodia and Sri Lanka. Aside from acting as a major centre for trade throughout the region, Sriwijaya was also a centre for religious learning. Monks as well as scholars from China, India and Sri Lanka travelled to the monastery of Nalanda to study Sanskrit. There seems however no reason to assume that pencak silat either originated in or was disseminated from one particular place. Whilst the Sriwijaya kingdom may have played a role in the spread of particular martial techniques, as well as the acculturation of elements from Chinese and Indian martial traditions within Sumatra, it is difficult to ascertain to what extent it influenced the configuration of pencak silat in either western or central Java.

Maryono theorises that silat developed as martial tradition primarily within the royal courts.<sup>12</sup> Certainly the concentration of temporal power would require an organised

military. The kingdoms of Sriwijaya, Saliendra, Majapahit, and later Mataram, required large and well-organised armies to maintain and expand their empires. During periods of armed conflict and expansionism military service was compulsory for the peasantry.<sup>13</sup> The martial skill imparted was limited to basic drills, however some diffusion of fighting skills from the professional warrior class to commoners undoubtedly occurred. One of the best known groups of full-time warriors was the *Bhayangkari* of the 14<sup>th</sup> century Majapahit kingdom, led by Gadjah Mada who later became prime-minister.<sup>14</sup> Kings such as Senapati and Ki Jaka Tingkir were initially commanders of the royal bodyguard. Moertono states that in order to join these special units one had to possess magical powers (such as the ability to crack the skull of an enraged bull) and demonstrate unwavering loyalty.<sup>15</sup> According to Pigeaud only village youths who had a close relationship to local aristocrats could apply to become elite court guards.<sup>16</sup> If martial and magical abilities were a prerequisite, then it would seem that initiation and training was available to those outside of the confines of the court. References to Javanese warfare techniques (Jv: *ngelmu yudha*, Sd: *hulu jurit*) can be found in colonial records dating back to 1622:

Their weapons consist chiefly of pikes, creeses, and shields. They are so exceedingly clever and adept in the use of these arms that no people can put them to shame. They are particularly skilled at using the long pike on horseback, for they are fine horsemen, and excel our riders in this respect, for they have both hands at their disposal, as they guide the horse with their knees and body.<sup>17</sup>

Unfortunately however there is no material shedding light on the specific techniques or training method employed, neither is any specific reference made to *pencak* or *silat*. It seems possible that techniques that later came to be identified as *pencak silat* were but one aspect of a broader course of military training. The sheer scale of warfare would

have meant that the hand-to-hand combat techniques and emphasis upon individual rather than collective strategy found in pencak silat would have been not sufficient in itself.

Maryono asserts that at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century the decline in the political significance of the royal palaces forced many pencak silat masters, formerly employed as professional warriors for the courts or as instructors for the royal family, to “return to their *kampung*” where they began disseminating their knowledge to the local population.<sup>18</sup> It seems likely that martial arts belonging to the courts would have been a tightly guarded secret. The assumption however that pencak silat was primarily refined within the confines of the palace environment of the Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms of Java and Sumatra suggests particular ‘imaginings’ of the past. A frequently cited example of the sophistication of pencak silat techniques was the defeat of Kublai Khan’s forces by the army of the Singosari kingdom in 1291. The kingdom of Majapahit has had a special place in contemporary imaginings of the evolution of nationhood, being emblemised as a prototype of the Indonesian state. Like other manifestations of ‘national culture’ (Ind: *kebudayaan nasional*) in contemporary Indonesia, pencak silat has come to be identified with the ‘high culture’ of the royal courts, rather than as a product of ‘peoples culture’ (Ind: *kebudayaan rakyat*).<sup>19</sup> According to material produced by IPSI a reference to the pencak silat related practice of *kanuragan* was made as early as 450 BC in a stone inscription from the Vishnu Tarumanegara kingdom of West Java.<sup>20</sup> Praising the kingdom’s ruler, Sri Purnawaman, it reads, “... his feet were capable of crushing and destroying the cities of his enemies...”<sup>21</sup> Whether this metaphor of power is related to an

actual practice is unclear, and once again it seems an example of the link made between political power and martial skill.

A more specific reference to pencak is found in the Kedukan Bukit and Talang Tuo inscriptions in South Sumatera that have been dated to the 7<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>22</sup> One sentence reads “*mamancak yam praja ini*”, the word *mancak* being the word for pencak in Palembang and Bali. Martial prowess was not so much the preserve of power as a means to it. It seems highly likely, as Maryono suggests, that the courts employed those skilled in martial arts. Yet the prevalence of banditry as well as peasant based millenarian movements and other types of popular rebellion throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century shows that the possession of highly developed martial skills was not restricted to those within the royal courts. Onghokham points out that invulnerability constituted a counter-elite value, contrasting with the quality of divine providence (Jv: *wahyu*) that was so important to aristocratic leadership.<sup>23</sup> It was available to anyone with sufficient resolve and discipline to perform the ascetic and meditative practices required to obtain it.

What seems most likely from the fragments of history, oral tradition and myth is that pencak silat developed through a number of separate but interrelated spheres. Perhaps of most significance were the networks of traditional institutions known as *asrama*, *pesantren* or *parguron*, some possibly predating the earliest kingdoms of Java. During the period of the Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms areas under the control of religious authorities were known as *mandala*.<sup>24</sup> The *mandala* were independent communities isolated from the centres of political power, often being situated in mountainous areas, dense forest, or

other environments conducive to ascetic retreat.<sup>25</sup> Religious learning was not confined to the study of texts, ritual and meditation, but also incorporated physical exercises (Ind: *olah tubuh*).<sup>26</sup>

The body was not an impediment to self-realization, but provided the context and resources for ultimate self-transformation. Due to their remoteness in areas outside of the control of the kingdom's police, these communities also required some form of organised self-defence. The combination of a body-orientated religiosity and physical isolation was thus conducive to the development of a unique martial tradition. After the Islamization of Java the structure of the *mandala* and *dharma* continued on in the Islamic boarding schools (Ind: *pesantren*), that to this day still incorporate silat practice into the curriculum of religious learning. The network of religious communities extended throughout the archipelago, aiding in the diffusion of techniques from one area to another. As Anderson has noted, it has long been a pattern within Javanese (and Sundanese) society for a youth to seek tutelage under a guru as part of their apprenticeship into adulthood: "He might be a local *djago*- a practitioner of magical arts, an expert in *pentjak* (the Javanese art of self-defense), or an adept of the esoteric *ngelmu kedotan* (science of invulnerability)".<sup>27</sup>

In Lombard's opinion the relationship between guru and student (Ind: *murid, siswa*) was fundamental, defining the period of Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms of Java.<sup>28</sup> The solid alliance between guru and *murid* was the foundation of social and political allegiances. When undergoing initiation the student would usually live with their guru, a tradition still continued to this day. When a particular guru attracted a large number of students they

usually established a *paguron*. In exchange for imparting their knowledge, the murid often worked for the guru, tending their fields and caring for livestock.

Trade also played an important role in the acculturation of elements of foreign martial arts into local styles and the spread of techniques from one region to another. For example, according to Liem Yoe Kiong, Chinese martial arts (primarily southern styles such as *Shaolin* and *Bhutong*) spread widely throughout Java during the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century via travelling traders from Shantung, known in rural Priangan as *mindring*.<sup>29</sup> Many of the first Chinese martial artists to arrive in Java were brought as security by the Chinese trading ships that travelled back and forth between mainland China and the large ports in Java at that time, such as Jayakarta (Jakarta) and Banten. On arriving in Java many of them accompanied their bosses selling and trading goods. To ensure their safety from attacks by robbers they passed on their martial knowledge to local coolies who carried their goods for them.<sup>30</sup> During the 18<sup>th</sup> century horse-trading was also a major forum through which Sumatran pencak silat techniques became acculturated into Sundanese *penca* tradition.

The influence of Chinese martial arts upon pencak silat is an issue with significant political implications in contemporary Indonesia. The elevation of pencak silat to the status of a 'national sport', as an integral element of 'national culture' has led to a downplaying of 'foreign' influences. Yet there is significant historical evidence, especially in Jakarta and Banten, of cross-fertilization between silat and Chinese martial arts. A number of aliran and perguruan synthesize elements of both; *Maccao*, *Mustika Kwitang*, *Beksi*, and *Rahmat*. All of them however are considered to be 'indigenous'

pencak silat, the Chinese elements are subsumed by the local. Abdur Rauff, an elder of aliran Cikalong, openly admits to the influence of Chinese martial arts, such as the sparring method of *bissau*, in the Cikalong style. In his opinion the important issue was not the ethnic background of the martial art, but its effectiveness; “If it was practical and in accord with the logic of the body it was used, no matter where it came from”.<sup>31</sup> From Rauff’s perspective the ‘logic of the body’ represents a higher order, one that transcends ethnic, religious and cultural differences. The value of a technique or principle was to be found in practice, in encounters between bodies.

Within the oral traditions of silat in West Java it is interesting to note recurring references to Chinese martial arts experts. Accounts of ‘fight events’, involving the founders of aliran such as Cimande, Penca Makao, Cikalong and Syahbandar, situate the Chinese martial artist as an aggressive outsider, challenging the honor of the local master. In each case these accounts follow an almost identical pattern, with the foreign challenger testing local knowledge, and invariably losing. He then either becomes a student and converts to Islam, or is killed: an ominous metaphor for cultural assimilation and the dangers of resisting it. In the case of Mustika Kwitang the victorious local borrows and adapts techniques from the loser. As in most cases, these inevitably come to be considered as their own. Syncretism occurred within the framework of a clearly defined power relationship between dominant and minority ethnic groups. A little known but significant variation from this theme is that found in Penca Makao.<sup>32</sup> Here a pencak silat teacher, Ki Abu Arwanta from Pandeglang, Banten, got into an altercation with a Chinese man who was fishing without permission in Ki Abu’s fishing pond. After a brief fight, Ki

Abu accepted that he was out-skilled by his opponent, and became his student. Whilst Ki Abu was studying under the unnamed teacher, he secretly analyzed the respective strengths and weaknesses of the pencak silat that he learnt. Finally he felt that he had effectively combined the two. During training he tested the new method on his teacher, who was unable to counter his movements.

A similar pattern can be found in stories about Mama Kosim, the founder of aliran Syahbandar. According to one version recounted by Mohammad Rafijen<sup>33</sup>, whilst in Batavia Mama Kosim got into a fight with a “Chinese *jago*” who was an expert in kuntao. Mama Kosim attacked him with a relentless array of punches. The Chinese man was soon overwhelmed, and fell to the ground battered and bleeding. At that moment a Dutch officer intervened, asking “what’s going on here?”. The Chinese man could neither speak Dutch nor Malay, so he resorted to his native language of Kun. “Pok-pok!!” he said, whilst demonstrating with his fist how Mama Kosim had beaten him. ‘Pok’ is the Kun word for punch. On asking Mama Kosim why he was fighting he replied simply that “I was just playing” (Ind: “*saya main aja*”). Putting the two accounts together the Dutch officer said “so, you were *main pok*?”. The assembled crowd quickly picked up on the officer’s creative language, *maenpo* soon becoming synonymous with the brutal, punch-orientated fighting style of Mama Kosim, and in turn, the ‘indigenous’ martial arts in West Java.<sup>34</sup>

According to Ko Wakem many of the early Chinese migrants also worked as farmers, especially in Tangerang, Banten and Central Kalimantan, furthering the diffusion of



Chinese martial arts amongst the local population.<sup>35</sup> Clans such as Wong and Chen, who originated from the south coast of mainland China, also brought with them their rural tradition of holding lion dance (Ind: *barongsai*) performances at the end of each harvest. This leads one to speculate regarding cross-fertilization between the *barongan* and *singgaan* traditions still found in these areas that also contains elements of pencak silat. In China the lion dance tradition was appropriated by the Ming dynasty, eventually becoming part of the training program of kung fu schools that served as recruiting grounds for the dynasty's army.<sup>36</sup>

What emerges from these fragments of legend or oral history is an image of a cosmopolitan network of often semi-nomadic martial artists testing, sharing and refining their respective skills, often irrespective of cultural, ethnic and religious differences. Whilst there has clearly been a two way flow of influence between pencak silat and Chinese martial arts throughout the history of the archipelago, the changing social and political configuration of Indonesia during the last 40 years has led to a marked reluctance on the part of many pencak practitioners to recognize it. A number of contemporary pencak silat teachers openly refuse to accept ethnic Chinese as students. As one explained, "silat is indigenous culture (Ind: *budaya pribumi*), it's for real Indonesians. I'm not prepared to accept the responsibility (of training Chinese) if later on there was a problem".<sup>37</sup> At least some of the hostility by older generations towards *kuntao* and other Chinese martial arts could be due to the fact that it was taught to the Dutch army, however there were also pencak silat masters who sided with the colonial authorities.<sup>38</sup> My questions regarding the influence of Chinese martial arts were often met with a high

degree of defensiveness and even irritation on the part of some of my informants. In part this can perhaps be explained by the extent to which IPSI's definition of pencak silat as purely 'indigenous ethnic Malay culture (Ind: *budaya rumpun Melayu*), has been accepted in the silat community. For instance the current head of IPSI has said:

Amongst the Chinese there are those who have the opinion and make the claim that the self-defense systems found in Southeast Asia originate from China.... this opinion and claim is not entirely correct, and even appears quite arrogant. The reason for this is that every social group, wherever they may be, has their own system of self-defense for facing, preventing, warding off, and overcoming the various physical threats that they face.<sup>39</sup>

When examining the early history of pencak silat in the Indonesian archipelago, it needs to be understood in terms of its representation in the present. The re-framing of pencak silat as 'purely indigenous' by IPSI largely reflects recent changes in cultural and political configuration of Indonesia, especially the New Order's project of constructing regional and national identity.

### **Aliran in West Java**

In West Java there are approximately 20 styles (Ind: *aliran*), not including those that have come from other regions.<sup>40</sup> In the present, styles are rarely taught in a 'pure' form, usually being mixed and combined with others. The most influential aliran in West Java have been Cimande, Cikalong, Syahbandar, and the sub-styles Kari and Madi. All of these styles were developed and spread during the last 200 years. Despite being identified with Sundanese tradition, only Cimande and Cikalong were developed by ethnic Sundanese, the others originating from West Sumatra and Batavia. Within Sundanese oral tradition there are a wealth of accounts regarding the history of the lives and exploits of

the founders of these styles. Aside from examining the history and myth surrounding each style I will also examine the technical and philosophical aspects of each and the methods through which they are trained into the body.

### **Cimande**

His appearance was impressive, his body muscular, hard and broad chested, a sign of his bravery and limitless energy, only he was already advanced in years. His head was wrapped with a red cloth, and his black silk pants fluttered in the breeze. He showed great bravery and flexibility. And he danced joyfully. His movements were in harmony with the drum. His performance was long to be remembered. His step was light, as if his feet did not touch the ground.<sup>41</sup>

Taken from the Sundanese historical romance *Pangeran Kornel* written by Raden Memed Sastrahadiprawira, the paragraph above gives a vivid description of Abah Kahir (also known as *Embah*, *Ayah* or *Eyang* Kahir) the legendary founder of Cimande pencak silat. Of all the pencak silat styles in Indonesia, Cimande is perhaps the most influential and well known, and is considered to be one of the oldest. There are a variety of accounts of the life of Abah Kahir. These locate the beginnings of Cimande pencak silat, its source of inspiration, and outline its lineage. According to one account popular within the pencak silat community in Banten, Abah Kahir was a Badui, an ethnic group who populate the mountainous regions of south-west Banten. According to legend the Badui were descendants of the army (Ind: *bala tentara*) of Ratu Pucuk Umum, the last king of the Hindu Pajajaran kingdom, centered in the present day town of Bogor.<sup>42</sup> After Ratu Pucuk Umum surrendered to Muslim forces, led by Molana Yusup (ruler of Banten 1570-80) in 1579, a concession was made that his followers would be left in peace on the condition that they settled and remained in the area.<sup>43</sup>

The martial traditions of Pajajaran were preserved and passed on through the generations. In this account, Kahir, who was from the Cikeusik region of Badui land, was renowned as an expert in *ulin Badui* (Badui silat).<sup>44</sup> His reputation soon spread outside of Badui territory and several pencak silat experts came to test his skills. His challengers all died in the resulting fights. The spilling of blood on Badui ancestral land was a serious breach of customary law that could not go unpunished, so the tribal elders (Sd: *puun*) decided to banish Abah Kahir to the Cimande area west of Bogor. In order to avoid a repetition of such an incident it was agreed that the Badui would adopt a code of silence to outsiders regarding their martial arts, one that is said to stand until the present day.<sup>45</sup>

After leaving his homeland, Abah Kahir worked as a baggage carrier (Ind: *tukang pikul*) for a Chinese trader. The trader was a hard man, who also happened to have been trained in the Chinese martial art of *kuntao*. One day Kahir decided to take a rest. The trader was furious and ordered him to start work again immediately. The two began to argue and a fight soon broke out, resulting in the trader being killed. Coming to his senses, Kahir reflected that he had ‘forgotten himself’ (Sd: *main poho*). It is from this event that the term *maenpo* was coined in reference to Sundanese pencak silat. Kahir was filled with regret at his lack of self-control, reflecting that he had killed his source of livelihood, and vowed that from then on he would only use his martial arts to serve humanity. As Wessing has noted, the Badui occupy an important symbolic position in wider Sundanese cultural discourse as a ‘compass’ (Ind: *pedoman*) or indicator for proper observance and the continued practice of “pure” Sundanese customs.<sup>46</sup> Due to their self-imposed isolation from the modern world, and the minimal effect of the Islamization of

the region upon them, the Badui have maintained some traditions no longer found in the rest of West Java and consequently considered to be more purely 'authentic' (Ind: *asli*). In the same way the Pajajaran kingdom is frequently invoked as a symbol of 'pure Sundanese-ness'. There is a belief that after death Sundanese become 'residents of Pajajaran' in the form of tigers.<sup>47</sup>

Another common legend regarding Cimande's origins cites Abah Kahir's wife as the creator and first teacher of Cimande jurus:<sup>48</sup>

One-day Abah Kahir's wife was washing rice down by the river. She heard a loud commotion coming from a nearby clump of trees and looked up to see a monkey jumping around and screeching wildly in the branches. The cause of the monkey's frantic behavior was a large tiger that was circling around the base of the tree in which they were perched. In the commotion, one of the monkeys fell from the safety of the tree. The tiger immediately launched itself at the monkey, but it dodged its attack and bit it on the stomach. Over and over the tiger attacked the monkey but each time it managed to evade it. Ibu Kahir was so totally absorbed by this battle that she lost all track of time. Returning home late she was met by her husband who was furious that his lunch had not been prepared. In his anger he went to strike his wife with a broom, who, remembering the monkey at the river, evaded his blow. Time and time again he tried to hit his wife, and each time she dodged and ducked to safety. Finally exhausted, Abah Kahir asked his wife where she had learnt these movements. She recounted the fight between the tiger and the monkey that she had seen by the river. Abah Kahir studied these techniques from his wife, developing them into a system of self-defense that came to be known as Cimande.

Almost identical tales can be found for a number of other unrelated pencak silat styles such as one from Bawean Island (off the north coast of east Java), pointing to a common framework of thinking. In each case a woman draws upon her observations and experience of nature to later defend herself against domestic violence. The defeated husband then systematizes these techniques into a style of pencak silat and is recognized as a guru. Maryono has noted that women often play a central creative role in pencak silat origin myths, despite the fact that pencak silat has traditionally been a male dominated practice and there have been only a handful of women masters.<sup>49</sup> The feminine

element is related to intimacy with the natural world, whereas the male is the domain of 'culture' and 'civilization'.

Another defining feature of pencak silat oral tradition is what Yus Rusyana, in his study of oral tradition in Sundanese pencak silat, refers to as "fight incidents" (Ind: *peristiwa pertarungan*).<sup>50</sup> Tales of fights are a central element in oral accounts of past masters. Aside from describing technical elements of a style they are also instructional, outlining the ethics and morals of combat. In any martial art success in combat is the bottom-line in terms of the value of a given style or technique. Hence accounts of fights authenticate the style by describing its effectiveness.

According to Tubagus Jamhari, a master of the perguruan Cimande Pajajaran, Abah Kahir created the jurus of Cimande after he performed night prayers (Ar: *tahajud*) and *istikharah* (to seek guidance from Allah when one is faced with a problem to which no solution is apparent).<sup>51</sup> He received inspiration to develop pencak silat movements based upon the *Alif* and *Lam* characters found in the Quran. Basing physical movements upon Arabic letters is common within pencak silat culture. In his study on Minangkabau pencak silat, Bart Barendregt describes how in silat training the Quran is associated directly with the human body.<sup>52</sup> From the perspective of Sufism the Quran expresses all the possible correspondences between the micro and the macrocosmos. This analogy is systematized in some styles, for example by limiting the number of *jurus* to 24, the number of letters in the Islamic testimony of faith (Ind: *kalimah sahadah*). The movements act as a mystical vocabulary. By moving in a manner that reflects the divine

word, the silat practitioner becomes “like a pencil in the hand of God. He moves in accordance with ‘His Will’”<sup>53</sup>. As one saying in Cimande goes, “it is ultimately only Allah who moves us” (Sd: *usik malik anging Allah nu marengkeun*).<sup>54</sup>

In the ethnographic present, the multitude of legends surrounding the figure of Abah Kahir act to both naturalize the style, either by attributing it to either natural phenomena or to divine inspiration. The influence of Cimande pencak silat in Java is extensive. The majority of perguruan found today trace some link, be it technical, philosophical or historical, to Cimande. It is almost mandatory for schools to pay some kind of symbolic homage to Cimande. The style is also recognized in West Sumatra as being one of the oldest, due in part to the fact that *mande* is the word for ‘mother’ in Minangkabau language.

In Kampung Babakan Tarikolot in Cimande village, present day descendants of Abah Kahir closely guard the traditions. Here Cimande is still taught the way it has been since its inception, uninfluenced by other styles or modern innovations in pencak silat practice. According to informants there, Abah Kahir was not the creator of Cimande pencak silat, only the first teacher of it. A sacred genealogical chart (Sd: *silsilah karomah*) held by Ace Sutisna, the current head of the Family of Cimande Pencak Silat (*Keluarga Besar Pencak Silat Cimande*), and a descendent in Kampung Tarikolot in Cimande village, begins with *Embah Buyut*, literally ‘great grandfather’ but more generally a Sundanese term of reference for a founding ancestor. It is not clear whether this is meant to refer to a particular individual or whether it is used as a general term for founding ancestors.

According to Pak Ace, “since long ago descendants of Cimande have used this name”. The silsilah lists seven generations, which at Pak Ace’s estimation span a period of around 350 years. If Embah Buyut were a historical individual this would suggest that he lived between the mid-17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century. This fits with the period when Abah Kahir is reputed to have begun teaching, around 1760, making him a second-generation Cimande practitioner, and first generation teacher. Within each generation there are more than one teacher, however the official “representatives” (Ind: *wakil*) of each generation are as follows:

1. Embah Kahir
2. Embah Rangga
3. Embah Ace Naseha
4. Embah Haji Abdulshamad
5. Embah Haji Idris and Embah Haji Ajid
6. Embah Haji Zarqasih, Haji Niftah, Haji Gaos, Ace Sutisna (current)

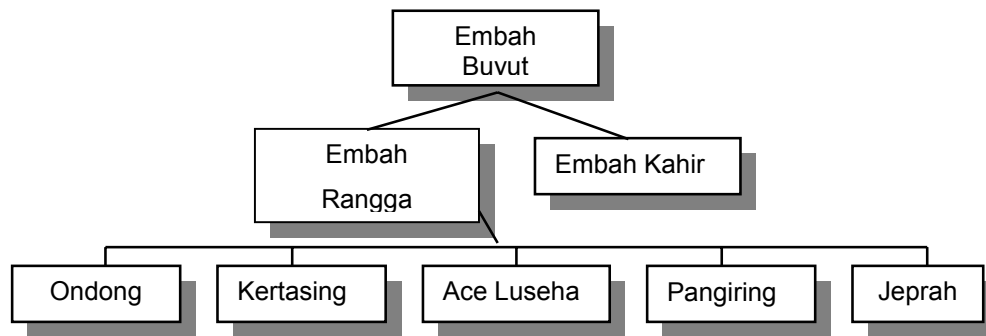
The silsilah is incorporated into the structure of training in Cimande. At the beginning of a latihan an invocation-like prayer known as an *amalan tasawal* is often recited that combines sections of the al-Quran with a list of past teachers.<sup>55</sup> The prayer serves a dual purpose, it is a way of paying tribute as well as means of seeking the spiritual ‘blessings’ (Ind: *berkah*) of past masters. The ‘paying of tribute’ is an important aspect of *silsilah*, so it would be misleading to interpret them as purely genealogical descriptive terms. The invocation of their names both authenticates and blesses practices in the present. The



graves of Embah Buyut and his son Embah Rangga are situated to the west of Kampung Tarikolot. Between the 12<sup>th</sup> and the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the Islamic month of *Maulud* the graves, along with those of Embah Ace Naseha and Abah Kahir, are visited by pilgrims, the majority of whom are Cimande locals or from the West Java pencak silat community. Many perform nightlong vigils at these graves in the hope that they may receive blessings. Abah Kahir was, according to Pak Ace, a simple farmer who spent his entire life living in the vicinity of Cimande. The black loose fitting calf length pants (Sd: *sontog* or *pangsi*) and loose long sleeved shirt (Ind: *baju kampret*) worn by Abah Kahir and other village men have become the standard uniform of pencak silat.

This story varies from those oral traditions maintained in Cianjur where it is believed that he was born in Kamurang village, in the sub-district of Mande, Cikalong Kulon, a part of the residency of Cianjur.<sup>56</sup> In Cianjur tradition he is said to have made a living as a horse trader, often traveling to Batavia (Jakarta) and other parts of West Java. On his travels he often had difficulties with wild animals such as tigers and jaguars as well as robbers. From these experiences Abah Kahir developed a system of self-defense. In Batavia he came into contact with martial artists from China and West Sumatra that helped him to refine his skills. After his martial ability came to the attention of Raden Aria Adipati Wiratanudatar VI, the Regent (Ind: *Bupati*) of Cianjur (1776 to 1813), he was employed as a *pamuk*, a Sundanese term for pencak masters employed by the aristocracy. From then on he is said to have taught pencak exclusively to local *menak*, including the Regent's children. This was even though he himself was a commoner (Sd: *somah*).<sup>57</sup> Abah Kahir had five sons, Endut, Otang, Komar, Oyot and Ocod who spread

pencak silat Cimande from Bogor via Cianjur to Bandung and then throughout West Java.<sup>58</sup> Soon after Wiratanudatar died in 1813, Abah Kahir is said to have moved to Kampung Babakan Tarikolot, Cimande, where he stayed until his death in 1825.



**Table 1:** First two generations of a sacred genealogy of Cimande Pencak Silat

Pak Ace downplays the fight events, referred to as “tough guy stories” (Ind: *kisah jagoan*), surrounding Abah Kahir as mere “fantasy” (Ind: *khayalan*). In his opinion they promote a negative image of Abah Kahir as someone who was aggressive, an image which conflicts with the defensive technical and philosophical foundation of the style. “They give a bad example as they always revolve around violent incidents, emphasizing arrogance and other ego related values, all of which are the antithesis of the values esteemed in Cimande pencak silat”.<sup>59</sup> In terms of its technique and philosophy Cimande is defensive and it is strictly forbidden for students to initiate an attack. As one practitioner explained it “what’s the point of fighting? It’s exhausting! If you can still run away, that’s the best way!”.<sup>60</sup> Pak Ace dismissed the suggestion that Cimande techniques were based upon *Alif* and *Lam* saying that such an opinion could “irritate religious leaders”, and that pencak silat was an “physical” issue (Ar: *dohir*). Pencak silat is seen as being in accord

with and supportive of religious teachings, but not a substitute to them. Students are required to be diligent in carrying out their religious obligations.

According to Pak Ace Cimande jurus are drawn from the practices of everyday life as found in a traditional Sundanese farming community: ploughing fields, carrying firewood, cutting grass, swatting a mosquito, sitting cross legged in the mosque after prayers. Just as natural phenomena are believed to reflect universal laws, so human culture also reflects universal generative principles. The ‘local genius’ of Embah Buyut and Abah Kahir was their ability to systematize these movements into a form of self-defense (Ind: *beladiri*): “the ability to look after oneself (Ind: *jagadiri*) is given by God to every creature, whereas self-defense is a creation of humans, ordained by God”.<sup>61</sup> As the principles of Cimande techniques are contained within the practice of everyday life, “instinctively all people possess Cimande *jurus*...pencak silat is practiced by everyone even though they may not be aware of it themselves”.<sup>62</sup> The techniques of the body are specific to a particular place and time, however the logic of the body underlying them is universal. The names of some of the Cimande jurus reflect ‘natural’ everyday body techniques as is illustrated by the Sundanese terms *batekan* (to withdraw one’s hand when it is strained) and *guaran* (to open something and observe what’s inside).<sup>63</sup>

### **Learning Cimande**

Training in Cimande pencak traditionally consists of three stages. Before starting physical training a prospective student must first take an oath (Sd: *taleq*) and undergo a ritual initiation after which they are accepted as a member of the family of Cimande

pencak silat. In the ritual initiation the student first recites the *taleq* before their teacher. This oath acts as both a ‘contract’ between teacher and student, and as a guideline for appropriate behaviour:

1. You must venerate and be faithful towards Allah and His Prophets<sup>64</sup>
2. Do not disagree with your mother or father
3. Do not disagree with your guru or king
4. Do not gamble and steal
5. Do not be arrogant
6. Don’t commit adultery
7. Don’t lie or be deceptive
8. Do not get drunk or smoke opium
9. Do not kill or harm God’s creations
10. Don’t take without permission, or take without asking
11. Do not be envious and jealous
12. Do not avoid paying what you owe
13. You must be polite, humble, not greedy, and respect one another in the community of humankind
14. Studying Cimande is not for showing off, bragging or mischief, but for seeking peace in this world and the next.

After the oath has been taken the teacher squeezes beetle vine juice into the eyes of the student, an act known as *dipeureuh*. This is symbolic of the student’s entry into a new

world, and their commitment towards “seeing things clearly”.<sup>65</sup> The Sundanese word *peureuh* (to blink due to something in the eye) is interpreted as being a composite of *peurih* (smarting, painful) and *peurah* (ability, capable, influential). The student will pass through a period of physical pain (Sd: *waktos peureuh*) that will test their resolve and dedication. However once they have passed through the *waktos peureuh* they will have achieved an incredible ability (Sd: *peurah*).

The Cimande *jurus* consist of three parts; 33 *jurus buang kelid*, 17 *jurus pepedangan* and *jurus tapak selancar*. The *jurus kelid* contain the self-defence techniques of Cimande. The first three *jurus* are learnt in pairs whilst in a seated cross-legged position. According to Ace Sutisna this evolved from the practice of conducting training after prayers in the mosque, which is also why training is done in a sarong and black cap (*peci*). Seated in pairs, students practised the *jurus buang kelid*, alternately attacking and defending. From the fifth to the ninth *jurus* contact is made between the forearms of the training pair in order to condition them.<sup>66</sup> One Cimande student recounted how in his initial training he practiced until his forearms were badly bruised and swollen. During the night he suffered hot and cold flushes due to the pain. Early the next morning he began the same training again; “It hurt so much to the point that it didn’t hurt any more...that tolerance to pain is now a part of me”.<sup>67</sup> After the student is proficient at the seated *jurus* and has strengthened the forearms, they begin practising the *jurus* in conjunction with step patterns. Again in pairs, one student attacks with a straightforward step, while the other defends themselves using a three part step pattern known as *langkah tilu*. After mastering the *jurus buang kelid*, the next stage of training is the *jurus pepedangan*. The *pepedangan*

jurus are a simulation of combat with weapons. Sharp weapons are never used in training, the student instead using a bamboo pole of around 50-60cm in length against an imaginary opponent. The final stage of training is mastery of the aesthetic dimension of Cimande, contained in the jurus *tapak selancar*. As they are designed for public display, the *tapak selancar* movements are highly stylised, so that the martial applications are hidden to the uninitiated. The jurus are performed with musical accompaniment. This consists of two large and one small drum (Sd: *kendang*) that provide the tempo of the performance, a wooden trumpet that provides melody, as well as small gong (Sd: *kempul*). Within West Javanese pencak silat generally there are four major drum patterns that are used:

1. *Tepak Dua*: A slower beat in order to highlight the subtleties of the pencak silat movements performed.
2. *Tepak Tilu*: A medium paced tempo used to accompany faster movements.
3. *Golempang*: A more up beat tempo that accompanies fast combinations of movements by a single performer.
4. *Pangdungdung*: An even faster beat that accompanies an improvised mock fight between two performers. Rather than being followed by the performers, this drum pattern takes its cue from the movements themselves, hence the performers need to create a rhythmic pattern.

### **Hard Hands, Healing Hands**

Apart from pencak silat, the village of Cimande also has a long tradition of healing broken bones. Cimande village's reputation for healing increased dramatically in the early 1970s. The increased importation of cheap motorbikes from Japan meant that many

villagers were able to afford an “iron horse” (Ind: *kuda besi*).<sup>68</sup> The rise in motorbike ownership also led to a rise in serious road accidents.<sup>69</sup> The high price of hospital treatment forced many to turn to traditional healers. The tradition of healing in Cimande is inter-woven with pencak silat. Pak Ace says that the techniques used for massaging broken bones are drawn directly from the jurus of Cimande pencak silat. Training instills an understanding of human anatomy and a sensitivity towards “how the body works, as well as what hurts”.<sup>70</sup> Unlike conventional methods that seek to immobilize the damaged bone, it is vigorously massaged. After this usually excruciating painful experience, Cimande oil (Sd: *balur Cimande*) is applied, and then the limb is bandaged and splinted.



1. *Jurus Kelid Cimande*: The four stages of the *kelid* jurus of the Cimande style of pencak silat as demonstrated by Gending Raspuzi.

The specific ingredients of the oil and the process by which it is made are the possession of a number of families in Cimande including Ace Sutisna and Haji Gufron, and are a closely guarded secret. According to Haji Gufron, “the history of Cimande oil is that it was for treating the wounds or broken bones of students or opponents who suffered injuries in a fight”.<sup>71</sup> Popular legend has it that the oil can only be made one night a year on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of the month of Maulud. The two prime ingredients are earth and coconut

oil. The earth is believed to be loose soil taken from the grave of Abah Kahir, the founder of pencak silat Cimande, which is situated in Kampung Sareal, Bogor. Likewise the coconuts are said to be taken from trees that grow near the grave. Another account is that one must find a tree facing east with only one green coconut on it. The coconuts are cooked, producing an oily residue known as *minyak keletik burung*. This is then mixed with white sugar cane as well as several other herbs, also a closely guarded secret. The special healing and strengthening qualities of the oil are then ‘activated’ by the recital of mantra unique to the family concerned. According to Ace Sutisna, “the oil in itself is not unusual, it is the mantra that brings it to life”.<sup>72</sup> The oil absorbs easily into the skin and is believed to saturate the bones, strengthening them, and making the arms both resilient to blows and extremely slippery. The result is that the arms become impervious to pain, and it is believed that it becomes impossible for an opponent to grasp or hold them.

### **Cikalong**

Unlike Cimande, which was developed and grew amongst the peasantry, Cikalong was created and developed within the confines of the *menak* of Cianjur. Cikalong borrowed from and synthesized elements of Kari, Madi and Cimande into a new unique system of pencak silat. The history of pencak silat in Cianjur is, in comparison with other areas, well documented, mainly due to the fact that the menak kept written records and *silsilah*, while also maintaining a rich and detailed oral tradition.

Cikalong was first created and taught by Raden Jayaperbata, who after performing a pilgrimage to Mecca changed his name to Raden Haji Ibrahim. Haji Ibrahim was the son



of Raden Rajadireja, tracing a line of descent through the regents of Cianjur back to Prabu Siliwangi.<sup>73</sup> He first studied pencak silat from his brother in law Raden Ateng Alimuddin, a horse trader from Jatinegara, Jakarta, and a descendent of the Sultan of Banten, Maulana Hasunudin. Ateng was a master of the Kampung Baru style of Cimande. He worked closely with the colonial authorities, helping them to quash a short-lived war between Chinese and Sundanese in Karawang, to the southeast of Batavia and capture Bapak Beka, a notorious bandit.<sup>74</sup> On the instruction of his brother in law, Haji Ibrahim then went and studied with Bang Ma'ruf, a pencak silat master from Kampung Karet, Tanah Abang, Batavia.

As a horse trader himself, Haji Ibrahim often traveled back and forth between Batavia and Cianjur. Whilst studying with Bang Ma'ruf he happened to meet his neighbour, Bang Madi, who was also horse trader from Pagarruyung, West Sumatra. From that moment on, without the knowledge of Bang Ma'ruf, Haji Ibrahim began studying silat under Bang Madi. As a member of the Cianjur aristocracy Haji Ibrahim was capable of paying for Bang Madi to come to Cianjur and teach silat. There all his everyday needs were taken care of. From Bang Madi Haji Ibrahim obtained *ngelmu permainan rasa*, a degree of sensitivity to movement that when developed resulted in the ability to read an opponent's movements on touch and immediately counter them.

Bang Madi was renowned for his mastery of the technique known as *bendungan*, which involved withstanding an opponents blows and then 'overtaking power with power'. In Cikalong circles this technique is referred to as *puhu tanaga* or *puhu gerak*.

One account of the meeting between the two goes as follows:<sup>75</sup>

“At one time, R.H Ibrahim was practising pencak with Bang Ma’rup late at night. After finishing and having a drink R.H Ibrahim said, “Bang Ma’rup, I want to ask you who was that person watching us while we were practising?”.

Bang Ma’rup: “That was Madi, the horse trader who lives next to me. He lives alone and makes a living selling horses”.

R.H. Ibrahim: “If that’s the case I want to meet him, because I’m sure he will be able to help me find horses in Jakarta”

Bang Ma’rup: “Ok prince, tomorrow you can go to his house. He is a nice man”.

After morning prayers R.H. Ibrahim went alone to his home, walking around it. When he reached the back of the house he saw two fine horses and became engrossed examining them. At that moment Bang Madi emerged from his house and approached R.H. Ibrahim, saying, “honorable prince, please come in so we can talk about horses”.

R.H. Ibrahim: “Thank you. I am very impressed with your horses. How much would you sell them to me for?”.

Bang Madi: “Please sit down first prince. There is some warm coffee. Please have a drink”.

R.H. Ibrahim gladly accepted Bang Madi’s offer, the two sitting down together and drinking coffee.

Bang Madi: “Last night I saw the honorable prince practising pencak with Bang Ma’rup. Your silat was excellent and nearly too good for Bang Ma’rup”.

On hearing the term ‘silat’, R.H. Ibrahim gazed intently at Bang Madi and asked, “Do you know silat?”.

Bang Madi answered, “Oh no your honorable prince, I’ve never studied it”

R.H. Ibrahim: “Where do you originally come from?”.

Bang Madi: “Actually I am from Betawi”

R.H. Ibrahim: “I find it hard to believe that you don’t know silat. Try placing your hands on mine. Don’t be scared, I won’t hurt you”.

Bang Madi: “Really, I can’t. I’m afraid of your abilities”.

R.H. Ibrahim still didn’t believe that Bang Madi had no knowledge of silat, so he pressured him again to ‘join hands’ (Ind: *bersambung tangan*). Bang Madi finally gave in to R.H. Ibrahim, saying, “Ok prince, if you insist. But please excuse me, I must go inside first”.

In a matter of seconds Bang Madi emerged from his house saying “Excuse me prince, but who will take stance first?”.

R.H. Ibrahim requested that Bang Madi take stance first. Bang Madi adopted an impressive horse stance, saying, “Prince, this is the Panther Descends from the Mountain stance”.

In an instant, Bang Madi's stance was 'welcomed' by R.H. Ibrahim, but just as quickly Bang Madi deflected R.H. Ibrahim's attack, sending him flying to the ground.

R.H. Ibrahim was startled, not suspecting that he would be so ungraciously thrown to the floor. He got to his feet and said, 'Let's try one more time. Now I will take a stance'. R.H. Ibrahim's stance was instantly 'met' by Bang Madi, resulting in him once more being thrown to the ground. Time and time again R.H. Ibrahim was 'played with' by Bang Madi until he had no energy left. "On this day I accept defeat and recognize you as my teacher" said R. H. Ibrahim. "But please don't ever mention this to Bang Ma'ruf". He added, "I will buy all of your horses and pay what ever you ask for them. Early tomorrow morning bring them and I will pay you. Then I will sell them again".

After they had agreed, R. H. Ibrahim returned to Bang Ma'ruf's house. He thought to himself, "Bang Ma'ruf stares but doesn't see. How could he not know that Bang Madi was such a master of pencak?".

After Bang Madi considered Haji Ibrahim to have mastered his silat, he recommended that he meet with a silat master from Kampung Benteng, Tangerang, known as Bang Kari. Before being accepted as a student Haji Ibrahim's skills were tested by Bang Kari, from which he concluded that Haji Ibrahim was a gifted student. From Bang Kari he learnt *ulin peupeuhan*, techniques that focused upon speed and explosive power.

The dialogue between Bang Madi and Haji Ibrahim illustrates an archetypal pattern of apprenticeship within pencak silat. An advanced practitioner challenges a seemingly unskilled opponent, who in turn defeats them. Accepting defeat they ask and are accepted as a pupil. The true mastery of the guru is that they do not ‘display’ their abilities, and only reveal their skill when forced. This is often referred to as the “science of rice” (Ind: *ilmu padi*). Just as rice stalks bend further towards the earth with increasing maturity, so a pencak silat master becomes more humble the more knowledge that they possess. As one current teacher states, “the mark of a true pendekar is that when asked they will deny having any knowledge of pencak silat”.<sup>76</sup> This being the case, a true pendekar would never use their knowledge for obtaining material gain or political power.



2. Raden Abdur Rauff, a sixth generation Cikalong practitioner, stands in front of the cave in which Raden Haji Ibrahim received the inspiration to create the Cikalong style. The cave is situated in Cikalong Kulon, Cianjur, West Java.

Apart from these three masters Haji Ibrahim is reputed to have studied with between 17 to 40 other silat guru. The fact that they are not listed in any documented silsilah suggests that their influence upon Haji Ibrahim was minimal. After completing his studies Haji Ibrahim performed frequent retreats (Ar: *khalwat*) in a cave situated in Kampung Jelebud on the banks of the Cikundul Leutik river in Cikalong Kulon, Cianjur.

From this three year long period of meditative retreat Haji Ibrahim received the inspiration through which he created a synthesis of all that he had learned. The resulting style came to be known as “aliran Cikalong”, the name taken from the village in Cianjur where he lived when he created and first taught it.

From the beginnings of this aliran up until the present a standardized form has never emerged. All of Haji Ibrahim’s students had different abilities and repertoires of movements, perhaps due to his method of teaching, which was adapted in accord with the physical attributes, aptitude, likes and dislikes of those he taught. Some students became renowned for their expertise ‘play of punches’ (Sd: *ameng peupeuhan*) others for *ulin rasa* or *ulin tempelan* (‘play of sensitivity’) as well as *usik tungtung*, techniques involving counter attacks after an opponent has been exhausted, and *ulin puhu*, intuiting and proceeding an opponent’s moves. During its early history aliran Cikalong was the preserve of a select few. This was due to the fact that Haji Ibrahim was extremely selective in choosing his students, partly due to his concern that his knowledge may fall into the wrong hands, which was considered far more likely to occur outside of the immediate family. Also the culture of the aristocracy, one that was obsessed with maintaining ‘face’ as well as defending symbolic cultural boundaries between themselves and common people (Sd: *somah*), meant that Cikalong was largely taught within family circles. The various prohibitions that regulated social interaction between *menak* and *somah*, such as the performance of prostration (Sd: *sembah*) and *gengsor* (to walk in a squatting position) when in the presence of *menak* would have made the physically intimate context of training almost impossible.<sup>77</sup> To train a commoner would mean to break with the conventions of his social class. *Sembah* for example, was required to be

performed whenever a commoner touched, spoke to, sat before, or passed by a menak.<sup>78</sup> Nina Lubis, in her study of the culture of the Priangan menak, states that the relationship between the two was that of “the powerful” (Sd: *anu kawasa*) and “the powerless” (Sd: *anu teu kawasa*).<sup>79</sup> The Regent and his relatives were considered with the same reverence as a king, a perception that persisted despite Dutch efforts to marginalize their authority. Haji Ibrahim’s teachers were either relatives, or in the case of Bang Kari and Bang Madi, non-Sundanese. Hence they were not bound by the constraints placed on interaction between different social classes within Sundanese society.

Due to his economic standing Haji Ibrahim did not rely upon his students financially and hence had no desire to increase their number. Another determining factor for the small numbers of students was that it was essential for them to touch (Sd: *napal*) hands with the guru. The focus upon feeling (Ind: *rasa*) in Cikalong was trained through the practice known as *tapalan* or *napal*:

Napal is a form of close-range fighting without punches, involving breaks (*rerikesan*), pushes (*susunan*) and locks (*lipatan*). Its core element is the processing of energy. Where do we focus our energy if, for example, an opponent pushes us? The force of our opponent is redirected, as if we were catching a fish. If we truly understand napal then we know how refinement can overcome brute strength. It is a matter of understanding where energy is focused, and how to refocus it. We overcome the opponent by closing off their means of attack. In Madi this is referred to as *numpang kalawan*. Really napal can only be felt, and not described. For that reason it takes a long time to master.<sup>80</sup>

Through this ‘hands on’ method the guru was also able to gauge the sensitivity of a student. As the practice required a one on one method the number of students who could study under a particular guru at any one time was limited. *Amengan tapalan* developed into a favorite pastime amongst the Cianjur aristocracy with its own particular set of

rules. The aim of the practice was to develop the sensitivity of the hands and forearms to the point that they could ‘see’ an opponents moves without the aid of the physical eyes. Advanced practitioners used blindfolds. The importance placed upon physical sensitivity meant that Cikalong practitioners, in contrast to those of Cimande, avoided receiving blows to the arms, as it was feared that this may dull or kill nerves. Techniques that were developed via this practice included drops (Sd: *labuhan*), breaks (Sd: *rikesan*) and locks (Sd: *lipatan*). Haji Ibrahim’s ‘refinement’ of the various techniques he had learnt from Abang Madi, Abang Kari and Rd. Ateng Alimudin was one based in the habitus of the aristocracy. Pencak silat created and practised by commoners (Sunda: *somah*) was refined in line with a particular technical rationale based in practice, yet this rationale was not in conflict with the physical ‘dispositions’ of his social class. For example the absence of kicks and the use of a *seser* or sliding step pattern is explained by the strategic rationale that when a person lifted their leg off the ground they put themselves in a state of imbalance. Yet it was also true that the tightly wrapped knee length batik cloth that was customary attire for both male and female menak of Cianjur would have made kicks or lifting steps extremely difficult.<sup>81</sup>



3. *Tempelan Cikalong*: Raden Harun Sirod (left) and demonstrate the *tempelan* method of Cikalong pencak silat.



After Haji Ibrahim's death three main schools of Cikalong developed in Cianjur; Bojong Herang, Pasar Baru and Kaum, led respectively by Raden Haji Abdullah, Raden Muhidin, and Raden Ibrahim Obing.<sup>82</sup> Despite their similarities, tensions did arise between them. Younger students made a pastime out of trying out those from other schools, and vicious rumors were spread. Around the same time (in the late 1920s to early 1930's) Cikalong first began to be taught to those outside of the Cianjur aristocracy. It soon spread to Bandung, Garut, Tasikmalaya, Sukabumi and Jakarta.

In the tea plantations surrounding Mt. Galunggung, Tasikmalaya, locals believe in the existence of *Onom*, a type of malevolent female spirit with prowess in silat Cikalong. The term *Onom* is of an adaptation of the Sundanese word *anom* which means "young wife". According to local belief the spirits of the numerous concubines (Sd: *anom selir*) that Rd. Hj. Ibrahim was reputed to have had, inhabit the area, attacking any unwary man who disturbs them. Their anger is believed to be due to the fact that the inheritors of silat Cikalong do not appropriately recognize their descendants.<sup>83</sup>

### ***Olah Rasa: Processing Feeling***

It is interesting to note within Cikalong history the frequently recurring motif of the touching, laying on, or rubbing of hands as a means by which one's pencak skills can be 'sensed'. Touch replaces sight as the main sense through which martial prowess is assessed. Within Cikalong there are distinct levels of *rasa* that correspond to an increase in sensory and extra-sensory perception which are the product (Sd: *tapak*; literally meaning foot or hand print) of physical training. This *tapak* is the "outcome of

internalizing the jurus, but is not bound by them. It manifests as reflex, sensitivity and creativity”.<sup>84</sup>

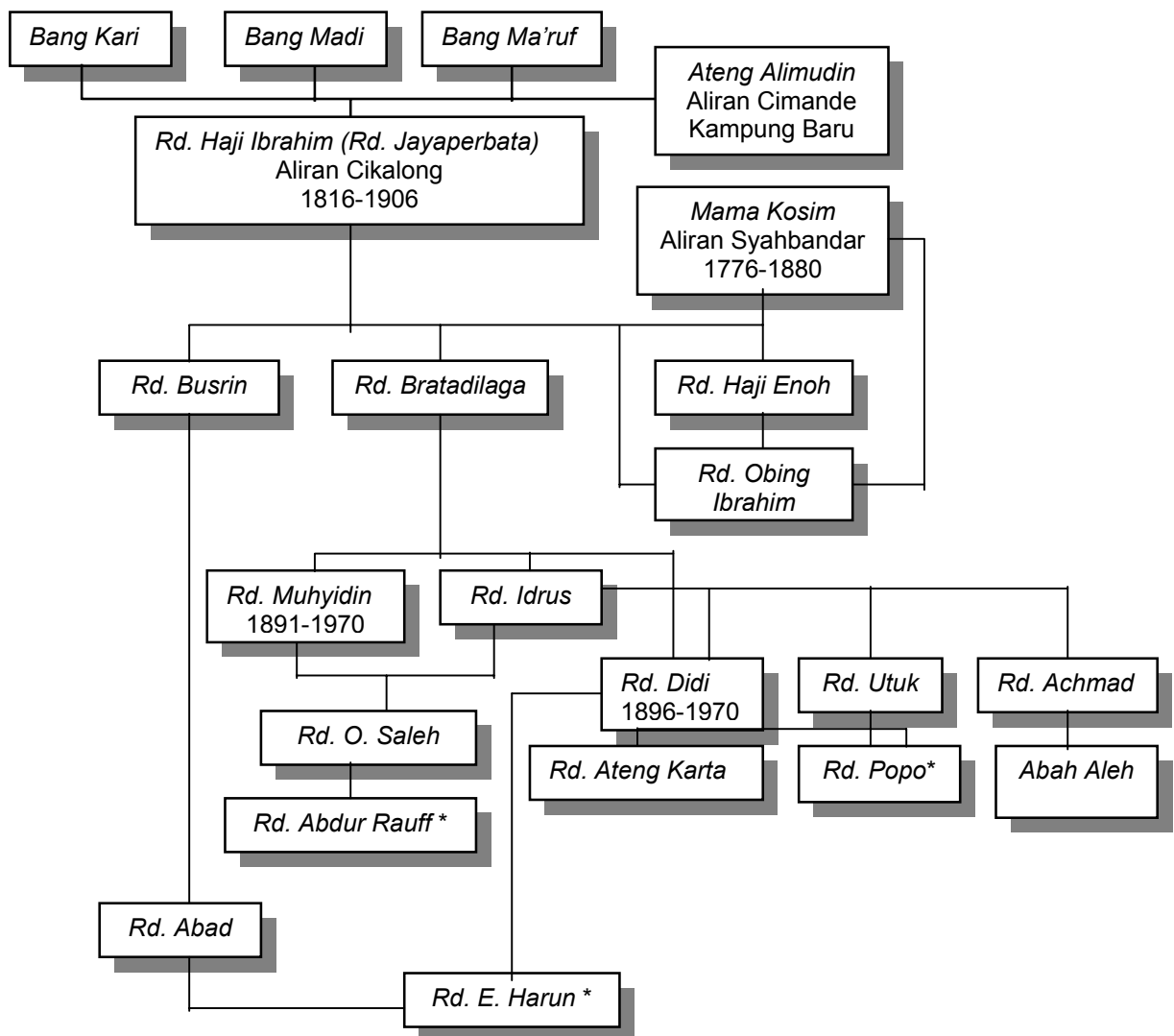
The first type of rasa is the physical sense of touch (Sd: *rasa antel*) that is developed via napal. The second level of rasa manifests in the ability to sense someone’s intentions and abilities at a distance, without any physical contact (Sd: *rasa anggang*). This involves developing one’s powers of observation. Over time, this sensitivity and ability to read opponent’s movements can evolve into intuitive powers and presentiment, known as *rasa sinar*. The process of developing rasa is an ongoing one, the practitioner constantly striving to discover “the feeling within feeling” (Sd: *rasa sajeroning rasa*).<sup>85</sup>

Cikalong training begins with the rote learning of forms that are performed until the guru considers the student to have sufficiently ‘internalized’ them. At this stage the stress is upon correct form and posture, and the student is forbidden to improvise in any way or reflect upon the possible martial applications of the jurus. As Abdur Rauff, a sixth generation Cikalong practitioner puts it:

In order that our body, or parts of it, can perform precise movements by themselves in a positive reflexive manner (Sd: *gerakan kalawan hideng ku sorangan*) we must make a habit of training ourselves to carry out the basic teachings, which are usually referred to as ‘jurus’, seriously and diligently to the point that movements that were initially performed consciously and under the control of the mind will eventually become habit. They become movements that are reflexive without entering thought beforehand.<sup>86</sup>

According to Rd. Harun Sirod, to successfully internalize jurus involves a reflexive mastery of their form, but also more importantly an embodying of the principles that are seen to underlie them. In essence, jurus are merely exercises for training the ability to

‘process’ the energy of an opponents attack. In combat one cannot rely upon the rote repetition of pre-learned sequences. The practitioner must be in a state of awareness focused upon the moment, and able to adapt and apply these principles to the situation at hand (Sd: *kondisi sanalika*). The four elements crucial to a student’s success are ‘correctness’ (Ind: *benar*), ‘substance’ (Ind: *berbobot*), “refinement” (Sd: *halus*), and ‘meaning’ (Sd: *harti*).<sup>87</sup>



**Table 2:** Cikalong Silsilah according to Rd. Nunung bin Rd. Obing. This silsilah was collated in 1955 and officially recognized by the History Commission for the Regency of Cianjur. \* : Denotes current teachers



4. Gan Uweh, a student of Raden Idrus and Raden Muhyidin. Photo courtesy of Raden Harun Sirod.



5. Raden Idrus, a third generation Cikalong practitioner. Photo courtesy of Raden Harun Sirod.

Despite the diversity of Cikalong several characteristic elements of its practice can be found. One is the use of a ‘close range’ fighting method, with a distance of less than one arm’s length from the opponent. As much as possible the Cikalong practitioner attempts to maintain physical contact with the opponent (Ind: *tapal*) at all times. Tapal helps the practitioner develop an intuitive understanding of the physics of movement. Through contact the practitioner attempts to guide and redirect the force of an opponent’s attack. Another is the focus upon the development and application of a high level of physical sensitivity (Ind: *rasa*). Via this sensitivity, developed primarily through the practice of tapal, the Cikalong practitioner is able to read and determine opponent’s moves, and the appropriate use of force/energy required to counter them. According to Harun Sirod it is

important not to anticipate, but rather “feel” an opponent’s movement as it emerges, for “anticipation can be wrong whereas feeling is always accurate”.<sup>88</sup> To avoid anticipating, the Cikalong practitioner must maintain a calm demeanor, as anger or fear result in a tensing of the muscles that dulls sensitivity. Contests of strength (Sd: *adu tanaga*) are avoided, the Cikalong practitioner instead attempting to “throw away” (Ind: *buang*) an opponent’s energy and use it to their own advantage (Sd: *siasat merean*): “the principle of the use of force (in Cikalong) is to be economical and efficient, as such contests of strength must be avoided except in certain circumstances such as in “fishing” techniques (Ind: *pancingan*) and *bendungan*”.<sup>89</sup>



6. Raden Obing bin Ibrahim, a second-generation Cikalong practitioner. Photo from *Volksalmanak Sunda*, 1936.

In practice this involves redirecting the force of an opponent's attack so that they lose balance, employing techniques such as "light on one side" (Sd: *hampang sabeulah*). This is followed up by repetitive strikes, such as short twisting punches. After each strike the attacking part of the body is not pulled back but rather directed to the parts of the opponent's anatomy that are "empty" (Sd: *balik ka saasalna kalawan make tanaga kosong*). Contests of strength occur when a practitioner holds on to their opponent forcefully, hence Cikalong favors a light, loose grasp. When force is applied in a particular direction, for example when an opponent pushes with the right side of their body, the Cikalong practitioner gives way, attacking the "empty" side (in this case the left side). This principle is known as "force resists, empty force" (Ind: *tenaga melawan hampa tenaga*).<sup>90</sup> Like *rasa*, three types of "force" (Sd: *tanaga*) are identified within Cikalong; "rough force" (Sd: *tanaga kasar*), "middle force" (Sd: *tanaga satengah*) and refined force known as "empty force but with content" (Sd: *tanaga kosong tapi ngeusi*). The ultimate goal of training is to develop and employ this refined force:

The essence of Cikalong pencak silat is to defeat/disable an opponent without relying upon physical strength, but rather by using a specific set of fighting techniques and skills. Hence what is required in Cikalong is not great strength but rather technical precision, flexibility, as well as a precise application of energy in movement combined with refined senses, fast and positive reactions and an efficient application of force.<sup>91</sup>

In Cikalong there is an overwhelming focus upon hand and arm techniques. Hand and arm attacks are usually in the form of punches (Sd: *peupeuhan*), elbows (Sd: *sikutan*), open palm strikes and 'drops' (Sd: *labuhan*). The principle of strikes is that the hard strikes the soft (ie. a clenched fist punch for fleshy areas of the body), and the soft strikes the hard (ie. open palm strikes to bones).<sup>92</sup> The primary target of strikes is nerve points

and parts of the body not protected by bone. Offensive techniques involving the legs are confined to frontal snap kicks and sweeps, and are only used when an opponents hands are fully “controlled” by the practitioner. Into the present day Cikalong has continued to place an emphasis upon self-defense. It has not been adapted into a ‘sport’, as this would alter its most basic principles; the processing of an opponent’s energy via the use of refined force and feeling.

### **Syahbandar**

At the same time that Haji Ibrahim was teaching aliran Cikalong another silat master named Muhammad Kosim (1776-1880), who lived in Kampung Syahbandar, Cianjur, was also instructing several Cianjur aristocrats, a number of whom were also students of Haji Ibrahim, including Raden Haji Enoh. As a result the two styles, Cikalong and Syahbandar, were melded by subsequent generations of Cikalong masters, most notably Raden Haji Enoh. Haji Ibrahim never studied under Muhammad Kosim, but there is an oral tradition recounting that the two met and fought in the town of Purwakarta. According to Yosis Siswoyo, the guru of the Bandar Karima pencak silat school,<sup>93</sup> Mama Kosim was expelled from his home in Pagarryung, West Sumatra, after he taught *silat marga* (clan silat) to those outside of his own family.<sup>94</sup> One description of him reads as follows:

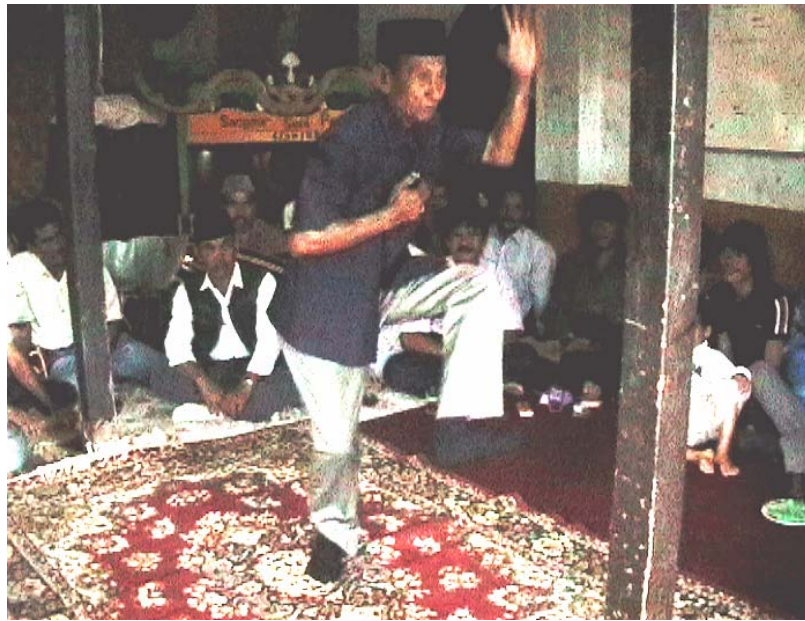
Regarding the physique of Mama Sabandar, he was tall, with large hands, a broad muscular chest and possessed exceptional strength. He had a patient nature, was compassionate towards his students and unwavering when facing a dangerous opponent. His possession of great knowledge showed that he used pencak with a purity of heart. On the other hand, of those who used pencak on him in a deceptive manner, many of them suffered as a result of their own actions.<sup>95</sup>

He traveled widely, eventually arriving in Cianjur where he met with students of Haji Ibrahim. Ibrahim's students, as members of the local aristocracy, had their own coconut plantation in Syahbandar village. On Sundays they would have a picnic at the plantation and train *maenpo* as well. As Mama Kosim was a stranger in the area they invited him to join them. After watching Ibrahim's students train several times Mama Kosim was eventually asked to join in, which he did. However he did not let on that he was already an accomplished silat expert himself, on the contrary he deliberately 'acted dumb'. Ibrahim's students soon became impatient with their apparently stupid training partner. Tempers flared at his inability to perform even the simplest of movements, to the point that one of Ibrahim's students attacked Mama Kosim. At that moment Mama Kosim's reflexes took over and he skillfully avoided and deflected the numerous attacks launched at him. It was then that his secret was revealed, that he was indeed a silat master in his own right. From then on Ibrahim's students, without the knowledge of their teacher, began to study under Mama Kosim. It didn't take long however for Haji Ibrahim to 'feel' that something was going on. He sent some of his other students to spy on the Sunday picnickers and they confirmed his suspicions, that they were studying with another teacher. Haji Ibrahim confronted Mama Kosim and a fight erupted.<sup>96</sup> However due to their respective skills it ended in a draw. A truce was soon called, with each recognizing the ability of the other:

On making contact with Raden Ibrahim's arm, Mam Sabandar was surprised by the amount of 'intention' he could sense in them. So was the case with Raden Ibrahim, who could feel from Mama Sabandar's arms that he had incredible skill. "Whoever moves first will certainly be injured" said Raden Ibrahim. Consequently the two experts waited, neither wanting to initiate an attack. After around a minute of tense waiting Mama Sabandar spoke; "Raden this is enough, your knowledge is great". On hearing his words, Raden Ibrahim withdrew his hands, relieved that there hadn't been an incident.<sup>97</sup>



From that point two streams of aliran Cikalong emerged, one which incorporated *aliran Syahbandar* and one which didn't. The former was spread via the first six students of Mama Kosim: Raden Natadipura, Raden Abdulrahman, Mama Haji Anda, Raden Haji Musa, Umar and Raden Haji Enoh.



7. Gan Ita Sasmita performs a Syahbandar technique at a meeting of pencak silat elders in Cianjur, West Java, January 1999.

In Cianjur Mama Kosim became a student of Ajengan Cirata, a sufi teacher (Ind: *guru tarekat*) from the Naqsyabandiyah order. At the time Naqsyabandiyah was experiencing a huge growth in popularity amongst local *menak*, a phenomenon which caused considerable anxiety for the Dutch colonial authorities.<sup>98</sup> Even the Regent of Cianjur, a relative of Haji Ibrahim, joined. Ajengan Cirata in turn became a student of Mama Kosim along with many other Islamic teachers in the region, facilitating the spread of Syahbandar through the extensive networks of *tarekat* and *pesantren* in the area.<sup>99</sup> When

Ajengan Cirata moved to Purwakarta, Mama Kosim followed, remaining there until his death in 1880.

It is possible that, as was the case in West Sumatra, pencak silat training may have been used as a means of spreading *tarekat* teachings. This can be seen in Banten, where the teaching of pencak silat Syahbandar is closely intertwined with Sufi concepts. For example the first and last *jurus* consist of just one movement, interpreted as meaning that humanity comes from the One and returns to the One. Students must perform ritual ablutions (Ind: *wudhu*) before training which is done facing in the direction of Mecca, just as in the mandatory ritual prayers of Islam (Ind: *shalat*). The guru also gives students passages from the Quran (Ind: *wirid*) that must be recited internally in synchronicity with the movements. A link is made between physical movement and divine invocation.

Like Bang Kari and Bang Madi, Mama Kosim was not an ethnic Sundanese. Bang Kari and Mama Kosim are said to have come from the same village, however Bang Madi had left there for Batavia when Mama Kosim was still a young boy. It is recounted that after being expelled from his clan Mama Kosim got work as a sailor. In silat mythology Mama Kosim was reputed to be a tiger tamer (Ind: *pawang macan*). Legend recounts that he was called upon by the regent of Purwakarta to get rid of a tiger that had been creating a nuisance of itself in the area. He is also said to have tried his hand as a horse trader, without success.

Syahbandar techniques are described by practitioners as being “like a whip, it is soft and flexible but devastating”.<sup>100</sup> One of the defining features of Syahbandar is the focus upon soft (Sd: *leuleus*) movements. According to Mohammad Rafijen, the soft flowing movements are designed to encourage an opponent to attack, at which point the Syahbandar practitioner responds with a powerful counter-attack.<sup>101</sup> The ‘softness’ of the style hides the power behind the movements, a strength through yielding.

### **Cianjur Networks**

The tradition of pencak silat within the aristocracy of Cianjur was well established one. The material resources available to them, as well as their position in the colonial administration meant that they were able to travel widely, providing them with the opportunity to study under a number of teachers. Many Cianjur regents made it compulsory for aristocrats working within the colonial administration to study pencak silat, along with the Quran and *tembang* (sung poetry). The network of practitioners expanded over time, and innovations were made as they distilled and refined their skills. Many studied under a number of teachers, though usually still within the extended family. Whilst still grounded in Cikalong, a number of sub-aliran emerged. For example, in the village of Cikaret, Sukabumi Ajengan Sanusi developed the Cikaret system that blended elements of Cimande and Cikalong.

Another influential sub-style was Sanalika that was developed by Raden Utuk Sumadipraja. Utuk was born in Tarogong, Garut on 13 May 1897. His mother was the grand daughter of Ajengan Biru, the ulama of Tarogong, whilst his father was from

Talaga, in the district of Kuningan. He established Sanalika in 1926. The style's motto was 'If you come you will be provided for, if you go you will be given provisions, please go first but I will overtake you' (Ind: *bila datang disediakan, bila pergi diberi bekal, silahkan lebih dahulu, nanti saya mendahului*).

Utuk developed Sanalika from his experiences studying five different aliran:<sup>102</sup>

1. *Aliran Jurus Tujuh*. Utuk began studying this from Abah Nata when he was still in primary school in Garut.
2. Cimande. Utuk learnt this from Abah Endut, a student of Abah Kahir, whilst he was studying at OSVIA (school for the indigenous elite) in Bandung.
3. Kari. Taught to him by Raden Haji Tarimidi when he was the subdistrict head of Ciamis. Utuk brought Tarmidi from Cikalong to Ciamis, with the assistance of Raden Didi Muhtadi (Gan Didi) as an intermediary. Utuk and Gan Didi had become friends at STOVIA.
4. Cikalong and Syahbandar. Again via the agency of Gan Didi, Utuk was introduced to Gan Obing, a student of Haji Ibrahim, in 1933. At the time Utuk was the sub-district head of Cipatat, Cianjur. In 1936 he worked as the district chief (Sd: *wadana*) of the Malingping district, Banten. Then he often met with Gan Obing, sometimes accompanying him on fishing trips to the ocean or nearby rivers that lasted for up to three months. During these extended fishing trips Gan Obing taught Utuk Cikalong and Syahbandar.

Utuk distilled and refined what he had learnt, developing a new system which he called Sanalika, meaning “in an instant”. In 1940 Utuk was appointed as the district chief of Cicurug, Sukabumi. The district bordered Cimande, giving Utuk the opportunity to meet with practitioners of the style. He soon developed a close friendship with Mama Haji Hisbullah, who was an elder of the Cimande pencak silat community. The two exchanged their respective knowledge of pencak silat. Haji Hisbullah sent many students to Utuk, resulting in Cikalong spreading throughout the region. One of Utuk’s best students was Raden Ateng Karta. Apart from his studies with Utuk he had also studied with a number of other masters throughout West Java. From his collected knowledge, he developed five basic jurus and established the pencak silat perguruan Sanalika in Bandung. The Sanalika style developed by Ateng Karta is currently taught by Endang Suhendi in Bandung. During my fieldwork I studied the five Sanalika jurus with Endang. Training is done according to the traditions passed on to him by his teacher, including a ritual initiation:

As Pak Endang had requested at our previous meeting, I bought with me coconut oil, two chicken eggs and a lime. After accepting these objects We then moved to a small single room building adjacent to his home . On entering he locked the door behind us and drew the curtains. After a short prayer we began training. There was little warming up, and we started by doing repetitive practice of the first jurus. After half an hour of this, we moved on to the second and then the third jurus. After around two hours we ended the session as we had begun. In the weeks that followed Pak Endang taught me the remaining four jurus. After I became proficient in them he began to reveal some of their applications and the ways in which they could be combined.<sup>103</sup>

Utuk’s friend Gan Didi had followed a similar path. As a young man he had studied pencak silat under Raden Bratadilaga (son of Haji Ibrahim) and Gan Obing. He was born in 1859 and died in 1942. Obing had been a prized student of Haji Ibrahim and inherited the name ‘Ibrahim’ from him.<sup>104</sup> He had also studied under Mama Kosim.

Gan Didi had a great love for traditional *karawitan* music. After completing his study of Cikalong he focused his efforts upon melding karawitan with Cikalong movements. At that time *ibingan penca* already existed in the Priangan region and was mainly drawn from Cimande no one had created a Cikalong version. The movements employed in Gan Didi's *ibingan* were adapted directly from martial applications of Cikalong that consisted of offensive and defensive movement patterns. The resulting dance appeared like a fight between the performer and an imaginary opponent. Gan Didi's efforts were met with criticism from many Cikalong masters, who were of the opinion that *ibingan* was a deviation from established tradition. They were concerned that someone who had mastered *ibingan* would feel that they had full knowledge of the Cikalong system, when in reality they would only have the "flower" (Ind: *bunga*) but not the "fruit" (Ind: *buah*). Whilst Gan Didi was renowned as a teacher of *ibingan* he also taught self-defence to selected students. If a student expressed a desire to study the martial applications of Cikalong Gan Didi would first observe their *ibingan* skills. Often he would suggest that they study with another teacher. All of this was used as a test of the student's resolve, to see whether they were serious in their intention to study the *buah* of Cikalong. One of the few students to do so was Raden Harun Sirod. Raden Harun began his training at the age of Gan Didi established *Paguron Pusaka Siliwangi* in 1930. Students of Gan Didi still teaching include Ita Sasmita and Raden E. Harun.

Gan Didi taught 13 basic jurus as well as several step (*langkah*) patterns:

- |                         |                          |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. <i>Jurus</i>         | 8. <i>Tomplok Tengah</i> |
| 2. <i>Suliwa</i>        | 9. <i>Tomplok Habis</i>  |
| 3. <i>Serong</i>        | 10. <i>Serut</i>         |
| 4. <i>Kocet</i>         | 11. <i>Kelima</i>        |
| 5. <i>Susun</i>         | 12. <i>Keenam</i>        |
| 6. <i>Lipet</i>         | 13. <i>Gedig</i>         |
| 7. <i>Tomplok desek</i> |                          |



8. The *jurus lipet* of Cikalong pencak silat performed by Raden Didi Muhtadi. Photos courtesy of Aam Santoso.

Utuk's son Raden Popo Sumadipraja was born in Bandung on 12 January 1919. Popo began learning pencak silat from his father at the age of 11. After finishing his schooling

at the *Hollandsch Inlandsche School* in 1936, he accompanied his father in his travels throughout West Java teaching Sanalika. His father sent him to study pencak silat with Gan Obing Ibrahim in Cianjur. As Gan Obing was already advanced in years Popo was then sent to study with Gan Didi. After completing his studies with him Popo then went to study with Raden Idrus. He also travelled to Jakarta where he trained under Bang Mujeni. In his extensive travels throughout West Java Popo met with many pencak silat masters, often testing their skills via *usik tempelan*, that is correcting one another's technique.

Between 1942 and 1945 Popo worked as a plantation manager in Sukabumi. In 1952 he worked in the Livestock Bureau of Banjarmasin, Kalimantan. In 1954 he returned to West Java working for the Bandung Municipality until his retirement in 1955. In the same year, Popo, along with many other pencak masters collaborated with the military, acting as security for the Asia Africa conference, held in Bandung. The collaborative effort later resulted in the forming of the *Gagak Lumayung* pencak silat association, that was led by Lieutenant Zaenal Abidin.

The group divided the study of pencak into three levels:

1. *Olah Raga*, also referred to as *Pakalah*. (development of physical strength, speed and agility. Memorizing of jurus. Necessary physical foundation).
2. *Olah Rasa*, also referred to as *Kaedah*. (development of the reflexes. Sensitivity towards, and ability to read, an opponent's moves).



3. *Olah Jiwa*, also referred to as *Kaidah*. (“Mengenal yang Maha mengerak”. To know what “moves” us. Knowing God by knowing oneself. A refinement of the physical senses leading to an apprehension of the metaphysical).<sup>105</sup>

The three levels identified in Sanalika in many ways correspond with the three levels of *rasa* discussed earlier. Both point to the common understanding within Cianjur pencak silat that training the body is not an end in itself, but a foundation for developing heightened sensitivity that in turn can lead to spiritual awareness.



9. Raden Didi Muhtadi uses a pole to practice the hand grip of the *suliweh* jurus of Cikalong pencak silat. Photo courtesy of Aam Santoso

### **Timbangan**

Whilst Cimande, Cikalong and Syahbandar remained the foundation for most of the pencak silat perguruan in West Java, another unique style of martial art developed independently of them. Whilst often considered not to be pencak silat, including by its own practitioners, *Timbangan* (“balance”) is an indigenous Sundanese martial art that has had a substantial impact upon the pencak silat community. In contrast to the aliran mentioned so far, *Timbangan* was developed by its founder, Raden Anggakusumah, a member of the Bandung aristocracy, as a solution to a philosophical dilemma framed within the political situation of the time. In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Raden Anggakusumah was an active member of the political organisation the Islamic Union (Ind: *Sarekat Islam*). His outspokenness drew the attention of the Dutch colonial authorities resulting in his imprisonment in Banceuy prison in 1919.<sup>106</sup> In prison he had much time for reflection, as well as discussions with fellow dissidents. Anggakusumah recorded his thoughts in three books, titled ‘The Sharpening Stone of the Spirit’ (Sd: *Gurunda Alam Rohani Bojanji*) that were written in Sundanese in the traditional poetic form of *dangding*.<sup>107</sup>

According to Anggakusumah, like all other aspects of life, movements also require balance. Simple acts such as walking, jumping and sitting could not be done unless one’s body moved in a balanced way. This balance is acquired both consciously and unconsciously, in the same way that a baby learns to walk. Anggakusumah’s own circumstances, as well as those of his fellow inmates, also showed to him that the weak often suffer at the hands of the strong, even though they are in the right. These two

observations provided the impetus for Anggakusumah to create an embodied aspect to his philosophy of balance.<sup>108</sup> He soon had the opportunity to put it into practice. From Banceuy he was moved to the harsher environment of Sawahlunto prison in West Sumatra. Unlike Banceuy, Sawahlunto was populated with petty criminals, robbers and murderers. Whilst there, Anggakusumah was frequently attacked. In each instance he was able to subdue the attacker without causing them any physical injury and to make them aware of that in fact he had no ill will towards them. Anggakusumah was released from prison and returned to Bandung in 1923. In 1927 he began teaching Timbangan to the members of the pencak silat community such as Raden Ema Bratakusumah, Raden Memed and Gan Salim.<sup>109</sup>

The first stage of Timbangan training is to “face the enemy within oneself”, to perform *jihad al-akbar* (the great holy war) the continuous battle against the carnal soul (Ar: *al-nafs*).<sup>110</sup> The student is required to develop an awareness of the nature of their own existence. On this point, Anggakusumah differentiated between a ‘person’ (Sd: *jelema*) and a ‘human’ (Sd: *manusa*). A *jelema* possesses intellect (Ind: *akal*), however it is only when they use it towards performing good deeds that they can be considered a *manusa*. In order to develop an awareness of proper action, the initial stages of training involves question and answer type sessions between teacher and pupil. During training the teacher is able to assess the character and morality of the student. It is only after the teacher is satisfied that the physical dimension of training begins.

Similarities are often drawn between Timbangan and the Japanese martial art of Aikido. Like Timbangan, Aikido also is founded upon a philosophy of non-conflict.<sup>111</sup> From the perspective of technique, neither claimed prior training or lineage to existing styles. Timbangan was an embodiment of Anggakusumah's existential philosophy, a method for ethical action in the world. There are no kicks, punches or other kinds of offensive strikes in Timbangan. Physical technique focuses upon processing and redirecting an opponent's force so that in effect, they defeat themselves. The deeper purpose was to make them aware of the futility of physical conflict. Hence the techniques were ultimately aimed at transforming the consciousness of the aggressor without inflicting physical injury.

### **Maenpo Peupeuhan**

As stated earlier, the historical aliran such as Cimande, Cikalong and Syahbandar still form the core of pencak silat teaching in much of West Java. One example of modern perguruan teaching a combination of the traditional aliran is *maenpo peupeuhan*. During the 70's in Bandung the renowned pendekar Adung Rais began to teach maenpo peupeuhan to the general public. Rais had been a student of Abah Salim, a master of Cikalong. According to Adung 'maenpo' was an abbreviation of 'to not have rhythm' (Sd: *teu make tempo*). What this meant was that maenpo peupeuhan was not bound to certain movement routines that were punctuated with breaks (in time). Previously its practice had been restricted to the aristocracy. According to Mohammad Rafijen this was due to the fact that "the really dangerous stuff" was taught only within closed circles whom the teacher trusted. The study of maenpo involved several rules (Sd: *ugeran*) that

dissuaded many from studying it. The most important of these was *teu numpangkeun rasa*. This principle of ‘discarding ones feelings’ meant that a student must eliminate from themselves any feelings of pity or compassion towards their opponent:

*Teu numpangkeun rasa* means there are no compromises. You can’t give an opportunity to an opponent, nor feel compassion towards them regardless of whether they are a relative or a friend. Because the rule of a fight is that you must be cruel, you must be vicious. That is how you will win. This has been the case since old times, not like now. If you studied *maenpo* you had to be prepared to damage your opponent.<sup>112</sup>

This was bound with the Sundanese martial principle of ‘they have just gotten ready, we’ve already finished’ (Sd: *batur arek kuring enggeus*). In practice this translated as pre-empting an attack, and continuing until one’s opponent was immobile. Any potential threat or challenge was initiated and finished as quickly as possible. Adung felt that the philosophy of *teu numpankeun rasa* alienated *maenpo* from broader acceptance. Many felt too unconfident (Sd: *cangcaya*) or hesitant (Sd: *asa-asa*) to study it as they were afraid of physical injury. According to his son Mohammad Rafijen, it also created the impression that *pendekar* were arrogant, whereas in reality “one who was powerful (Sd: *linuwih*) must keep a low profile”.<sup>113</sup>

In a further attempt to increase the popularity of *maenpo* Adung introduced the Cianjur musical tradition of *kecapu suling*. This was an innovation, as previously *maenpo* had only been performed with *kendang penca*. It received both positive and negative reactions in silat circles. The incentive to meld the two was a result of a desire to blend the ‘coarse’ (Ind: *kasar*) with the ‘refined’ (Ind: *halus*) and also perhaps due to the influence of Adung’s wife who was a singer (Ind: *pesinden*) of *Cianjuran*. According to

Rafijen *tembang Cianjuran* revolve around three themes: “the bravery of past Sundanese warriors” such as Prabu Siliwangi, the beauty of nature, and prayers of adoration to God. Consequently the movements must reflect and express each theme. One must have mastered maenpo before attempting to move with the *kecapi* suling. Without having embodied the techniques, the results are bound to be stiff and disjointed. He also established the perguruan *Babancong Siliwangi* that aside from pencak silat also incorporated Sundanese arts such as *reog*, *calung* and *Tembang Cianjuran*. The group disbanded after his death.

Adung began studying maenpo at the age of 19 from his father, Salim Ambarak. According to Adung maenpo began with three pendekar: H. Abdurachman, Bang Madi and Bang Kari. Bang Madi and Bang Kari were fierce rivals but two of their students, Salim Ambarak and Bah Oed were relatives. The two were also close friends with Mama Kosim. These three exchanged their knowledge, then Salim Ambarak passed it on to his son Adung Rais. Salim is also said to have learnt from from Wa Acep Tarmidi whose line of transmission began with Raden Haji Ibrahim, the founder of aliran Cikalong.

After six years of intensive practice Adung Rais mastered all the pencak silat passed on to him by his father and began to teach others. Adung Rais in turn taught his maenpo skills to his four sons, Ahmad Fajar, Mohammad Rafijen, Ahmad Guntina and Husen Rizal. He passed away in 1987 at the age of 52. His third son Mohammad Rafijen is now the official heir (Ind: *pewaris*) of maenpo peupeuhan. Rafijen, who was born in Bandung on 11 December 1964, began studying with his father at the age of nine. By the age of 11

he had mastered all of his father's *maenpo*. He was granted permission to teach at the age of 15, however at that point his father always accompanied him. In 1987 he became active in action films and television serials, acting in silat movies such as *Kelabang Geni* and *Si Jampang Apsari*. To date he has acted in 25 films. Since 1998 he has worked in the Market Department (Ind: *Dinas Pasar*) for the City of Bandung, though he spends most of his time teaching *maenpo*.



10. *Kari jurus* performed by Mohammad Rafijen, head of the Maenpo Peupeuhan pencak silat school.

Training in maenpo peupeuhan begins with learning eleven basic jurus. According to Adung Rais the number eleven was of special significance as it consists of two number ones standing next to each other.<sup>114</sup> This was seen as symbolizing the balance required in pencak silat between the soft and the hard (Sd: *leuleus jeung teuas*) and the body and the soul. The body is also considered to have eleven parts that can be used as weapons.<sup>115</sup> After the eleven jurus have been adequately mastered by the student, they are combined, a process referred to as *nyieun*. In doing so the student learns how to improvise in preparation for free fighting (Sd: *usik*).

According to Rafijen, the relationship between guru and murid in maenpo peupeuhan is also marked by three distinct levels that correspond to increasing levels of technical difficulty in *usik*. The first is referred to as *merian* ('to give'). In contact sparring the guru gives the student the opportunity to attack, encouraging them to improvise. After *merian* the student progresses to the next level of *dihurlinan* ('to be pushed'). Whilst in the *merian* stage the guru gave the student an opening in which to attack, the guru now counters and upsets the student's movements. The purpose of this is to further develop their ability to improvise and launch effective offensive movements. The guru's movements are meant to be perceived as 'questions', to which the student must find an adequate 'answer'. The third stage is that of *diaduin* ('to fight'). Whereas in the preceding stages the guru merely countered the student's movements, now he launches attacks himself. Both engage in frequent controlled fights. Over time it is hoped that the student will begin to feel the 'spirit' of maenpo peupeuhan, which is expressed in the saying 'a tiger descending from its place of origin' (Ind: *macan turun dari udik*).



In this chapter we have looked at the historical and mythical origins of pencak silat in Indonesia as well as the major styles in West Java. Created and developed between the late 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, Cimande, Cikalong and Syahbandar have come to be identified with ‘authentic’ Sundanese pencak silat tradition. The styles have become a foundation and reference point upon which other styles and schools have reflected, reacted against, grown from and developed. The training regimes and body techniques found in Cimande, Cikalong and Syahbandar are rooted in the culture and environment in which they developed. For example Cimande pencak silat reflected the culture of the rural peasantry, whereas Cikalong is firmly rooted in the traditions and customs of the Sundanese aristocracy.

We notice through these examples that the process of learning, as well as the ‘origins of practice’, have been inscribed by silat and tradition as being rooted in intuitive practices, often termed ‘olah rasa’. These fragments, that record or reconstruct the ‘origins’ of silat, generally attribute the ‘source’ of practice to powers in nature or the supernatural that are beyond individual mastery of ‘technique’, and in connection with forces beyond the individual body. They are transmitted via ‘charged’ personal contact, not by mechanical technique. As we will see in the next chapter, new social and cultural conditions prompted some pencak silat practitioners to reflect upon and reassess the relevance of ‘traditional’ techniques as they struggled to adapt to a changing environment.

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- <sup>1</sup> On banditry in Java, see Sartono Kartodirdjo, *Modern Indonesia: Tradition and Transformation*, Gadjah Mada University Press, Yogyakarta, 1991.
- <sup>2</sup> Quoted in Nina Lubis, *Kehidupan Kaum Menak Priangan 1800-1942*, Pusat Informasi Kebudayaan Sunda, Bandung, 1998, pp. 63-64.
- <sup>3</sup> Nina H. Lubis, *Tradisi dan Transformasi Sejarah Sunda*, Humaniora Utama Press, Bandung, 2000, pg. 137.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, pg. 137
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, pg. 64. The tradition of seeking *kasaktian* later evolved into the inner power (*tenaga dalam*) practices found throughout Indonesia today.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, pg. 58.
- <sup>7</sup> M. C. Ricklefs, *War, Culture and Economy in Java 1677-1726: Asian and European Imperialism in the early Kartasura period*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1993, pg. 13.
- <sup>8</sup> Eric Hobsbawn, *Bandits*, Abacus, London, 2000, pg. 10.
- <sup>9</sup> B.O'G Anderson, *Java In A Time of Revolution*, pg. 8 fn.15
- <sup>10</sup> R. Asikin, *Pelajaran Pencak Silat*, Penerbit Tarate, Bandung, 1983, pp. 9-10
- <sup>11</sup> Donn F. Draeger, *The Weapons and Fighting Arts of Indonesia*, Charles E. Tuttle Company, Tokyo, 1972, pg. 23.
- <sup>12</sup> Maryono, 1998, pp. 43-47
- <sup>13</sup> Peter Britton, *Profesionalisme dan Ideologi Militer Indonesia*, PT Pusaka LP3ES Indonesia, Jakarta, 1996, pg. 12.
- <sup>14</sup> Like many contemporary pencak silat schools, the Indonesian military draws symbolic power from imaginings of the past glory of the Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms of Java.
- <sup>15</sup> Soemarsaid Moertono, *State and Statecraft in Old Java: A Study of the Later Mataram Period, 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> Century*, Cornell University Modern Indonesia Project Monograph Series, Ithaca, 1968, pg. 69.
- <sup>16</sup> Th. Pigeaud, *Java in the Fourteenth Century: A Study in Cultural History*, Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1960, Vol. 4, pg. 532.
- <sup>17</sup> In B. Schrieke, *Indonesian Sociological Studies. Selected Writings of B. Schrieke. Part Two: Ruler and Realm in Early Java*, W. Van Hoege Publishing Ltd, The Hague, 1957, pg. 122.
- <sup>18</sup> Maryono, 1998, pg.54.
- <sup>19</sup> For an analysis of the discourse of 'high' and 'low' culture in contemporary Indonesia in relation to performing arts, see Ian Douglas Wilson, 'The Politics of Possession: Community Arts in New Order Java', unpublished Honors thesis, Murdoch University, 1997.
- <sup>20</sup> *Kanuragan* involves that acquisition of physical invulnerability and supernatural powers via a variety of physical exercises and ascetic practices. Traditionally it has been a component of pencak silat training.

<sup>21</sup> Pengurus Besar Ikatan Pencak Silat Indonesia, 'Sejarah dan Organisasi Pencak Silat Indonesia', mimeograph, 1995, pg. 9. Another of the Sri Maharaja Purnawarman inscriptions reads, "...Sri Purnawarman, whose armour could not be pierced by the spears of his enemies, who always destroyed the cities of his enemies...". See, Yoseph Iskandar, *Sejarah Jawa Barat: Yuganing Rajakwasa*, CV Geger Sunten, Bandung, 1997, pg. 51.

<sup>22</sup> Pengurus Besar Ikatan Pencak Silat Indonesia, 'Latar Belakang Penyelenggaraan Festival Pencak Silat', material produced for the National Pencak Silat Congress, 16-18 September 1999. Jakarta.

<sup>23</sup> Onghokham, *The Residency of Madiun: Prijayi and Peasants in the Nineteenth Century*, Ph.D. thesis, Yale University, 1975, pp. 63-69.

<sup>24</sup> In West Java *mandala* were known as *kabuyutan*.

<sup>25</sup> Martin Van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning, Pesantren dan Tarekat: Tradisi-Tradisi Islam di Indonesia*, Penerbit Mizan, Bandung, 1999, pg. 24.

<sup>26</sup> Denys Lombard, *Nusa Jawa: Silang Budaya, Kajian Sejarah Terpadu, Bagian III: Warisan Kerajaan-Kerajaan Konsentris*, Gramedia Pustaka Utama, Jakarta, 1996, pg. 147.

<sup>27</sup> B.O'G Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution; Occupation and Resistance 1944-1946*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1972, cf. pg 86

<sup>28</sup> Denys Lombard, *Nusa Jawa: Silang Budaya, Kajian Sejarah Terpadu, Bagian II: Jaringan Asia*, Gramedia Pustaka Utama, Jakarta, 1996, pg. Pg. 131

- <sup>29</sup> Liem Yoe Kiong, *Ilmu Silat: Sedjarah, Theorie dan Praktek*, CV. Penjedar, Malang, 1960, pg. 60. According to Ko Wakem, a *kuntao* (Chinese martial arts) master from Bandung, early migrants from Shantung in Southern China also influenced other Sundanese rural traditions such as the *barongan* and *reog* folk dances that were derived from the *barongsai* lion-dance. Interview with Ko Wakem, Bandung, 25/01/00.

<sup>30</sup> Epic battles between local and Chinese martial artists are a central element in pencak oral tradition in West Java.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Abdur Rauff, 23/01/00, Cianjur. A list of the students of Raden Haji Ibrahim, the founder of aliran Cikalong, compiled from family records, shows several Chinese names, suggesting the possibility that there was a two way flow of influence between silat and kuntao. It also disproves the commonly held belief that Haji Ibrahim only taught Sundanese. It is also interesting to note that the 'salam' used in Cikalong involves the right hand, held in a fist, pressed against the open palm of the left hand, identical to that used in traditional kungfu schools.

<sup>32</sup> A detailed account of Ulin Makao can be found in Rusyana, 1996, pp. 52-89. In Banten Ulin Makao is also known as Ulin Abu and Ulin Sawah. See also 'Ulin Makao: Perpaduan Pencak Silat dengan Kung Fu', *Jurus: Majalah Seni Beladiri*, No. 6, 30 August 1999, pp. 22-24.

<sup>33</sup> Interview with Mohammad Rafijen, Bandung, 2/10/1999. His father, Adung Rais, the founder of Maenpo Peupeuhan, passed down this story to him.

<sup>34</sup> Other interpretations of the term *maenpo* include 'maen arung teh mue tempo', to move without a tempo, and 'maen papat', the play of four elements, these being *wani* (confident), *teki-teki* (cautious/attentive), *aksi* (authoritative) and *harti* (meaningful/with purpose). Recounted to Raden Harun, a *pewaris* of aliran Cikalong, by his teacher Raden Abad. Interview with Raden Harun, 22/01/00, Cianjur.

<sup>35</sup> A process reversed in 1959 with the implementation of Government Regulation 10/1959 that outlawed ethnic Chinese from conducting business in rural areas. The military commander of West Java at the time further interpreted this to mean that Chinese were forbidden from living outside of major urban centers, which he enforced. The result was huge repatriations, and an influx of Chinese into large cities, ending in racial riots in Cirebon, Sukabumi and Bandung in May 1963.

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Ko Wakem, 25/01/00, Bandung.

<sup>37</sup> Confidential interview, July 1999, Bandung.

<sup>38</sup> Many of these masters were Dutch-Indonesian, and moved to the Netherlands after the Japanese invasion in 1942. Some established schools there, such as *Ratu Adil* and *Pukulan Betwai*.

<sup>39</sup> Eddie M. Nalapraya, 'Memahami Pencak Silat Aset Budaya Bangsa', mimeograph, Jakarta, 1994.

<sup>40</sup> This includes Bandrong, Cigondewah, Cipecut, Cimacan, Cimande, Cikalong, Syahbandar, Kari, Madi, Cikaret, Timbangan, Terumbu, Jalakrawi, Sanalika, Tajimalela, Sera, Nampon, Sekaregang, Kuntulan, and Ulin Maccao. This list does not include styles from the Jakarta area.

<sup>41</sup> Sastrahadiprawira, R. Memed, *Pangeran Kornel*, Rahmat Cijulang, Bandung, 1986.

<sup>42</sup> The Badui people deny this and insist that they are the original inhabitants of the mountainous regions of Southern Banten. The term Badui itself is a derogatory one derived from 'Bedouin', the nomadic desert peoples of Saudi Arabia. The Badui refer to themselves as *Kanekes* people (Sd: *urang Kanekes*). See Edi Ekadjati, *Kebudayaan Sunda (Suatu Pendekatan Sejarah)*, Pustaka Jaya, Jakarta, 1995, pg. 53.

<sup>43</sup> Sunatra, *Integrasi dan Konflik: Kedudukan Politik Jawara dan Ulama dalam Budaya Politik Lokal (Studi Kasus Kepemimpinan Informal Pedesaan Banten Selatan)*, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Universitas Padjajaran, Bandung, 1997, pg. 133.

<sup>44</sup> *Ulin* literally means "play", and is often used along with the more 'refined' Sundanese word *ameng*.

<sup>45</sup> Ki Jalceu and Karim, both ethnic Badui, recounted this version to Gending Raspuzi. Interview with Gending Raspuzi, 02/07/99, Bandung.

<sup>46</sup> Wessing, Robert, 'The Position of the Baduj in the Larger West Javanese Society', in *MAN*, 12 (2), pp. 293-303.

<sup>47</sup> Robert Wessing, *The Soul of Ambiguity: The Tiger in Southeast Asia*, Northern Illinois University Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Monograph Series on Southeast Asia, Special Report No. 24, 1986, pg. 32.

<sup>48</sup> Bapak Holidin, a silat master from the Panglipur School, gave the following account. Interview with Bapak Holidin, 13/04/99, Bandung.

<sup>49</sup> Maryono, 1998, pg. 35. Perhaps the most influential woman pendekar in modern times is Eny Rukmini Sekarningrat. She is the current head of the Panglipur pencak silat school, based in Garut, West Java. One consequence of the nationalization of pencak silat, that began in the 1940s, has been a huge increase in the numbers of women studying pencak silat. Training sessions in contemporary schools are still usually divided by gender, however in many instances women and men train and even spar with each other.

<sup>50</sup> Yus Rusyana, *Tuturan Tentang Pencak Silat Dalam Tradisi Lisan Sunda*, Yayasan Obor Indonesia, Jakarta, 1996, pg. 21-22.

<sup>51</sup> Agus Heryana, 'Pencak Silat Aliran Cimande Di Jawa Barat', in *Laporan Penelitian*, Edition 9/XII/1995, Balai Kajian Sejarah dan Nilai Tradisional, Bandung, 1995-96, pp. 64-103.

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<sup>52</sup> Barendregt, 1995. For example the al-Quran is thought to consist of 6666 lines whereas the body is thought to contain 6666 nerves and veins.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid pg. 128.

<sup>54</sup> Siti Maria Herliswanny, *Apresiasi Generasi Muda Terhadap Pencak Silat Di Cimande*, Direktorat Sejarah dan Nilai Tradisional, Departmen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, Jakarta, 1996, pg. 53.

<sup>55</sup> In 1995 the *amalan tasawul* Cimande was published in a report compiled by researchers from the Indonesian Department of Education and Culture, one of whom was a Cimande student. This caused considerable consternation amongst elders in Cimande who considered it to be a secret revealed only to the initiated. For this reason, and on the request of Pak Ace Sutisna, I have not included a transcript of the *amalan tasawul* in this study.

<sup>56</sup> Another version is that he was born in Kampung Tarikolot, Cimande, and moved to Kamurang village in 1770 after marrying a women from Cianjur.

<sup>57</sup> Djonos Djadadinata, *Sedjarah Keboedajaan Pentja*, Pengharepan, Bandoeng, 1938

<sup>58</sup> Herliswanny, 1996, pg. 30.

<sup>59</sup> Interview with Ace Sutisna, 27/10/99, Cimande.

<sup>60</sup> 'Jurus Lari Lebih Baik Ketimbang Harus Berkelahi', *Suara Pembaruan*, 30 May 1997.

<sup>61</sup> Interview with Ace Sutisna, 28/10/99, Cimande.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Interview with Ace Sutisna, 29/10/99, Cimande.

<sup>64</sup> 1.) *Harus taat dan takwa kepada Allah dan Rasul-Nya* 2.) *Jangan melawan Ibu dan Bapak*, 3.) *Jangan melawan kepada guru dan ratu*, 4.) *Jangan judi dan mencuri*, 5.) *Jangan ria, takabur dan sombong*, 6.) *Jangan berbuat zina*, 7.) *Jangan bohong dan licik*, 8.) *Jangan mabuk-mabukan dan mengisap madat* 9.) *Jangan jahil, menganiaya sesama makhluk Tuhan*, 10.) *Jangan memetik tanpa izin, mengambil tanpa meminta*, 11.) *Jangan iri hati dan dengki*, 12.) *Jangan suka tidak membayar utang*, 13.) *Harus sopan santun, rendah hati, dan saling menghargai antara sesama manusia*, 14.) *Berguru Cimande bukan untuk gagah-gagahan, kesombongan dan ugal-ugalan, tetapi untuk mencapai keselamatan dunia dan akhirat*. In *Petunjuk Pembinaan Pencak Silat Cimande*, unpublished ms., date unknown.

<sup>65</sup> Interview with Ace Sutisna, 27/10/99, Cimande.

<sup>66</sup> That is jurus *timpah sabeulah*, *timpah serong*, *timpah dua beulah*, *teke tampa* and *teke purilit*.

<sup>67</sup> Interview with Gending Raspuzi, 28/6/99, Bandung.

<sup>68</sup> 'Klinik Patah Tulang: Berkah Masuknya Kuda Besi', *Gatra*, no 37/III, 2 August 1997.

<sup>69</sup> A boom in patients seeking treatment for road accidents occurs after every campaign period for general elections when youths on motorbikes participate in rowdy convoys. 'Bengkel Penderita Patah Tulang Cimande', *Suara Pembaruan*, 30 May 1997.

<sup>70</sup> Interview with Ace Sutisna, Cimande, 27/10/99. Another example of healing broken bones and pencak silat is the family of Aki Bohon in Geger Kalong, Bandung. Aki Bohon was renowned as an expert in

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healing and pencak silat, being known as the ‘pendekar of North Bandung’. According to his daughter, Aki Bohon achieved his gift at healing by fasting for one month and not drinking boiled water for 20 years. He passed on his knowledge of healing to his daughters, whereas his sons were taught pencak silat. Field notes, 28/6/99, Bandung.

<sup>71</sup> *Suara Pembaruan*, 30 May, 1997.

<sup>72</sup> Interview with Ace Sutisna, 28/10/99, Cimande.

<sup>73</sup> A genealogy of the regents of Cianjur can be found in Lubis, 1998, pg. 318.

<sup>74</sup> ‘Sajarah Penca Cikalong Nu Gumelar Di Tatar Sunda’, unpublished document of Yayasan Daya Sunda, date unknown.

<sup>75</sup> The following is drawn primarily from an account by Raden Ibrahim Obing, Raden Busrin and Raden Apit given in 1920. See Yayasan daya Sunda, date unknown.

<sup>76</sup> Interview with Aam Santoso, Bandung, 17/03/99. This is also frequently stated to students as a reason for not instigating a fight, for it may turn out that one’s opponent is in fact a master. Likewise a student should not show of what they have learnt to the public, for those who openly display their abilities to others are by definition not true pendekar.

<sup>77</sup> Nina Lubis describes the process of performing *sembah* as follows: “the two hands are placed together with the fingers touching except for the thumbs. The hands are then moved slowly until they touch the tip of the nose. The face is lifted slightly. There are also those who move their hands towards the chest, chin or head, but it is best to touch the tip of the nose. If one performs *sembah* the hands must be empty. It is more respectful to perform *sembah* whilst sitting rather than standing”. Lubis, 1998, pg. 173.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 173-174.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid*, pg. 121.

<sup>80</sup> Interview with Mohammad Rafijen, 2/10/99, Bandung.

<sup>81</sup> It is worth noting at this point that there is no evidence of Haji Ibrahim ever having any women students. Whilst lines of descent in Cikalong *silsilah* are often traced through a matrilineal line, it appears that pencak was only taught to male offspring.

<sup>82</sup> Yayasan Daya Sunda, date unknown.

<sup>83</sup> Interview with Bapak Holidin, 13/04/99, Bandung.

<sup>84</sup> Interview with Raden Harun Sirod, 1/11/99, Bandung.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>86</sup> Abdur Rauff, *Sedikit Perkenalan Dengan Kaedah-Kaedah Pokok Maen Po Cikalong*, Tjikoendoel Paguron Maen Po Raden Hadji Ibrahim Djaja Perbata Tjikalong, Cikalong Kulon, 1975, pg. 20.

<sup>87</sup> The “play of four elements” (Sd: *main papat*) is interpreted as another meaning of *maenpo*. Interview with Raden Harun Sirod, 20/02/00, Cianjur.

<sup>88</sup> Interview with Raden Harun Sirod, 20/02/00, Cianjur.

<sup>89</sup> Abdur Rauff, 1975, pg. 5

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid, pg. 6.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, pg. 5.

<sup>92</sup> Interview with Raden Harun Sirod, 1/11/99, Bandung.

<sup>93</sup> Interview with Yosis Siswoyo, 27/7/99, Bandung. Bandar Karima is an abbreviation of Syahbandar, Kari and Madi.

<sup>94</sup> *Silat marg*a were styles taught only within the confines of a particular family. Teaching them to outsiders often meant excommunication from the clan. This tradition was strongest in Sumatra where to this day new students must be symbolically 'adopted' by the guru as a nephew/niece (Ind: *anak sasian*).

<sup>95</sup> Yayasan Daya Sunda, 'Sajarah Penca Cikalong Nu Gumelar Di Tatar Sunda', unpublished manuscript, date unknown.

<sup>96</sup> According to another version of this story, upon touching hands, Haji Ibrahim and Mama Kosim immediately apprehended the ability of the other.

<sup>97</sup> Yayasan Daya Sunda, 'Sajarah Penca Cikalong Nu Gumelar Di Tatar Sunda', unpublished manuscript, date unknown..

<sup>98</sup> Martin van Bruinessen, *Tarekat Naqsyabandiyah di Indonesia: Survei Geografis, Historis, dan Sosiologis* Penerbit Mizan, Bandung, 1998, pp. 23-26.

<sup>99</sup> 'Kajian Perguruan: Aliran Pencak Silat Syahbandar', in *Jurus: Majalah Seni Beladiri*, No.10, 25 October 1999, pp. 5-9.

<sup>100</sup> Interview with Yosis Siswoyo, 27/7/99, Bandung.

<sup>101</sup> Mohammad Rafijen, *Pencak Silat Maenpo Peupeuhan "Adung Rais"*, Dian Rakyat, Jakarta, 2000, pg. 61.

<sup>102</sup> The following is taken from a biography of Raden Utuk Sumadipraja written by his son Raden Popo Sumadipraja. See, Popo Sumadipraja, 'Sejarah Pencak Silat di Tatar Sunda', unpublished manuscript, date unknown.

<sup>103</sup> Field notes, 23/7/99, Bandung.

<sup>104</sup> 'Mengenal Para Tokoh Pencak Silat Cikalong', *Jurus: Majalah Seni Beladiri*, No.2, 5 July 1999, pp. 32-33.

<sup>105</sup> Interview with Raden Popo Sumadipraja, 24/5/99, Cipatat.

<sup>106</sup> 'Ameng Timbangan, Beladiri dari Bandung untuk Menyelamatkan Diri dan Lawan', in *Jurus: Majalah Seni Beladiri*, No. 15, 3 January 2000, pp. 53-58

<sup>107</sup> The books were printed in a limited number. The only existing copy known to the author is in the possession of the Anggakusumah family. Considered a sacred heirloom, it is not shown to outsiders. *Dangding* is sung, usually with the accompaniment of *kecapi suling*, an ensemble consisting of bamboo flute (*suling*), and two stringed zither (*kecapi*).

<sup>108</sup> Interview with Gending Raspuzi, 15/08/99, Bandung. Gending Raspuzi studied Timbangan under the late Muhyidin Anggakusumah, Raden Anggakusumah's eldest son.

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<sup>109</sup> *Jurus*, No. 15, 3 January 2000.

<sup>110</sup> Interview with Fadil Adikusumah, head of the *Penca Daya Sunda* school, and a teacher of Timbangan, 11/06/99, Bandung. The lesser jihad (Ar: *al-jihad al-asghar*) involves defending the faith and the believing community from external attack.

<sup>111</sup> For an account of Aikido's philosophy and techniques by the founder's son, see Kisshomaru Ueshiba, *The Spirit of Aikido*, Kodansha International, Tokyo, 1987.

<sup>112</sup> Interview with Mohammad Rafi'jen, 2/10/99, Bandung.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> These are both hands, both elbows, both knees, both soles of the feet, both shoulders, and the forehead. Mohammad Rafi'jen, 2000, pg. 74.



## **New Configurations: Modern Aliran in Urban Bandung**

The poor and densely populated neighborhoods of inner-city Bandung were the testing grounds for a number of modern silat styles and aliran that broke away from the ‘traditional standards’ (Sd: *patokan*) of the major traditional aliran outlined in the previous chapter. Whereas traditional aliran developed primarily in the colonial atmosphere of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, many of the new aliran were forged in the social and economic climate of urban Bandung during the early years of the New Order. The rapidly changing environment of modern urban life, with its new social, economic and cultural pressures, led some within the silat community to reevaluate the relative worth and usefulness of techniques and philosophies that had up until then remained largely unquestioned.

In this chapter I will detail two responses to these new circumstances from within the Bandung pencak silat community. They highlight how traditional practices have been modified, and new body techniques, genealogies and types of organization created. Each reaffirms the relevance of pencak silat, but in a different way. In doing so I hope to convey how, as a type of body culture, pencak silat not only reflects and reproduces social and cultural traditions, but also generates practices that enable individuals to improvise and adapt to changing situations. ‘Tradition’ is not static, nor is the ‘modern’ what we implicitly imagine it to be. These responses to changing times will show how ‘tradition’ has combined with individual innovation to produce new and dynamic forms

of pencak silat practice. This process thus demonstrates a creative local agency often ignored in assessments of ‘modernization’ and social change.

After independence the number of perguruan in West Java rapidly increased. Most of these perguruan taught syncretic combinations of the major aliran that had come to be identified exclusively with ‘tradition’. Whilst IPSI endeavored to standardize and nationalize pencak silat, its rival in West Java the Indonesian Pencak Silat Union (Ind: *PPSI; Persatuan Pencak Silat Indonesia*) sought to define and replicate ‘authentic’ Sundanese pencak silat tradition. The majority of perguruan in West Java focused exclusively upon the aesthetic dimension, the *ibing penca*. By the mid-1960s karate had begun to grow in popularity, especially amongst the armed forces and students who were attracted to its focus on self-defense.<sup>1</sup> This, coupled with the demands of the new cultural and political environment, forced a major reassessment of the position of pencak silat. Whilst IPSI, with government support, sought to redefine pencak silat primarily as a sport, others endeavored to reaffirm its value as a practical form of self-defense.

During the late 1960s and early 70s areas in Bandung such as Buah Batu, Cicadas, Kebon Kawung and Dulatyp were infamous as centers for jawara and street gangs. Street battles between rival gangs from neighboring kampung were a common occurrence. A large influx of migrants from surrounding rural areas, such as Ciamis, Garut, Padalarang and Cianjur, led to new social pressures as people struggled to make a living in increasingly over-crowded urban neighborhoods. Youths who had been mobilized during the communist purges of the late 60’s returned to their kampung. Finding little work and

much time on their hands, many formed gangs. The rice shortages that affected Java in 1972-73 also led to further social and political instability. As in the period prior to independence, martial prowess was an essential life skill in such an environment. For some it became a source of livelihood in itself. Local jawara fought for control over particular neighborhoods. Jawara such as Rachmad Hidayat (Kebon Kawung) and Sidarman (Buah Batu) became famous throughout Bandung.

Examining the phenomenon of preman in the New Order, a modern urban equivalent of the *jago* and *jawara*, Loren Rytter states that they had no chance of formal sector employment, with “nothing to sell but their own muscles”.<sup>2</sup> Due to their knowledge of the criminal world and fighting skills they were often called in to work as security for local businesses and to assist local authorities, more often than not to protect them from other preman. During the New Order, preman and jawara became closely tied with local government through a practice referred to as ‘backing’ (Ind: *beking*). According to Tim Lindsay, through the practice of backing money extorted from bars, clubs and shops by preman found its way to the elite.<sup>3</sup> As the elite benefited from the extortion rackets of the preman, local officials were encouraged to protect them, in return for a cut of the money. Despite this mutually beneficial relationship, preman and jawara who challenged, threatened or were a nuisance to the authorities were often dealt with harshly.<sup>4</sup>

The streets surrounding the Bandung central train station were a favorite meeting place for jawara and preman during the late 1960’s and early 1970’s. From there many would walk two kilometers to Jalan Naripan to watch nightly performances of the

traditional wooden puppet show *wayang golek*, and then move on to Saritem, Bandung's infamous red light district. Saritem was a proving ground for many aspiring jawara. Both prearranged challenge fights and spontaneous brawls would take place where they would test each other's skills (Sd: *ngadu jajaten*). These were brutal and bloody affairs that often resulted in serious injury and even death. But they were not without their own particular rules and ethics. As one witness somewhat nostalgically recounted:

There was no ganging up or hitting from behind (Ind: *main keroyok*). If the police showed up they would say that they were just doing silat training. They may have been rough around the edges, but they still had ethics.<sup>5</sup>

Reputations were made and broken in these challenge fights. News of a victory quickly spread throughout the jawara world. However reputations once established had to be continually defended. There was usually no shortage of challengers seeking to make a name for themselves by defeating a well known jawara, as can be seen by the following example:

Karim had worked as a security guard at several nightclubs in Jalan Braga. During the day he was a renowned *jawara* in his local kampung and received payments from local businesses to ensure security. He had been active in several local pencak silat schools, and built a reputation as a skilled fighter. One night whilst working in Jalan Braga, Karim got into an altercation after ejecting a troublesome patron. The drunken man produced a knife and attempted to stab him, but in the ensuing struggle Karim gained control of the knife and fatally wounded the man in the chest. He was sentenced to 13 years imprisonment for manslaughter, but was released after three when a guarantee was given by an "important person" that he would stay out of trouble. On returning to his kampung Karim discovered that other *jawara* had since taken over his position. He resigned himself to the fact, content to pursue a more 'legit' career. However the new *jawara*, thinking that he would try to regain his old turf, attacked him en masse with machetes (Ind: *golok*), resulting in the loss of sight in his left eye.<sup>6</sup>

Karim's injury effectively meant the end of his career as a jawara, for prowess was measured not only by reputation, but also by physical condition. As one guru recounted,

“the way to tell a real jawara is whether or not they have any physical disabilities or scars. If their physical body was intact then that was a sign that they were good at what they did”.<sup>7</sup> If a jawara lost a challenge then his followers (Ind: *anak buah*) would often become followers of the victor, a tradition sometimes referred to as ‘cow science’ (Ind: *ilmu sapi*), the practice of following whichever jawara was considered to be the strongest at the time.<sup>8</sup>

The link between jawara and local pencak silat perguruan was in many instances a strained one. Perguruan were generally hesitant to accept jawara with a reputation as a criminal, except if it was thought that there was a possibility of reforming them. Through tutelage under a respected master, combined with the discipline, emphasis upon ethical action and accountability found in the perguruan, a jawara could, through proper training, become a pendekar. In many ways the jawara possessed many of the characteristics required for success in pencak silat; physical strength, bravery, and respect for those considered to possess ilmu greater than their own.

Martial ability was intimately connected with reputation. Those who had proved themselves in conflict situations quickly developed a name, attracting those wishing to become students. What Yus Rusyana calls ‘fight events (Ind: *peristiwa pertarungan*) were crucial in establishing the name and reputation of a jawara or pendekar.<sup>9</sup> Accounts of certain events soon spread and became part of urban oral folklore. The lack of actual details of these events was often compensated for with embellished accounts that verged

on the fantastic. Such reputations were not just the preserve of individuals but also of particular neighbourhoods, as illustrated in an extract from the author's field notes:

I spent the evening drinking coffee and smoking *kretek* (clove scented cigarettes) at a small roadside stall in Jalan Dulatyp, chatting with locals about *jawara* and *preman*. They said that as long as they could remember Dulatyp had been renowned as a center for *jawara*. "But *jawara* here means someone who is an expert at fighting, not a common criminal. Dulatyp *jawara* are not like *preman* who extort money and generally cause trouble. We have always been unified as a community if there was a problem. If a neighbouring gang attacked, Chinese and *pribumi* (indigenous Indonesians) would join together to fight the ones causing trouble. "That doesn't mean that we are arrogant. Others say that we are like this or like that but this is just the way that we live our lives. If you tell someone you are from Dulatyp they will be shocked and won't bother you."<sup>10</sup>

### **From *Jawara* to *Pendekar*: Perguruan Silat Tajimalela**

Dulatyp, the birthplace of the Tajimalela pencak silat school, has long held a reputation as a center for *jawara*. This reputation largely stemmed from the Kusumadinata family, as all members were reputed to have knowledge of the 'science of silat' (Ind: *ilmu silat*). The Kusumadinata clan are descendants of the menak of Sumedang. According to the family's genealogy their founding ancestor was Prabu Guru Aji Putih, ruler of the Hindu Sumedanglarang kingdom around 1500.<sup>11</sup> Their father, Raden Dadan Sunarya Kusumadinata, was a soldier in the Republican army and a famed teacher of Sundanese dance. He was killed in the second Dutch 'police action' in Yogyakarta in 1948. Together with his wife Ukan Sukani, they had five sons, Aang, Iyan, Yuyun, Yayat and Djadjat, and three daughters.<sup>12</sup> Yuyun recalls how when he was a young boy his father often invited pencak silat experts, such as Abah Aleh the founder of the Panglipur pencak silat school, to the family home in Jalan Dulatyp, central Bandung. There they would discuss and practise, exposing the boys at an early age to a wealth of pencak silat knowledge.

The large ethnic Chinese community in Dulatyp was also famous for their skills in *kuntao*. Latihan in *kuntao* was given at the two local Buddhist temples (Ind: *klenteng*). During the 1950's Ko Supeng gained a reputation as an expert in pressure point strikes (Sd: *totogan*). Race relations in the area, unlike other areas of Bandung, were generally harmonious. Chinese shop owners were happy for the security afforded by allowing pencak silat and *kuntao* students to train in the evenings outside their stores. The relationship discouraged any would be Mafioso from trying to exploit or extort their businesses. The Kusumadinata children spent their early years in an environment where Sundanese pencak silat, dance and philosophy were an integral part of everyday life.

After Raden Dadan's death, the seven Kusumadinata children were brought up by their mother, Ukan Sukani, who struggled to survive on her late husband's pension. During their youth the Kusumadinata children found themselves in an increasingly harsh social environment. As was mentioned earlier, the late 60's and early 70's were an era of gang violence in Bandung. The destruction of the Communist Party by General Suharto resulted in large numbers of demobilised youth returning to their local *kampung*. The lack of formal sector employment meant that many were forced to make a living through petty crime. Of the six boys, Djadjat was by far the most troublesome. He soon forged a reputation as a jawara not to be meddled with, and was often called upon by friends and neighbours to settle disputes and deal with troublemakers. According to local residents, he was feared and respected by friends and enemies alike. Following in the family tradition he studied classical Sundanese dance as a teenager and also learnt the pencak

silat dance *ibing penca* from Gan Tarmini, a renowned master of pencak silat from the perguruan Salam Nunggal. He soon became proficient in the dance form of silat but still felt that something was missing. *Ibing penca* was aesthetically pleasing, however from Djadjat's perspective it wasn't effective as a form of self-defence. It wasn't sufficient to deal with the challenges he faced in the streets. Increasingly consumed with a desire to unravel the mysteries of martial prowess he began a spiritual quest for invulnerability (Ind: *ilmu kedigjayaan*) at the age of 18.

He began performing meditation and undertaking retreats, fasting and visiting sacred sites throughout West Java. According to the Kusumadinata family, one day, whilst he was heading into the Sancang forest in South Garut, he had a strange experience that was to change his life forever. He came to a gateway that led into the forest. There he met an old woman who forbade him to enter. Djadjat was insistent that he continue his journey into the forest. Eventually the old woman acquiesced, but not before she gently caressed his face. On entering into the forest, the darkness of evening lifted and a brilliant light surrounded Djadjat. In the forest he saw snakes with human heads, tigers, and many other bizarre creatures, however they paid him little attention, and even seemed to welcome him.

Eventually Djadjat reached a small grotto where he encountered an old man dressed in black. Near the grotto was a hill and a lake, whose banks were filled with trees in full fruit. On approaching the grotto the old man greeted Djadjat saying, "what you have been seeking all this time can be found at home, so return there now. If you need to meet with



me, read this”<sup>13</sup> At the same time he produced a large gold sword inscribed in Arabic with the *kalimah syahadah*, the Islamic testimony of faith, ‘There is no god but God, and Muhammad is his Prophet’ (Ar: *la Illaaha Illalahu Muhammadadur Rasuulullaah*). “Now shut your eyes,” said the old man. Djadjat did as he said, and when he opened them he found himself in Jalan Garut, a main street in central Bandung.

In this instance Djadjat had disappeared for four days. When he returned to his family home he was in a state of disorientation and shock, and was unable to speak. It was only after four more days that he was able to recount his experience to his family. Djadjat told one of his brothers that he had obtained *ilmu silat* from the Ka’abah in Mecca.<sup>14</sup> After Djadjat had recovered from his visionary journey, he began to practice silat in front of a mirror, which he later came to refer to as *silat* ‘shadow silat’ (Ind: *silat bayangan*). The movements were different from all the known styles at the time. Word soon spread through the area that Djadjat had undergone a spiritual transformation and was now a *pendekar*.

Not long after his return from this visionary journey, an incident in Dulatyp drew even greater public attention to Djadjat’s newfound abilities. As one witness recounted:

At the time the gang from Kebun Munguh attacked Dulatyp. They were trying to make a name for themselves and take control of that area. I suspect they even wanted to ruin Kang Djadjat’s good name. They said he was *santer* (full of bravado) in Dulatyp. When the trouble started Kang Djadjat came out into the streets, not to attack but to try and stop things getting worse by preventing the Kebun Munguh crew from coming into Dulatyp. From Kebun Munguh there were... I couldn’t count how many as they mixed in with those shopping at Cibadak market. This was around 1968/69 if I’m not wrong. Fights started to break out between the *crossboy* and locals.<sup>15</sup> Kang Djadjat was set upon by a group of the Kebun Munguh gang. At that time I wasn’t involved, though I had several machetes with me. I passed them to Kang Djadjat who proceeded to use them on his attackers. He did it with such ease and beauty...dak dak dak!! Within moments all of them were taken care of.

How did he do it?...I don't really know. It must have been because he had already been on a journey (*merantau*) and had become a true *pendekar*. I was touched. At that moment I knew that I wanted to become his student.<sup>16</sup>

For Tatang, a witness to this event, the fight became a defining moment in his life. After repeated requests Djadjat eventually accepted him as his first student. They began training in a small dark alleyway (Sd: *lontrong*) behind the Kusumadinata home. Djadjat first taught Tatang an *ibing penca* of his own creation, and drew from the fighting techniques he had used so devastatingly against the Kebun Manguh crew. During this early period Djadjat used Tatang as a human punching bag for testing his new techniques. Tatang received injuries, including a pinched facial nerve, which has stayed with him throughout his life.<sup>17</sup> He also began teaching family, including his nephew Simon Kosasih, as well as neighbours and friends in Dulatyp. A core group of seven students, known as the 'special troops' (Ind: *pasukan khusus*) were designated by Djadjat as the official first generation of students, those whose responsibility it would be to manage the school in Bandung. They were; Nang Martha, Buci Budiman, Ahya, Dedi A.R., Barli, Ook and Risman. All of them, with the exception of Ook, were Dulatyp locals. Ook was ethnic Chinese, a long time friend of Djadjat, who was also a black belt in karate. Buci Budiman was also a nephew of Djadjat. Tatang was delegated by Djadjat as a "shadow troop" (Ind: *pasukan bayangan*), who was to remain in the background and guard that the 'authenticity' of the style was maintained.<sup>18</sup>

The majority of Djadjat's early students were local traders, becak drivers and labourers. Whilst the Kusumadinata family's account of Djadjat's experiences invoked the traditions of the *menak*, his choice of students and teaching method ignored the

conventions of his social class, as the first generation of his students were drawn from among the urban poor. Whilst it had been hoped that this generation would consist of Djadjat's immediate family (as in the case of Cikalong) none had shown enough commitment. This was to be crucial in determining the development of this style in the years to come. The failure to establish a family based family genealogy (Ind: *silsilah keluarga*) meant that a 'neighbourhood genealogy' (Ind: *silsilah kampung*) was to become the foundation of the perguruan's succeeding generations.



11. Tajimalela members in 1971. Photo courtesy of Simon Kosasih

The first group training sessions were on Monday and Thursday nights, between seven and eleven in the evening, in an unlit clearing behind the local junior high school. After a brief period of warming up and stretching, Djadjat instructed his students in eight basic jurus.<sup>19</sup> This was followed by practical applications of the jurus. At this stage Djadjat had yet to name his particular style of silat. Initially students wore only loose fitting pants, and then uniforms were made from old flour sacks. After several washes the

brick red colour of the flour sacks faded to a dull orange, which was eventually chosen as the standard one for uniforms.

After more contemplation and discussions with his brothers and the *pasukan khusus*, Djadjat decided to name his silat school ‘*Tajimalela*’ after Prabu Tajimalela, the first ruler of Sumedang Larang and a founding ancestor of the Kusumadinata clan. Prabu Tajimalela is reputed to have been a fearless and powerful warrior.<sup>20</sup> Another interpretation of the name was that it stood for “violent cock’s spur” (Ind: *taji yang merajalela*), in reference to the standard punching fist in the style, in which the joint of the middle finger is protruded like the crow’s talon.<sup>21</sup> The new school was proclaimed in Bandung on 4 August 1974. The five principles (Ind: *panca darma*) of the school were contained within the name Tajimalela itself. According to Iyan Kusumadinata this was done to ensure that a cult did not form around the personage of Tajimalela, as has happened with other legendary Sundanese culture heroes such as Prabu Siliwangi and Kean Santang. The Panca Darma is as follows:

1. *TAklukan nafsu jahat dalam diri* (Rid yourself of evil desires)
2. *Jlwa murni pangkal keluhuran budi* (A pure spirit is the source of wisdom)
3. *MAntapkan rasa penyerahan diri terhadap Tuhan* (Foster a sense of surrender towards God)
4. *LEkatkan keberanian di taraf kebenaran* (Place bravery on par with truth)
5. *LApangkan kerendahan hati di mata kesombongan* (Be humble in the face of arrogance)



12. 'The Big Family of Tajimalela': The logo of the Tajimalela pencak silat school.

The structure of the Kusumadinata family's account of Djadjat's experience mirrors the Sundanese epic narrative *pantun* which in turn follows the structure of the "hermitage pattern" linked to Indic and shamanistic practices. Traditional histories of this type are most generally accounts of the exploits of figures from the Pajajaran dynasty such as Prabu Siliwangi and Kean Santang. They recount the initiation of a hero who leaves his kingdom to seek "experiences...supernatural power...the realisation of a dream".<sup>22</sup> Inserting Djadjat's experiences into a traditional symbolic framework, after enduring hardships while obtaining these spiritual goals, the hero finally returns to his kingdom transformed, bestowing it with the benefits of his achievements. Wessing has discussed the symbolic significance of the Sancang forest in Sundanese mythic history.<sup>23</sup> It is believed to be the home of ancestral spirits. In Sundanese belief tigers symbolise the founding ancestors, most commonly identified with Prabu Siliwangi. It is also believed that after death *menak* transform into tigers.<sup>24</sup> Rather than fight his own son, Prabu

Siliwangi changed into a white tiger. His followers turned into Sancang tigers.<sup>25</sup> Djadjat's journey into the heart of the forest was thus a journey into the realm of the ancestors.

A similar pattern to Djadjat's experiences can be observed in those of the late Adjat Soedradjat, the guru and founder of the pencak silat perguruan *Si Macan Tutul* (Spotted Leopard). After deciding to establish a pencak silat perguruan, Adjat undertook a 40-day ascetic retreat at Mount Galunggung in order to seek inspiration for a name for the school.<sup>26</sup> Towards the end of the 40 days an old man appeared who told Adjat, "that which will appear before you will be the name you seek". The following evening, whilst meditating, Adjat heard a loud roar. He ignored it and continued his meditations. Then out of the darkness appeared a panther. The panther walked straight towards Adjat and licked his face. For the next two days it followed him as he made his way out of the forest. On reaching the edge of the forest the panther spoke to him, whispering, "the name that you have sought is Si Macan Tutul". As in the case of Adjat, Djadjat's silat is seen as 'pure silat', coming directly from a divine source rather than through the conventional method of a lengthy apprenticeship under a living teacher. He was believed to have established spiritual contact with the Hindu-Buddhist *kesatria* from the golden age of Sundanese culture.

As a part of Tajimalela's oral history the mythic accounts of Djadjat's transformation from jawara to pendekar formed the core of the school's identity, establishing it as at once innovative and firmly rooted in Sundanese tradition. His reputation as a feared jawara and elevation to pendekar status at the young age of 21 mirrors an archetypal process of self-

realisation. Djadjat's troubled youth can be placed in the context of tales about cultural heroes such as Sunan Kalijaga and Ken Angrok. They were wayward and immoral youths and "the youthful misbehaviour of such heroes is an early sign of their tremendous spiritual powers, which they later directed to higher purposes".<sup>27</sup> Rumours regarding Djadjat's extraordinary powers continue to circulate amongst members. Djadjat himself never spoke of or displayed publicly any of his reputed powers and, according to two senior students, "did not approve of things that smelt of the occult...what he always emphasised to us was the importance of the unity of God (Ind: *tauhid*)".<sup>28</sup>

The Kusumadinata family account of Djadjat's transformation varies considerably from that of some among the *pasukan khusus*. According to both Buci Budiman and Risman, Djadjat studied under a number of teachers in his youth. Combining what he had learned of the traditional aliran with his street experiences as a jawara in Dulatyp, he created a number of new movements. At the time pencak silat in Bandung was dominated by ibing, the performance orientated artistic aspect of pencak silat. Djadjat felt that the self-defence techniques of pencak silat were unnecessarily obscured by emphasis upon structured aesthetic qualities within ibing. He set out to develop a method of practical 'no-frills' self-defence that was still distinctly pencak silat.<sup>29</sup>

The popularity of Bruce Lee films, first screened in Indonesia in the early 70's, was also considered to be a motivation for Djadjat. Like Lee, who radically revised traditional Chinese martial arts, Djadjat consciously sought to strip away what he considered to be the 'unnecessary' outer core of silat. This was also a motive behind stress on the word

*silat*, identified with self-defence applications, rather than the more commonly used Sundanese terms *penca* and *maenpo*. The popularity of Lee's films also concerned Djadjat, who worried that foreign martial arts were developing and growing in popularity to the detriment of pencak silat. As one senior student described it, "it was like a monkey holding a coconut, they scratch at the husk without knowing what's inside...that was how silat was back then. Then Djadjat came along and split the coconut right open".<sup>30</sup> Another silat teacher commented that "Djadjat made a style of pencak silat based upon his environment, his perceptions and his common sense. People now need martial arts like this".<sup>31</sup>

In my conversations with Djadjat during 1993 whilst I was studying under him, he situated the origins of Tajimalela, and more generally silat itself, within the body. On my first night at his home I asked him what he considered to be the historical foundations of pencak silat in Indonesia. Anticipating an account of past masters I was surprised when Djadjat asked me to close my eyes and "imagine a baby floating motionless in embryonic fluid, then out of this stillness its feet and hands suddenly move (Sd: *ulin*)... that is the beginnings of silat, it begins in the womb. Its movements spring directly from a pure spirit".<sup>32</sup> According to Djadjat there was a distinct epistemological difference between 'silat' and 'pencak'. 'Pencak' referred to physical movements that are determined by purely external conditions, whereas 'silat' involved movements that "have a close connection with the condition of the spirit". The decision to call his martial art 'silat', a term usually identified with Minangkabau tradition rather than the more Sundanese 'penca', was intended as a statement regarding its orientation and purpose. To 'become'



Tajimalela, meant not just learning the jurus and fighting techniques, but tapping the source of movement itself.

Regarding training methods, Djadjat likened the repetitive practice of jurus to the *sarengat*, the level of ritual obligation in Islam. At first prayer may seem absolute in itself, but in reality it is a vehicle, helpful for developing awareness of the self. However once one has truly mastered the form and understood its inner source then one no longer has any more need for them, just as when the silat student realises that the *jurus* are just that, a direction.<sup>33</sup> This is to leave the training methods without going against them; “Tajimalela is a system of not having a system. The object is to develop feeling and frequency, to move swiftly and with certainty”. From the perspective of modernist Islam such ideas regarding ritual obligation are heretical yet widespread throughout Java. Perhaps this is why Djadjat did not promote them amongst his students, instead encouraging them to perform their religious obligations. The body is both the home of the inner-self and the vehicle through which it expresses itself. The aim of physical training is to acquire a body that mirrors in its movement the spiritual forces that occupy it. According to Djadjat self-defence (Ind: *bela diri*) was not possible without knowing the self first (Ind: *mengenal diri*). Anything less is at best sport, at worst violence.

From this perspective silat is an embodied spirituality, an empirical activity involving not just the mental faculties but also the whole body as a receptor and source of knowledge. Djadjat formulated some of his ideas into what he called the “teaching of the seven dimensions of existence” (Ind: *ajaran tujuh dimensi kehidupan*):

1. Consciousness and certainty regarding the origins of human existence.
2. Consciousness and certainty regarding the meaning of life. The unity of the living and that which gives life.
3. Consciousness and certainty regarding the essence of humanity (Ind: *hakekat manusia*).
4. Consciousness and understanding of the meaning of life, that is thought, feeling and movement as a unified totality.
5. Awareness of the existence of sacred texts (Ind: *kitab suci*).
6. Awareness and understanding of the responsibilities of human existence.
7. Awareness of the certainty of death.



13. The late Raden Djadjat Kusumadinata (left), the founder of Tajimalela silat school, together with the author and Simon Kosasih, Djadjat's nephew and a senior in the school. The photo was taken in 1993.

Only a handful of students were initiated into the inner teachings of the martabat tujuh, and those that were are reluctant to discuss it. Before its formal establishment as a

perguruan the symbol incorporated the number seven however Djadjat did not expand on its meaning. The philosophy has hence remained something of a mystery to most Tajimalela members.

In terms of its physical technique and method, Tajimalela silat was significantly different from the major aliran in West Java. According to Iyan Kusumadinata some of the main differences were that the stances are generally ‘open’ in order to ‘fish’ (Ind: *mancing*) for an opponent’s attack.<sup>34</sup> The leg stances (Ind: *kuda-kuda*) are narrow and light, allowing ease of movement and rapid shifting of position. There is a balance between the use of leg and arm techniques. This contrasts with the focus upon hand and upper body techniques in West Java. There are many deceptive movements (Ind: *gerak tipu*). The jurus are simple and practical. Movements are not ‘abstracted’, and are designed to be applied directly in a self-defense situation. Jurus in traditional aliran are usually taught in two stages. Firstly students are required to master the form, without any explanation regarding how it is applied in practice. It is only later that the ‘purpose’ (Ind: *maksud*) of the jurus is taught.

Aside from speed, the other qualities considered necessary in Tajimalela were to be brave (Ind: *gagah*) and vicious (Ind: *galak*). The aim of its self-defense techniques is to incapacitate an opponent as quickly as possible. There are no purely defensive maneuvers. Blocks and evasive moves are combined with offensive strikes. One of the more difficult aspects of learning Tajimalela is developing the ability to accurately perform several movements at once, for example striking the temple with one hand,

blocking with the other, and simultaneously kicking at the genitals. Three movements are effectively combined into one.

### **Hard Beginnings**

During the early years of Tajimalela, Djadjat actively recruited local toughs (Sd: *jeger*) in Bandung, Subang and Cianjur.<sup>35</sup> His own reputation as a jawara meant that many who may have been turned away elsewhere were attracted to the new school. Djadjat is said to have preferred them as students, as they were already used to fighting, were brave, and had the “viciousness” (Ind: *kegalakan*) considered necessary for mastering Tajimalela.<sup>36</sup> At the same time, Djadjat also saw it as part of his responsibility as a teacher to ‘guide’ these marginal youth, especially considering his own background as a jawara. Senior instructors such as Sutarna and Maryatno started out as troublesome youths before coming under Djadjat’s influence. As Maryatno recounts:

When I was younger I was a ‘cowboy; I liked to fight and thought I was pretty tough. The first time I saw Kang Djadjat, I thought, ‘who does this guy think he is?’ But when I finally met him I immediately submitted to his authority. He had such charisma, he could defeat an opponent with his mere presence without resorting to physical conflict.<sup>37</sup>

Similarly Sutarna was entrusted to Djadjat by his parents because he was frequently getting into fights. The fear and respect these youth inspired in the local community quickly established Tajimalela’s reputation as a ‘force to be reckoned with’ in the silat world.

Some problems occurred with people ‘riding’ on the name of Tajimalela, usually to further their own reputations. The jawara members were especially important in areas

such as Cianjur and Sukabumi, where there was initially considerable hostility towards the new school. The long established tradition of pencak silat in both areas meant that a new school, especially one with no links to established lineages, had to prove itself. As a consequence physical challenges were frequent. Djadjat instructed his students that they should never back down from a fight. Many however preferred to ‘test’ the reputed skills of Djadjat directly:

Back then he was tried out by a *jago*, a Chinese karate expert named Wawah. Before they fought Kang Djadjat warned him of the risk, “either you will die or I will”. He still wanted to try, but as it turned out he didn’t even last one minute before it was all over. I saw it myself. I had asked Kang Djadjat if I could fight him but he said no, because it was he whom Wawah wanted to test. After it was over Kang Djadjat’s mother came out, she was furious!...it was lucky he didn’t kill him!<sup>38</sup>

In Subang, under the leadership of a renowned jawara, Tajimalela grew quickly. Until 1997 it was obligatory for students to ‘chop up’ (Ind: *bacok*) a local thief or criminal before they would be accepted as a member.<sup>39</sup> The branch was organised more along the lines of a gang than a perguruan. The Subang branch is especially renowned for fanatical loyalty to the school, and several members have the schools symbol tattooed on their body.<sup>40</sup> The name Tajimalela was abbreviated to ‘Jilela’ as the two principles symbolised by ‘Ta’ and ‘Ma’ were considered to be “to heavy” a burden for some members to bare.<sup>41</sup> Whilst officially disavowed, such ‘tests’ were given by Djadjat to some of his first students. Tatang recounts his own initiation:

Kang Djadjat said to me “if you want to become a student of Tajimalela you must be tested”. I replied that I was ready and asked what the test would be. “You must take down an opponent. Whoever it will be is up to you”. So I visited karate and kung fu schools in the area, even though Kang Djadjat never told me to do this. At that time I was still young and immature. I took out opponents from all the karate and kung fu schools in the area. At the end of it there were no more left in Dulatyp. As a consequence I was penalised by Kang Djadjat. The reason he did it was to appease the police, he did it for my own good. But after everything was sorted out he said, “Ah, that

was good, that's what Tajimalela is about, you have felt it. You have to be able to take down an opponent without using weapons". That was my test!<sup>42</sup>

Tajimalela's rapid growth during the late 70s and early 80s, as well as its popularity amongst jawara, attracted the attention of Yapto Soejosoemarno, the head of Pemuda Pancasila, who approached Djadjat with an offer of amalgamation between it and Tajimalela. Djadjat refused the offer.<sup>43</sup> Along with his older brother Iyan, Djajdat was also one of the founders of The Siliwangi Youth (Ind: *AMS; Angkatan Muda Siliwangi*), a nationalist youth organisation established in Bandung in 1966. Like its counterparts and rivals, Pemuda Pancasila and Pemuda Panca Marga, AMS was ostensibly established to 'channel' the aspirations of marginal youth towards the furthering of national development and the state ideology of Pancasila.<sup>44</sup> In practice the organisation was used as a 'human resource' by the New Order, either for political thuggery or as a 'rent-a-crowd' for counter demonstrations supporting the government.

Djadjat also served as the head of the Bandung branch of AMPI, Golkar's youth organisation. Despite the fear and awe in which he was regarded, Djadjat resisted following the jawara 'tradition' and always paid his own way at bars or clubs, "in order to set a good example to his students".<sup>45</sup> Groups such Pemuda Pancasila, and jawara in general, were notorious for using their power to avoid paying their way.<sup>46</sup> Whilst having grown up in an environment dominated by jawara, Djadjat was not sympathetic to those who 'abused' their influence. In an interview in Tempo magazine he defended his reputation:

Indeed people who are in the wrong fear me. But I myself am not evil. I am not in the Mafia, nor do I organise any group similar to the Mafia. I love peace and tranquillity. I adhere to the ethics of the *kesatria*. If there is someone who needs to be confronted from the criminal underworld (Ind: *kalangan hitam*), I will do it...I am not afraid.<sup>47</sup>

In the same interview Djadjat offered Tajimalela's services in assisting the authorities in dealing with the increase in violent crime. There is no evidence to suggest that his offer was ever taken up.

Between 1987 and 1992 he was a Golkar representative in the Bandung Municipal Assembly (Ind: *DPRD II; Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah Tingkat II*).<sup>48</sup> Despite his close involvement with the ruling party Tajimalela was not 'politicised' in the same way as groups such as Pendekar Banten or Satria Muda Indonesia who were closely aligned with members of the military and government. His brothers Yayat and Iyan had long advised him not to fall into the trap of 'corrupting' the school by aligning it with any particular political force.<sup>49</sup> Maintaining organisational independence was later written into the schools by-laws. However one senior member did recount that on at least one occasion Tajimalela members fought demonstrators who had disrupted a Golkar parade in which Djadjat participated. It seems though that this was a spontaneous act of loyalty to their guru rather than reflecting a political or organisational allegiance. Many senior members have been long-term supporters of the Indonesian Democratic Party (Ind: *PDI; Partai Demokratik Indonesia*) and hence said their teacher never exerted pressure on them to vote Golkar.

As has been mentioned, issues of 'face' are crucial in both jawara and silat circles. If Djadjat heard that someone had insulted either himself or Tajimalela he would always

seek them and out and demand an apology. Yosis Siswoyo, the founder of the Bandarkarima pencak silat school recounted how once a rumour begun to circulate that he had spoken badly of Djadjat. On hearing this Djadjat confronted Yosis and challenged him to “prove his words in action”.<sup>50</sup> On explaining that the rumour was untrue, the two sought out the source of the rumour. According to Yosis, “we didn’t consider someone a coward if they didn’t want to fight with us, but neither did we consider someone brave if they did!”<sup>51</sup>

The school was also involved in providing security. During the late 1970’s Djadjat had received a request from Suhadi Senjaya, the owner of the Kasum Optical business, to provide security for his store in Jalan Braga. Braga had already long been a center for billiard halls, bars, discotheques and prostitution and consequently attracted a large criminal element. Senjaya had had problems with local preman who regularly demanded that he pay exorbitant amounts of ‘protection’ money. Djadjat agreed to help, and sent Buci Budiman, one of the *Pansus*, as well as two others to guard the store. The presence of Djajdat’s students was enough to discourage the would-be extortionists. Many traders in the nearby electrical goods market were impressed by this and consequently enrolled as students.<sup>52</sup> In appreciation for their help, as well as to break the monotony of their task, Senjaya trained the three in his trade. Later each was able to establish their own optical businesses as part of the Senjaya opticians chain.<sup>53</sup> Senjaya’s patronage of the school continued. From 1980 to 1989 he acted as Tajimalela’s chairperson.



Tajimalela's rapid growth in the Bandung pencak silat scene prompted some to label it as a "deviant" and even "satanic" style. According to one senior member this was due to Djadjat's focus upon straightforward self-defense, his 'open policy' towards students, and also the fact that it did not trace a lineage to the traditional aliran. Djadjat was considered to be at the forefront of a "rebel generation" (Ind: *generasi pemberontak*) within the Bandung silat community.<sup>54</sup> Reversing the conventional method of training, Djadjat taught students practical self-defense techniques first, without any preliminary basic jurus (Ind: *jurus dasar*). This was directly opposite to the established traditions (Sd: *patokan*), which required a long period of apprenticeship before a student was taught the 'content' (Sd: *ngeusi*) of the jurus. The danger believed to be latent in Djadjat's method was the possibility that those who had not yet acquired the necessary self-discipline and ethical instruction, could misuse what they had learnt, bringing dishonor upon themselves and their guru.

Yet for Djadjat, the proof of the efficiency of a technique was to be found in a fight. It wasn't sufficient for a student to have faith that a technique was practical, they had to 'feel' it directly. For Djadjat physical jurus were of secondary importance to embodying the 'principle' behind them. 'Real Tajimalela' was the ability to apply these principles creatively in a fight. In other ways however Djadjat's teaching method echoed Sundanese tradition, as in his concept of *silat wayang*. Just as wayang puppets can only act in accord with their particular characteristics, so in his terms people can only perform silat that "fits" with their own nature, meaning both their physical and mental disposition.<sup>55</sup>

Consequently Djadjat created and imparted a countless number of jurus and fighting techniques, each devised specifically for particular students.

Students were also encouraged to focus upon the aspect of training to which Djadjat thought they were best suited. One student recounted how in 1976 when he was still in his teens, his father took him and his brother to enrol in Tajimalela. On seeing the two boys Djadjat pointed to one of them and said to their father “just this one sir, he will become a champion”. The boy, Dani Wisnu, was later to become a repeated national, Southeast Asian and world champion of competition pencak silat. He is now a senior instructor in Tajimalela. Djadjat’s eclectic method was reflected in my own experiences training with him. At one time he woke me at 2am saying that he had had an “inspiration” (Ind: *ilham*) regarding a jurus that was specifically, as he said, “just for you”. The simple yet effective technique that he then taught me felt, in contrast to many of the others I had learnt, ‘natural’ and I had little difficulty in becoming relatively proficient in it. It was clear that Djadjat has assessed my physical disposition and developed a technique that he believed fitted with it. Only later when training with other Tajimalela members, did I realize that the technique was significantly different from those commonly taught.

### **The Impact of Sport**

Around the same time that Tajimalela was established as a school, the first pencak silat sporting tournaments were being hosted by IPSI. In order to further establish its name, Djadjat selected particular students to compete. Competitive pencak silat was still in the embryonic stage. Rules were ambiguous at best and many competitors had no

knowledge of them whatsoever. The atmosphere was often more akin to gang battle than a sporting event. Defeat was taken as a major loss of face for a perguruan, and often fights were continued outside the ring. Tajimalela supporters would march to a competition en masse, carrying banners and machetes with them in the anticipation that fights would break out, as they often did.

In 1975 Tajimalela became an affiliate of IPSI. To be recognized by IPSI the school had to formulate association bylaws and formalize the organization's administrative structure. Despite early 'teething problems', in adjusting fighting technique to the constraints of competition, Tajimalela soon became a major force in the forum at the regional and national level. Though Djadjat had created a 'Tajimalela ibing' it had not been taught widely, and hence the standard was not sufficient to make the group competitive in the 'art' category of IPSI and PPSI competitions. On the other hand Tajimalela students had an advantage in that they were already 'hardened' by their style of training. No protectors were worn during sparring sessions, which were conducted "just as if we were facing a real enemy".<sup>56</sup> Mistakes were met with a beating with a stick from Djadjat. Equal emphasis upon hand and leg techniques also perhaps made Tajimalela fighters better adapted to competition than other styles in West Java, whose offensive movements were almost exclusively hand-based. Competition rules rewarded higher points to successful offensive leg movements (ie. kicks, sweeps and drops) than punches, strikes or other hand techniques.



14. Application of a Tajimalela technique

By 1976 the school had its first major success when Dedi A.R won the Bandung municipal championship. The win prompted a new direction. Beginning in 1978 Djadjat begun working on jurus specifically designed for the competition forum. Students with backgrounds in sport sciences, such as Maryatno and Sutarna, helped formulate a revised training format that incorporated methods used in other sports. Between 1980 and 1999 the school won three national, three provincial, and one municipal championship, a level of success unrivaled by any other perguruan in Indonesia. Fighters such as Dani Wisnu, Syakera Pujasmedi, Dewi Yanti, Budiwati Ido and Vidia Iriyanti have won gold at the regional and international level. Even amongst senior members, Tajimalela's dominance of IPSI competitions appeared as something of a mystery. In the words of Sutarna, "in terms of technique and movements used in competition Tajimalela is not much different

from other perguruan...yet we keep winning!’<sup>57</sup> The lack of any rational explanation has led some to suggest that success is due to spiritual intervention by their teacher.

### **New Directions: Tajimalela after Djadjat**

Djadjat's unexpected death on 6 August 1995, at the age of 49, left the school in a state of shock. Despite intermittent periods of ill health, Djadjat had been fit and active in teaching. His sudden death was caused by a blood clot in his leg. Djadjat had not appointed a successor nor formalized a grading system. After discussions between the Kusumadinata family and senior members it was decided that his elder brother Iyan would become the school's chairperson. Djadjat's charisma had been the binding force for the school. The death of the founder of an aliran or perguruan is often a crucial point in its development. If an organizational structure or clear lineage has not been established then often the perguruan either dissolves or breaks up into splinter groups. Djadjat had consistently resisted attempts to systematize and codify Tajimalela techniques, in part due to his firm belief that silat must be both taught in accord with the particular dispositions of those involved. The down side of this individual approach was after his death there was little agreement amongst members as to what movements, if any, constituted 'standard' Tajimalela. In Cianjur for example, Djadjat taught different golok techniques to those in Bandung, making problematic the endeavor of formulating a standardized method. Whilst Djadjat was still alive differences had emerged between generations, but had been reconciled through his facilitation.<sup>58</sup> Members of the 'first generation' as well as some of the senior instructors had their own individual conceptions of purpose, method and what constituted the 'real' Tajimalela. Each taught according to their own method, drawn from

their individual experiences training under Djadjat. There was a real concern that without his unifying presence the school could break up into smaller splinter perguruan.



15. Members of Tajimalela pay their respects at the grave of Djadjat Kusumadinata on the fifth anniversary of his passing.

A system of graded levels had been in place in the school for several years, and was used as a framework in all Tajimalela branches, however the content of each grade still varied considerably, especially outside of Bandung. The first basic level (Ind: *tingkatan dasar*) consists of four stages, each requiring a minimum of six months. Students are taught eight basic jurus for each stage. The second level involves four more levels with a minimum of 12 months training for each. The third level is that of the 'pendekar'. There are three levels of the pendekar stage: young (Ind: *muda*), middle (Ind: *madya*) and main

(Ind: *utama*), each requiring two years of intensive instruction. The highest level in the system can be achieved in a minimum of 12 years of regular training.

Another tension that became evident after Djadjat's death was that between first generation seniors and younger instructors who had come of age in IPSI sporting competitions. Of the first generation only two, Ahya and Tatang, have continued to be active in teaching. Tatang's method of teaching can be characterized as the traditional/conservative model; intensely personal, secretive, selective in imparting his knowledge, plus demanding and reciprocating absolute loyalty. Tatang has taken his own relationship with Djadjat as a role model for that between guru and student. His main group of students is at the lower secondary school (Ind: *SMP; Sekolah Menengah Pertama*) near the Bandung train station. Loyalty has been fostered more towards the teacher rather than the perguruan itself. Keeping to Djadjat's request that he act as a 'shadow troop', Tatang has remained aloof from administrative decisions. Younger instructors have complained that instead of continuing to instruct his own students, Tatang should take on the role of an adviser to them, so that they can impart his knowledge to their students. Their wish is that a hierarchical structure be employed in which seniors take on an advisory role to senior instructors who have the responsibility of training members. For his part Tatang was reluctant to engage with the younger instructors, preferring to focus exclusively upon his own training units.

Younger trainers such as Kang Wai, Cecep and Wawan, whilst having trained under Djadjat, have always been involved in IPSI programs. Their students have been trained

largely in techniques applicable to competition silat. The main concern of the older generation was that over time 'ilmu Tajimalela' would become increasingly diluted. While prestige through success in competitions was important for promoting the school, only a small percentage of 'authentic' Tajimalela techniques could actually be applied within them. The 'authentic' in this case, in the eyes of senior members, is identified with techniques developed by Djadjat in the years before competition. Despite Tajimalela's dominance of the competition forum, it was felt that the 'spirit' (Ind: *semangat*) of the school, found in its roots in jawara culture, was not evident in younger members. One senior member commented that "the younger generation of Tajimalela are not tough enough, they are afraid of getting hurt". Second generation instructors such as Sutarna, Dani Wisnu and Maryatno had come of age in the competition forum under Djadjat's guidance and were influential in developing a revised program of training.<sup>59</sup>

A graduate of Bandung Sports Institute, Maryatno been involved in training the Indonesian national pencak silat squad from 1994 up until the present. In 2001 changes were introduced into the organizational structure of the school that were hoped would address these problems. A Council of Teachers (Ind: *Dewan Guru*) was appointed with Tatang as its head, recognizing his status as Djadjat's first student. Consisting of first and second-generation members, the council is to function as the sole authority on technical, methodological and philosophical issues. In an effort to document and systematize Tajimalela, all those who trained personally with Djadjat, including the author, have been requested to contribute the jurus they learnt as well as their experiences with him. The hope is that once all have been gathered together, the Dewan Guru will be able to



formulate a more uniform system that can be applied in all the Tajimalela branches throughout West Java. Students are to be required to be proficient in both self-defense and competition silat, and given have the opportunity to specialize in one.

Aside from being instrumental in restructuring the perguruan, Iyan Kusumadinata has played with combining Tajimalela with music. Whilst I was in Bandung in 1999, Iyan hosted several experiments at trying to find a “resonance“ (Ind: *hubungan rasa*) between the violent techniques of Tajimalela and the flowing melodies of *kecapi suling*. A description of one such occasion is as follows:

Arriving at Kang Iyan’s for the weekly meeting I was surprised to find a group of around 30 people congregated in the lounge room. Amongst them were two Badui men dressed in black as well as a *kecapi suling* orchestra from Cianjur. Kang Iyan explained that tonight there was to be an ‘experiment’ at blending Tajimalela with music. The lights were dimmed and those assembled went silent. The elderly leader of the *kecapi suling* group began a monologue in high Sundanese, invoking the names of Allah, Muhammad and his companions, and Prabu Tajimalela. Kang Iyan whispered to me that the purpose of the *sajen* was to “seek permission from the energies of the sky and the earth”. After collectively reciting the *al-fatiyah* prayer, the elderly man placed several lumps of incense on a small burner and waved the fumes towards his face. He then took a small bowl of water and flicked it on the musical instruments. The playing then began. After around 30 minutes of uninterrupted music Kang Iyan gestured to his son Dinar to perform. Moving to the middle of the room he kneeled with eyes closed. One of the *kecapi* players called out to him “just try and feel the music”. Slowly he rose to his feet and did the perguruan salute. He moved slowly and gracefully around the room, before launching into a rapid combination of hand and leg strikes. The improvised performance fluctuated between the dreamlike melodies of the *kecapi suling* and a controlled violent physicality. Kang Iyan commented that he interpreted the performance as a representation of the internal battle we all experience to harmonize the ‘refined’ (Ind: *halus*) and ‘coarse’ (Ind: *kasar*) aspects of our own being.<sup>60</sup>

Under Iyan’s leadership there has been a greater emphasis upon the spiritual and philosophical dimensions of Tajimalela. Weekly perguruan meetings are held at Iyan’s home that are open to any members. At these meetings philosophical issues such as the inner meaning of the Panca Darma are discussed in an open and frank manner. Iyan’s hope was that the discussions would help foster a deeper interest in the spiritual

dimension of Tajimalela amongst the younger generation. Whilst it is considered important to honor Djadjat's memory, Iyan has emphasized that he shouldn't be "turned into a cult figure...there must be encouragement for one to strive to become more than the guru".<sup>61</sup> The principle of innovation that Djadjat constantly emphasized persists, even after his passing. As one instructor commented, "if we want to be at the forefront of pencak silat, be it competition or other forums, we must continue to create new and innovative techniques".<sup>62</sup>



16. Sutarna, a Tajimalela senior, performs improvised movements to kecap suling music at a gathering at the home of the school's current head, Raden Iyan Kusumadinata.

### **Continuing Legacy**

In a letter to an instructor in Cianjur in the late 1980's, Djadjat had threatened that he would come and 'haunt' him (Sd: *dijurig-jurigan*) if the jurus he taught were ever

changed or forgotten. A decade later, and several years after Djadjat's death, this tongue-in-cheek warning appeared to some to have come true at the wedding of Uke Kusumadinata, Djadjat's eldest daughter. The Sarijadi branch of Tajimalela had been practising a routine to be performed as part of the celebrations. The training had not been going well. Wawan and Simon strongly admonished the group for their laziness, telling them that it was essential that they 'ask permission' (Ind: *minta izin*) with the creator of Tajimalela before the performance. They were instructed to perform night prayers (Ar: *salat tahajjud*) the evening beforehand.<sup>63</sup>

The following day they began their routine as planned. Several seconds into it, the group began performing movements that they had never learnt before. The routine was of an exceptionally high standard, well beyond what was expected of the students. The students expressions were blank, their gaze fixed and unblinking. Djadjat's mother wept during the routine along with several other family members and seniors. Afterwards she explained that she had seen Djadjat at the front of the group, leading them in the routine. She explained that "he wanted to be present at his daughter's wedding".<sup>64</sup> The students themselves were unable to explain the ability they displayed, and some had no recollection of the event at all. The occurrence was described by one witness as an instance of *kaeunteupan* (Sd: to attach, to stick).<sup>65</sup> This, it was explained, is fundamentally different from possession or *sambatan* where the spirit of a deceased master temporarily inhabits the body of the silat practitioner, endowing them with their martial prowess. *Sambatan*, also known as 'ancestor silat' (Sd: *penca karuhan*), is most commonly practiced in Banten. Whereas possession and *sambatan* are seen by some as

being in conflict with Islam, *kaeunteupan* involves the spirit of the deceased temporarily ‘influencing’ the living. It ‘sticks’ to them, but unlike possession, does not take over their body. The jurus seem to have acted as what the Sundanese refer to as a ‘rope to the ancestors’ (Sd: *talari karuhan*), in this case the spirit of Djadjat.

From this and numerous other accounts of Djadjat’s appearance, either in visions or dreams, it seems that he still exists as a powerful presence in the lives of the Tajimalela community. Two years after his death there had been a short-lived rift between members from a branch at an Islamic university and some seniors over the way in which respects were to be paid to their late teacher. The seniors had made several midnight vigils at Djadjat’s grave, leaving offerings. They were concerned that Djadjat’s grave may become a site of pilgrimage for those seeking to ‘absorb’ his reputed spiritual power, such is the case with the graves of other past masters such as Embah Kahir and Embah Rangga (Cimande), Haji Sanusi (Cikaret) and Haji Mahmud (Cignondewah). From the perspective of the students, Islam forbids such practices. Prayers are to be directed only to Allah. At most one should pray to Allah to forgive the deceased for their sins and be accepted at His side. Such patterns of pilgrimage are found throughout Java and are an integral part of Sundanese tradition. The seniors and instructors from the Sarijadi branch have also made several visits to the reputed site of Prabu Tajimalela’s grave, situated on the slopes of Mount Lingga, to meditate upon the inner meaning of Tajimalela. The tension made apparent differences in perception regarding Djadjat and his legacy. For some older members, just like Prabu Tajimalela, Djadjat had entered to realm of the ancestors. As an ancestral spirit, Djadjat and his ilmu were still accessible, and he

continues to exercise a protective influence over the lives of his family and students. This perspective displays continuity with Sundanese tradition. For others, Djadjat's legacy was the principle of innovation he displayed in his lifetime, one that also challenged the accepted traditions and conventions of pencak silat in West Java.

### **Tarung Derajat**

Having examined in detail the history of Tajimalela, it is worth mentioning here another style that emerged at the same time and in similar conditions. Whilst Djadjat Kusumadinata was establishing a name as a jawara in Dulatyp, another youth was undergoing a similar transformation in a neighboring district. Achmad Drajat, commonly known as Aa Boxer, grew up in Tegalreja during the 1960's. Like Dulatyp, Tegalreja was an area considered "dangerous" (Ind; *rawan*) due to gang related violence, and Achmad often found himself caught up in fights; "but I only fought to defend myself, not to try and be a tough guy (Ind: *sok jagoan*)".<sup>66</sup> As a young man his skill on the soccer pitch often attracted the ire of those on the opposing team and several times he was set upon after the match had finished.<sup>67</sup> Physically weak and with no training in self-defense, Achmad was an easy target for local toughs. Fed up with these humiliating beatings Achmad resolved to develop a system of self-defense that could be used against opponents who were physically stronger and larger than him. In seeking inspiration he turned to his own experiences of street fighting. He identified four basic physical elements at play within a fight; punching, kicking, blocking/evasion and throwing/dropping.<sup>68</sup> He covered his body with tattoos "so that I looked terrifying", and did extensive weights training developing a muscular physique.<sup>69</sup>

Technically the system developed by Achmad has many similarities with Thai kickboxing. It is a ‘no frills’ system, focusing upon simple movements done with maximum force coupled with a high endurance of physical pain.<sup>70</sup> This was a reflection of Achmad’s primary concern with self-preservation. Aesthetic and philosophical elements were simply superfluous. Applying his techniques in the street, Achmad soon made a name for himself. Whilst initially reluctant to teach others, more and more people came to him asking to be instructed. He formally established a self-defense school, named Derajat Fighting (Ind: *Tarung Derajat*), in 1972.<sup>71</sup> At the time Achmad was 24 years old. Unlike Djadjat, Achmad did not consider his martial art to be related to pencak silat in any way, and hence had no contact with either IPSI or PPSI. For Achmad, *Tarung Derajat* was a ‘natural’ system of self-defense, as it had evolved directly out of his own experiences.

Since 1999 the school has worked closely with the Provincial Rail Authority, providing basic self-defense training for its staff as well as security at the major train stations in Bandung.<sup>72</sup> *Tarung Derajat* students have also become favored as bodyguards amongst Jakarta executives. However despite frequent requests it does not provide a bodyguard service.<sup>73</sup> According to Achmad, “bodyguards are out-dated. Our motto is transform yourself into your own bodyguard”.<sup>74</sup> Those seeking protection are encouraged to join the school and train. It was however officially involved in a cooperative agreement between the Central Java police and the Martial Arts Sport Association (Ind: *Perkumpulan Olahraga Beladiri*) in providing additional security in ‘troubled areas’.<sup>75</sup> Dressed in black track-suits emblazoned with the school’s name, *Tarung Derajat* are a

conspicuous presence around Bandung's central train station and mini bus terminal. One local referred to them as "preman in uniform".<sup>76</sup> At times tensions have arisen with other martial arts schools in the area, which see Tarung Derajat's monopoly on security as an invasion of their 'turf'.<sup>77</sup>



17. An army officer tests the strength of a Tarung Derajat student at a gathering of the school in Jakarta. Photo from *Suara Mereka*, 12 October 1998. Links between the military and silat will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6

In 1998 Tarung Derajat was recognized by KONI as a sport in its own right. Infamous for its 'full-body contact' style fighting, the effort to create a competitive style that conformed with KONI regulations presented major difficulties, especially in terms of technique. The 'hardness' of Tarung Derajat has been both its main attraction and its major obstacle towards gaining more mainstream popularity. Members proudly declare

that it is a “full contact” martial art. In effect the style had to be reconfigured in a way that radically altered the social habitus in which it had been developed. The challenge was also one of a martial art that was identified with culture of ‘the streets’ gaining acceptance in the mainstream sporting community. As one journalist wrote “if in an official arena an athlete is seriously injured due to the harshness of the competition then this sport could easily return to the streets”.<sup>78</sup>

In the case of both Tajimalela and Tarung Derajat there was no connection to an already established pencak silat lineage. Whilst being informed by the culture and traditions surrounding the traditional aliran, each involved new configurations of the pencak silat body, in terms of technique, disposition and the ethics of combat. These were developed in response to the social and cultural environment in which the founders were immersed, in this instance the densely populated urban sprawl of modern Bandung. The demands of this environment prompted a refocusing upon the self-defense aspect of pencak silat and a rationalizing and simplifying of Sundanese pencak silat tradition. Both also underwent fundamental changes in order to adapt to the challenges presented by the emergence of sporting competitions as the new forum for the ‘legitimate’ display of the pencak silat body.

In the next two chapters, both focused on aspects of silat culture within the New Order, we will focus on distinct and often contrary movements. In the following chapter our focus is on how, even within ‘new’ styles of movement, there has been a renewal of emphasis upon the fundamental significance of ‘inner power’. In the next chapter I will



reverse frames and counterpoint emphasis on ‘inside’ process with focus on ‘outer’, regulatory and ‘regime encapsulating’ organizational development.

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<sup>1</sup> Maryono, 1998, pg. 94.

<sup>2</sup> Loren Ryter, ‘Pemuda Pancasila: The Last Loyalist Free Men of Suharto’s Order?’, *Indonesia*, No. 66, October 1998, pp. 45-73.

<sup>3</sup> *The Jakarta Post*, ‘War on ‘preman’: Fighting crime or joining in?’, 5 May, 2001. Many preman however also came from the ranks of the elite. In 1972 Suharto gave instructions that no children of armed forces personnel were to be involved in gangs. Their interests were to be channeled into clubs and youth associations under government control. Living in a military environment, and often with access to their father’s gun, they were often the most troublesome and violent. Ryter, 1998, pg. 58.

<sup>4</sup> There have been periodic systematic murders of preman throughout the New Order, such as ‘Mysterious Shootings’ (Ind: *PETRUS; Penembakan Misterius*) of the mid-1980s, and more recently the ‘Operation Exterminate’ (Ind: *Operasi Membasmi*) of April-May 2001. See *Gamma*, ‘Yang Dibenci dan Disayang’, 17 April, 2001.

<sup>5</sup> Confidential interview, July 1999, Bandung.

<sup>6</sup> Confidential interview, July 1999, Bandung.

<sup>7</sup> Interview with Mochtar Soleh, 16/05/99, Bandung.

<sup>8</sup> Interview with Mochtar Soleh, 16/05/99, Bandung.

<sup>9</sup> Rusyana, 1996, pp. 101-102

<sup>10</sup> Field notes, 17/05/99, Bandung.

<sup>11</sup> Lubis, 1998, pg.51.

<sup>12</sup> Aang is the head of the Cianjur branch of Tajimalela. Both Yuyun and Yayat are renowned teachers of classical Sundanese dance. Iyan is an influential social figure in Bandung and renowned as a sufi philosopher.

<sup>13</sup> In Sundanese: “*naon nu ku maneh diteangan geus aya di imah, ayeuna mah geura balik. Lamun hayang panggih jeung aki baca weh ieu!*”. In another version recounted by Djadjat’s brother Yayat Kusumadinata, the old man said to Djadjat ‘if you want to continue don’t look behind’. Djajdat ignored his warning. Looking over his shoulder he caught a glimpse of a black crow flying in front of the sun. The old man then took him to the grave of Prabu Tajimalela where he received the *ilham* (Ind: divine inspiration) to create a new silat style. On returning home, Djajdat told Yayat that he had “obtained silat from the Ka’abah”. Conversation with Raden Yayat Kusumadinata, Bandung, 7/04/99.

<sup>14</sup> The motif of travelling to Mecca can be found in the legends surrounding Kean Santang. Djadjat’s statement is interpreted by some in the Kusumadinata family as meaning that he made a journey to the “inner Ka’abah”, the spiritual heart.

<sup>15</sup> The term *crossboy* originated in the 1950’s referring to fans of James Dean and Elvis Presley. During the 60s and 70s it became synonymous with troublesome youths and petty criminals.

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<sup>16</sup> Interview with Kang Tatang, 10/05/99. Other accounts by those present differ to Tatang's. One is that the gang was from Cimahi, and consisted of the sons of army officers. On entering Dulatyp the gang saw Djadjat's brother in law Bapak Kosasih, who was a commando, and decided to back off. Djadjat had wanted to attack the gang but was restrained by his brother Iyan. Interview with Simon Kosasih, Bandung 17/05/99.

<sup>17</sup> Resulting in his nickname the "human experiment" (Ind: *manusia percobaan*) amongst fellow Tajimalela seniors.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Simon Kosasih, 10/05/99, Bandung.

<sup>19</sup> Interview with Kang Risman, 29/01/00, Bandung.

<sup>20</sup> There is practically no written material on Prabu Tajimalela, though a sword and armour reputed to have belonged to him is kept at the Sumedang municipal museum.

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Kang Risman, 29/01/00, Bandung.

<sup>22</sup> Weintrob, A.N. *Ngahding Carita Anu Baheula (To Awaken an Ancient Story): An Introduction to the Stories of Pantun Sunda*, Southeast Asian Paper no.34, Center for Southeast Asian Studies, University of Hawaii at Manoa, 1991, pg. ii.

<sup>23</sup> Robert Wessing, 'A Change in the Forest: Myth and History in West Java', in *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 24, 1 March 1993, pp. 1-17

<sup>24</sup> Robert Wessing, *The Soul of Ambiguity: The Tiger in Southeast Asia*, Special Report No.24, Northern Illinois University, 1986, pg. 31.

<sup>25</sup> According to local authorities tigers have been extinct in the area for many years though reports of sightings by locals are still common and are seen as an omen of good luck. Kean Santang is also believed to be buried near the Sancang forest. Ibid pg. 13

<sup>26</sup> The following account was told to me by Maherman Soedradjat, Adjat's eldest son. Interview with Maherman Soedradjat, 2/05/99, Bandung.

<sup>27</sup> Julia D. Howell, *Vehicles for the Kalki Avatar: The Experiments of a Javanese Guru in Rationalising Ecstatic Religion*, Ph.D. thesis, Standford University, 1977, pg. 45

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Dani Wisnu and Sutarna, 21/8/99, Bandung.

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Kang Risman, 29/01/00, Bandung.

<sup>30</sup> Interview, 10/05/99, Bandung,

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Yosis Siswoyo, 27/7/99, Bandung.

<sup>32</sup> Conversation with Raden Djadjat Kusumadinata, 14/08/93, Bandung.

<sup>33</sup> Djadjat played upon the dual meaning of *jurus*, movements in the martial arts, but also 'to go in a certain direction'.

<sup>34</sup> Interview with Raden Iyan Kusumadinata, 23/04/97, Bandung.

<sup>35</sup> Interview with Raden Aang Kusumadinata, 22/1/00, Bandung.

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- <sup>36</sup> Interview with Raden Aang Kusumadinata, 22/1/00, Bandung.
- <sup>37</sup> Interview with Maryatno, 4/08/99, Bandung.
- <sup>38</sup> Interview with Tatang, 10/05/99, Cilengkrang.
- <sup>39</sup> Meaning, they had to challenge and defeat them in a fight. Iyan Kusumadinata outlawed the practice soon after being appointed chairperson of the school in 1995.
- <sup>40</sup> Tattoos in Java are commonly seen as a sign of gang allegiance or membership in the criminal underworld.
- <sup>41</sup> Interview with Simon Kosasih, 7/9/99, Bandung.
- <sup>42</sup> Interview with Tatang, 10/05/99, Cilengkrang.
- <sup>43</sup> Despite the refusal the two maintained a friendship. Once whilst being chased by enemies, of which he had many in Bandung, Yapto sought refuge at Djadjat's home. After Djadjat's death in 1995 Pemuda Pancasila attempted to set up a 'command post' in Dulatyp but were 'sent packing' by Tajimalela members and locals who were no doubt concerned they would seek to exploit the large Chinese business community in the area. For a detailed study of Pemuda Pancasila see Loren Ryter, 1998.
- <sup>44</sup> Interview with Raden Iyan Kusumadinata, 1/7/99, Bandung. Neither Iyan nor Djadjat had much contact with AMS since the early 1970's. At a national congress of the group in 1999 Iyan caused considerable controversy when he said that the group had lost its way and become a puppet of Golkar.
- <sup>45</sup> Interview with Dani Wisnu, 23/8/99, Soreang.
- <sup>46</sup> Whilst in Bandung in 1999, members of Pemuda Pancasila that I met offered that if I ever wanted to see a movie or go to a bar I should contact them first as they could guarantee that I would not have to pay.
- <sup>47</sup> *Tempo*, 21 May 1994.
- <sup>48</sup> Djadjat was also lead vocalist in the rock group Paramour. The group recorded 13 albums and were popular in Bandung throughout the 1980's.
- <sup>49</sup> Interview with Raden Yayat Kusumadinata, Bandung, 13/04/99, Bandung.
- <sup>50</sup> Interview with Yosis Siswoyo, 27/7/99, Bandung.
- <sup>51</sup> Interview with Yosis Siswoyo, 27/7/99, Bandung.
- <sup>52</sup> To this day Tajimalela commands a strong presence in and around the market, the network of members also involved in several joint business ventures. The influence of the network has meant that the market no longer has to employ paid security guards.
- <sup>53</sup> Interview with Buci Budiman, 13/02/00, Bandung.
- <sup>54</sup> Interview with Yosis Siswoyo, 27/7/99, Bandung.
- <sup>55</sup> Interview with Dani Wisnu, 23/8/99, Soreang.
- <sup>56</sup> Interview with Kang Risman, 29/01/99, Bandung.

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<sup>57</sup> Interview with Sutarna, 21/8/99, Bandung.

<sup>58</sup> At one point differences regarding the direction of the school between first generation and third generation members nearly erupted into violence, that was only prevented after Djadjat intervened.

<sup>59</sup> Dani Wisnu was rewarded with a job in the provincial civil service by the government after his repeated successes at the national and international level.

<sup>60</sup> Field notes, 15/7/99, Bandung.

<sup>61</sup> Interview with Raden Iyan Kusumadinata, 2/01/00, Bandung.

<sup>62</sup> Interview, 10/01/00, Bandung.

<sup>63</sup> In Islam *salat tahajjud* are non-obligatory prayers, usually performed between 2-3am with the intention of seeking guidance from Allah regarding a particular problem.

<sup>64</sup> Djadjat's mother, Ibu Uke, had also seen him at a ceremony marking four years since his passing that had been held two months earlier.

<sup>65</sup> Conversation with Simon Kosasih, 29/11/00, Bandung.

<sup>66</sup> 'Drs. H. Achmad Dradjat: Menciptakan Beladiri Praktis dan Efektif', *Duel: Majalah Seni Beladiri*, No.2, November 2000, pp. 25-28

<sup>67</sup> It is rumoured that Adjat has a collection of finger tips taken from pickpockets and *preman* who made the mistake of attacking him with a knife, something he doesn't deny; "I don't have many, less than a hundred". See 'Tarung Derajat Naik Pangkat', *Tempo*, 24 October 1999, pg. 62.

<sup>68</sup> *Duel*, November 2000.

<sup>69</sup> *Tempo*, 24 October 1999. Pg.62

<sup>70</sup> One ex-member stated that the reason he left Tarung Derajat was that he was "tired of having my head smashed in every week". Confidential interview, Bandung. September 1999.

<sup>71</sup> According to one informant from Tajimalela, Achmad Drajat attempted to start a branch of Tarung Derajat in the Dulatyp area in the late 1970s. When word of this reached Kang Djadjat, he and one of his senior students went to Achmad's home in Tegalreja to "try him out". On hearing word that Kang Djadjat was approaching his home Achmad is said to have fled out the back door. As a result Tarung Derajat established a branch in a neighbouring district instead.

<sup>72</sup> 'Sebanyak 38 Paspam PT.KAI Lulus Pendidikan Dasar', *Pikiran Rakyat*, 26 August 1999, pg. 16

<sup>73</sup> 'Ada Tentara Ngobjek, Ada Pelatih Silat: Mengintip Kehidupan Bodyguard Eksekutif Jakarta (2-Habis)', *Jawa Pos*, Wednesday 2 September 2000.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> *Suara Merdeka*, 12 October 1998.

<sup>76</sup> Field notes, 12/06/99, Bandung.

<sup>77</sup> Confidential interview, August 1999, Bandung.

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid, pg. 62

## Looking Within: The Science of Inner Power

The pursuit of esoteric knowledge or ‘ilmu’ has always been an intrinsic part of pencak silat culture. Mastery of the physical body forms the foundation for perceiving and harnessing hidden powers both within and without. In this chapter I concentrate on the history and theory of ‘inner power’ within pencak silat. After outlining the historical development and general theory of inner power we focus on four contemporary groups in West Java. As we will see, inner power practices have grown in popularity in recent times, partly and ironically, in response to the ‘sportization’ of silat culture. The promotion of silat as sport and national culture by the state has led to what some see as a ‘banalisation’ of the silat body.

Inner power practitioners on the other hand have sought to ‘re-enchant’ the body by exploring the forces and flows within it, and expand its horizons by borrowing theories from modern science, religion and New Order ideology. In looking at inner power practices, I aim to highlight how silat practitioners have imagined themselves as finding a dynamic equilibrium between inner realities and outer social process. By exploring and developing the individual body via body techniques, and attempting to embody social and cultural ideals, inner power practitioners, in their terms, have sought to bring themselves into harmony with the larger social body of which they are a part. In their terms, this means their practice is precisely and completely ‘engaged’ and active rather than

'escapist'. 'The inner dimension of pencak silat is seen by its practitioners as a practical means of engaging with the world as embodied and conscious social actors.'<sup>1</sup>

According to Popo Sumadipraja, traditional pencak silat training in West Java consists of three progressive stages of development: *olah raga*, *olah rasa* and *olah jiwa*.<sup>2</sup> Within this context, olahraga or in Sundanese, *pakalah*, refers not to 'sport', but to the training of the physical body via the reflexive memorisation of jurus. The trained physical body constitutes the necessary base for the unfolding of the next stage of *olah rasa*, intuitive knowledge. The repetitive performance of physical exercises aids in the maturation of an enhanced awareness of the body's internal processes and to previously hidden flows of energy. There are two basic types of force, 'unrefined energy' (Ind: *tenaga kasar*) and 'refined energy' (Ind: *tenaga halus*).<sup>3</sup> Tenaga kasar refers to the purely physical product of training such as muscular strength and endurance. Sustained training of the physical body can lead to the final stage of *olah jiwa* where one masters tenaga halus and gains perfect knowledge of the self. Within silat discourse the body is not an impediment to self-knowledge and self-realisation as it provides the vehicle and source for it. In the words of Popo Sumadipraja "coming to fully know oneself means understanding all of the elements of the natural world, all of which exist within us".<sup>4</sup>

The sportization of pencak silat practice that took place in the mid 1970's via the agency of IPSI, led to a marginalisation of the spiritual dimension of pencak silat as well as practices aimed at the accumulation of supernatural power.<sup>5</sup> 'Olahraga', identified by IPSI as 'sport', which was the preliminary stage of training in traditional schools, became

an end in itself. The socialisation of this new form of purely technical, competitive silat took time. Many competitors still wore magically charged *jimat* (amulets) under their uniforms, and employed various other forms of ilmu to gain an advantage over their opponent.<sup>6</sup> During these early years of competition ‘checks’ were required to ensure that no magic was being used. The promotion of sport as the main developmental forum for pencak silat corresponded with a shift in government policy regarding mysticism (Ind: *kebatinan*), with which pencak silat had been so closely identified. Up until 1970 the popularity of kebatinan within pencak silat circles had been fostered by Wongsonegoro, who apart from being the head of IPSI was also the founder of the Indonesian Kebatinan Congress (Ind: *Badan Kongres Kebatinan Indonesia*) and an ex government minister.<sup>7</sup> In 1973 government legislation was introduced that recognised kebatinan as a ‘belief’ (Ind: *kepercayaan*), “an independent but legitimate option within the terms of the Pancasila”.<sup>8</sup> Whilst, officially at least, this constituted a legal recognition of kebatinan practices, the reality was that listing a mystical movement instead of a religion on one’s identity card was often considered ‘subversive’.<sup>9</sup>

The secularisation of pencak silat was accompanied by an influx of concepts from the sports sciences that resulted in a new “rational-logical” approach, enculturated in the general public via the New Order’s ‘development’-orientated education system. Beliefs that were not in accord with the discourse of Western science and orthodox religion were downplayed. This ideology of modernity influenced IPSI, which in 1982 replaced the term ‘kebatinan’ with the more ‘scientific’ term *mental-spiritual*:



The mental-spiritual aspect of pencak silat cannot be explicitly pointed to. However, without a mental-spiritual dimension a form of self-defence cannot be called pencak silat. This is in accord with the understanding of pencak silat itself. Pencak silat is Indonesian national culture aimed at defending and maintaining the existence and integrity of the social and natural environment. It is for the purpose of increasing faith and piety towards Almighty God. In this respect we can conclude that whatever we do in connection with pencak silat must be orientated towards increasing our faith and piety.<sup>10</sup>

IPSI 'guidance' (Ind: *pembinaan*) programs associated the mental-spiritual aspect of pencak silat to the ethical complex of 'noble character' (Ind: *budi pekerti luhur*), one that linked concepts of national character (Ind: *kepribadian nasional*) and the 'complete person' (Ind: *manusia seutuhnya*) with a moral interpretation of the Pancasila. The shift was away from the experiential embodied spirituality towards the ideological.

IPSI's attempt to separate the esoteric inner dimension from pencak silat was in part responsible for an upsurge of schools concerned solely with the internal aspect of practice. The mid 1970's saw a upsurge in the number of 'inner power' (Ind: *tenaga dalam*) orientated pencak silat schools, that gained widespread media attention and popularity, especially amongst the educated urban middle-class. Modern 'inner power' practices revised and rationalised traditional practices associated with the 'kebatinan' and magical dimension of pencak silat as well as techniques drawn from local Sufism, via a discourse that blended theories from Western science and medicine with indigenous spirituality and orthodox religion. The traditional focus upon the accumulation of 'power' was gradually replaced by the objective of maintaining 'health' and 'well-being'. The basic principle found in the varying inner power techniques is that by combining regulated patterns of physical movements with specific breathing techniques, humans can activate, increase, and utilise the potentially huge reservoir of power that is believed to

exist within each individual. This power can be applied in numerous ways, such as for repelling attackers without the use of physical force, healing oneself and others, heightening sensory perception, clairvoyance, performing extraordinary physical feats such as breaking hard objects, and spiritual enlightenment.

It appears also that it has only been since the 1970's that the term 'tenaga dalam' has been used in reference to a distinct set of practices taught either separately or in conjunction with pencak silat. In West Java other terms used to refer to inner power have included *penca gebreg*, *spierkracht* and *ilmu hikmah*. The Indic and Chinese terms *prana* and *chi* are also commonly used. The huge increase of popular interest in tenaga dalam was itself the product of two seemingly divergent yet interrelated social processes. The process of borrowing and adapting concepts from Western science in response to pencak silat's secularisation was paralleled by a growth of representations of pencak silat in popular culture. According to pencak silat researcher Agus Heryana, during the early 1970's dramatised radio broadcasts of *dongeng pasosore* (serialised legends broadcast in the afternoon) such as *Si Andi Jago Turugan* and *Saur Sepuh* came immensely popular in West Java.<sup>11</sup> These legends, of which there are literally hundreds, revolved around a similar romantic theme: a nomadic, magically powerful martial arts expert roaming the countryside fighting evil (usually in the form of sadistic warlords or evil sorcerers) and defending the weak. Whilst the physical martial skills of the hero are prominent, they were ultimately secondary to his supernatural powers, referred to as *tenaga dalam*. These broadcasts fostered a wave of popular interest in the 'inner' dimension of pencak silat, fostering the belief that those who practiced inner power are capable of performing

incredible super-human feats. Martial arts films and popular fiction, both local and foreign, further fuelled this.

Whilst popular culture increased interest in inner power, IPSI made moves to distance itself from it and other practices not considered to be ‘within reason’ (Ind: *masuk akal*):

In this rational age, we must take a sceptical and critical approach towards the problem of inner power that is found within IPSI ranks. Indeed it constitutes a part of the richness of pencak silat, but it needs to be rethought and reconsidered as to whether this richness should be preserved. Pencak silat is already equal with karate, judo, jujitsu and taekwondo, but not yet completely. In order to make this equality total, pencak silat must be rationalised. For this reason, things that are doubtful and difficult to understand, that are a hindrance in making pencak silat a source of national pride which is also respected by different nations, must be cleared up.<sup>12</sup>

Pencak silat schools that prioritised physical self-defence but also taught inner power, such as Merpati Putih (White Dove), Pencak Silat Tenaga Dasar and Sim Lam Ba continued to have close organisational links with IPSI.<sup>13</sup> However many schools that taught only inner power without physical self-defence techniques grew increasingly distant from the organisation. Whilst many were formally registered with IPSI, they had little or no contact with it. The conceptual status of inner power in relation to the four categories of silat practice enshrined by IPSI was also unclear. Some considered it to be an aspect of self-defence techniques whilst others saw it as still falling under the rubric of ‘mental-spiritual’. The result was that many inner power groups disengaged completely with IPSI. It was not until 1990 that an organisational body was established especially for inner power schools. Founded in Yogyakarta by Daliso Rudianto, the Indonesian Inner Power Association (Ind: *IPTDI; Ikatan Perguruan Tenaga Dalam Indonesia*) aimed to act “as a forum for discussion for those committed to developing the inner force

activities and those who have problems related to inner energy”.<sup>14</sup> Several universities, such as Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, also set up ‘laboratories’ in their medical faculties to investigate the healing properties of inner power, working closely with larger schools such as Satria Nusantara.

### **Mapping forces and flows: defining Inner Power**

In discussing inner power it is important to situate it within the broader context of ideas and practices related to conceptions of power. In his essay, ‘The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture’, Benedict Anderson argued that in Java power is conceptualised as being something that infuses all matter, both animate and inanimate.<sup>15</sup> There is only so much power in the cosmos, though its distribution can change. Hence if power is concentrated in one place, then there will be less in others. Power is morally ambiguous, its possession not indicative of any kind of legitimacy. Power is simply power. As will be seen, the concept of power found in inner power circles is, in several significant ways, different to that outlined by Anderson.

Contemporary tenaga dalam theories adopt a syncretic approach that combines Western and Eastern concepts of the body. For example, according to Aas Rukmana, founder of the Inner Radiation School of inner power, inner power can be defined as “the energy produced by the activation of hormones. These hormones are situated in specific places (within the body) that is in the glands, which in the terminology of yoga are referred to as *cakra*”<sup>16</sup>. Whilst being specific to his particular school in its references to hormones and *cakra*, Aas’s definition of inner power is typical of most contemporary

schools in the way in which it combines elements of western biological science and religious and mystical concepts. Similarly Dicky Zaenal Arifin, head of the Hikmatul Imam school, describes inner power in the following manner:

Every human possesses what is known as inner power. Humans possess a chemical element in the body known as ATP or Adenosin Tri Phosphate, which can transform into energy via the body's metabolic process. The energy produced by ATP is extremely abundant and can become a huge force when a human is in a particular spiritual state, such as panic, trance or hypnosis. This energy can also be developed via precise training.<sup>17</sup>

The use of appropriate technique is vitally important to determining the type of energy activated, and its affect upon the body. Patterns of breathing and movement in effect act as 'keys' that open different reservoirs of energy. Consequently the incorrect practice of a technique, or the combining of techniques from different styles, is believed to have potentially disastrous consequences. Modern inner power practices vary from invulnerability practices (*ilmu kanuragan* and *ilmu kebal*) in that there are few prohibitions relating to sexual abstinence, fasting or diet. Focused around weekly training sessions, the practice easily integrates with the everyday life of its practitioners.

The use of Western scientific discourse by inner power groups reflects both a desire to provide a 'modern' explanation for essentially traditional practices, and conviction that inner power is a universal, objective phenomenon.<sup>18</sup> The secular language of Western science helps to objectify powers within the body. As one Inner Radiation trainer explained, "science is a language that can be accepted by everyone".<sup>19</sup> Maryono argues that the use of Western scientific terminology by inner power groups began in the mid-1980's as a response to an increasing scepticism amongst the urban middle class to

traditional mystical practices. However the types of ‘scientific’ explanation and terminology used by inner power schools to describe the phenomenon were by no means drawn from conventional mainstream science.

Common descriptive terms for inner power such as ‘bio-electrical vibrations’, ‘psycho-nuclear power’, ‘inner radiation’, seem to have more in common with popular science fiction and the New Age movement than the classic Newtonian physics taught in Indonesian schools. The new language of inner power acts more as a language of enchantment, portraying the inner reality of the body as a mysterious yet knowable resource of seemingly limitless potential. Rather than being reductionist, the discourse of science is seen as expanding the horizons of the body. It found a new language, a process described by Bourdieu:

Certain practices which had been experienced as a drama for so long as there were not yet any words to say them and think them - none of those official words, produced by authorised people, doctors or psychologists, who make it possible to *declare* them, to oneself and others - undergo a veritable ontological transmutation by virtue of the fact that, being known and recognised publicly, named and authenticated, they are made legitimate, even legalised, and may thus declare and display themselves.<sup>20</sup>

Many inner power practitioners, especially university students, take an active interest in modern speculative physics such as quantum and chaos theory, as well as the works of David Bohm and Niels Bohr. Organisations such as Inner Radiation situate themselves as the ‘exploratory vanguard’ of the new physics.<sup>21</sup> According to the school’s founder, “we always check the compatibility of a scientific concept with experience. If it matches, then we will use it”.<sup>22</sup>

In 1950 Paryana Suryadipura, the former chief surgeon of Semarang General Hospital, published a book entitled ‘Domains of Thought’ (Ind: *Alam Pikiran*). Considered ground breaking at the time in kebatinan circles, the book gives a detailed explanation of inner power and self-realisation via theories drawn from mainstream Western science as well as fringe sciences such as parapsychology, electro-physiology. There are close parallels with the discourse of inner power found amongst contemporary inner power groups, most notably the equation of ‘life force’ with electrons and electricity. One section reads: “The energy which enters our body via the five senses...is living electrical energy or *bio-electriciteit*, which is stored in the brain... the spirit is structured by living electrons which radiate from the physical”.<sup>23</sup> A similar description of inner power as ‘bio-electricity’ was made over 40 years later by Maryanto, the founder and head of one of the largest and most influential contemporary inner power groups in Indonesia, Satria Nusantara:

Humans can speak, move, think, their heart beats along with other occurrences in the body that constitute electrical events. All the parts of the body in performing their functions always have a connection to electricity, especially the muscles and nerves, to the point that it can be said that humans constitute a unique bioelectrical system.<sup>24</sup>

None of my informants ever made reference to *Alam Pikiran*, so it is difficult to determine to what extent the book may have influenced contemporary inner power discourse. However the similarities in terminology suggest that there was a gradual dissemination of these metaphors. More generally the linking of electricity and life force shows parallels with what Davis refers to as the “electromagnetic imaginary”, the romance of electricity and animism that first emerged in the Western imagination in the seventeenth century.<sup>25</sup>

Whilst New Order government rhetoric espoused the importance of economic and social development and a militant nationalism, inner power organisations adopted an experiential and intensely individualistic approach to the project of *pembangunan*. New Order slogans such as *manusia seutuhnya*, *sumber daya manusia* took central importance as ideals for individual growth and realisation. Discussing the Indian wrestler's ideology of *Pahlawani*, Alter states, "the ideology centers on the importance of the body as a psychosomatic whole which needs to be built up and maintained in balance with the larger socio-political environment".<sup>26</sup> Similarly, inner power practitioners articulate a holistic perspective focused upon the individual body and its relationship to society.

Power, for inner power practitioners, is not an end in itself, nor morally ambiguous. Concepts of 'inner power' within *tenaga dalam* schools are part of a complex discourse of 'bio-morality'. Practices generally involve a variety of different breathing techniques that are fused with simple physical movements that require varying degrees of exertion. The basic theory is that the human body contains huge reservoirs of 'bio-electrical energy'. By employing the specialised breathing techniques this untapped energy can be activated and channelled to various parts of the body where it can be utilised for a number of positive purposes, such as healing oneself and others, repelling those with ill intent, detecting missing objects, telepathy etc. The scientific discourse of 'bio-electricity' is meshed with a moral interpretation of supposed biological realities. In this discourse 'intention' manifests at the biological level as a particular form of energy. Those who harbour ill intent towards others, or are motivated by anger, greed, lust or other 'negative' emotions similarly generate a 'negative current' of energy. In contrast, those who practice



inner power generate ‘positive energy’. This energy is believed to be capable of physically repelling negative energy in the same way that the matching poles of two magnets will push each other away.<sup>27</sup> Framed in this way inner power can be used only for ‘good’, making it conceptually different from the idea of power articulated by Anderson. The body is generally seen as the only pure source of energy in the material world. Forces external to it are of a negative, or at least ambiguous, moral quality and must be treated with caution, lest a dependent relationship develop.

There are two ways in which power is conceptualised. These are being “filled” (Ind: *diisi*) and “opened” (Ind: *dibuka*). Practices involving being ‘filled’ are linked to concepts of spiritual potency similar to those outlined by Anderson.<sup>28</sup> Power is accumulated in certain individuals or objects that can ‘fill’ others with it at will. Sociologically such a conception is intimately intertwined with hierarchical and authoritarian social structures. Within the context of silat culture this manifests in cult like groups that often centre on a charismatic leader or a particular sacred heirloom. The leader or heirloom, most commonly a sword or dagger, ‘radiates’ energy, filling the followers with it. The greater one’s proximity to the source of power the greater one’s own.

In contrast, the concept of being ‘opened’ suggests a more ‘egalitarian’ model of power. Rather than being the preserve of particular potent individual, power exists as a potentiality present in every person. To be opened refers specifically to the process whereby one who has already activated their ‘inner power’ assists another in doing the same. Consequently contemporary inner power groups such as Nampon, Prana Sakti,

Hikmatul Imam and Satria Nusantara exhibit more democratic forms of social organisation, with a greater emphasis upon individual effort and achievement. The role of the guru is more that of a guide. The focus upon individual achievement, explanations couched in scientific terminology, and a self-conscious concern with religious orthodoxy help to explain why inner power groups have gained so much popularity amongst the educated urban middle-classes. Inner power groups frequently refer to the practice as a new model for social interaction.

For others however even the concept of being opened is suggestive of an external influence that potentially ‘pollutes’ the nature of the energy activated. Debates regarding the purity’ of inner power draw references and explanations from the Quran and popular Western medical knowledge regarding cardiovascular and neurological activity. Muhammad Ali Syhaid, the head of the Nur-Mulkaillah pesantren and the Padjajaran Nasional pencak silat school uses a healing method that involves writing verses of the Quran on *sirih* leaves. One leaf is fed to a goat and the patient eats another. Digesting the sacred verses creates an ‘energy link’ between the two that allows the disease to be transferred from the body of the patient to that of the goat. I observed such a procedure performed on a young man suffering from a severe liver complaint. During the evening Ali as well as the patient recited the Quran. The following day the goat was slaughtered and its internal organs examined for signs of disease. When the goat’s liver was cut open a white discolouration was discovered. It was agreed that this was proof that the offending illness was no longer in the man’s body. Satisfied, yet obviously still ill, the young man and his family returned to Jakarta.

According to Muhammad Ali Syhaid, “every letter in the Quran contains powers, contains a laser”.<sup>29</sup> For example the verse *al-Besi* (‘Iron’) is believed to convey the ability to break hard objects such as rock or iron when written on the skin.<sup>30</sup> When written on the skin the letters of the appropriate verse radiate power into the person, neutralising their illness or bestowing them with superhuman powers. For the verse to take affect the one who writes it must be ritually clean and understand the relations between sections of the Quran: “there are certain specifications. After a certain verse has been written it must be ‘closed’ with another. It’s like someone making medicine to cure a headache, they must know the appropriate chemical composition”.<sup>31</sup>



18. Sections of the Quran written on sirih leaves. The inscribed leaves are ingested in a ritual aimed at ridding one of illness.

Despite its clear links to yogic and Chinese concepts and practices, inner power has generally been accepted and accommodated within orthodox Islamic theology and practice in Java. However discourse regarding the religious status of invulnerability, ilmu kebal, continues to be polarised between two opposing positions, despite historically close links to established Sufi orders such as Qadiriyyah and Rifa'iyah.<sup>32</sup> Religious modernists consider it to be *syirik* (polytheism) mainly due to the fact that ilmu kebal is often seen as being drawn from forces external to the individual, bringing it into a highly sensitive area of Islamic discourse.<sup>33</sup> One other common accusation against invulnerability practices is that it encourages personality cults focusing upon the figure of the guru. In Java such groups have often been the source of millenarian movements claiming the imminent arrival of a *Ratu Adil* (Just King).<sup>34</sup> For example Kartosoerwirjo, the leader of the Darul Islam rebellion, gained much support from villagers in West Java and other regions due to the popular belief that he was invulnerable to bullets.

Practices such as visiting the graves of those who were *sakti* in order to make contact with and absorb some of the power they possessed when they were still alive are a common means of seeking invulnerability. Conscious of the criticism by religious modernists, some modern day practitioners have 'rationalised' the practice via the explanation that what is invoked is not the actual spirit (Ind: *nyawa*) of the deceased. This would be a clear instance of *syirik*. Rather what is 'absorbed' is the residue or 'vibrations' of their power that continue to exist after the physical body has long since passed away.<sup>35</sup> One invocation in Arabic used extensively in Banten, believed to endow one with invulnerability to sharp weapons and the ability to move reflexively, reads as follows:

In the name of Allah the Most Merciful and Most Compassionate. Oh my lord, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani, be present, be present, be present, not dead, not dead, not dead, except with the permission of Allah. There is no power and effort apart from that which is permitted by Allah, the Most High and Most Great.<sup>36</sup>

What is of crucial importance to the arguments of both the pro and anti invulnerability camps is the spiritual source of ilmu kebal, and the means by which it is obtained. Specific procedures are required to obtain invulnerability that varies depending upon local tradition. There are several distinct methods that can be practised separately or combined in order to increase the efficacy of the ilmu. For example, in the Serang region of Banten, an area renowned for its powerful esoteric knowledge, seekers of invulnerability to sharp weapons are required to fast for a period of 40 days, as well as abstaining from sleep and sexual intercourse.<sup>37</sup> According to one *debus* teacher from Banten, the prohibitions placed on those seeking invulnerability are no different to those imposed by orthodox Islam:

Because the ilmu that I possess is a part of the Qadiriyyah tarekat, the method for refining it is identical with Islamic ritual obligations, such as reciting passages of the Quran after obligatory prayers, and heeding other prohibitions, that is to say everything forbidden by Allah is also forbidden in *debus*.<sup>38</sup>

During May 1999 numerous articles and commentaries began to appear in the local and national press regarding the increase of interest in invulnerability in urban centres such as Jakarta, Bandung and Surabaya.<sup>39</sup> Placed alongside graphic reports of riots in Aceh, Ambon, Banyuwangi and Ciamis, as well as gloomy predictions of violent social upheaval, in the lead up to the general elections in July, commentators generally concluded that this upsurge of 'irrational' belief was the product of uncertain times.<sup>40</sup> Not

surprisingly media commentators did not reflect upon their own role in reproducing this atmosphere of anxiety regarding the nation's future. Aside from the usual clients, such as soldiers heading to areas of conflict such as East Timor or Aceh, paranormals, inner power masters, religious teachers and others considered *sakti* were swamped by members of political parties (most notably the Indonesian Democratic Struggle Party, National Awakening Party and Golkar), students, local security forces, as well as large numbers of members of the general public. In some instances the situation occurred where members of the security apparatus and students sought protection from each other from the same guru.<sup>41</sup>

Street vendors in Bandung and Jakarta, always quick to perceive popular trends, began stocking jackets and vests emblazoned with political party logos that were said to have been 'filled' with invulnerability magic, the going price being around 200,000rph



19. A representation of physical invulnerability in popular literature. In J. Rio Purbaya, *Legenda dari Jawa Barat: Asal-Muasal Rangkas Bitung, Jilid Pertama*, CV. Pionir Jaya, Bandung, date unknown.

(\$40 Aus). Shopping malls such as Bandung Plaza hosted ‘paranormal festivals’ where hundreds queued to consult with fortune-tellers. Newspapers and tabloids were filled with advertisements for ‘instant’ mail order invulnerability, usually in the form of a talisman that was required to be worn at all times after being ‘activated’ by a period of fasting or sleeplessness. Invulnerability in effect became a highly valuable social commodity, a kind of ‘supernatural capital’ necessary for survival in an increasingly hostile and dangerous social environment.<sup>42</sup> Whereas inner power constructs a theory and practice that looks inwards then moves outwards, kebal closes and seals the boundaries between the self and others. One must literally become as hard and impervious as rock. As one mantra for obtaining invulnerability from Banten intones, “my head is black rock, my forehead is coral“ (Sd: *hulu aing batu wulung, tarang aing batu karang*).<sup>43</sup>

As Van Bruinessen has noted, during times of instability the acquisition of talismans, invulnerability training, inner power, silat and supernatural strength become some of the dominant aspects of pesantren life.<sup>44</sup> Throughout Indonesian history revolutionaries, rebels and peasants have flocked to Sufi sheikh, magicians and pencak silat masters renowned for their supernatural power in preparation for, or in anticipation of, upcoming upheaval. Traditional silat schools along with tarekat have also always been a strong basis for revivalistic and millenarian movements in Java. Within this context invulnerability was a manifestation of a divine mandate, distributed to members via talismans or transferred directly. With the spread and accessibility of what was previously exclusive knowledge to the broader population, the demand for ilmu during periods of social upheaval has increased substantially. In the words of the head of the Budi Suci school,

Ki Singa Lodra, “the cause of violent behaviour is often due to social jealousy. Consequently, many of the middle and upper class need to equip themselves with magical power. This can be in the form of ilmu kebal”.<sup>45</sup> In times of social and political upheaval where fears emerge regarding the maintaining of personal and social boundaries, belief in invulnerability practices continue to remerge, as a last line of bodily defence against social breakdown.

### **Origins and Ideology: Sunan Gunung Jati and the Syncretic present**

The historical origins of inner power techniques, like those of pencak silat, are shrouded in myth. Practices similar to those found in contemporary schools have undoubtedly existed for hundreds, perhaps thousands of years. Similarities with Indic and Chinese breathing techniques and internal martial arts (such as *qi gong* and *tai chi*) are indisputable. Considering the eclectic nature of inner power techniques and theory, it is perhaps not surprising that one of the most commonly cited sources of inner power techniques is Sunan Gunung Jati and Sunan Bonang, two of the *Wali Songo* or *Walliyullah*, the nine saints believed to have spread Islam throughout Java. There are a number of conflicting accounts regarding the origins of the two. According to Slamet Mulyana, Sunan Gunung Jati (also known as Tagaril, Toh A Bo and Hidayat Fatahillah) and Sunan Bonang were of Chinese descent. According to Zaenal Abidin Sidik, head of the Budi Suci school, inner power practices that involve long distance strikes (Ind: *pukulan jarak jauh*) were developed by Sunan Gunung Jati who passed them on to his son Nyai Mas Gandhasari.<sup>46</sup> Some believe that inner power techniques were brought to Java



by the invading Mongols in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. One account produced by the Nampon pencak silat school of Bandung states:

The Tartar, Patan and Mongol peoples of China possessed several types of silat that could knock a person down from a long distance. Well known Mongol silat includes *Shurulkhan*, which means ‘deceitful tricks for kings’, consisted of 12 jurus created by Taymor Lathep Barber (1450-1520).<sup>47</sup>

According to the ancient *Zhodam* text that records the history and techniques of Shurulkhan, the style was created by an aristocrat from the Tayli ethnic group of East Turkistan named Jenan who was renowned as an expert in *syariah* religious law.<sup>48</sup> The style combined Shaolin kung fu together with the martial arts of the Muslim Namsuit and Wigu tribes of East Turkey and Mongol, Tatar and Saldsyuk wrestling.<sup>49</sup> Practised primarily in Turkistan religious boarding schools, the style was ‘cleaned’ of any ritualistic aspects considered to be non-Islamic. Current Indonesian practitioners of the Shurulkhan sub-style *Thifan*, state that it was brought to Indonesia in the 16<sup>th</sup> century by Turkish experts sent by the Ottoman empire to aid the Lamuri and Pasai kingdoms of North Aceh.<sup>50</sup> According to Portuguese records, this was the birthplace of Sunan Gunung Jati.<sup>51</sup> This leads one to speculate that Sunan Gunung Jati may have brought Shurulkhan derived techniques to Java from Pasai.

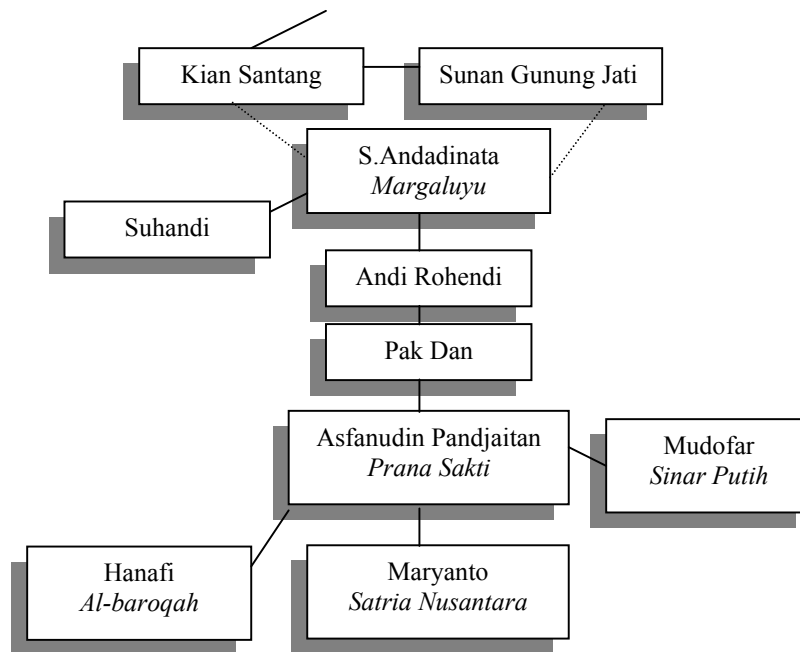
The Prana Sakti Jayakarta inner power school, for example, claims that its techniques have been passed down by students of the nine saints.<sup>52</sup> The founder of Prana Sakti, Pak Dan, studied under the founder of the Margaluyu school, Andadinata. Prana Sakti’s genealogy begins with Prabu Kian Santang, son of the legendary Sundanese king, Prabu Siliwangi. Under the guidance of Sheikh Datuk Kahfi, Kian Santang converted to

Islam and is said to have learnt “pure” Islamic breathing techniques that he combined with indigenous pencak silat. According to Yoseph Iskandar, Syech Datuk Kahfi was a teacher of the Qadiryah sufi order who established the second oldest pesantren in West Java.<sup>53</sup> Due to the secretive nature of the teachings, the genealogy was ‘invisible’ for several hundred years until it re-emerged with Andadinata. The movements and the resulting energy produced are said to form *asma-asma Allah*, some of the 99 divine names of Allah, though only senior members who have had the experience of *waskita* (presentiment) are able to comprehend which names. The suggestion that Sunan Gunung Jati was of Chinese origin is interesting considering the similarities between Javanese and Sundanese inner power practices and the Chinese internal martial arts of *tai chi* and *qi gung*. A document produced by the Nampon school supports the possibility of a link:

In China there were several types of silat which used inner power, including *Ging Kang* (the science of lightening the body) which could be used for leaping great distances, jumping great heights, or walking on water. Keiw Kang and Wei Kang were almost the same, their differences being only in the first jurus. Wei Kang was known as the ten jurus, and these jurus spread throughout Vietnam, Campa, Malaysia and Indonesia. There they developed into several styles, for example silat Mandar from South Sulawesi, Silat Timpung from East Java and Silat Nampon from West Java.<sup>54</sup>

The multitude of contradictory yet inter-woven accounts of the history of inner power techniques points to an ongoing dynamic process of cultural reproduction. The lineage of a single school may span a period of over 500 years, invoking several epistemic eras. The most likely explanation regarding the origin and evolution of inner power practices is that there was an ongoing process of syncretisation, an integration of new practices that continues into the present.

Shaikh Datuk Kahfi
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**Table 3:** Genealogy of inner power teachers according to the Prana Sakti school.<sup>55</sup>

What is perhaps more significant than the historical validity of the connection is the fact that it is made at all. The invocation of the names of Sunan Gunung Jati and Sunan Bonang as the creator of inner power techniques could be seen as a means of legitimising pre-Islamic practices, in the same way that other saints did with various elements of local culture. As a symbol of cultural integration, Sunan Gunung Jati becomes a validating metaphor. As McKinnley has noted, myth and the genealogies that grow from them can be interpreted as a dialogue between a current ideology and an earlier one.<sup>56</sup> In the ethnographic present the relative historical importance of tracing a lineage from the Islamic saints or Hindu kings invariably depends upon the orientation of the group in question and “syncretic forms are liable to reconfiguration and re-evaluation in the light of changing socio-political tensions”.<sup>57</sup> For schools such as Prana Sakti, the connection is of special significance due to their self-defined mission of spreading ‘true’ Islam.<sup>58</sup>

### **Margaluyu: The Path of Harmony**

What we do must have meaning. We must think about what we do and be cautious before we do it, and push all bad thoughts aside' (Sd: *sarigig kudu djeung harti, sarengkak reudjeung pikiran memeh prak sing ati-ati, mun sidik goreng singkiran*).

Andadinata, the founder of the Margaluyu pencak body movements school <sup>59</sup>

The two oldest inner power schools in West Java that are still active are Margaluyu and Nampon. Margaluyu, taken from the Sundanese words *marga* (path) and *luyu*, or *seluyun* (balance/harmony), was formally established as an organisation in 1930 by Andadinata (1891-1969) and Suhandi (? - 1984). According to oral accounts, during the early 1900s Aki Suhandi was a renowned jawara who was feared throughout Bandung.<sup>60</sup> An expert in Cianjur pencak silat, which incorporated the Cikalong, Syahbandar, Kari and Madi styles, he had challenged all of the jawara in Bandung to one-on-one tests of their martial skills and had emerged undefeated. Hearing of the unsurpassed skill and power of a jawara named Andadinata, who lived in the Majalaya district of Bandung, Suhandi could not resist going to test him out as well.

Andadinata was a descendent of the menak of Sumedang. As a young man he had travelled widely throughout Java, studying religion and pencak silat. Making his living as a trader, he settled temporarily near the home of an unnamed guru, from whom he studied a variety of different esoteric knowledge such as *kadugalan* (invulnerability) that made him able to physically withstand fire and blows to the body. Alongside of this 'external knowledge' (Ind: *ilmu lahiriah*) he also learnt esoteric religious knowledge, Arabic

calligraphy, and memorised the Quran, following a path of initiation into adulthood common for young men of his lineage. On arriving at his home, Andadinata came out to greet his young guest. Suhandi, who was eager to prove that he was the ‘toughest’, immediately adopted a stance in preparation to launch an attack. However to his surprise he discovered, that for no apparent reason, he was totally unable to move and could not even muster the strength to take a step. At that moment Suhandi realised that Andadinata possessed knowledge far greater than any he had ever encountered before. He humbly accepted defeat and asked to become Andadinata’s student. Suhandi soon became Andadinata’s most prized pupil.

After the proclamation of the ‘youth pledge’ (Ind: *sumpah pemuda*) by young Indonesian nationalists at a Youth Congress in Jakarta in October 1928, numerous pencak silat schools began to emerge in a wave of nationalist sentiment. At that time the techniques taught by Andadinata were known simply as *sepor* (Sd: sport, physical movements). In order to differentiate his knowledge from other pencak schools, and on the advice of Suhandi, in 1930 Andadinata established the school *Marga Rahayu*, the ‘path of peace’, that was later changed to *Margaluyu*, the ‘path of harmony’. Combining his esoteric knowledge and martial abilities, Andadinata formulated a ‘path of harmony’ between the knowledge of “this world and the next”, combining the teaching of pencak silat with inner power and spiritual development (Ind: *pengolahan batin*).<sup>61</sup> In its early years the majority of Andadinata’s students were peasants and street traders. Training sessions were held anywhere with a flat earth surface, and usually lasted around one hour. After Andadinata’s death in 1969, Suhandi took over as head of the school until his own

death in 1984. Yuyus Rustaman, Suhandi's grandson, then led the school. He registered Margaluyu with IPSI in 1988. Whilst the school now employs an administrative structure similar to those used by many pencak silat schools, Sundanese is still the main language of instruction. This is in contrast to most contemporary schools that use the national language of Indonesian. Students are not required to pay any fees. With few financial resources, and with little desire to promote itself, the school has remained small scale with the majority of branches in and around Bandung.

The foundation of Margaluyu training consists of learning 24 jurus, which are combined with breathing techniques.<sup>62</sup> The first 10 are the creation of Andadinata whereas the other 14 are drawn from the Kari, Madi and Syahbandar styles. Margaluyu is widely considered to be the 'founding ancestor' (Ind: *cikal bakal*) of the most widespread 'family' (Ind: *rumpun*) of inner power practice in Java. Characteristics of this family include sliding step patterns, and a 'triangular' breathing pattern (inhale-hold-exhale) in which the inhaled breath is 'held' just below the navel. The jurus can be used as physical self-defence techniques, or with the addition of inner power in which case they can be employed without making physical contact with an opponent. The physical exercises of older schools such as Margaluyu and Nampon have both an inner and outer function: they are a practical form of physical self-defence as well as being a means, when coupled with breathing techniques, towards cultivating inner power. This supports the theory that internal training was an integral part of traditional pencak silat. The physical movements of contemporary schools that focus exclusively upon inner power are generally 'abstracted' in the sense that the movements no longer have any 'external' function as a

form of self-defence. Whilst martial elements can be observed in the jurus of schools such as Prana Sakti, Satria Nusantara and Radiasi Tenaga Dalam, they are no longer clearly articulated or applied. The external physical movements are a means towards activating energies within the body and directing it outwards.

According to Ichad, the current general secretary of the school, Margaluyu trains and develops the ‘extra power’ (Ind: *tenaga ekstra*) stored in the body in order that it can be utilised at will.<sup>63</sup> Every individual possesses inner power, but it is only through training that it can be utilised when required. In order for the training to be successful there must be a ‘harmony’ between movement, breath and thought. After a student has successfully mastered the 10 jurus they undergo an examination known as a *harkatan* in which the instructor helps to stimulate the inner power within the student. The inner power activated by Margaluyu techniques can only be used defensively in response to an attack or ill will directed at them. Whilst at a certain level of attainment practitioners can direct inner power at will, it is strictly forbidden to use it for extracting revenge or intentionally harming another. More advanced training involves developing the astral body, extra-sensory perception and opening the crown chakra. At this stage students are encouraged to undergo fasts as well as perform specific prayers drawn from the Quran.

### **Nampon**

Uwa Nampon was born in the Ciamis region of West Java in 1844. Like Andadinata, as a young man he is said to have studied many different styles of pencak silat, and is believed to have been taught directly by Raden Haji Ibrahim, the founder of the Cikalong

style.<sup>64</sup> In Cianjur he is also reputed to have studied *penca gebreg*, a form of inner power generated by a sharp contraction of the muscles in the lower abdomen, which draws heavily from the Syahbandar style.<sup>65</sup> In internal Nampon documents it is said that he also studied with Mama Kosim, Syahbandar's founder. During the early 1930's he worked at the railway station in Ciamis. After losing his job due to his involvement with the Indonesian nationalist movement, he travelled throughout the Padelarang region before moving to Bandung in 1937 where he lived in the home of one of his students, Tamim Mahmud. Uwa Nampon's close links with the nationalist movement brought him under suspicion by the Dutch colonial government. According to Yoesoef Tamim, the son of Tamim Mahmud, beginning in 1928 Uwa Nampon spent several short periods in jail due to his alleged activities in the independence movement, together with one of his first students Setia Muchlis. There he is said to have met with several pencak silat masters under whom he studied. He was released in 1932. In 1938 Uwa Nampon and Mahmud established the organisation "Three Feelings" (Ind: *Tri Rasa*), the three referring to culture, physical exercise and art.



20. Uwa Nampon, the founder of Nampon pencak silat school. Photo courtesy of Adjat Sudradjat

pencak silat style. Photo courtesy of Adjat



Like Suhandi, Mahmud was already an accomplished martial artist when he heard of the strange power of Uwa Nampon. As was the tradition amongst silat practitioners at the time, he travelled to Padalarang to ‘test the strength’ (Ind: *ngadu kekuatan*) of Uwa Nampon. His experience was similar to that of Suhandi. Each time he tried to attack Uwa Nampon he was flung to the ground before making any physical contact. He soon accepted defeat and became Nampon’s student. At Mahmud’s home in Jalan Kopo, Uwa Nampon continued his involvement with the growing nationalist movement. He trained many students from OSVIA (administrative training school for indigenous officials in the colonial government), the Bandung technical school, which was later to become the Bandung Institute of technology, and other schools established by the Dutch for the indigenous elite as part of their ‘ethical’ policy. Like Margaluyu, Nampon practitioners also claim that Indonesia’s first president Sukarno was a student. It is said that he studied directly under Uwa Nampon during his time at the Bandung technical school, and is supposed to have reached the stage of realising his inner power.<sup>66</sup>

The large turnover of students during the 1930’s period resulted in ‘ilmu Nampon’ quickly spreading through out Java with small groups of practitioners forming in Tegal, Semarang, Pekalongan and Cilacap in Central Java, as well as Surabaya in East Java. The wide dissemination of Nampon’s teachings also resulted in several different opinions regarding the origins of Nampon’s ilmu. A commonly held belief amongst pencak silat practitioners in Central Java is that Uwa Nampon was a descendent of the founders of the

Majapahit kingdom. The *Raga Jati* pencak silat school in Central Java invokes a different genealogy again by suggesting that Nampon's ilmu originated from the Wali Sunan Bonang who then passed it onto Sunan Kalijaga, the Javanese archetype for cultural and religious syncretism. This ilmu was in turn perfected by Mama Kosim, the creator of the Syahbandar style, and passed onto Uwa Nampon, presumably during the period he spent in Cianjur.<sup>67</sup> This seems to suggest a 'Javanization' of Sudanese culture, with Sunan Kalijaga and the Majapahit kingdom replacing the more 'Sundanese' Sunan Gunung Jati and Pajajaran kingdom. In some cases the ilmu itself was altered.<sup>68</sup> This was especially the case after Nampon died in 1962.

The first few years after the death of a master are crucial in determining the future direction of the system that they taught. If a successor was appointed before their death then the ilmu generally continues to be transmitted in the form in which it was originally taught, with minor variations, through a clearly defined line of transmission. However in the case that a master dies unexpectedly or does not appoint a successor, a process of generative diffusion is unfolds, with various students establishing their own networks of pupils and so forth. Each of these students may have learnt only a portion of their master's ilmu, which they then teach to others, resulting in an 'impoverishing' and gradual diffusion of the system. In other instances practices may be significantly modified and revised, or integrated to varying degrees with elements of local practice. Where no clear organisational structure or line of transmission has been established elements of a system or certain techniques may be lost. The secrecy of traditionalist groups in part stems from the concern that specific knowledge may leak to the uninitiated. Mixing

practices is considered to be courting permanent physical and psychological damage. It is common for schools to require a new student to sign a pledge that they will not study any other system while they are practising. In the case of Nampon, elements of Nampon's teachings have transformed into a spiritualist cult that focuses upon contacting and drawing power from his spirit.

As has been mentioned, Mama Kosim was a student of Ajengan Cirata, a teacher of the Naqsyabandiyah sufi order in Cianjur. Ajengan Cirata in turn learnt silat from Mama Kosim, as a result of which it became popular amongst local religious leaders and tarekat followers. Basic Naqsyabandiyah spiritual techniques include 'conscious while breathing' (Ar: *hush dar dam*) and 'watching step' (Ar: *nazar bar qadam*).<sup>69</sup> 'Conscious while breathing' involves focusing attention upon the inhalation, exhalation and holding of the breath. The purpose of this exercise is to receive spiritual power from God. 'Watching step' is a technique whereby the aspiring sufi must pay careful attention to their steps and focus their gaze straight ahead. The spiritual purpose is not allowing themselves to be distracted by irrelevancies.<sup>70</sup> Considering Mama Kosim's devotion to Ajengan Cirata (he followed him to Purwakarta) and that Cirata himself studied Syahbandar, it is possible that a fusion of physical and spiritual techniques took place. Techniques such as *hush dar dam* and *nazar bar qadam* could easily be applied to pencak silat practice. In Pandeglang, Banten, Ace Setrawijaya teaches a form of Syahbandar known as *Ageman Syahbandar*. The 24 physical jurus (the same number as found in Margaluyu) taught are thought to symbolise each of the 24 letters that make up the *kalimah sahadat* (Islam's testimony of faith).<sup>71</sup> Training consists of five stages, the numeric symbolism taken from the five

pillars of Islam. Concentration exercises also include concentrating upon the Arabic letter *alif*.

Despite variations in breathing technique, both Nampon and Margaluyu, as well as newer inner power schools such as Prana Sakti and Rajakawasa, draw the majority of their physical movements from the Cimande, Kari, Madi and Syahbandar pencak silat styles. The combination of Cikalong, Cimande and Syahbandar movements and self-defence techniques, along with the *ibing penca* taught by Nampon, were already common throughout West Java. It was the perception, and application of the force underlying these movements that was unique to the style. The breathing technique of Nampon, unlike that found in schools from the Margaluyu family, holds in the breath in the chest rather than the lower navel. According to Adjat Sudradjat Hando, the current head of Nampon, breathing techniques that involve holding the breath in the chest derive from the Cirebon area of West Java and are Islamic in origin. The technique uses what is known in inner power circles as a triangular pattern, of inhaling, holding, and exhaling. In Adjat's opinion techniques that involve a 'square' pattern (inhaling, holding, exhaling, holding) and focus upon the solar plexus derive from ascetic Hindu yogic practice. Perhaps due to the number of Dutch educated students taught by Uwa Nampon, inner power in Nampon came to be referred to by the Dutch word *spierkracht*:

The martial arts taught and spread by Nampon place an emphasis upon the science of inner power or *spierkracht*. *Kracht* is the energy that accumulates via physical exercise accompanied with breath training. Breath and movement are regulated by the centre for breathing in the brain, which possesses a *kracht* stimulant that is full of carbon dioxide. If there is no carbon dioxide in the blood, then the brain will not be stimulated, resulting in a force that is named *sandi*. This is not dangerous for the body as the blood has an adequate supply of oxygen. After *kracht* has accumulated in the muscles (specks of *kracht* consist of specks of bio-electricity).<sup>72</sup>

There are two types of jurus taught within Nampon, *jurus gebreg* (Ind: *gerakan bersama regenerasi*; collective regeneration movement) and *jurus leuleusan* (Ind: *lemah gemulai*: ‘graceful’) both consisting of five separate jurus. Close range hands-on fighting techniques known as *rapetan* (also known as *usik* or *maenpo*) are also taught along with *ibing penca* and *harkatan*, the method for utilising the inner power generated by the jurus.<sup>73</sup>

After Uwa Nampon passed away in 1962 his students and children continued to teach, initially within the confines of close family and friends. After the alleged coup by officers aligned with the Indonesian Communist Party on 30 September 1965, and the subsequent mass killings of suspected communists, Nampon’s teachings became popular amongst Bandung students aligned with the anti-communist Indonesian Students Action Front (Ind: *KAMI; Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Indonesia*).<sup>74</sup> From that point on larger numbers of people outside of the family circle began to study. Initially latihan were conducted in the evening in a small room in Uwa Tamim’s home.<sup>75</sup> The latihan were not open to

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Nampon was not the only school inundated with during this period. The years preceding the alleged coup were formative ones for many inner power and magically-orientated pencak silat schools. The desire for instant martial ability coupled with the wave of anti-communist sentiment resulted in an increase in those asking to study. The then common association between inner power and pre-Islamic spiritual practices in the minds of many Indonesians took on a political significance in the denunciatory climate of the time. This prompted a process of ‘purification’ amongst many schools. For example, in the late 1960’s Asfanuddin Panjaitan, the founder of the Prana Sakti self-defence school, consulted with religious scholars such as Buya Hamka, Haji Ali Maksum and Haji Fachruddin who offered criticism and suggestions on how to “clean and purify the techniques developed by Asfanuddin Panjaitan of non-Islamic elements that smelt of polytheism”.<sup>76</sup>



22. Nampon students perform the third jurus at a *harkatan* initiation in Lembang, West Java

It was not until November 1993 that the informal groups of Nampon practitioners officially registered as a school. Branches such as Kiwari in Soreang still practice the program of study developed by Uwa Nampon that involves traditional self defence applications, *ibing penca* and, finally, inner power training. The Jala Sutra branch in Bandung however places a greater emphasis upon inner power training, in part due to the student's lack of interest in the practical self-defence and art aspects. According to Adjat Sudradjat, the greater emphasis upon inner power is in "accord with the times".<sup>77</sup> A commitment to "helping others" rather than self-defence characterises what Adjat refers to as the "development era" (Ind: *era perkembangan*) of Nampon training. In his words, "the best form of self-defence in the modern world is human rights and communication amongst people".<sup>78</sup> This sentiment is shared by other inner power schools such as Satria Nusantara and Kalimasada, that in recent years have replaced self-defence training, in the form of long distance strikes (known in Nampon as *ampal-ampalan*) with an increased emphasis upon the achievement of personal well being and the healing applications of inner power.

The weekly training sessions at the Muamalat Bank unit of the Jala Sutra branch of Nampon begins with a brief prayer led by the head trainer. Around 30 students of varying degrees of ability and experience meet on a weekly basis. Held in the lobby of the bank, the latihan provides a space where the hierarchies of everyday life are relaxed. Bank managers and university lecturers join together with security guards, becak drivers and

high school students for the two hour long session. The prayer is followed by some loose stretching, and some preliminary breathing exercises combined with slow, circular arm movements that are done in a cross-legged position. On the direction of the trainers, who usually number between three to four, the students then line up in rows of five and begin to perform jurus, starting with jurus one. The step pattern for each jurus is a simple forward sliding motion of the back leg, done in conjunction with varying arm and torso movements. At the beginning of each jurus the breath is inhaled deeply, then held. Each jurus is performed ten times in succession at the end of which the breath is exhaled slowly. Within each jurus there is a climactic point. At that moment the eyes and the muscles of the upper body are tightened in a jolt, then relaxed. The intention is to channel inner power to these parts of the body. After performing the basic jurus for around 30 minutes the next stage of the latihan is referred to as *tembakan* ('shooting'). One by one students stand around two metres in front of their trainer and begin to move forward, performing the first jurus. The trainer then 'shoots' energy towards them. During the early stages of practice the goal is to be knocked over by inner power, referred to as *kracht pangkat*, which is shot by the trainers. Being able to be knocked over means that one is sensitised to inner power.

*Harkatan* comprises of learning to focus the energy produced by the jurus. The direction and impact of the energy depends upon the type of jurus. For example a stabbing type jurus will 'shoot' energy straight at an opponent. The effect of the harkatan jurus is the same as those of physical jurus, but it occurs without physical contact. The



distance a student can ‘shoot’ inner power depends upon the degree of their power relative to their opponent as well as their accuracy at “shooting”. Nampon students described the sensation of being shot with inner power as being as similar to a forceful sensation of being pushed, or a “magnet” pulling them involuntarily. The sensation of inner power itself within their own bodies was described as a type of “vibration”, or an intense tingling feeling accompanied by a sense of vitality.

The atmosphere at latihan is convivial and supportive. During the one-on-one ‘shooting’ sessions between students and their trainers, those watching shout words of encouragement and joke and clap with enthusiasm when their friends are knocked down. Trainers are addressed politely but informally, and many socialise with each other outside of the latihan. Students are required to bring an attendance book that is signed by their trainer after each latihan. The purpose of monitoring attendance is to aid the trainers in assessing when a student is ready to learn a new jurus or be allowed to undergo harkatan. A student is required to perform each jurus for a minimum of 15 hours before they are taught the next one. They are encouraged to practice jurus at home, though it is expressly forbidden to ‘try them out’ on non-members. After an initial period of basic training lasting several weeks, students must obtain a written recommendation from their trainer before they are allowed to progress to the next level. This is to ensure that students don’t slip through to more difficult aspects of practice

In her study on the growth of Qi gong inner power practices in contemporary China, Nancy Chen notes the way in which such practices ‘re-humanised’ social space:

The inner experiences and social networks generated by such practices shape public arenas such as parks, gymnasiums, and buildings into zones of personal practice and cultivation. At the same time that individuals are aware of the physical landscape of the city, they are also producing mental spaces of an alternative order within this landscape.<sup>79</sup>

Certainly for many inner power practitioners, such as those from Jala Sutra, the everyday physical landscape was overlaid with another more subtle and emotionally engaging one. Students often recounted encounters with jinn, ghosts and other supernatural creatures within the densely populated urban space of Bandung. Quotidian space was infused with a sense of vitality, mystery and the marvellous.

#### **Powers of the Imagination: The case of Hikmatul Iman**

Whereas the theory and practice of inner power in Margaluyu and Nampon were developed within the context of traditional pencak silat practice, the inner power of the Hikmatul Iman school, founded by Dicky Zaenal Arifin in Bandung in 1988, came as an unexpected divine gift. His experiences were situated in the context of representations of martial arts and the supernatural in popular culture.<sup>80</sup> Dicky's unusual abilities first surfaced as a young boy. He was able to see supernatural beings such as jinn and ghosts, as well as sometimes having lucid premonitions in the form of visions or dreams. He did not share these experiences with his family, and thought little of them until he was in his early twenties.

One day in September 1988, whilst engrossed in reading his favourite silat comic 'Tiger Wong', the light in Dicky's bedroom suddenly became extremely dim. Looking up he saw a translucent figure, which he described as being similar to a hologram,

performing martial arts movements as well as breathing techniques. Focusing his eyes upon this holograph-like vision, he realised that the figure was in fact himself. Overcome with panic at this unexpected apparition he jumped to his feet, at which point the hologram disappeared. Yet the experience was not yet over. Dicky then became aware of a powerful energy pulsing and surging through his body, generating alternating sensations of extreme heat and cold. This was followed by a feeling of an immense and excruciating pressure that was seemingly coming from both inside and outside of his body. This was accompanied by apocalyptic visions of bizarre other worldly creatures, erupting volcanoes spewing molten lava, and the world shattering and splintering into tiny pieces. At a loss as to what to do, Dicky then remembered one of the movements performed by his hallucinatory double that he was later to name 'one water' (Ind: *air satu*). Dragging himself to his feet, he repeated the movements three times, at which point the force pressing upon him dispersed and was replaced by a sense of an immense overflowing of power within him. He knew that he could control this power at will. The vision often returned to him in the following days, and Dicky soon found that he could will it to appear. Each time he carefully observed and noted down the seemingly endless array of martial arts movements and breathing techniques, the likes of which he had never seen before.

After nearly two weeks of learning from the hologram, his room was filled with a brilliant white light, out of which appeared a human figure wearing a white cloak. The figure immediately paid homage to Dicky, introducing itself as Muhamad Jibril, the war commander (Ind: *panglima perang*) of the Mabut kingdom of Muslim jinn. The jinn

chieftain said that he, along with 101 other kingdoms of Muslim jinn, submitted to Dicky and were prepared to assist him in the *jihad fisabilillah*, the holy war to convert non-Muslims. Sharpening eyes his upon the jinn, Dicky then saw that its form was in fact like that of a white haired gorilla. In the following days countless kingdoms of ‘infidel jinn’ (Ind: *jinn khafir*) appeared before Dicky and expressed their desire to become Muslim. After converting to Islam under Dicky’s guidance, the jinn bestowed upon him numerous powers, a process that has continued up until the present. Some of these powers include:<sup>81</sup>

- *Ilmu Kidang Kancana*: The ability to run at extreme speed, as if pushed by a powerful wind.
- *Rubah Wujud*: This ilmu is to be used when facing a black sorcerer. If they change their form into that of a dragon, one who has this ilmu will be able to change into a giant, a black hawk or another equally terrifying form.
- *Kilat Api*: When facing a powerful opponent, one who has mastered this ilmu will be able to shoot a blast of scorching wind from their hands.
- *Tali Gaib*: a supernatural rope with which to tie up disruptive non-Muslim jinn (Ind: *jinn khafir*), especially *jinn thuyul*.<sup>82</sup>
- *Beset*: To make an opponent believe they have been cut in two. The opponent will hallucinate that their body has been sliced in half and feel pain as if it had. However in reality their body will remain intact. The method requires that the opponent attack in a state of emotional distress (ie. anger, fear) at which point one simply slices ones hands through the air as if slicing them down the middle. This needs to be done at a distance of around one to two metres from the opponent.

- *Sapujagat*: This ilmu reflects back any black magic directed at oneself, and is done by slamming the palms of the hand on the ground. It can also be used for healing those affected by sorcery.



23. Dicky Zaenal Arifin, the head of the Hikmatul Iman school, leaps over a boulder. Photo courtesy of Dicky Zaenal Arifin.

Discussing the ‘status’ of his unique experience, Dicky described it as *maunah*, an Islamic term for a form of assistance direct from Allah, without the aid of intermediaries such as angels, that is bestowed upon ordinary human beings.<sup>83</sup> Despite his special abilities as a child, Dicky had never studied martial arts or inner power. He was however immersed in popular representations of silat via comics and movies.<sup>84</sup> Seven months after these experiences, Dicky formally established the Hikmatul Iman martial arts foundation with the explicit aim of “spreading Islam, with the minimum of islamising those who claim to be Muslim but do not carry out its ritual obligations”.<sup>85</sup> Hikmatul Iman is popular amongst university students in Bandung, with branches at most of the

major campuses. The overall age of members is much younger than most inner power groups, with even the most senior members being only in their mid-thirties. The eclectic combination of Islamic piety and fantastic claims of supernatural power, as well as Dicky's own youthfulness, perhaps draw youth to the school.<sup>86</sup>

Within the Hikmatul Iman self-defence school a significant theoretical and practical distinction is made between inner power and metaphysical energy (Ind: *tenaga metafisik*). As mentioned earlier, according to Dicky, inner power is the energy produced by the metabolism of the chemical element Adenosine Tri Phosphate. In everyday life he believes only 2.5% of the energy stored in the body is utilised. The other 97.5% is stored as a 'reserve' in the nerves at the pit of the stomach. When one breathes normally, the oxygen is just sufficient to aid circulation of the blood, quicken the metabolism and supply the brain functions. The breathing techniques taught in Hikmatul Iman "circulate the breath to all parts of the body, ridding it more effectively of carbon monoxide".<sup>87</sup> This is done by tightening the muscles at the point of exhalation. This activates and releases the energy stored in the body, producing 'energy waves' through the muscles and blood cells.

There are two types of waves, 'hot' (positive energy) and 'cold' (negative energy). An example of these waves working together is the hot and cold flushes accompanying a fever. It is part of the body's mechanism for fighting illness. The inner power techniques taught in Hikmatul Iman deal exclusively with the 'hot' energy. Through regular practice hot energy can be concentrated in the pit of the stomach and directed to various parts of

the body at will. The sensation is said to be that of a warm wind within the body. According to Dicky, an increase of 2.6% will enable one to break five steel files, or kill a horse with a single blow.<sup>88</sup> Potentially one's access to this energy will increase as one's training progresses: "imagine, if we could awaken all the reserve energy in the body humans would be able to do anything imaginable".<sup>89</sup>



24. Hikmatul Imam students perform the 'wind jurus' at a training session in Padjajaran University, Bandung. Photo courtesy of Dicky Zaenal Arifin.

Whilst inner power is a form of energy existent within and produced by the body itself, metaphysical energy is drawn from external forces. Dicky divides metaphysical energy into four categories. The first is metaphysical energy sent down by Allah. This is further subdivided into three types, *tenaga metafisik mukjizat*, *tenaga metafisik karamah* and *tenaga metafisik maunah*.<sup>90</sup> The second category of tenaga metafisik is that bestowed by angels in order to assist those "fighting in the path of Allah".<sup>91</sup> The other two categories consist of tenaga metafisik provided by jinn and other supernatural beings. Power derived with the assistance of jinn always involves 'conditions' of some kind, for

example giving offerings, or prohibitions on certain actions. In Dicky's opinion the majority of traditional ascetic practices for obtaining metaphysical powers fall into this category, and hence are in conflict with Islam. For example, when performing an ascetic retreat one is unable to carry out the five obligatory prayers. Excessive fasting is also viewed as a form of self-torture, and hence not condoned by Islam. The use of prayers and *Asmaul Husna* is only acceptable when the intention is become closer to Allah. If one recites simply in order to obtain powers then this is heresy (Ar: *bi'dah*).<sup>92</sup>

In present times there are many of our brothers and sisters who do excessive recitation of prayers in order to obtain supernatural powers. However in fact, the Prophet never gave this example. In Islam, whoever performs a religious matter incorrectly or to excessive will end up losing their way.<sup>93</sup>

The human body itself is believed to have metaphysical energy surrounding it. It is believed to be 'wrapped' by an electro-magnetic field, commonly known as an aura. The energy potential of the aura is said to be increased by absorbing energy from nature. One exercise for doing this involves holding one's hand above the head in the shape of a 'parabolic antenna', and visualising a ball of energy accumulating in the palms.<sup>94</sup> The aura is also said to 'thicken' through doing regular breathing exercises. The electro-magnetic energy of the aura can be utilised for a variety of purposes such as creating an energy shield around the body, curing disease, influencing other's opinions and becoming invisible. A and weapons techniques d iced as physical exercises, or





Dicky operates a healing clinic from his home.<sup>95</sup> Starting at six each morning, people line up to seek his assistance with a variety of different problems. Senior students spend most of their days at his home and help with treating the up to 200 people who visit each day. Such clinics perform an important social function in a society with little or no subsidised public health care. During the economic crises of the late 1990s the formal health sector has become increasingly inaccessible to low-income families, with the cost of medicine and consultation fees rising dramatically. For many, inner power became a cheap alternative to conventional medicine, and a last resort when other methods have failed. Local NGOs working on public health issues were quick to realise the potential of 'alternative healing'. Practices such as inner power training are seen as a cheap and accessible therapeutic tool for those living in the overcrowded and polluted city environment.

Dicky has close contacts with an organisation working with intellectually disabled children. According to Dicky, by transferring energy into the children he stimulates the nervous system helping with the regeneration of damaged cells. If someone is not physically capable of coming to the clinic due to illness, a relative brings a photo, which Dicky uses as an 'energy link'. There is no set fee for the service, though most discreetly leave an envelope containing anything between 1000 to 50,000 rupiah (20 cents to \$10 Aus.) under a small mat in the reception room. Locals also benefit from the clinic, with becak drivers and food and drink vendors doing brisk trade at the front of Dicky's home.

Aside from physical ailments, people seek assistance with personal problems such as a wayward child or a troubled marriage as well as ‘metaphysical’ disturbances such as spirit possession and haunting.<sup>96</sup> One student brought their masters thesis and had Dicky fill it with ‘positive energy’ in the hope that it would influence the examiners.<sup>97</sup> The actual success of Dicky’s skill is hard to gauge, however word of mouth has ensured the continuing popularity of the clinic which has remained constantly busy since it first opened five years ago.

### **Chakras, Inner Radiation and Consciousness Raising: *Radiasi Tenaga Dalam***

Radiasi Tenaga Dalam was established as an organisation in 1992 by Aas Rukasa. As was the case with Dicky, Aas abilities first surfaced as a young boy. He recounted often having “strange experiences”, where would see and travel through a ‘radiant vortex’ filled with different coloured rays of light.<sup>98</sup> Later as a young man he came to identify



these experiences as “meditation”. In his local kampung neighbours would often ask him to guess the weekly winning lottery numbers, which he did with reasonable success. He took an interest in the martial arts as a teenager, winning a karate championship as well

as achieving success in pencak silat competitions.<sup>99</sup> In 1987 he enrolled as an engineering student at the Bandung Institute of Technology. There he came into contact with tenaga dalam groups such as Satria Nusantara. He found that he was able to see and identify the energy produced by their training. In order to confirm the accuracy of his perception, he produced colour drawings of what he saw and showed them to senior members. Together with friends he began experimenting with tenaga dalam techniques and yogic concepts learnt from books.

26. Dicky Zaenal Arifin transferring inner power to a patient and bottles of water at his home clinic in Bandung.

Aas’s experiences pointed him to the yogic derived chakra system as a model for conceptualising inner power within the body. According to Aas a chakra is “a centre of energy in the body that is active at all times (if we are conscious of it or not). Every activity of the chakra influences the psychological condition of the mind (anger, sadness, joy, calmness etc)”.<sup>100</sup> In his view inner power is produced by hormones that are sensitive to the ‘etheric dimension’ that are situated in the chakras.<sup>101</sup> The main chakras are:

1. Base chakra (three fingers from the tail bone)

2. Navel chakra (two fingers below the navel)
3. Solar plexus chakra
4. Throat chakra
5. Ajna chakra (between the eyes)
6. Mahkota chakra (crown of the head)

According to Aas, aside from the main chakras there are several other minor chakras situated at the joints that function as "connectors" or pathways for the current of energy generated by the major chakra. This energy flows from the arteries up to the surface of the skin. Each of the chakras possesses different elements, characteristics and functions. They can be 'activated' to produce varying kinds of energy. The jurus of Inner Radiation are one such method. In order for the chakra to function properly as energy centers, they must first be "opened" by one capable of doing so. Inner power can "make contact" when there is an overlap of the etheric body of an object or living creature with that of another. This etheric body is visualised as a balloon shaped "energy contour" surrounding the body.<sup>102</sup> It cannot be seen by the plain eyes, but only psychically. Those who are trained in inner power possess a larger etheric body than those who are not, and are hence less likely to fall ill as their metabolism and blood circulation are believed to be 'smoother'. Illness as well as energy blockages create "sparks" in the etheric body that can be removed by one who is sufficiently well trained in inner power techniques.

In Aas's opinion, the prevalence in Java of sorcery and other forms of magic involving "blocked energy" is a product of the dominant model of Javanese character that

involves the suppression of emotion. Sorcery can only work when it has something to ‘hit’, such as a blockage of energy at the emotional level, located in the navel chakra. Otherwise it would pass right through the body. This, he said, accounts for the sporadic periods of violent upheaval in Indonesian society, when the suppressed emotions boil over into destructive and irrational behaviour. “In this respect Suharto was such a negative role-model, yet ultimately all of us are responsible”.<sup>103</sup>

Inner power, referred to as prana, is generated via breathing exercises combined with physical movements. Within the Inner Radiation school these are known as the “callisthenics series” (Ind: *senam seri*). The first type of senam seri consists of 23 levels, each with its own jurus and method for producing and directing inner power. At the third level students are instructed in meditation techniques. There are two main types of meditation, ‘microcosmic meditation’ where attention is focused within the body, and ‘macrocosmic meditation’ where attention is focused outwards to the surrounding environment.<sup>104</sup> The jurus of Radiasi Tenaga Dalam blend elements from a variety of martial arts. According to Aas, “physical movements process energy in different ways, hence we combine the flowing softness of tai chi with the more stilted hardness of Javanese movements... the result is a play of different energies”.<sup>105</sup>

Conceptually, the main factor that distinguishes Radiasi Tenaga Dalam from other inner power schools is the primary function of meditation as a means of ‘raising consciousness’. The ability to repel attackers, break objects and heal others, that are central in many inner power schools, are positioned as by-products of the central endeavour of increasing spiritual awareness. The school represents a self-conscious move

away from a focus upon the accumulation of power towards the realisation of individual potential; “the development of human potential (Ind: *sumber daya manusia*), that is a part of inner power and meditation, is linked to the ability to increase, deepen and enrich one’s perspective on reality”.<sup>106</sup> Aas defines ‘consciousness’ as “the state produced by the interaction of control, sensitivity and power, referred to as CSP. Control represents the power of the head (mind), sensitivity represents the heart (feeling) and power represents the muscles (actions)”.<sup>107</sup> The level of one’s consciousness was determined by the speed of interaction between these three aspects. Each aspect could be trained and ultimately unified via meditation, yoga asana, and inner power jurus respectively.



27. A member of the Inner Radiation inner power school performs a movement intended to ‘activate’ inner power within the body.

Aas's own experiments with meditation culminated in an experience of "annihilation" (Ar: *fana*). At one point during meditation, he had a sensation of his spirit moving up towards his head, accompanied by a feeling of impending death.<sup>108</sup> This he explained was the product of *kundalini* rising up his spine. Observing his own body, he experienced it as the whole cosmos, seeing constellations of stars in his arms. Then he was enveloped in darkness followed by an explosion of white light that filled his consciousness. He asked his students who were present at the time to pray to 'let him go'. However frightened at the prospect of losing their teacher, they refused. Aas felt his spirit being tugged up and down. Gradually, and with great anguish, he returned back into his body, however it was not the body he had previously identified with. The experience affected Aas deeply. He was left with a feeling that he 'knew too much'. He found he now had seemingly limitless supernatural powers, for example being able to disappear at will, and produce water in the palms of his hand. Concerned that such powers were 'satanic', he started a two-month long process of "returning to the world". He prayed to God that he might once again sleep, eat, feel emotions and 'disobey', as well as other human characteristics. Prayer itself was confusing, as he could not easily differentiate between "I" and "God". According to his Danish partner Marianne, "Aas was like a baby, he had to relearn even the most basic human tasks. I helped him re-establish his cognitive skills by frequently engaging him in logical argument".<sup>109</sup>

The process of enlightenment also radically changed Aas's view of social relationships: "once one has achieved enlightenment it is no longer appropriate to kneel at the feet of another (Jv: *sungkem*), we must relate to one another as friends and equals".<sup>110</sup>

Drawing inspiration from the Sufi concept of ‘being in the world, but not of it’, he developed a new concept of ‘entrepreneurship’ and ‘multi-dimensional consciousness’ for Radiasi Tenaga Dalam. Through entrepreneurship Aas hopes to encourage the independence and creativity of group members via small business enterprises as, in his words:

People who meditate in isolation become accustomed to peaceful environments and hence are easily disturbed. The real challenge is to meditate in all the activities of everyday life, to leave the world only to re-enter it with a heightened consciousness.<sup>111</sup>

For Aas multi-dimensional consciousness represents the pinnacle of meditation and involves integrating the various types of consciousness into a unified field.<sup>112</sup> As Aas states:

In whatever condition, one who possesses this consciousness will always be able to expand, deepen and enrich their perception. For example, in undergoing spiritual experiences they will be able to actualise spiritual ideas in the physical dimension. Likewise when involved in worldly affairs they will be able to enrich them with spirituality. A person will not be bound by their desires and psychological tendencies, but will be able to control and make use of them in the pursuit of noble objectives.<sup>113</sup>

Just as urban pencak silat styles such as Tajimalela grew as a response to new social and cultural conditions, so inner power schools also developed and evolved in the context of the increasing standardisation of pencak silat and the influence of the discourses of development and modernity. Whilst tracing lineages back several centuries, modern inner power schools such as Nampon, Radiasi Tenaga Dalam and Hikmatul Imam articulated a new theory and practice of inner power, and more generally of the body and its relationship to other bodies, that reflected the perceived social and political realities of modern Indonesia. Inner power schools delineated a movement inwards that attempted to



establish a link between the dry political rhetoric of the New Order represented in the silat world by IPSI, and the latent potential believed to reside within individual bodies. In the next chapter we will examine in detail the history of IPSI and how it has sought to nationalise pencak silat, and in the process inscribe state-sanctioned values upon the body of the silat practitioner.

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<sup>1</sup> Stange makes this point in relation to mystical practice during the Indonesian struggle for independence and other periods of crisis. See 'Inner Dimensions of the Indonesian Revolution', in Laurie J. Sears (ed.), *Autonomous Histories, Particular Truths: Essays in Honor of John R. W. Smail*, University of Wisconsin, Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, Monograph Series, No. 11, 1993, pp. 219-243.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Popo Sumadipraja, 24/05/99, Cipatat

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> See Maryono, 1999, pg. 245-249.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, pg. 245.

<sup>7</sup> Paul Stange, '“Legitimate” Mysticism in Indonesia', *Review of Indonesian and Malay Affairs*, vol. 20, no. 2, 1986, pp. 76-117.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, pg. 90.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, pg. 91.

<sup>10</sup> Pengurus Besar Ikatan Pencak Silat Indonesia, 'Perkembangan Pencak Silat dan Tantangannya', unpublished manuscript, Jakarta, date unknown

<sup>11</sup> Agus Heryana, *Laporan Penelitian Pengkajian Kekuatan Tenaga Dalam Pada Pencak Silat*, Balai Kajian Sejarah Dan Nilai Tradisional, Bandung, 1994/1995, pg. 2.

<sup>12</sup> Edi Nalapraya in Pengurus Besar Ikatan Pencak Silat Indonesia, transcript of PB IPSI plenary session, 7 September 1994, Jakarta.

<sup>13</sup> Maryono, 1998, pg. 295. For more on the inner power techniques of Merpati Putih, see Izral Chaniago and Alex Sunarno, *Merpati Putih: Keajaiban Seni Pernapasan Kuno untuk eksekutif masa kini*, PT Elex Media Komputindo, Jakarta, 1998

<sup>14</sup> 'Learning inner-power for self-defence is now in vogue...but only a few reach true profundity', in *The Jakarta Post*, 7 July, 1993, pg. 7. ". Around 60 schools in Central Java are registered with the association, however its influence has not extended to other provinces.

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<sup>15</sup> Bennedict R.O’G. Anderson, ‘The idea of power in Javanese culture’, in Claire Holt (ed.), *Culture and Politics in Indonesia*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1972, pp. 1-69.

<sup>16</sup> Aas Rukasa, ‘Modul I: Pengenalan Dasar Tenaga Dalam’, unpublished manuscript, Yayasan Seni Pernapasan Radiasi Tenaga Dalam, 1995, pg. 1

<sup>17</sup> Dicky Zaenal Arifin, ‘Tenaga Metafisik’, internal document of Lembaga Seni Bela Diri Hikmatul Iman, Bandung, date unknown.

<sup>18</sup> In the case of schools that adopt a ‘universalist’ stance, written material is invariably in the national language of Bahasa Indonesia and is frequently peppered with English terms and phrases.

<sup>19</sup> Interview, Bandung, 10/11/99.

<sup>20</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1990, pg. 85

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Aas Rukasa, 11/02/00, Bandung.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with Aas Rukasa, 06/01/00, Bandung.

<sup>23</sup> Paryana Suryadipura, *Alam Pikiran*, Sumur Bandung, Semarang, 1963, pg. 37.

<sup>24</sup> Maryanto, ‘Hakekat Seni Beladiri Tenaga Dalam Satria Nusantara Ditinjau Dari Pendekatan Ilmiah dan Manfaat yang Ditimbulkannya’, paper presented at the Satria Nusantara seminar, Yogyakarta, 12 August 1990.

<sup>25</sup> Erik Davis, *Techgnosis: myth, magic and mysticism in the age of information*, Serpents Tail, London, 1999, pg. 41. According to Davis the word *electricity* first entered the English language in 1650 in a treatise on the healing property of magnets by a Flemish physician and Rosicrucian, Jan Baptist van Helmont, who identified it with the spiritual energies latent in the physical universe.

<sup>26</sup> Alter, 1994, pg. 572.

<sup>27</sup> The metaphor of the magnets was frequently mentioned to me when discussing the nature of inner power with practitioners.

<sup>28</sup> Anderson, 1972.

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Muhammad Ali Syahid, 22/06/99, Bandung.

<sup>30</sup> The verse reads: “We sent forward our messengers with clear signs and sent down with them The Book and the Balance (Of Right and Wrong), that men may stand forth in justice; and We sent down iron, in which is great might, as well as many benefits for mankind, that Allah may test who it is that will help, unseen, Him and His messengers; for Allah is full of strength, exalted in might”.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Muhammad Ali Syahid, 22/06/99, Bandung.

<sup>32</sup> For more on the relationship between invulnerability and Sufism in Java, see Martin Van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning: Tradisi-Tradisi Islam di Indonesia*, Mizan, Bandung, 1995, especially pages 276-282.

<sup>33</sup> See for example, ‘Kekebalan tubuh, syirik atau tidak?’, *Republika*, 28 May 1999.

<sup>34</sup> See Sartono Kartodirdjo, *Ratu Adil*, Pustaka Sinar Harapan, Jakarta, 1992.

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<sup>35</sup> Confidential interview, August 1999, Serang.

<sup>36</sup> In Masruri, *Ilmu Kebal: Agresif & Defensif*, CV. Aneka, Solo, 1999, pg. 29. Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani was an influential Persian sufi and founder of the Quadiriyah sufi order who died in Baghdad in 1166. According to Martin Van Bruinessen Abdul Qadir is identified with invulnerability in folk tradition throughout the Islamic world, especially in Banten, West Java. See Martin Van Bruinessen, 1995, pp. 218-22. In Banten 'ilmu Abdul Qadir' is closely linked with invulnerability practices known as *debus*. For more on *debus* see J. Vredenburg, 'Dabus in West Java', *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land-en Volkenkunde*, 129, 1973, pp. 302-320 and Masruri, *Teknik Magis Atraksi Debus*, CV. Aneka, Solo, 1998.

<sup>37</sup> See Masruri, 1999.

<sup>38</sup> Haji Muhammad Idris in Masruri, 1998, pg. 17.

<sup>39</sup> See for example *Gatra*, 24 April 1999, *Republika*, 9 & 28 May 1999.

<sup>40</sup> See for example 'Kekebalan tubuh: konon, lebih penting ketimbang Sembako!', in *Republika*, 9 May 1999.

<sup>41</sup> *Gatra*, 24 April 1999.

<sup>42</sup> Whilst waiting for a bus at the Serang terminal in Banten, I was approached by several men offering me a gemstone that they assured me would make my body invulnerable to bullets. Asking for 2 million rupiah (\$ 500 Aus), their persistence only waned after I requested that they first give a personal demonstration of stones power!

<sup>43</sup> Interview, 10/08/99, Serang.

<sup>44</sup> Van Bruinessen, 1995, pg. 338.

<sup>45</sup> Masruri, *Para Tabib dan Paranormal tentang Penyembuhan Alternatif*, CV. Aneka, Solo, 1997, pg. 44.

<sup>46</sup> Zaenal Abidin Sidik in Masruri, *Dialog Dengan 9 Guru Ilmu Hikmah dan Pendekar Tenaga Dalam*, CV. Aneka, Solo, 1997, pg. 98. The *Budi Suci* ('Pure Wisdom') pencak silat school was established around 1903 by Abdul Rosyid in Indramayu.

<sup>47</sup> 'Krachtologi Selayang Pandang', internal document of Perguruan Pencak Silat Nampon, date unknown.

<sup>48</sup> Originally written by Ahmad Syiharani in his native language of Urwun, the *Zhodam* text was translated into Malay by Hang Nandra Abu Bakar, the war commander of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Acehnese ruler Sultan Iskandar Muda. Another source says that the Thifan sub-style of Shurulkhan entered Aceh during the rule of Aceh Malik Mudhofar Syah. See Suara Hidayatullah, 'Kungfu Anti Syirik', at Suara Hidayatullah Online [<http://hidayatullah.com/sahid/9911/tren.htm>], November 1999 and 'Aliran Tsufuk: Penyelamat Beladiri Thifan Pokhan di Indonesia', in *Jurus: Majalah Seni Beladiri*, no. 11, 8 November 1999, pp. 5-8.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, pg. 5. The shaolin or *shourim* style of kungfu is believed by some to have been formulated by a mendicant Buddhist monk from Hindustan named Bodhidharma, who is also often credited as the founder of the *Ch'an* school of Buddhism. For a brief overview of Bodhidharma and his connection to Chinese martial arts, see Michael Maliszewski, *Spiritual Dimensions of the Martial Arts*, Charles E. Tuttle Company, Rutland, 1996, pp. 43-45.

<sup>50</sup> *Jurus: Majalah Seni Beladiri*, no. 11, 8 November 1999.

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- <sup>51</sup> Suara Hidayatullah, 1999. For a discussion of the origins of Sunan Gunung Jati see Slamet Muljana, *Runtuhnya Keradjaan Hindu-Jawa dan Timbulnja Negara-Negara Islam di Nusantara*, Bhratara, 1968, Djakarta, pp. 124-129.
- <sup>52</sup> Persaudaraan Seni Beladiri Tenaga Dalam Prana Sakti Jayakarta, 'Dari Hilangkan Stress Sampai Kebal Penyakit', unpublished manuscript, Jakarta, date unknown.
- <sup>53</sup> Yoseph Iskandar, *Sejarah Jawa Barat: Yuganing Rajakawasa*, CV Geger Sunten, Bandung, 1997, pg. 320.
- <sup>54</sup> 'Krachtologi Selayang Pandang', internal document of Perguruan Pencak Silat Nampon, date unknown.
- <sup>55</sup> Drawn from Persaudaraan Seni Beladiri Tenaga Dalam Prana Sakti Jayakarta, date unknown.
- <sup>56</sup> R. McKinley, 'Zaman dan Masa, eras and Periods: Religious Evolution and Permanence of Epistemological Ages in Malay Culture', in A.L. Becker and A.A. Yengoyan (eds), *The Imagination of Reality: Essays in Southeast Asian Coherence Systems*, Ablex, Norwood, 1979, pp. 302-324. See page 307.
- <sup>57</sup> Beatty, 1999, pg. 3
- <sup>58</sup> Persaudaraan Seni Beladiri Tenaga dalam Prana Sakti Jayakarta, date unknown.
- <sup>59</sup> Interview with Ichad, 13/10/99, Bandung.
- <sup>60</sup> The following account was recounted to me by Ichad, chairperson of Gerak Penca Margaluyu on 13/10/99 at his home in Cisirung, Bandung. See also 'Gerak Badan Penca Margaluyu: Cikal Bakal Perguruan Beladiri Tenaga Dalam', in *Jurus: Majalah Seni Beladiri*, No. 16 February 2000, pp. 6-12.
- <sup>61</sup> Ibid, pg. 7
- <sup>62</sup> Margaluyu members politely declined to discuss the specific breathing techniques used, however it is well known in inner power circles that they employ a 'triangular' breath pattern of inhaling, holding, exhaling.
- <sup>63</sup> Interview with Ichad, 13/10/99, Bandung.
- <sup>64</sup> Interview with Yoesoef Tedja Sukmana Tamim, Bandung, 14/05/99. In some Nampon internal documents it is claimed that Uwa Nampon studied with Abah Kahir, the founder of the Cimande system, however this is historically impossible as Abah Kahir died 19 years before Uwa Nampon.
- <sup>65</sup> Penca Gebreg is currently taught in the Bojong Herang pencak silat school in Cianjur, which traces a verifiable genealogy from Raden Haji Ibrahim and Mama Kosim.
- <sup>66</sup> A photo of Sukarno owned by Mbah Harnodi, head teacher of the Raga Jati pencak silat organisation, is believed to show him performing the *gebreg* movement of Nampon.
- <sup>67</sup> See 'Seni Beladiri Nampon', in *Jurus: Majalah Seni Beladiri*, no.3, 19 July-1 August 1999, pp. 30-31 and 46-47. Uwa Nampon in turn passed his knowledge onto Mbah Bugel who taught it to Mbah Harnodi from Banjarnegara, the current head teacher of Raga Jati.
- <sup>68</sup> This was especially the case after Nampon died in 1962. Several cult like groups formed that focused upon making contact with Uwa Nampon's spirit.

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<sup>69</sup> Martin van Bruinessen, *Tarekat Naqsyabandiyah di Indonesia: Survei Historis, Geografis dan Sosiologis*, Mizan, Bandung, 1992, pg. 77.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, pg. 77.

<sup>71</sup> 'Aliran Pencak Silat Syahbandar', in *Jurus: Majalah Seni Beladiri*, No. 10 25 October 1999, pp. 5-9.

<sup>72</sup> 'Krachtologi Selayang Pandang', internal document of Perguruan Pencak Silat Nampon, date unknown.

<sup>73</sup> H. Setia Muchlis, 'Penca Silat Nampon', unpublished ms., date unknown.

<sup>74</sup> The Indonesian Students Action Front was formed in October 1965 by anti-communist party university students. The group, which had the support of the army, conducted street demonstrations demanding the abolition of the Indonesian Communist Party and an end to Sukarno's guided democracy. Sukarno banned the group in February 1966, less than one month before he signed the *Supersemar* document (Ind: *Surat Perintah Sebelas Maret*: 11 March letter of Instruction), which effectively gave Suharto full control.

<sup>75</sup> Email message from Indra Abidin to Nampon discussion group [nampons@egroup.com] Saturday, 22 July 2000. Archived at <http://www.egroups.com>.

<sup>76</sup> 'Sejarah Perguruan Beladiri Tenaga Dalam Islam Prana Sakti', unpublished ms, date unknown.

<sup>77</sup> Interview with Adjat Sudradjat, 14/05/99, Bandung.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Nancy N. Chen, 'Urban spaces and experiences of *qigong*', in *Urban Spaces in Contemporary China: The Potential for Autonomy and Community in Post-Mao China*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995, pp. 347-361.

<sup>80</sup> The following account is derived from numerous interviews with Dick Zaenal Arifin conducted in Bandung throughout 1999.

<sup>81</sup> The following are taken from a list of 768 types of 'metaphysical power'. See Dicky Zaenal Arifin, 'Tenaga Metafisik', unpublished ms., date unknown.

<sup>82</sup> *Thuyul* are mischievous spirits that take the form of a young child. It is a common belief throughout Java that professional robbers employ their assistance in order to steal.

<sup>83</sup> Dicky Zaenal Arifin, interview, 11/06/99, Bandung. On several other occasions Dicky used the term *anugerah*. There are two other categories of divine assistance within Islam. *Karamat* refers to miracles, powers or charisma conferred by Allah to his *wali* (representative, saint) whilst *mu'jizah* is a miracle bestowed upon a prophet.

<sup>84</sup> Dicky is an avid comic collector and has a huge collection, most of them Indonesian translations of Chinese martial arts serials.

<sup>85</sup> Interview with Dicky Zaenal Arifin, 11/06/99, Bandung.

<sup>86</sup> Students from the Bandung Institute of Technology have set up a popular website and chat forum for Hikmatul Iman members and the general public that provides updates on the school's activities. See <http://www.hikmatul-iman.com/index>.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>88</sup> Interview with Dicky Zaenal Arifin, 1/06/99, Bandung.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Dicky Zaenal Arifin, 1997, pp. 20-23.

<sup>91</sup> In relation to angelic derived metaphysical power, Dicky refers to Surat Al-Anfal verse 9, in the Quran, which states, "Remember ye implored, the assistance of your Lord. And he answered you: 'I will assist you with a thousand of the angels, ranks upon ranks'".

<sup>92</sup> Dicky Zaenal Arifin, 1997, pg. 26.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid, pg. 27.

<sup>94</sup> Interview with Dicky Zaenal Arifin, 12/06/99, Bandung. This is a popular theme in martial arts comics and cartoons, such as the Japanese cartoon serial *Dragonball-z*.

<sup>95</sup> More recently Hikmatul Imam have started a rehabilitation program for drug addicts that combines inner power training with hypnosis and herbal remedies.

<sup>96</sup> According to Dicky, since the financial crisis hit Indonesia in 1998 he has seen a huge increase in the number of educated professionals suffering from some form of spirit possession. Prior to the crisis instances of possession were almost exclusively confined to those from lower socio-economic groups. In Dicky's opinion the increase was the result of stress brought on by rising unemployment and cost of living coupled with an unstable social and political environment. Interview, 15/06/99, Bandung.

<sup>97</sup> The author has resisted the obvious temptation to do the same!

<sup>98</sup> Interview with Aas Rukasa, Bandung, 6/1/00

<sup>99</sup> Aas studied with the Perisai Diri pencak silat school.

<sup>100</sup> Aas Rukasa, 1995, pg. 3.

<sup>101</sup> Interview with Aas Rukasa, 6/01/00, Bandung.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> *Quanta*, 'Modul Matra CSP: Sebuah Metode Pengembangan Sumber Daya Manusia', Seminar paper, Sukabumi, 1999, pg.42.

<sup>105</sup> Interview with Aas Rukasa, 11/02/00, Bandung.

<sup>106</sup> Interview with Aas Rukasa, 6/01/00, Bandung.

<sup>107</sup> *Quanta*, 1999, pg.27.

<sup>108</sup> Interview with Aas Rukasa, 11/02/00, Bandung

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> This includes consciousness of the physical, social, spiritual, cosmic and death.

<sup>113</sup> *Quanta*, 1999, pg. 41.

## **Civilizing Processes: The Organization of Pencak Silat**

Having explored the ‘inside’ perspective on inner power in silat practice, now we turn to ‘outer’ efforts to nationalize and standardize pencak silat, most resulting from increasing state intervention. Thus the focus in this chapter is on state intervention within the development of the Indonesian Pencak Silat Association. While in the previous chapter emphasis was on local and individual agency in maintaining ‘inner’ awareness of power, through this exploration we will notice some of the ways in which powerful institutions create and modify body techniques in order to articulate new configurations of the body and new types of social relations between bodies.

The desire to create a national style of pencak silat first emerged in the 1920s and 1930s and was strengthened by the influence of the Japanese occupation and the Indonesian nationalist movement. Formed post-independence, the nationalization of pencak silat has been IPSI’s central obsession. It has sought to reconfigure pencak silat as a reflection of state approved values, reinventing it as both “national culture” and more recently as a national and international sport. The influence of IPSI upon pencak silat in Indonesia has been substantial. We will see how it has transformed the silat body into a site of both ideological and political contestation, and instigated a move away from concentration on the specifics of the individual body towards the more ‘abstract’ body of the ‘nation’ and ‘state’.



The guru has always been the central figure in pencak silat culture. They are the source of ilmu, and their character and charisma animates nearly every aspect of pencak silat practice. Traditionally, close students acted as the guru's assistants, often living with them.<sup>1</sup> In traditional aliran such as Cimande and Cikalong a guru may have had only a handful of students in a lifetime, who were often either relatives or neighbors. However as knowledge was disseminated, styles spread and perguruan grew in size, this close relationship often became less tenable. One current teacher described the spread of pencak silat in the following terms:

The spread of pencak silat is like water flowing from the top of a mountain. The top of the mountain is the guru, whereas as the water is knowledge that comes from God. As the water flows down the slopes it branches out into rivers and streams. The rivers are aliran, the streams are perguruan.<sup>2</sup>

The historical growth and dissemination of pencak silat has led to new types of organization within and amongst perguruan. Indonesian pencak silat researchers such as Maryono, Notosoejitno and Liem Yoe Kiong have identified three basic main types of perguruan; 'traditional/conservative', 'moderate/transitional' and 'modern/rational-progressive'.<sup>3</sup> Traditional perguruan are characterized by hereditary leadership, strict selection criteria for prospective students, a lack of administrative or organizational structures as well as a set of unchanging techniques. By their nature, traditional perguruan were local, small scale, and closed to outsiders. Usually the designation of authority followed familial lines.<sup>4</sup> Emerging first in the 1930's, 'moderate/transitional' perguruan started to modify traditional training programs in order to simplify and speed up a student's progression. This allowed training sessions involving larger numbers of students.<sup>5</sup> Modern/transitional schools had a more open door policy to accepting new

students, without complex initiation rites or probationary periods. The larger number of students led to more elaborate forms of management and organization. As branches developed, a centralized administration needed to be set up. In some cases fees were charged for training sessions, or on a monthly basis.<sup>6</sup> Standardized uniforms were introduced along with graded levels of attainment that was usually symbolized by a coloured belt worn around the waist.<sup>7</sup>

Post-independence Indonesia saw the emergence of *perguruan* that further rationalized both the purpose and method of training. Not bound by tradition, these *perguruan* adopted an experimental approach, often taking and adapting techniques from other martial arts. Ideas from sports and biological science were also incorporated, such as the importance of aerobic and isometric training, weights and issues regarding stamina, endurance etc.<sup>8</sup> Questioning and discussion of the relative merits of a technique were also encouraged amongst students. In terms of organizational structure, modern/rational schools made a clear distinction between administrative positions and martial ability. Whilst the three types follow a historical line of development, all continue to exist in a variety of forms in contemporary Indonesia.

Prior to Indonesian independence, *pencak silat* schools in West Java existed as largely autonomous social groupings, as an informal institution within rural life. Often situated on the geographical fringe of the community, they played an important role in local security. As Anderson has noted, joining a *perguruan* was one of several paths of initiation into adulthood open to youths.<sup>9</sup> *Perguruan* were a continuation of an ancient

tradition of apprenticeship and learning that was founded upon the relationship between guru and student. Similar to the Chinese martial tradition, it was believed that it was the parents who gave birth to a child, however it was a master or teacher who had the responsibility of guiding them into adulthood.

It was not until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century that attempts were made at establishing region-wide organizations. In 1922 the Indonesian Pencak Silat Association (Ind: *Perhimpunan Pencak Silat Indonesia*) was founded in Subang, West Java in an effort to unify West Javanese aliran, however with limited success. Larger perguruan such as Setia Hati and Panglipur already had well-established networks of branches throughout Java.

The growth in organized resistance to colonial rule and nationalist sentiment also provided a catalyst for a greater degree of organization and coordination between schools. In 1930 the pencak silat school *Sekar Pakuan* was established in Bandung with the motto of “train, so one is brave in resisting the Dutch”.<sup>10</sup> The school drew together masters of West Javanese aliran such as Cimande, Cikalong, Sera and Syahbandar. Earlier in 1918 the pencak silat school *Silat Simawarame*, led by Haji Hasan Arief, had led a short lived uprising against the Dutch in Cimareme, Garut. After refusing to surrender part of his rice crop to local officials, Haji Hasan and two members of his family were killed in the ensuing gun battle. Known as the ‘Garut Affair’, it provoked a crackdown by the colonial authorities on the growing nationalist movement. Sarekat Islam, which had a substantial level of support in the area, was singled out by the Dutch, with several hundred members being arrested in Garut alone. Haji Hasan coined a phrase that was to become an

inspiration to other perguruan in the region: “rather than surrender, it is better to become a tiger for a day”.<sup>11</sup>

The close surveillance of perguruan by the colonial authorities meant that pencak silat guru were only able to instruct small numbers of students at any one time. Closed to the uninitiated, the secrecy surrounding training, as well as the suspicion which guru often held towards one another also inhibited efforts to build any kind of umbrella organization. In a lifetime many guru may have had only around ten students, though their standard of proficiency was generally extremely high. Officially sanctioned silat training was only permitted in police and civil servant training schools (D: *Opleiding voor Bestuurs Beamte*).<sup>12</sup> Members of the traditional aristocracy working within the colonial administration were allowed to continue training.<sup>13</sup>

The short period of occupation under the Japanese (1942-1945) brought significant changes in training practices as well as the one of the first efforts to create a standardized pan-Indonesian style. In contrast to the Dutch, the Japanese troops in the *Dai Nippon* and the ‘Defenders of the Homeland’ (Ind: *PETA*; *Pembela Tanah Air*) were given training in pencak silat with Japanese military style discipline.<sup>14</sup> The Japanese style rule, drawn from the military and imperial traditions, struck a cord with Javanese martial culture, invoking imaginings of the *kesatria* of pre-colonial Java.<sup>15</sup> In Japan itself the martial arts had undergone a process of militarization during the 1920s and 1930s, largely as a result of the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945), becoming closely associated with ultra-nationalism and being raised to the status of national sport.<sup>16</sup> Traditional martial arts (Jp:

*budo*) became compulsory in schools, where it was hoped it would mold the “samurai spirit” (Jp: *bushido*) that laid the foundation for a militant patriotism.<sup>17</sup> As early as 1895 a Japanese Martial Virtue Association (Jp: *Dainihon butokukai*) had been established, which later played a crucial role in promoting Japanese martial arts “in line with the ‘martial spirit’ (Jp: *kammu*), which formed the basis of Japanese spirit (Jp: *wakon*)”.<sup>18</sup> Martial arts were transformed into part of the apparatus for national mobilization. In 1941 they were placed under direct government control.<sup>19</sup> Ideologically the goal of training shifted away from achieving self-perfection towards “devotion to the nation-state”.<sup>20</sup>

This approach to martial arts was implemented in the archipelago. After initially banning practices such as pencak silat, that were considered to be a potential source of unrest, the Japanese occupying force gradually allowed its practice in regions where there was little resistance.<sup>21</sup> Locals recruited into the ‘Defenders of the Homeland’, a guerrilla force established in resist an expected Allied invasion, were given training in Japanese martial arts such as kendo and judo. Interaction between Indonesians and the Japanese led to pencak silat also becoming a component of military training.<sup>22</sup> As was the case with martial arts in Japan, an effort was made to create a standardized national style. As Shun notes, the ‘invented tradition’ of judo became the body culture associated with Japanese national identity.<sup>23</sup> In order to formulate a pan-Indonesian pencak silat style, the Japanese brought together a number of silat teachers and instructors from throughout the archipelago to Jakarta.<sup>24</sup> Under the direction of Soegoro and Saksono, two teachers from the East Javanese perguruan Setia Hati, they developed a pencak silat system consisting of 12 jurus.<sup>25</sup> After becoming proficient, the teachers returned to their respective areas

with the instruction to teach the jurus to the local militia, the ‘Vanguard Corps’ (Ind: *Barisan Pelopor*). Attracting youth from all strata of society, Barisan Pelopor conducted paramilitary drills, and was pivotal in the fostering of a new nationalist consciousness.<sup>26</sup> By the end of Japanese rule in 1945, its membership had reached nearly 30,000. In each case martial arts was integrated into military training. Despite resistance in some quarters to the Japanese pencak silat style, the effect of the effort was nonetheless significant. For the first time a serious attempt was made to nationalize pencak silat, laying the foundation for its development in post-independence Indonesia. Of equal if not greater importance was the strengthening of the ideological link between pencak silat, nationalism and a militaristic patriotism.

### **Nationalist Visions: The Indonesian Pencak Silat Association**

At a congress sponsored by the Indonesian Sports Association (Ind: *PORI; Persatuan Olah Raga Indonesia*) held in Solo in 1948, the ‘Pencak Association for All Indonesia’ (Ind: *IPPSI; Ikatan Pencak Silat Seluruh Indonesia*) was formally established.<sup>27</sup> The then Minister for Education and Culture, Wongsonegoro, was chosen as the organizations first chairperson. In the 1930’s Wongsonegoro had been chairperson of the Surakarta branch of the nationalist organization Budi Oetomo, and was one of the founders of the Greater Indonesia Party (Ind: *Partai Indonesia Raya*).<sup>28</sup> In 1945 he became governor of Central Java, and in 1949 was appointed as the Indonesian Minister of Internal Affairs.<sup>29</sup> The deputy chairman was Soeria Atmadja, a West Javanese pencak silat master. The prevalence of high profile political figures in IPPSI’s ranks set a precedent for the years to come.

Whilst IPSI had already been established as an organization in Central and East Java since 1947 and was recognised by the government as the sole national pencak silat body, by the mid 1950s it had yet to gain acceptance in West Java. This was primarily due to the conservative and secretive nature of silat schools in the province, as well as to the already widespread perception that IPPSI did not sufficiently represent the unique traditions existent there. The central board of IPPSI has been dominated by East Javanese, most notably from the perguruan Setia Hati. The presence of Wongsonegoro, who was a prominent exponent of kebatinan, as the chairman of IPPSI also prompted suspicions amongst the more pious Muslim pencak silat community of West Java that the organization sought to promote practices not in line with religious orthodoxy.<sup>30</sup>

Many of IPSI's opponents in West Java joined the rival organization, the Indonesian Pencak Silat Union (Ind: *PPSI, Perhimpunan Pencak Silat Indonesia*). In contrast to IPSI, with its emphasis upon the nationalisation and standardisation of pencak silat in conformity with government programs, PPSI acted as a self-conscious defender of silat 'tradition' in West Java. According to the association's current chairperson Uuh Rukmana, PPSI was established in 1957 after a number of pencak silat masters, at the request of the Indonesian army, participated in the 'Fence of Legs' operation (Ind: *Operasi Pagar Betis*) that was used to eliminate remnants of the Darul-Islam rebellion in the mountainous regions of Banten and Priangan.<sup>31</sup> The first chairman of the association was Major General Kosasih of the Siliwangi Division of the Indonesian army. According to PPSI pencak silat consists of three aspects that are symbolised in its motto of *Shalat, Silat, Siliwangi*. These refer respectively to religion, culture, and 'Sundaneness'.<sup>32</sup> Self

consciously 'Sunda-centric', PPSI asserts that West Javanese pencak silat is "in cultural terms superior to that of Central Java".<sup>33</sup> Apart from Bandung, current PPSI strongholds remain in Garut, Banten, Sumedang and Cianjur. Alongside its involvement with perguruan, PPSI also has close contacts with pesantren and schools throughout West Java, providing pencak silat instruction as part of the curriculum.

The second IPPSI congress was held in Yogyakarta in 1950. Following the example of the Japanese less than ten years earlier, one of the main aims of the congress was to work at formulating a national pencak silat system. The result was a basic pencak silat training program consisting of 38 jurus. It was implemented in a number of schools and institutes such as the Magelang Police Academy, the Yogyakarta Physical Education Teacher Training Institute and the Airborne Commando Battalion in Cibinong, Bogor.<sup>34</sup> Other decisions made at the congress were the formulation of statutes and by-laws, the changing of IPSSI to IPSI, and a recommendation that silat become a compulsory subject in all schools.<sup>35</sup> IPSI also asked the government whether pencak silat was to be considered as sport or culture. Initially the government seemed uncertain how to classify pencak silat. In 1952 a pencak silat directorate was formed within the Ministry for Education, Learning and Culture. Its main activity was to gather material on silat and provide lessons for anyone interested. In 1953 its activities were moved from the education division to the cultural division of the ministry.<sup>36</sup>

According to Denys Lombard, Western style sports were first introduced into Java around the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>37</sup> Their popularity quickly spread and by 1909 there



were already five soccer clubs in Batavia. Such pastimes were initially almost entirely the preserve of the colonial elite, however within the space of a few years one English commentator of the time was suggesting that soccer “might also be described as the national game”.<sup>38</sup> Prior to the introduction of Western sports, traditional game contests such as *sepak raga* were popular especially throughout Java.<sup>39</sup> The first Western style sports school was established in Bandung in 1922. By the late 1920’s boy scouts groups had been established by organizations such as Sarekat Islam and Muhammadiyah that took “Western themes regarding the importance of physical education and life in the outdoors, as well as stressing the benefits of sporting competitions as a forge for the spirit”.<sup>40</sup>



28. Members of the pencak silat exhibition team, including Suhari Sapari (centre), at the 5<sup>th</sup> National Sports Week held in Bandung in 1961. Photo courtesy of Aam Santoso.

During the late 1950s and early 1960s sport became embroiled in the ideology-driven politics of the time. The 4<sup>th</sup> Asian Games in Jakarta, in which Israeli and Taiwanese

athletes were refused visas, saw the International Olympic Committee impose sanctions on Indonesia. President Sukarno responded by hosting GANEFO (Games of the New Emerging Forces) in November 1963, participants consisting largely of communist leaning nations.<sup>41</sup> The Indonesian National Sports Committee (Ind: *KONI*; *Komite Olahraga Nasional Indonesia*) was formally established on 1 December 1966. Previously sports had been administered by the Sports Council of the Republic of Indonesia (Ind: *Dewan Olahraga Republik Indonesia*) and before that the Sports Movement Command (Ind: *Komando Gerakan Olahraga*). Sukarno also paid particular attention to pencak silat and its new role as a bulwark against the encroachment of ‘western cultural imperialism’.<sup>42</sup> As an ‘indigenous sport’ and an integral part of the new Indonesian national culture, there was an increased imperative for the government to intervene directly in its development. Pencak silat had already been an ‘exhibition sport’ at the first two National Sports Week (Ind: *Pekan Olahraga Nasional*) held in 1948 and 1950.<sup>43</sup> In an introduction to a 1952 book on pencak silat published by IPSI Sukarno referred to pencak silat as a national sport:

.... it can be said that Pencak Silat for us is a form of national sport. Aside from its physical benefits, such as self-defense, we also obtain spiritual benefits from it, such as sharp reactions, the ability to withstand pain, heroism, gallantry etc. So, it is appropriate that pencak and silat are properly looked after in order that it grows and prospers in the midst of Indonesian society, as an heirloom passed on through the generations that compliments and is useful to the interests of the homeland.<sup>44</sup>

Perhaps inspired by Sukarno’s words, at the third IPSI congress in 1953 a committee was formed to work out a sport version of pencak silat.<sup>45</sup> The difficulties in formulating a competitive style of pencak silat as well as resistance from traditionalist teachers meant that it was not until 1961 that a national seminar was held to address the issue.<sup>46</sup> Hosted by the division of physical education of the Ministry of Education, the seminar also saw

IPSI moved from the jurisdiction of the division of culture back to that of the division of education.<sup>47</sup>

### **Civilizing Processes: The ‘Sportization’ of Pencak Silat**

The logic whereby agents incline toward this or that sporting practice cannot be understood unless their dispositions towards sport, which are themselves one dimension of a particular relation to the body, are reinserted into the unity of dispositions, the habitus, which is the basis from which lifestyles are generated.<sup>48</sup>

Pierre Bourdieu

What changes in Indonesian society accounted for the development of a version of pencak silat that had the specific characteristics of sport? The modern Indonesian term used for contemporary sport, *olahraga*, is a composite of the words *olah* and *raga*. Echols and Shadily’s Indonesian-English dictionary defines *olah* as both “manner, way of doing things” and “process, to turn something into something better”. In Javanese literary tradition and common Indonesian, *raga* refers to the physical body. To *mengolahraga* is to literally “process the body”, transforming it from its base physicality into something ‘higher’. In the preface to the statutes of KONI, sport is elevated as an essential component of human development:

In accord with human nature, sport constitutes a human necessity which finds its source in the greatness and majesty of All Mighty God, and which constitutes one essential and influential aspect of the physical and spiritual development of every individual, in the context of developing the whole person, which is needed in the implementation of national and state development that strives for a just and prosperous society.<sup>49</sup>

This vision of a somatic nationalism equates the ‘complete person’ (Ind: *manusia seutuhnya*) with national well being. Sport, and more generally physical culture, were a

means to realizing the goal of the spiritual development of both the individual and of the nation.

At the national congress of IPSI held in Jakarta in January 1973 it was decided that, “in order to guarantee the swift development of pencak silat, it is considered necessary to guide it specifically via sporting pencak silat”.<sup>50</sup> The congress was the first since the New Order’s rise to power. The 1960’s had seen a polarization of the pencak silat community along ideological lines and IPSI now had the task of unifying it. Pencak silat was redefined as consisting of four aspects; self-defence (Ind: *bela diri*), sport (Ind: *olahraga*), art (Ind: *seni*) and the mental-spiritual dimension. Each of the four elements combined to form an inseparable unity.<sup>51</sup> However it was felt that it was only through olahraga that it could be successfully ‘managed’ and promoted, both within Indonesia and overseas.



29. Logo of the Indonesian Pencak Silat Association.

The decision to develop sport silat as the primary forum in which to promote pencak silat had wide-ranging cultural and political implications. The congress was held at a time

when the New Order was still consolidating its power.<sup>52</sup> Wongsonegoro was replaced as the national chairperson of IPSI by Tjokropranolo, the governor of Jakarta and a former Brigadier General. This reflected a broader process of the militarization of social and cultural organizations throughout the country, and the weeding out of leftists and Sukarno loyalists within government. Two months after the congress the newly constituted Peoples Consultative Assembly (Ind: *Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat*) re-elected Suharto for a five-year term. Recommendations for provincial IPSI chairpersons now came directly from government, and inevitably named a prominent military or government figure. Generally these government appointees had previously had little or nothing to do with pencak silat, making it clear that their purpose was to ensure loyalty to state policy. As one master commented:

That was the way things were done by the New Order: ‘Here’s pencak silat, you look after that’, even though in reality they knew nothing about it. As long as it was a general or an army man, they got the job.<sup>53</sup>

The same applied to other sporting, cultural and youth organizations, reflecting the corporatist strategy that was employed across the board by the New Order government.

One year earlier, in 1972, Ali Sadikin, then governor of Jakarta, stated the importance of establishing an institution of “adopted fathers” (Ind: *bapak angkat*) to ensure that sport continued to “develop”.<sup>54</sup> The Suharto family was IPSI’s prime patron throughout the 1980’s and 1990’s. Suharto was given the title of (Ind: *Pembina Utama*). His son Bambang Trihadmodjo was on IPSI’s advisory council, whilst his son-in-law Prabowo Subianto acted as a deputy chair. Bambang’s Bimantara conglomerate was also one of the

organizations main financial donors.<sup>55</sup> Up until the completion of the Indonesian National Pencak Silat Center in 1997, which was built on land donated by Suharto's wife, IPSI's office was housed in the Bimantara building in central Jakarta.

'Youth' (Ind: *pemuda*) presented itself as a particular problem to the new regime. In 1973 General Soemitro, the Commander of the Command for the Restoration of Security and Public Order (Ind: *Kopkamtib; Komando Pemulihan Keamanan dan Ketertiban*), had ordered that "groups and gangs of teenagers" be disbanded.<sup>56</sup> Groups and gangs mobilized by the military against suspected communists during 1965-66, including jawara and pencak silat schools, had now returned to their neighborhoods. The lack of work meant that many became involved in criminal activities. In July of 1973 the Indonesian National Youth Committee (Ind: *KNPI; Komite Nasional Pemuda Indonesia*) was formed as the sole forum for youth organizations in Indonesia. A sub-committee of the State Intelligence agency (Ind: *BAKIN; Badan Koordinasi Intelijen Negara*) assembled former gang leaders for training as mechanics "establishing a pattern of access to *preman* followed by other army commanders".<sup>57</sup> Throughout the country local military commanders "began to increase their access to gangs by establishing various Teen Clubs, with an emphasis on sports".<sup>58</sup> The approach adopted by the New Order viewed sport as a means of cultivating the "human resources" deemed necessary for national development. In a speech to a national workshop on 'the development of sport' in 1983, Suharto outlined his vision of the role of sport in national life:

Sport contains several elements that are important to national guidance especially in the current development era. One important aspect of sport is the attitude of sportsmanship, the attitude of the *kesatria*. This means that if our opponent is victorious, then we accept this victory with respect. Our

defeat at the hands of our opponent need not be a humiliation. We should rather turn defeat into a whip to spur us on to train more diligently and achieve greater prestige. In this sense sporting competitions contain an element of constructive competition, because all parties strive to achieve the greatest that they can. Struggling to achieve constitutes an important element in stimulating the development of modern society. If the demeanor of the *kesatria* and a commitment to achievement is fostered and grows in our society, in every class and group, then the dynamic of our development will be limitless.<sup>59</sup>

Sporting competitions were framed as a forum for developing physical prowess and inculcating *sportivitas*, defined as ‘a form of constructive competition’.<sup>60</sup> Sport was to act as a model for the ideology of a market driven economy and modernity. It produced healthy, efficient and compliant bodies. In the same speech, Suharto pointed to what he considered to be the other important aspect of sport:

Either directly or indirectly, to a greater or lesser degree, the discipline found in sport will foster individual discipline. Individuals who are disciplined, citizens who are disciplined, will develop a disciplined nation. National discipline is essential for the growth of an orderly and dynamic society.<sup>61</sup>

The importance placed upon discipline in sport highlights how it was viewed by the New Order government as a potential form of social control. Seen in this light, the development of sporting pencak silat, under the direct patronage of Suharto, emerges as part of the larger New Order project of both ‘civilizing’ and institutionalizing youth as well as groups (such as *jawara*) that had traditionally existed on the fringes of social and political life. In his address at the 1973 IPSI congress Suharto stated that silat masters must “change their primordial, exclusive and ego-centric attitudes for the sake of the success of national pencak silat”.<sup>62</sup> Individual and local interests were to be sidelined in order to achieve national development. One year later in Banten, *jawara* with close links to Golkar formed the Indonesian Association of Bantenese Silat and Culture (Ind:

*PPSBBI; Persatuan Persilatan dan Seni Budaya Banten Indonesia*). The revolutionary spirit of youth, that at times resulted in ‘excesses’, was now to be ‘disciplined’ and focused towards realizing the first of the New Order’s five year plans. Sport was to be a medium by which to train bodies for the nation and a means of instilling the military ethos of the satria in the civilian population. Sport was believed to be directly linked to the enhancement of national power. Pencak silat, as a martial art, had a particular place in this vision. IPSI’s role was to:

Guide Indonesian pencak silat practitioners in order that they can make manifest the Archipelago Concept (Ind: *Wawasan Nusantara*) as well as participate positively in the implementation of national development, national defence (Ind: *Bela Negara*), and the defense of national security as an integral part of the implementation of the Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution.<sup>63</sup>

The initial resistance amongst the pencak silat community in West Java towards IPSI and sporting competitions was eased when, on the recommendation of the governor, Suhari Sapari was appointed chairman of the West Java branch of the organization. Sapari was one of the founders of PPSI and a highly respected member of the West Javanese pencak silat community. Whilst his appointment was unusual in that he was in fact a recognized silat master, it was a tactical move on the part of the government to win over perguruan hostile to IPSI. The central government had been putting pressure on IPSI to ensure that all pencak silat groups in Indonesia align themselves with it.<sup>64</sup> PPSI had presented a major stumbling block towards realizing this in West Java. Earlier in 1962, IPSI had proposed that they form a joint organization with PPSI named (Ind: *Gabungan Olahraga Pencak Silat Indonesia*) however PPSI refused outright, instead suggesting that IPSI join them.<sup>65</sup> At the 1973 national congress IPSI officially recognized ten “influential



pencak silat organizations” that were considered to have made substantial contributions to the growth of IPSI and pencak silat in general.<sup>66</sup> PPSI was one of them. PPSI was incorporated into IPSI’s framework by proxy.<sup>67</sup> That they refused to participate in the organization meant little. Their name had been appropriated. Rejecting the sportization and nationalisation of silat as a ‘betrayal’ of the instructions of the old masters, PPSI refused to participate, instead hosting its own festivals of *ibing penca* known as *pasanggihiri*. From the perspective of PPSI affiliated schools, sporting competitions were a contrived simulation of real combat and hence ‘dangerous’, firstly as they encouraged a dilution of techniques designed for use in real ‘life or death’ situations, and secondly as the forum encouraged egoism and pride. PPSI became a forum for the expression of opposition to the introduction of sporting competitions.



30. Women competitors at a pencak silat sport competition in Bandung

Only perguruan registered with IPSI were allowed to participate in competitions. As a result many schools registered, rapidly increasing IPSI membership. Acceptance as a member also required perguruan to submit detailed group statutes and by-laws that needed to conform to standards outlined by IPSI.<sup>68</sup> The introduction of government legislation in 1985 that required all social, cultural and political organizations to place the state ideology of Pancasila as their sole ideological foundation further strengthened IPSI's influence over pencak silat throughout the country. Offices were established in every province, at the regency, district and city level. IPSI became ideological watchdogs of the New Order.

Throughout the 1980's IPSI worked to formulate and standardise a unified pencak silat 'philosophy'. The result was the philosophy of 'noble character' (Ind: *budi pekerti luhur*). The 'noble values' (Ind: *nilai-nilai luhur*) found within Indonesian pencak silat were contained within the Esteemed Values of Pencak Silat (Ind: *Nilai-nilai Luhur Pencak Indonesia*), which were formulated at the sixth IPSI national congress held in Jakarta in 1986.<sup>69</sup> The Esteemed Values of Pencak Silat consisted of:

the values of pencak silat and the philosophy of noble character and conduct which are in the spirit of, and also constitute a spelling out and a supplement to, the esteemed values of the philosophy of the Indonesian nation, that is the Pancasila<sup>70</sup>

The 'essence' of these values were simplified and made the foundation for the Pencak Silat Practitioners Pledge of Loyalty (Ind: *Prasetya Pesilat*):

1. We Indonesian pesilat are citizens who are devoted to Almighty God and are of noble character.

2. We Indonesian pesilat are citizens who defend and put into practice the Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution.
3. We Indonesian pesilat are satria who love the Indonesian nation and homeland.
4. We Indonesian pesilat are satria who hold in high esteem the brotherhood and unity of the nation.
5. We Indonesian pesilat are satria who always pursue progress and are of Indonesian character (Ind: *berkepribadian Indonesia*).
6. We Indonesian pesilat are satria who always maintain truth, honesty and justice.
7. We Indonesian pesilat are knights who withstand trials and temptations.<sup>71</sup>

The pledge of loyalty has close parallels with the Seven Articles (Ind: *Sapta Marga*) the oath of the Indonesian armed forces.<sup>72</sup> In both, the overwhelming emphasis is upon loyalty to the nation, state, and its ideology. By 1991, jurus were also created to “internalise the ethical code of the Prasetya Pesilat Indonesia into the heart of every pencak silat practitioner in Indonesia”.<sup>73</sup> The drive by IPSI to embody its vision for pencak silat in movement took a step forward in 1996. In that year IPSI formulated a set of jurus known as the ‘compulsory jurus’ (Ind: *wiraloka wajib*). Consisting of 99 movements, the jurus were devised and choreographed by a team of pencak silat masters associated with IPSI’s central board. The idea behind the compulsory jurus was that in order to “shed its backward image” and gain new converts pencak silat must have a set of standard jurus, similar to the *kata* of karate.<sup>74</sup>

IPSI also felt that the growth of sporting silat could result in a “poverty of technique” amongst younger practitioners.<sup>75</sup> Hence it framed the compulsory jurus as an attempt to preserve the ‘uniqueness’ of pencak silat in a set of jurus that reflected the diversity of pencak silat, as well as a creating a ‘unified identity’ amongst the pencak silat

community. As one sympathetic journalist commented, “if the uniqueness of silat movements is maintained by whoever in the silat world is so inclined, and then standardized, then pencak silat as a whole will be strengthened and become a part of Indonesia’s cultural identity”.<sup>76</sup> Perguruan were encouraged to include the jurus as part of their regular training programs. The introduction of single and group performances of the compulsory jurus as a new competitive category was to act as a further incentive.<sup>77</sup>

However IPSI’s program for ‘socialising’ the compulsory jurus was met with considerable skepticism by many within the silat community, especially in West Java. Opponents felt that the jurus did not in fact represent the diversity of pencak silat’s extensive repertoire of techniques. This was compounded by the fact and that there had been almost no consultation with pencak silat masters in regional centers, especially those outside of Java. Whilst West Javanese styles were represented by several Cimande derived techniques, contributed by Rival Sahib of the Panca Sakti school, the response to the compulsory jurus from the West Java silat community was cool. Smaller perguruan especially felt that IPSI was no longer acting as a representative body, but more as a *perguruan* in itself that was in direct competition with others.

The effect of sportization upon the organization and ‘ethics’ of silat was that of a, borrowing Norbert Elias’s term, ‘civilising process’.<sup>78</sup> Elias argues that a central aspect of the development of modern sport has been a ‘civilising process’ regarding the expression and control of physical violence within society. Within the space of silat sport competition, a transfer of emotions occurred from what were initially direct actions aimed

at maiming or killing an opponent to mimetic activities that have the abstract aim of accumulating 'points', and the pleasures of spectating. According to Maguire, mimetic activities such as sport: "provide a 'make-believe' setting which allows emotions to flow more easily and which elicits excitement of some kind imitating that produced by real-life situations, yet without its dangers or risks".<sup>79</sup> From the perspective of the state, frustrations and rivalries that are considered to be potential sources of civil disturbance can find release in the arena. Sport could be used as a means of social control. As has been mentioned, challenge fights were a common part of traditional silat culture in west Java. These were conducted largely without any formal rules regarding technique or conduct. During the early days of competition the forum was often perceived as a one in which long standing rivalries between schools could be settled.

The rules of the early experimental competitions were simple, the winner was the last man standing. Such high stakes meant that competitors left little to fate, 'armouring' themselves with amulets (Ind; *jimat*) believed to convey invulnerability. Whilst blows to the head and genitals were forbidden, joint locks and holds were permitted. Body protectors had yet to be introduced, points being scored by removing five cloth stars that were pinned on various parts of the opponent's back and chest.<sup>80</sup> Serious injuries such as broken bones and internal bleeding were common.<sup>81</sup> Over time a refining and tightening of the rules occurred that reduced the possibility of injury, placing greater and greater restrictions over physical action.

As a general statement, changes in the balance of power related to silat sport have manifested in this way. Sporting competitions provided IPSI, as the representative of the government in the pencak silat community, the opportunity to expand its sphere of influence. The chance for national and international exposure that competitions gave was a strong incentive for groups to participate.

On the level of technique, competitions prompted a radical alteration of traditional styles and training practices. The point system used in competitions gives scores of one point for a clean punch, two for a kick, and three for a 'drop' (Ind: *bantingan*). The emphasis upon hand movements in the majority of West Javanese styles (in contrast to Minangkabau or East Javanese styles that utilise more leg-based attacks) placed it at an immediate disadvantage in the competition forum as its speciality was worth less points. The result was that schools intent on succeeding in competitions had to incorporate moves from other styles, providing further the impetus for a composite 'national style' such as those formulated by schools such as KPS Nusantara and Satria Muda Indonesia. Competition silat also created a clear distinction between techniques for 'self defence' and those for 'sport'. Training practices that traditionally focused upon the rote repetition of jurus and the strengthening of the limbs, began to include stamina, endurance and weights training, as well as explore issues of nutrition and 'body mechanics'.<sup>82</sup> Perguruan began to introduce separate training sessions for sport silat. In many cases sport training was given to younger members, whilst more senior students concentrated upon self-defence and the spiritual dimension of practice. In this respect sport silat was interpreted in terms of the traditional understanding of *olahraga*, as an optimising of the

physical capabilities of the body, which laid the foundation for psychological and spiritual development.

The requirements of sporting competitions meant that the techniques used were homogenised, varying little between perguruan. The unique jurus of most perguruan and aliran were simply not applicable to competition. In Tajimalela for example, it is generally believed that only around ten percent of ‘authentic’ jurus could be transferred to the forum. For other older perguruan that focused upon teaching traditional styles such as Cimande and Cikalong, the challenge of adapting to the new constraints was too great. Most simply ignored the competition forum altogether. IPSI itself recognised the limited technical repertoire involved in competition, but preferred to emphasise the importance of strategy and ‘entertainment’:

In sporting pencak silat, not many techniques are studied. Just punches, kicks, blocks and a few other techniques such as sweeps, drops and scissor kicks. This is because there are only a limited number of attacks that are given points. What is interesting in pencak silat is the way in which the silat practitioner attempts to score these points. In other words, the process of attack and defence is what is interesting to watch. That is if we watch it in terms of its ‘entertainment’ value.<sup>83</sup>

The changes prompted by sporting competitions were not merely at the level of technique (blows to the head, genitals, and knees were forbidden) but also in terms of the morality and ethics of physical combat. The philosophy of many of the traditional aliran of West Java prioritizes immobilising an opponent as quickly as possible. For example the Sanalika style of Cianjur has an ethic of “if you come I will take you on, if you go I will help you on your way” (Sd: *datang sampaikeun balik bahanan. Mangga kihelea abdi kiheleauan*). Any physical challenge is to be dealt with in an uncompromising and

devastating fashion. For many schools the concept of silat as sport was in conflict with its most basic principles. Silat was not something to be openly displayed to the public and should not be performed for the sake of ‘winning’. Certain sectors of the silat community differentiate between sport silat and “real” silat. As one pencak silat teacher put it:

The basic idea (of competition) is good, however many authentic silat practitioners consider it an insult, fighting, but so many rules! Fighting is fighting, there is no need for lots of regulations. The one who is cleverest will win, the one who is most powerful will come out on top...with competition that’s not the case. You can be the better fighter but still lose to the rules (Ind: *kalah aturan*)<sup>84</sup>

The process of ‘sportization’ of silat saw an ideological shift from traditional martial philosophies to one of ‘sportsmanship’ (Ind: *sportif*), identified with the ethics of the ‘knight’ (Ind: *satria*). The ethics of the *satria*, rooted in the wayang traditions of Indic Java, were reinvented as revolving around ‘playing fair’ within a set of predetermined rules.

By meeting the criteria of a ‘sporting’ rather than ‘cultural’ organization, IPSI began receiving funding from KONI in the mid 1970s. Previously it had been largely under the guidance of the Department of Education and Culture. KONI’s influence accelerated the change amongst IPSI affiliated schools towards administrative and semi-bureaucratic forms of organization (the ‘modern/rational’ style *perguruan*) and standardised training practices that were drawn from sports science. A gradual shift occurred away from a “guru focus” to a greater stress on the role of delegated trainers (Ind: *pelatih*). National and provincial level IPSI trainers participated in sports training programs hosted by KONI and the Ministry of Youth and Sport.<sup>85</sup> The size of large *perguruan* meant that the traditionally close relationship between teacher and student was no longer practical.



Training was conducted increasingly by trainers, with the teacher acting in an advisory role. In many schools distinctions were made between purely administrative positions and martial skill. Brownell states that in socialist states the classification of sports as ‘culture’ was part of the endeavor to “legitimate proletarian culture”.<sup>86</sup> In the case of pencak silat the process was reversed. It was by being defined as a sport that it gained increased recognition and legitimacy.

In 1980, and upon the initiative of IPSI, the International Pencak Silat Association (Ind: *Persekutuan Pencak Silat Antara Bangsa*, PERSILAT) was formed. Edi Nalapraya was appointed as chairman with Oyong Karmayuda as the general secretary.<sup>87</sup> Founding members consisted of Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei Darussalam, all of whom were considered, as countries with largely ethnic Malay populations, as ‘original sources’ of pencak silat. In 1982 the first international pencak silat competition was held in Jakarta, followed by another in 1984 and 1986. In 1987 the first official pencak silat world championships were held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The championship used the competition regulations already established by IPSI. By 1994 PERSILAT had 21 member nations.<sup>88</sup> In 1996 PERSILAT recognised four elements of pencak silat competition, sporting pencak silat (Jv: *wiralaga*), choreographed self-defence routines between two performers, solo choreographed art performances and the compulsory jurus.<sup>89</sup>



31. Members of the 1999 Indonesian national pencak silat team practice in preparation for the Southeast Asian Games.

At the third general session of PERSILAT in 1991, The Prasetya Pesilat was modified and condensed into a form acceptable to the international pencak silat community. It was known as the Three Oaths of the Pencak Silat Practitioner (Ind: *Triprasetya Pesilat*):

1. A pesilat is an individual of noble mind and character.
2. A pesilat is a person who honours their fellow human beings, and who loves friendship and peace.
3. A pesilat is a satria who upholds truth, honesty and justice, and withstands trials and temptations.

The Triprasetya was considered to be “the essence of the values found in the philosophy of noble mind and character, in its capacity as a universal moral philosophy”.<sup>90</sup> That the

pledge was an adaptation of the Seven Pledges formulated five years earlier, minus the references to Indonesia and the Pancasila, showed IPSI's domination of PERSILAT. In 1996 two extra pledges were added to the Triprasetya, which was hence known as the Pencak Silat Practitioners Oath (Ind: *Ikrar Pesilat*). The additions were:

1. A pesilat is a person who always thinks and acts in a positive, creative and dynamic manner.
2. A pesilat is a satria who is always responsible for their words and deeds.<sup>91</sup>



32. "Indonesia Arise". A pencak silat 'opera' hosted by the Indonesian Pencak Silat Association at the inauguration of its national executive board in Jakarta, 1999.

After the fall of the New Order in 1998, sport continued to play a prominent role in public discourse surrounding issues of Indonesian character. During the election campaigns of the 1999 general elections 'sportivitas' was often cited as a fundamental "

“national ideal”, a behavioural model befitting a modern democratic society, that should be adopted by all citizens. In a campaign speech in 1999, President Habibie stated “sportsmanship is not necessary in sport alone, but also in social and national life”.<sup>92</sup> Despite the Suharto family’s extensive patronage of IPSI, the organization was relatively unaffected by the end of the New Order.<sup>93</sup> At a ceremony for the inauguration of the new IPSI central board in 1999, now minus members of the Suharto family, a ‘pencak silat opera’ was performed that portrayed pencak silat as a bastion of unity and stability in a time of national crisis. Rows of pencak silat practitioners moved in unison, fighting back a mock group of ‘irresponsible demonstrators’ holding placards emblazoned with messages such as ‘down with Indonesia!’ and ‘let’s riot!’. Having subdued the demonstrators, the pencak silat practitioners marched in military like fashion unfurling an Indonesian flag, and a banner saying ‘Indonesia arise!’. The narration of the opera outlined IPSI’s role during the events of 1998:

The international monetary crisis was the beginning of the collapse of Indonesia. The weakening of national savings and the postponement of foreign aid had resulted in the crash of the Indonesian economy. Meanwhile, masses of university students marched forward and protested in order to save the country. The movement was tarnished and misused by irresponsible crowds. A chaotic situation emerged. The unity and foundations of Indonesia were threatened. In this situation the extended family of pencak silat maintained the unity of the organization and its members. Quick action by the central board consolidated all the members of IPSI and has positioned IPSI in its proper function and role as a sporting organization and as a bearer of the cultural values of the nation.

### **Reconfiguring the Body**

Another major impact of the sportization of pencak silat, discussed in the previous chapter, was a process of secularisation. Prior to the changes effected by IPSI in the early 1970’s, many pencak silat schools were indistinguishable from mystical groups (*aliran kebatinan*). The primary focus was upon developing the physical body as a receptacle for

spiritual experience. In an article written in 1959, Wongsonegoro, the head of IPSI stated that:

Pencak and silat have a meaning that is far greater than just sport. The purpose of pencak and silat is to educate every part of the human body to move and have its own character as if each had its own life.<sup>94</sup>

The spiritual dimension of training was not considered to be separate, for the simple fact that the body and spirit were understood as an inseparable unity. The shift in IPSI's conceptualisation of the relationship between pencak silat and sport is highlighted when we compare an IPSI document from 1953 which stated,

a healthy spirit can only be found in a healthy body. This is self-evident. The body and spirit have such a close relationship that the two cannot be separated (*Jv: loro-loroning atunggal*). The spiritual education found in pencak silat is emphasised in the final stage of training. This is different with sport. There is no spiritual education in sport, even though sport has a beneficial effect upon the spirit. Thus we can conclude that pencak contains a complete spiritual and physical education.<sup>95</sup>

The shift to an emphasis upon the *olahraga* dimension of pencak silat constituted a significant change in attitudes towards the body. Whereas previously body and spirit were treated as forming an inseparable unity, the introduction of sport established a dualism where the physical and spiritual were treated as mutually exclusive realms. Sport trained the physical body, but not the soul. Spirituality and morality was the domain of recognised religion and government ideology. Keeping in line with the new stance towards kebatinan, IPSI removed the term *kebatinan* from its terminology, replacing it with 'mental-spiritual'. The use of the term 'mental' emphasised the duality between mind and body, as well linking the spiritual to 'thought', the functions of the brain.

Whereas according to its statutes the mental–spiritual dimension of pencak silat as defined by IPSI was its most important aspect, it received little attention.<sup>96</sup> IPSI’s ‘guidance’ consisted largely of monitoring schools to ensure that their philosophy was in keeping with state approved ideology. Kebatinan-orientated schools affiliated with IPSI were required to include physical pencak silat movements in their training program, alongside breathing and meditation techniques.<sup>97</sup> This requirement led to many schools voluntarily disengaging from IPSI entirely, resulting in the growth of inner power schools discussed in the previous chapter.

### **The Position of Chinese martial arts in relation to Pencak Silat In New Order Indonesia**

According to Maryono, at the end of the 60s heated debate took place amongst the silat community regarding the inclusion of kung fu within IPSI.<sup>98</sup> Whilst many did not agree, kung fu was incorporated within the organisation in order that it could be “guided and nationalised”.<sup>99</sup> There was a concern that if ‘independent’ schools emerged they could transform into a ‘political force’, an apparent reference to the assumed links between ethnic Chinese and the outlawed Indonesian Communist Party.<sup>100</sup> Explicitly Chinese elements such as the use of Chinese language, uniforms, as well as certain movements such as ‘drunken god style’ and ‘crane style’ were forbidden. Kung fu schools were accepted as members of IPSI, but with a number of conditions: they must have the Pancasila and 1945 Constitution as the ideological foundation of their school, the name of the school and its movements must be in Indonesian, the instructors must be Indonesian citizens, and they were forbidden to “be affiliated with a foreign figure from another country”.<sup>101</sup> The *barongsai* lion dance, an integral part of Chinese martial arts,

was banned from being performed publicly in 1967 via Presidential Instruction no. 14/1967.<sup>102</sup> The banning was officially abolished only in December 1999 by the government of Abdurahman Wahid along with its recognition of the Confucian *Khonghucu* as a state approved religion. Even before this, in the 1950's, the Sukarno government outlawed the use of the term 'kuntao' in reference to Chinese martial arts, replacing it with 'silat' instead.<sup>103</sup> The result was not as intended, as Chinese martial arts were increasingly identified as pencak silat.

Whilst as official members of IPSI kung fu schools were permitted to participate in IPSI hosted competitions, further regulations that forbade "stances that reflect foreign culture" made it all but impossible to do so. In other words, they were pressured to become pencak silat.<sup>104</sup> According to Harsoyo, General Secretary of IPSI (1983-1988) instructions for the inclusion of kung fu within IPSI came directly from the government, the aim being that "the red of kung fu would slowly be absorbed by the white of IPSI".<sup>105</sup> Harsoyo adds however that what happened was the opposite, with kung fu influencing pencak silat. According to Ko Wakem, a Bandung kung fu master and lion dance (Ind: *barongsai*) artist, the use of side and round kicks as well as sweeps in West Javanese pencak silat came as a direct influence from kung fu.<sup>106</sup> Whilst this view is common within kung fu circles in Indonesia, it is largely rejected by pencak silat teachers.

Whilst the use of a variety of kicks is predominant in West Sumatran styles, as well as the little known Bantenese style Jalakrawi, it seems possible that the impetus to include them as 'standard' silat movements was at least partly due to the growing popularity of

representations of Chinese martial arts in popular culture, especially the popularity of Bruce Lee films in the mid-1970s (that resulted in the popular use of ‘kung fu’ in reference to Chinese martial arts). This also coincided with the first sporting competitions for silat.<sup>107</sup> Extensive use of kicks and acrobatic legwork also characterised the Southern styles of kung fu found in Java, *shaolin* and *butong*, which were brought by migrants and traders from Shantung and other regions along the south coast of mainland China. The desire of IPSI to popularise pencak silat via the sport competition forum, have it accepted as technically equal to ‘foreign’ martial arts, and to remove the label of ‘backward’ (Ind: *kampungan*) from it, prompted the inclusion of some of the more visually spectacular moves found in foreign martial arts within the sport silat repertoire. Indeed one of the major criticisms launched by traditionalist pencak silat circles against sport silat was that it is no longer ‘authentic’ (*asli*).<sup>108</sup>

It is also interesting to note that in the last few years many of the production teams of pencak silat TV serials such as the ‘Mystery of Mount Merapi’ and ‘Titur Tinular’ have begun to employ fight scene coordinators from Hong Kong, furthering the popular identification of Chinese martial arts techniques with pencak silat.<sup>109</sup> One pencak silat master commented that the popularity of such shows has influenced student’s expectations; “they turn up expecting to learn how to fly through the air and other such things. After a few lessons of real silat they lose interest and go somewhere else”.<sup>110</sup>

Perhaps ironically, the inclusion of kung fu within the organizational framework of IPSI also resulted in it ‘opening up’ to the general public, with many schools accepting



non-Chinese students for the first time.<sup>111</sup> This also led to an eventual disappearance of clan based styles (Ind: *aliran warga*), taught only within the closed circles of a particular family or clan.<sup>112</sup> The main impact upon Chinese martial arts in Indonesia in fact came from China itself, via a process of standardisation and nationalisation that in many ways paralleled IPSI's intentions for pencak silat. Upon the establishment of the Peoples Republic of China in 1949, the new communist government implemented a systematic program of documenting and selectively combining the multitude of martial art styles found throughout the mainland. The resulting hybrid form was further stylised via the inclusion of movements taken from gymnastics and traditional theatre. *Wushu* as it was named, became a Chinese national sport, and quickly gained popularity throughout the world.<sup>113</sup>

#### **'Go Global': IPSI and the challenge of Globalization**

As an organization ostensibly concerned with the development and preservation of pencak silat, IPSI's task has been hampered by a centralised administration. National level decisions and policy are made with little or no consultation with the regional branches. This became most evident in the furore that erupted amongst the Bandung silat community regarding the removal of the art (Ind: *seni*) category from IPSI sponsored competitions in 1999. The rationale of IPSI's central board was that in the interests of the drive to promote silat outside of Indonesia, referred to as "silat penetrates the world" (Ind: *silat menembus dunia*), it must be further standardised along the lines of karate and taekwondo. According to IPSI, this was in order to avoid confusion regarding its "real" form and meaning. IPSI hoped that eventually pencak silat could be accepted as a

competitive sport at the Asian Games, and ultimately the Olympics. Seni, as a highly subjective and diverse aspect of silat practice, conflicted with IPSI's desire to create homogenous and objective standards that could be accepted internationally. The decision deepened the long-standing perception that IPSI did not sufficiently represent the unique traditions existent in West Java. At a meeting of West Javanese pencak silat masters in 1999, some called for a boycott of IPSI. Similar sentiments were also expressed in West Sumatra and East Java.<sup>114</sup> One master argued that:

By removing the art category IPSI is further impoverishing pencak silat. All that will be left is sport and those damned compulsory jurus. If the art aspect is no longer a part of competition even less young people will be interested in studying it.<sup>115</sup>

IPSI proposed that the seni category be replaced with choreographed routines performed without music and that the 'creative' aspect of art be displayed in an annual non-competitive 'pencak silat festival' held at the regional, national and international level.<sup>116</sup> Indonesia's dominance of PERSILAT meant that the proposal was accepted by the international pencak silat community. For masters in West Java, where *ibing penca* is such an integral part of pencak silat culture, the proposal that art and music be separated was the ultimate heresy. Up until 2002 a festival has yet to be held, and the issue remains an unresolved one. Indonesia's defeat at the hands of Vietnam, a relative newcomer to silat, at the 1999 Southeast Asian games held in Brunei, coupled with the removal of the art category from competition, was interpreted by many as a sign that silat in Indonesia was in the midst of a depression. Rumours began to spread that the loss to Vietnam was in fact orchestrated as a part of IPSI's agenda to have pencak silat acceptance in the ASEAN games. The theory was that its chances would be increased if it was shown that countries

other than Indonesia could succeed in competition. Whilst it is impossible to either confirm or deny the truth of these rumours, the fact that such opinions are so prevalent was a strong indication of the degree of suspicion that many local silat masters have towards the Jakarta based central board of IPSI. As one jaded teacher stated, “the central board of IPSI is the pencak silat equivalent of the New Order regime”.<sup>117</sup>



33. *Guru and murid*. A statue idealizing the relationship between teacher and student at the National Pencak Silat Center in Jakarta

During the twentieth century sport has become a ‘global idiom’, its laws being the first to be voluntarily embraced across the globe. The formation of sport is also closely connected to the invention of traditions that attempt to bind the past and present together. Being inherently competitive and based on a hierarchical valuing of worth, sport binds people to the invented traditions associated with the nation. Through sport IPSI has attempted to reinvent pencak silat as mirror of state approved values and define the ‘legitimate’ use of the pencak silat body. The ‘nationalisation’ and increasingly

bureaucratic administration of pencak silat at the national level has corresponded with the move to turn it into a sport. This ‘civilising process’ of pencak silat via sport involved an at times unintentional politicising of the silat body. Whilst the political investment of the silat body in sporting competitions was primarily symbolic in value, we will see in the next chapter that it also had a more sinister dimension.

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<sup>1</sup> A tradition still evident in 2000. Students of the late Ki Djodjo Soewito lived in houses adjacent to their guru and performed daily chores for him, as well as preparing his meals, and instructing junior members.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Aam Santoso, 01/05/99, Bandung.

<sup>3</sup> See Maryono, 1998, pp. 110-122, Notosoejitno, 1997, pp. 99-101 and Liem Yoe Kiong, 1960, pp. 60-63. Liem Yio Kiong lists four types of perguruan; conservative, progressive, liberal and rational.

<sup>4</sup> This is especially the case in Sumatra, where clan based styles flourished.

<sup>5</sup> Maryono, 1998, pg. 117.

<sup>6</sup> Notosoejitno, 1997, pg. 100.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, pg. 120.

<sup>8</sup> See for example, Pengurus Besar Ikatan Pencak Silat Indonesia, *Latihan Kondisi Fisik Bagi Atlet Pencak Silat*, Lembaga Pelatih, internal booklet, Jakarta, 1999.

<sup>9</sup> Anderson, 1972, pp. 5-6.

<sup>10</sup> Mochtar Saleh, *Pencak Silat 1: Sejarah Perkembangan, Empat Aspek, Pembentukan Sikap dan Gerak*, Fakultas Olahraga dan Kesehatan, Institut Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan, Bandung, 1991, pg. 21

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, pg. 9.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, pg. 20.

<sup>13</sup> Interview with Joesoef Tamim, 14/05/99, Bandung.

<sup>14</sup> Maryono, 1998, pp. 82-83.

<sup>15</sup> Anderson, 1972, pg. 33.

<sup>16</sup> Inoue Shun, ‘*Budo: Invented Tradition in the Martial Arts*’, in Sepp Linhart & Sabine Fruhstuck (Eds.), *The Culture of Japan as Seen through its Leisure*, State University of New York Press, New York, 1998, pg. 83-93.

<sup>17</sup> Ikou Abe, Yasuharu Kiyohara, and Ken Nakajima, ‘Sport and Physical Education under Fascistization in Japan’, *InYo: Journal of Alternative Perspectives* [[http:// ejmas.com/jalt/jaltart\\_abe\\_0600.htm](http://ejmas.com/jalt/jaltart_abe_0600.htm)], June 2000.

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<sup>18</sup> Shun, pg. 90.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, pg. 83.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, pg. 90.

<sup>21</sup> Maryono, 1998, pg. 82.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 1998, pg. 82.

<sup>23</sup> Shun, pg, 88. *Judo* was created by Kano Jigoro in the 1880's. In his own words; "I selected the best elements of the older schools of *jujitsu* and constructed a new system which is most suited to today's society" (Shun, pg. 85.). One of his most influential achievements was the development of a clearly defined grading system known as the *dan* system, which was soon employed by other Japanese and Korean martial arts.

<sup>24</sup> Maryun Sudirohadiprodjo, *Pelajaran Pencak Silat: Rumusan Kongres IPSI Tahun 1950- Yogyakarta*, Bhratara Karya Aksara, Jakarta, 1982, pg. 2.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 1982, pg. 2.

<sup>26</sup> Anderson, 1972 , pp. 29-30.

<sup>27</sup> Interview with Buhyu Miyoh, Cigondewah, 30/06/99. According to Buhyu Miyoh, a silat elder from Cigondewah, PPSI originally stood for the Indonesian Sundanese Pencak Union (Ind: *Persatuan Pencak Sunda Indonesia*), however current PPSI officials deny this.

<sup>21</sup> 'K.R.M.T. Wongsonagoro S. H. Meninggal Dunia', *Mawas Diri*, April 1978, pp. 60-62

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Maryono, 1998, pg.90.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Uuh Rukmana, 19/06/99, Ujung Berung.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Sudirohadiprodjo, 1982, pp. ix-x

<sup>35</sup> Pengurus Besar Ikatan Pencak Silat Indonesia, 'Sejarah dan Organisasi Pencak Silat Indonesia', unpublished manuscript, Jakarta, 1995, pg. 17.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, pg. 17.

<sup>37</sup> Denys Lombard, *Nusa Jawa: Silang Budaya Kajian Sejarah Terpadu, I Batas-Batas Pembaratan*, Gramedia Pustaka Utama, Jakarta, 1996, pg. 160-161.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, pg. 161.

<sup>39</sup> Sepak raga is a game contest in which players keep a small rattan ball (*raga*) in the air using all parts of their body except the hands. The agility and dexterity required, as well as the prolific use of kicks have

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made it a popular pastime amongst silat practitioners. Prior to the introduction of badminton, sepak raga was played in a small circle with players positioned around the circumference.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, pg. 161.

<sup>41</sup> Lombard, 1996, pg. 161

<sup>42</sup> Mohammad Djoemali, *Pentjak Silat diteropong dari sudut Kebangsaan Indonesia*, Seksi Pentjak/Silat Bagkes Djakb Kem. P.P. dan K., Jogjakarta, 1959, pg. 59.

<sup>43</sup> Maryono, 1998, pg. 90.

<sup>44</sup> Mohammad Djoemali, 1959, pp. 7-8.

<sup>45</sup> Maryono, 1998, pg. 93.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, pg. 94.

<sup>47</sup> Pengurus Besar Ikatan Pencak Silat Indonesia, 1995, pg. 17.

<sup>48</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, 'Sport and social class', in *Social Science Information*, no. 17, 1978, pp. 819-40.

<sup>49</sup> Komite Olahraga Nasional Indonesia, *Anggaran Dasar dan Anggaran Rumah Tangga*, mimeograph, 1999, pg.1.

<sup>50</sup> Pengurus Besar Ikatan Pencak Silat Indonesia, 'Keputusan Kongres Ikatan Pencak Silat Indonesia Ke-IV/1973 Nomor 2 Tentang Peraturan Pertandingan', mimeograph, 1973.

<sup>51</sup> In IPSI's logo this is represented by the trident (*trisula*), the three points symbolising self-defence, sport and art, with the handle symbolising the mental-spiritual dimension.

<sup>52</sup> In January of that year the government forced the fusion of the old political parties into two groups. The Indonesian Democratic Party (Ind: *PDI; Partai Demokratik Indonesia*) represented non-Islamic parties whereas the United Development Party (Ind: *PPP; Partai Persatuan Pembangunan*) was created out of an amalgamation of existing Islamic parties.

<sup>53</sup> Confidential interview, July 1999, Bandung.

<sup>54</sup> *Tempo*, 29 April 1979.

<sup>55</sup> Rosano Barak, the director of the Bimantara Group, has been a deputy chairman of IPSI from the early 1990's up until the present.

<sup>56</sup> Loren Ryter, 1998, pg. 61. Kopkamtib is an abbreviation of Operational Command for the Restoration of Security and Order (Ind: *Komando Operasi Pemulihan Keamanan dan Ketertiban*).

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, pg. 62.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, pg. 62.

<sup>59</sup> Excerpt from Suharto's address to a national 'Sport and Development' workshop held in Jakarta, 1983.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>62</sup> Maryono, 1998, pg. 99.

<sup>63</sup> Pengurus Besar Ikatan Pencak Silat Indonesia, 'Khazanah Pencak Silat', unpublished manuscript, 1994, pg. 5.

<sup>64</sup> Confidential interview, September 1999, Bandung.

<sup>65</sup> Maryono, 1998, pg. 101.

<sup>66</sup> The ten organizations were Perpi Harimurti, Setia Hati, Setia Hati Terate, Perisai Diri, Perisai Putih, Putra Betawi, Phasadja Mataram, Tapak Suci, Keluarga Pencak Silat Nusantara and PPSI.

<sup>67</sup> Despite their guaranteed non-attendance IPSI somewhat belligerently continues to set aside a place for PPSI representatives at their national congresses.

<sup>68</sup> For a list of IPSI's statutes, as well as those required by perguruan, see Pengurus Besar Ikatan Pencak Silat Indonesia, 'Anggaran Dasar Ikatan Pencak Silat Indonesia', manuscript, Jakarta, 1994.

<sup>69</sup> Notosoejitno, *Khazanah Pencak Silat*, CV. Jagung Seto, Jakarta, 1997, pg. 57.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid*, pg. 57.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 205-210.

<sup>72</sup> The Sapta Marga reads as follows: 1. We are citizens of the unitary Republic of Indonesia based on Pancasila, 2. We are Indonesian patriots, bearers and defenders of the state ideology, who are responsible and know of no surrender. 3. We are Indonesian knights, who are devoted to one God, and who defend honesty, justice and truth. 4. We are soldiers of the Indonesian Armed Forces, guardians of the Indonesian state and nation. 5. We soldiers of the Indonesian armed forces uphold discipline, are obedient and observant of our leadership, and uphold the soldier's attitude and oath. 6. We soldiers of the Indonesian Armed Forces set ourselves to perform our task with courage, and are always ready to devote ourselves to the state and nation. 7. We, soldiers of the Indonesian Armed Forces are loyal and keep our word to the Soldiers Oath.

<sup>73</sup> Notosoejitno, 1997, pg. 88. Created by the silat teacher Sakti Tamat, The jurus consisted of seven series consisting of seven movements each.

<sup>74</sup> 'Pencak Silat, Upaya Menepis "Wajah Kampungan"', *Kompas*, 28 May 1996.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>77</sup> This type of interventionist approach in the name of preserving 'tradition' was not confined to pencak silat. For another examples of how the state has attempted to regulate body movements see Amrih Widodo, 'Stages of the State: arts of the people ad rites of hegemonization', *Review of Indonesian and Malay Affairs*, Vol.29 Winter and Summer 1995, pp. 1-35.

<sup>78</sup> Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, Urizen Books, New York, 1978.

<sup>79</sup> Joe Maguire, 'Towards a Sociological Theory of Sport and the emotions: A Process-Sociological Perspective', in Eric Dunning & Chris Rojek (Eds.), *Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process: Critique and Counter-Critique*, Macmillan, Houndmills, 1992, pp. 96-120.

<sup>80</sup> Interview with Aam Santoso, Bandung, 17/03/99.

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<sup>81</sup> Since the inception of IPSI competitions in the 1970s only one death has been officially recorded. The victim died from head injuries sustained after being dumped by his opponent during a competition held in Sulawesi. IPSI held an internal investigation into the incident, however no recommendations were made regarding any changes to competition rules. Interview with Oyong Karmayuda, Jakarta, 01/04/99.

<sup>82</sup> Pengurus Besar Ikatan Pencak Silat Indonesia, *Latihan Kondisi Fisik Bagi Atlet Pencak Silat*, Lembaga Pelatih, internal booklet, Jakarta, 1999.

<sup>83</sup> Pengurus Besar Ikatan Pencak Silat Indonesia, 1999, pg. 1.

<sup>84</sup> Confidential interview, Bandung, June 1999.

<sup>85</sup> Nalapraya, 1994, pg. 18.

<sup>86</sup> Brownell, 1995, pg. 19.

<sup>87</sup> A position he held up until 2003.

<sup>88</sup> These included Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Vietnam, Burma, Thailand, the Philippines, France, the Netherlands, Spain, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Australia, Switzerland, Turkey, Morocco, England, Suriname, Laos and Hawaii.

<sup>89</sup> Maryono, 1998, pg. 155.

<sup>90</sup> Notosoejitno, 1997, pg. 58.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, pg. 127.

<sup>92</sup> 'Presiden BJ Habibie: Menang atau kalah dalam pemilu harus sportif', *Republika*, 11 March 1999.

<sup>93</sup> The exception to this was Prabowo Subianto, Suharto's son-in-law and the deputy chairman of IPSI up until his dishonourable discharge from the army in late 1998. Prabowo will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

<sup>94</sup> Mohammad Djoemali, 1959, pg. 18.

<sup>95</sup> Pengurus Besar Ikatan Pentjak Seluruh Indonesia, *Pentjak Silat Indonesia*, P.B. IPSI, Djakarta, 1953, pg. Pg. 77.

<sup>96</sup> Nalapraya, 1994, pg. 9.

<sup>97</sup> Maryono, 1998, pg. 247.

<sup>98</sup> Maryono, 1998, pg. 134.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, pg.134.

<sup>100</sup> Ko Wakem, a Bandung kung fu master, somewhat cynically notes that IPSI's real motivation for the inclusion of kung fu was to gain access to the affluent Chinese business community. Interview, Bandung, 25/01/2000. Between 1945-50 several units of the Royal Dutch Indies Army were reputed to have been trained in kuntao (literally 'fighting hands') possibly linking it in the minds of some Indonesian nationalists to pro-Dutch sentiment.



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<sup>101</sup> Harsoyo, 'Pelestarian dan Pengembangan Pencak Silat untuk Pembangunan Bangsa dan Negara Indonesia', mimeograph, 1984, pg.3.

<sup>102</sup> The instruction is regarding Chinese religion, beliefs and customs. In essence the instruction states that Chinese customs and ritual celebrations that have a 'cultural affiliation' with the land of their ancestors must be performed 'internally' within the family environment and not in public as they may "manifest an improper psychological, mental and moral influence upon Indonesian citizens". See Siauw Giok Tjhan, 'Ceramah Siauw Giok Tjhan di Seminar PPI Belanda, V. Hetze Anti Tionghoa Meluap', [[http://www.Munindo.brd.de/artikel/artikel\\_01/sg5.html](http://www.Munindo.brd.de/artikel/artikel_01/sg5.html)], 31 August 1999.

<sup>103</sup> Interview with Ko Wakem, 25/01/00, Bandung.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid, pg. 3.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid, pg.8. The influence of kung fu amongst IPSI affiliated silat schools had been there from its inception. The founder of Perisai Diri, one of the 10 'historical' silat schools given special status by IPSI, learnt the majority of his martial arts from a kuntao master.

<sup>106</sup> Interview with Ko Wakem, 25/01/00, Bandung.

<sup>107</sup> Interview with Ko Wakem, 25/01/00, Bandung.

<sup>108</sup> Interview with Mochtar Saleh, 13/04/99, Bandung.

<sup>109</sup> Some pencak silat teachers have also worked in film and television, such as Aam Santoso and Mohammad Rafijjen.

<sup>110</sup> Interview with Yosis Siswoyo, 27/07/99, Bandung.

<sup>111</sup> Interview with Ko Wakem, 25/01/00, Bandung.

<sup>112</sup> They are reputed to still exist in Semarang.

<sup>113</sup> For a more detailed account of the nationalisation of Chinese martial arts by the communist government see Brownell, 1995, pp. 52-55. For information on wushu in Indonesia see Sugiarto, Hery Siswantoro and Lauw Tjhing Houw, *Wushu: Variasi dan Perkembangan*, Gramedia Pustaka Utama, Jakarta, 1999.

<sup>114</sup> One master in Surabaya was so incensed by the decision that he threatened to send soccer hooligans to attack IPSI's headquarters in Jakarta.

<sup>115</sup> Field notes, November 1999, Bandung.

<sup>116</sup> Pengurus Besar Ikatan Pencak Silat Indonesia, 'Latar Belakang Penyelenggaraan Festival Pencak Silat', material produced for the 10th National IPSI Congress, Jakarta, 16-18 September 1999.

<sup>117</sup> Confidential interview, August 1999, Bandung.

## **Power, Criminality and Rebellion: The *Jawara* and Pencak Silat Culture**

In the previous chapter we examined the historical process through which pencak silat perguruan and their techniques have been increasingly institutionalized and refashioned in line with prevailing government ideology. The silat body was politicized, with physical movements being inscribed with ideological symbolism and traditional groups linked to a centralized bureaucracy.

In the progression of themes we have moved through in the last two chapters, we have shifted from individual and inner to institutional and state. Now we turn to increasingly crucial local social roles, which mediate between, individual and state at the local community level. The politicization of the silat body occurs at not only national levels, but also the local. Pencak silat involves the development and accumulation of personal physical capital at the individual level, in the form of a disciplined body with a repertoire of fighting skills. But a trained body is also a more powerful body in relation to other bodies. It can become a powerful coercive force, a form of political capital. In this chapter I explore the controversial figure of the *jawara*, to illustrate how trained silat bodies have been employed as a concrete form of social and political capital by individuals, organizations and the Indonesian state. Focus on this mediating figure highlights ongoing

tension within pencak silat culture between the cultural ideals it seeks to embody and the social and political realities in which it is embedded.

Whilst traditional aliran instituted oaths and pledges as a control over the use of the body techniques that they taught, another silat tradition grew on the fringes of the closed environment of the perguruan. The Sundanese term *jawara* points to central tensions within pencak silat culture between issues of knowledge, power, authority and criminality. In common usage the word *jawara* has the meaning of a “champion”, an expert at fighting, or indeed anyone who has made a name for themselves in a particular field. In contemporary Sundanese society it is often interchanged with *jago*, *jeger*, *garong* and *preman*, covering a range of meanings from ‘champion’ and ‘tough’ through to ‘robber’ and ‘hoodlum’.<sup>1</sup>

In the opinion of Aam Santoso, head of the Gagak Lumayung pencak silat school, “the word *jawara* didn’t use to have the negative connotations that it does now. It used to refer to *inahong-inahong silat* (Sd: silat elders), to *pendekar*”.<sup>2</sup> The word *pendekar* is derived from the base word *dekar*, meaning to fight with a sword. Colloquially it is interpreted as meaning “short and tough” (Ind: *pendek dan kakar*). A *pendekar* is a master of martial arts, or like *jawara*, a champion of a particular cause. According to Notosoejitno the word may be derived from the Javanese words *pandega* (leader), *pandika* (someone who has mastered a particular field of endeavor) or *pandita* (a priest or mystic).<sup>3</sup> Among the Minangkabau *pendekar* is said to come from the phrase *pandai akal*, meaning “clever mind”.<sup>4</sup> In each case the characteristics attributed point to a particular

kind of person that transcends the ordinary. To be a *pendekar* is the pinnacle of pencak silat culture. Traditionally it has been an honorific title conferred by society upon a master, not only due to martial skill, but also personal attributes.

More recently the term has become an official title conferred by IPSI to social and political figures considered to have contributed to the ‘development’ of pencak silat, in a manner similar to that in which universities bestow honorary doctorates. The development of a hierarchical grading system among modern perguruan, modeled largely upon the Japanese belt system, awards the title to those who have achieved a high level of technical proficiency in a particular style.<sup>5</sup> In both cases there has been a secularization of a title that has traditionally had semi-religious connotations. Unlike “*jawara*”, it has remained devoid of connotations of criminality. The *pendekar* was a respected pillar of the community, and in the ideal a living embodiment of traditional values: “[The *pendekar* is] an example of a wise and noble human, a moral and virtuous human, a leader who is devout, perceptive, trustworthy, reliable and swift.”<sup>6</sup>

The image of the *pendekar* has been firmly engrained in the popular imagination via silat stories (Ind: *cerita silat*), comic books, film, television and radio serials. *Cerita silat* constitutes a unique and immensely popular genre of literature in Indonesia, with a history dating back to the 1920’s.<sup>7</sup> The narratives generally follow a familiar pattern, described by Denys Lombard as follows:

In silat stories there is no center of power, no state, no police, and no uniform justice. People busy with everyday activities in their village or neighborhood are constantly made fools of by bandits from surrounding areas that control the mountains and forest, and who also, from time to time, loot

and extort. In this pessimistic world fortunately there appear a number of chosen people – the *pendekar* - who live a nomadic and solitary lifestyle, are blessed by the ascetic practices they perform, and possess supernatural powers. Endowed with silat techniques, they are able to temporarily break the grip of evil power and provide security to the oppressed.<sup>8</sup>



34. *Image of the Pendekar*: Excerpt from the comic 'Journey of A Pendekar' by Jan Mintaraga. The text reads, "...I ask forgiveness. It wasn't my intention to hurt you. I hope no one amongst you is injured"... "ha ha ha.. very good youngster. It seems you are indeed an exceptional youth".

In this world *pendekar* were the antithesis of the *jawara*, and indeed this and other forms of popular culture has been influential in forming an image of the *jawara* as a thug and bandit, a *pendekar* gone bad, or perhaps one who has yet to discover their true calling. Physical strength and skill was only of use to society if the inner self was also strong. In the opinion of Bonneff, silat stories were "literature for the oppressed", containing allusions to political figures and events. The *pendekar* used their powers to free ordinary people from the oppression of a corrupt ruler or ruthless bandits. As a result they themselves also became rulers: "the hierarchy of the silat world mixed with administrative structure. With the social integration of the *pendekar*, the secure limits were extended, so that a state could be formed".<sup>9</sup>

In the words of Bonneff, “the pendekar incited people to believe in their own virtuousness and their own abilities”.<sup>10</sup> They were ‘self-made’ men and women whose abilities were the product of their own moral resolve, bravery and discipline. To become a king one required a sign of divine providence (Jv: *wahyu*), however the possibility of transforming oneself into a pendekar was an existential one open to all. Their ongoing struggle against the forces of evil was also an inner one, the battle to overcome their own inner demons. The power of the jawara and the king derived from external strength, whereas the pendekar’s was internal. In this respect the pendekar represents a unique folk tradition that articulates a relationship between self-transformation, power and authority.

### **Jawara in Banten**

One region with a long and complex tradition of jawara and pendekar is Banten, which spans the coastal area to the west of Jakarta and extends to the highlands near Bogor in the southeast. The ambiguity of the figure of the *jawara* in Bantenese society is evident in the folk etymology of the word: *jahat* (evil), *wani* (brave), *rampog* (robber) and *jago* (champion), *wani* (brave) and *ramah* (friendly). Else Ensering categorizes *jawara* in Banten into two groups: *jawara-teri*, in reference to petty thieves and robbers, and *jawara-gedeh* (big jawara), who practice pencak silat, use weapons, and pursue mystical development under the guidance of a *kyai* or guru, culminating in the obtaining of invulnerability.<sup>11</sup> Each represents, like the *jago* described by Kartodirdjo, “endpoint examples of an ideal type continuum”, the jawara as predator, criminal and opportunist, and as charismatic leader and protector of the common people.<sup>12</sup> According to Williams, jawara were “peasants, usually unattached young men, who led a semi-outlaw existence

and whose influence was often greater than the headman. In earlier times, the word jawara merely indicated a person with no fixed occupation.”<sup>13</sup>

Within jawara culture in Banten there is also a differentiation between ‘black magic’ and ‘white magic’ jawara.<sup>14</sup> Those who traced a lineage to past jawara and sought to continue it through their own offspring were ‘white’, whereas those with no identifiable lineage were ‘black’.<sup>15</sup> The existence of a lineage was crucial to the legitimization of a jawara within his community. The lineage acted as a type of ‘contract’ of accountability to pre-established norms. The linking thread between the two types of jawara was the possession of supernatural power (Sd: *kasakten*). To have supernatural power meant to also have political and social power. Van Till suggests that the ambivalent attitude shown by villagers towards the often-excessive behavior of the jawara was perhaps due to ideas regarding power as something homogenous and constant.<sup>16</sup> From this perspective the jawara was someone to fear and respect, but not judge. However considering the differentiation made between ‘black’ and ‘white’ jawara it seems likely that the ‘ambivalence’ was a survival strategy. Those who informed on or resisted the demands of the jawara were dealt with harshly. With nowhere to turn, except perhaps other jawara, villagers often had little choice but to acquiesce. Illegality has always been considered as part and parcel of jawara culture. Whilst the *pendekar*, who may start out as a jawara, was also a man of power, he was one who had transcended the self-interest (Ind: *pamrih*) that dominates the jawara.<sup>17</sup>

Banten has a long tradition of rebellion dating back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century and also an established reputation as center for a variety of esoteric sciences. The word 'Banten' itself is said to derive from *bantahan*, meaning 'to protest' or 'recalcitrant'. Pencak silat has long been an inseparable aspect of Bantenese society, "like sugar and its sweetness" as one local adage puts it. Silat has constituted the basic physical capital required for success as a jawara as well as being an integral part of the tradition of apprenticeship that marks the transition from youth to manhood. As one Banten silat master explained, "pencak silat is one part of Banten culture, but also part of the endeavor to defend our culture".<sup>18</sup>

According to Williams jawara constituted one of three forms of leadership in Bantenese society. The others were local religious leaders (Ind: *ulama*) and the traditional aristocracy. The jawara were often freelance, or formed loosely knit gangs that mirrored the structure of perguruan. The numerous oaths and pledges required of students in pencak silat perguruan forbade abusing their knowledge for individual gain. To oppose one's guru was a serious breach of etiquette with both social and spiritual consequences, and expulsion from the perguruan was a serious form of social ostracism. On a spiritual level a rebellious student (Ind: *murid murtad*) ran the risk of *kwalat*, suffering the karmic repercussions of betraying their own oath. An aspiring jawara may study in a number of silat schools, traveling widely. Whist jawara often maintained a life-long relationship with their guru, the illegality of their activities and the bind of perguruan oaths meant that they rarely held formal membership in the perguruan. In their travels they also made important contacts with other jawara, and established loose networks of alliances.



According to local legend, before Islam arrived in the region, jawara acted as bodyguards (Ind: *pengawal*) for the rulers of the Pajajaran kingdom as well as intermediaries between the king and his subjects. They collected tributes, oversaw forced labor, and generally enforced, often violently, the ruler's will.<sup>19</sup> Like their Javanese counterpart the jago, jawara thrived in the space between ruler and the ruled. In some cases they acted as defenders of the village, in others as opportunists exploiting a breakdown in the established social order and the lack of an effective police force in rural areas:

The Jawara is a figure who is loyal to their leader, to an extent that is sometimes without 'reserve'. Their character is manifested via militancy, patriotism and fanaticism that leads rise to, and requires, both the character of a 'defender' and 'bravery', which are founded upon a desire for togetherness and/or a collective ego.<sup>20</sup>

Sunatra's suggestion that jawara were characteristically loyal needs to be put into the context of their position in village life. Jawara were loyal, but only so long as it was in their best interests. They offered protection to their village and often maintained control for the village headman, but only in exchange for certain privileges. In folk legends the jawara is often portrayed as a Robin Hood type outlaw, defending the interests of the common people against injustice and oppression. Among the Betawi ethnic group of Jakarta for example, figures such as Si Pitung and Si Jampang are legendary. The extent to which this was true, however, is debatable. Examining newspaper reports and colonial records of the time, Van Till shows that there is no evidence of Si Pitung distributing the spoils of his daring robberies to the poor.<sup>21</sup>

The hero status that came to be attributed to him after his death was most likely due to the fact that he was able to outsmart the colonial authorities. Likewise, Schulte Nordholt found that poor farmers were often seen as easy targets by jawara.<sup>22</sup> As a general rule jawara involved in crime conducted it outside of their village. An unspoken ethic was in place that they would not try and contest control of an area held by another jawara, one that is still adhered to today.<sup>23</sup> Hence to villagers, the local jawara was often seen as a defender of the community, but to others he was a robber and thug. It wasn't until after his death that Si Pitung, along with many other jawara, became enshrined in popular legend as the type of social bandit described by Hobsbawm as:

peasant outlaws whom the lord and state regard as criminals, but who remains within peasant society, and are considered by their people as heroes, champions, avengers, fighters for justice, perhaps even leaders of liberation, and in any case as men to be admired, helped and supported.<sup>24</sup>

Banten was one of the most unsettled areas of Dutch controlled Java. Nineteen uprisings were recorded between 1810 and 1870. Both indigenous and Dutch officials saw appointment to the region as a demotion or a form of punishment, partly due to the presence of jawara.<sup>25</sup> Due to their skills at fighting and prominent position in village life, jawara were often pivotal figures in social unrest. In 1808 a jawara named Mas Jakaria led a revolt against Daendals use of forced labor to build a harbor near Ujung Kulon at the southwest tip of Java.<sup>26</sup> By 1811 he controlled the Pandeglang district and continued to cause trouble for colonial authorities up until his death in 1827. Other jawara who became infamous throughout the region were Sakam and Samoem. There were also jawara known as *khadam* who devoted their lives to protecting outspoken ulama and helping them avoid capture by the Dutch.<sup>27</sup> The close relationship between jawara and ulama was

pivotal throughout the late 19<sup>th</sup> century when religious inspired revolts against the Dutch erupted throughout the region, and again in during struggle for independence. Both were central figures in village life. The relationship between the two was at times troubled, as jawara, to some extent represented pre-Islamic traditions (Sd: *tradisi karuhan*) that was sometimes considered to be at odds with Islam. There were intermediaries between jawara and ulama known as *ulama jawara*.<sup>28</sup> This term could be applied either to a jawara who had established himself as a religious teacher, or to an ulama who that had mastered pencak silat. In either case such figures played an important role as mediating cultural brokers.

During the 1920's the Indonesian Communist Party actively recruited jawara from Banten involved in smuggling and labor recruitment in Tanjung Priok.<sup>29</sup> The poor economic situation in Banten prompted many to move to Batavia, only 80 kilometers to the east. Large communities of Bantenese settled in the harbor region of Tanjung Priok, many as working laborers and security personnel. Excluded from other political organizations such as Sarekat Islam, jawara found a ready place in the Communist Party hierarchy, as did similar marginal figures throughout Java.<sup>30</sup> Their influence proved crucial in gaining wide scale support amongst the peasant population. By 1926 the Banten branch of the party had established a 'jawara section'.<sup>31</sup> The large numbers who joined the PKI were seen by party officials as a sign that they had mended their ways and were committed to the people's cause.<sup>32</sup> In reality jawara continued their criminal activities, the party's growing influence allowing them to gain an even stronger monopoly in fields they already dominated, such as cattle auctions and labor recruitment. Despite the popularity

of the PKI amongst the jawara community during the 1920s many still remained deeply suspicious of it. In the early 1920s a number joined the ranks of the Green Union (Ind: *Sarekat Hijau*), set up by members of the Priangan aristocracy to counter the growing influence of the PKI in the region.<sup>33</sup>

As Kartodirdjo has noted in his seminal study of the 1888 Banten revolt, training in pencak silat constituted a substantial part of pesantren education in Banten.<sup>34</sup> Intensification in pencak silat training among pesantren students, as well as peasants, was often a sign that insurrection was imminent. The centralization and bureaucratization of the colonial and indigenous administration by the Dutch marginalised the jawara, displacing them from their traditional role in village life.<sup>35</sup> Pushed further to the fringes, the criminal activities of jawara bands became an increasing headache for colonial authorities. The involvement of jawara in the Banten revolt, as well as the numerous uprisings that sporadically erupted throughout the region, meant that they were persistently pursued, harassed and imprisoned by colonial authorities.

Following the failed communist uprising in Banten in 1926, jawara were uniformly mistrusted by both local and colonial authorities. This suspicion also extended to pencak silat training. Trained bodies were dangerous bodies, so the Dutch periodically placed restrictions upon martial arts training among the local population.<sup>36</sup> To avoid detection training sessions were conducted in the middle of the night at graveyards or other places removed from eyes of the police and their informers.<sup>37</sup> Aside from being a safe meeting place, such secluded places were often believed to be charged with supernatural power

that could be absorbed by those who were receptive enough. The prohibition on training had the effect of radicalizing many moderate silat teachers. Schools emerged such as ‘Whip the Company’ (Ind: *Sabeni*; *Sabet Kompeni*) from Batavia, who were openly and aggressively anti-Dutch in sentiment.<sup>38</sup>

Smail has documented the role of jawara groups during the revolution in Bandung.<sup>39</sup> Like jago bands throughout Java, the jawara played an ambiguous role as informal leaders in rural areas where there was a breakdown in law and order. Their often-excessive behavior at times brought them into conflict with the more moderate leadership of the nationalist movement, for example the jawaras known as *algodjos* (executioner/butcher), who were both feared and admired for their brutal treatment of suspected informers.<sup>40</sup> The conditions were perfectly suited to jawara. In a society ruled by force “only those who were armed or who were members of an armed force were truly safe”.<sup>41</sup> Consequently jawara and jago bands mushroomed. Some groups such as that led by a jawara named Soma in the Padalarang region of Banten, established short-lived “jago republics”.<sup>42</sup> According to D.H. Meyer, the Assistant Resident of Serang in 1940, some of the large jawara groups at the time formed “a state within a state and paralyzed the village and local administration”.<sup>43</sup>

In terms of the styles of pencak silat practiced within jawara circles in Banten, like the Priangan region, Cimande has been the most influential aliran, local legends suggesting that its founder Abah Kahir was in fact from South Banten. Cikalong, Sera, Syahbandar and Cikaret have also spread throughout Banten. The region is also home to

four aliran of its own: *Jalakrawi*, *Bendrong*, *Terumbu* and *Ulin Makao*. According to Maryono, jawara employed as *opas* (guards) by the Dutch at government controlled plantations such as in Tangerang, Bogor, Sukabumi, Puncak, Cianjur and Bandung were influential in the spread of West Javanese styles to other parts of Java.<sup>44</sup> The building of the Great Coast road (D: *Grote Postweg*) that extended nearly 1000km from the western to eastern most tips of Java aided in the creation of a single economic region. As employees of the colonial authority, *opas* were often sent to work in other regions of Java, most notably Central and East Java. Many settled in these areas, teaching their fighting skills to locals. The expansion of coconut cultivation throughout Java also presented employment opportunities for jawara in Banten, many of whom worked as *opas* or recruiting laborers.<sup>45</sup>

Jawara were also influential in the spread of West Javanese styles through the vast network of pesantren and tarekat scattered throughout the region. The prevalence of West Javanese pencak silat styles in East Java can be attributed largely to the stream of pesantren and tarekat students traveling back and forth between the two regions. Perhaps more so than any other region in Indonesia, pencak silat culture in Banten is closely intertwined with the life of the tarekat. In some cases jawara joined tarekat as part of a sincere spiritual quest, however more commonly tarekat and the techniques that they taught were a means towards obtaining the various kinds of esoteric knowledge that were considered essential for success as a jawara.<sup>46</sup> Similarly some pencak silat teachers conducted tarekat type communal devotions. However, according to Van Bruinessen, there have been none that are authenticated tarekat shaikhs.<sup>47</sup> For example Pak Abah Ace

of Pandeglang teaches a type of Syahbandar pencak silat, known as *Ageman Syahbandar*, that is combined with tarekat derived techniques and concepts.<sup>48</sup> He is a seventh generation teacher, learning Syahbandar from Mama Ocim (Sukabumi) and Mama Karta (Cianjur). As mentioned in chapter 2, the founder of Syahbandar, Mama Kosim, had had a close relationship with tarekat, and it seems possible that elements of tarekat teachings were incorporated into it by him. The linking thread between silat and tarekat culture in Banten is the science of invulnerability, the most conspicuous representative of which is *debus*. According to Kasmiri Assabdu *debus* constitutes the “metaphysical” dimension of Bantenese pencak silat.<sup>49</sup> Students begin their apprenticeship by learning the physical pencak silat techniques, then, if their guru feels that they are ready, they are “filled” (Ind: *diisi*) and taught the specific techniques and *dhzikir* associated with *debus*.

As a symbolic personality in Bantenese society the jawara embodied communal ties and the patron-client relationship upon which the largely rural society was based. Their influence extends into the present, and despite repeatedly being proven to be ineffective, there continues to be a strong belief in the invulnerability of the jawara. In their rebellion against the authorities the jawara were, if only temporarily, invulnerable to the coercive power of the colonial state and its agents. Eternal opportunists, they were quick to exploit breakdowns in order and political transitions to their advantage. Distrusted and disliked by colonial and indigenous authorities alike, their support was still essential for establishing any lasting authority in the region.



35. *Caricature of the Jawara:* Cartoon by Budi Riyanto Karung, in *Pikiran Rakyat*, 4 October, 1999. The burning coals, sharp tacks and bat are common elements in *debus*.

### **‘Defend the Self to Defend the Nation’: Jawara, Pencak Silat and the Indonesian Military**

The 1950s saw the development of closer ties between the military and the pencak silat community that in many ways mirrored the patron-client relationship between the jawara and colonial and local authorities. One of the earliest examples in post-Independence Indonesia of jawara from Banten and Priangan assisting the security apparatus was the military’s suppression of the Darul-Islam rebellion (DI-TII) that spread throughout West Java, South Sulawesi, South Kalimantan and Aceh between 1948 until 1961.<sup>50</sup> Led by the Javanese Kartosuwirjo, the Darul Islam movement attempted to establish an Islamic state. One of its biggest strongholds was in the central Priangan highlands and the southern regions of Banten.<sup>51</sup> In Banten, the military operation against DI-TII insurgents was named the “Machete War” (Ind: *Perang Bedog*). Jawara working with the military were given the informal title of “war commander” (Ind: *panglima perang*).<sup>52</sup> It became evident that military actions alone were not sufficient to quell the



rebellion, which had gained widespread sympathy amongst villagers. Faced with the PRRI and Permesta rebellions in West Sumatra and Sulawesi, as well as Darul-Islam, the military's resources were stretched to the limit.

The active involvement of civilian groups in military operations was justified via the 'doctrine of territorial warfare' (Ind: *doktrin perang wilayah*) that was devised in 1958 by a military panel appointed by the Army Chief of Staff General Nasution.<sup>53</sup> In the same year he was to declare the concept of the 'Middle Way' and the dual function of the army.<sup>54</sup> Ostensibly devised as a defensive strategy against external attack, the doctrine articulated the military's role as one of managing and coordinating all aspects of national life in order to ensure stability.<sup>55</sup> The previous year Nasution had already begun establishing army-civilian cooperation bodies, and established working links with Ansor (the youth wing of the Islamic organization Nahd'atul Ulama) as well as the youth groups of the PKI, PNI (Ind: *Partai Nasionalis Indonesia*: Indonesian Nationalist Party) and Masyumi.<sup>56</sup> Though essentially a new doctrine, it was considered to be a manifestation of Article 30, Section 1 of the 1945 Constitution, which stated, "every citizen has the right and is obliged to participate in defending the state".<sup>57</sup> Beginning in 1958 the "Fence of Legs" (Ind: *Pagar Betis*) operation carried out in Banten and Priangan led to the capture of Kartosuwirjo and the eventual demise of Darul-Islam. Aside from their military role, jawara were important in 'persuading' local villagers to assist the army in flushing out rebels.<sup>58</sup> The success of the operation led to closer formal working relationship between individual jawara, pencak silat schools, civilian organizations and the armed forces on security issues. Earlier in 1955 pencak silat practitioners had been involved in security for

the Asia-Africa conference held in Bandung. The commander of the Siliwangi division, Colonel Kawilarang, assigned Colonel Zainal Abidin the task of “unifying and making use of the strength of silat masses to assist ABRI in security”.<sup>59</sup>



36. Suherman Suhada (center) and other members of the civilian militia force drawn from the West Java pencak silat community who acted as security at the 1955 Asia Africa Conference in Bandung. Photo courtesy of Aam Santoso.

Abidin hosted a meeting of around 200 pendekar in Cipaganti, Bandung who agreed to work together with the army. The pendekar, such as Ibu Enny Rukmini Sekarningrat, trained upward of 1600 pencak silat students who were then mobilized throughout Bandung for the duration of the conference. The successful collaboration resulted in two new silat organizations led by Siliwangi division officers. In 1955 silat masters and jawara involved in the Asia-Africa conference, as well as the Pagar Betis operation, formed the Indonesian Pencak Silat Association (Ind: *Persatuan Pencak Silat Indonesia*).<sup>60</sup> A representative body for pencak silat schools in West Java and a rival of IPSI, it was led by Major Kosasih. Zainal Abidin and other pendekar involved in the

securing the conference such as Raden Popo Sumadipradja, Darmita Sobandi and Anwar Djajasutisna established the pencak silat school *Gagak Lumayung* in 1955, the name referring to Kian Santang, Prabu Siliwangi's son, and the link with the Siliwangi division.<sup>61</sup>



37. Suherman Suhada (bottom left), a prominent member of the Bandung pencak silat community, acting as security for President Sukarno at the Asia Africa Conference held in Bandung in 1955. Photo courtesy of Aam Santoso

Throughout history Bantenese jawara had always worked individually or in small bands. Whilst there were informal networks of individual jawara, usually based upon allegiances and loyalties to particular guru or ulama, there had never been a formal structured organization. This changed in 1974 when the Indonesian Association of Bantenese Silat and Culture (Ind: *PPSBBI: Persatuan Persilatan dan Seni Budaya Banten Indonesia*) was established as a forum for jawara and silat schools throughout Banten as

well as those in Jakarta. In order to avoid the negative image that had come to be associated with the term jawara it was replaced with “*pendekar*”.<sup>62</sup> Encompassing over 70 perguruan and debus groups, the stated purpose of the association was to channel the aspirations of jawara away from self-interest and criminality towards more ‘constructive’ activities that contributed to the New Order’s program of social and economic development. By the mid-1990s the organization claimed a membership of 170 000.<sup>63</sup> In the words of PPSBBI’s chairman Tubagus Chasan Sohib, “in the past jawara only fought for themselves, their group or tribe, however via the PPSBBI together we fight for the nation and the state”.<sup>64</sup>

From its inception PPSBBI identified “nation and state” with Golkar, with whom they had a close relationship since the 1977 general election. This was largely due to the influence of Tubagus Chasan Sohib who was a local parliamentarian for the Golkar faction since the early 1970’s and a prominent figure in the jawara community. Commonly known as ‘development jawara’ (Ind: *jawara pembangunan*) they worked to ensure Golkar’s supremacy. Taking advantage of the long-standing influence of jawara in village life, Golkar, through the agency of General Ali Murtopo, utilized PPSBBI to secure support for the party in Banten.<sup>65</sup> In this respect Golkar mirrored the tactics used by the PKI. In a survey conducted amongst villagers in South Banten in the early 1990’s, Sunarta found that feelings towards jawara were a mixture of fear and respect.

In part due to the close connection of jawara with traditional custom (Ind: *adat*).<sup>66</sup> Candidates who had jawara support were guaranteed of victory, for to oppose the jawara

meant facing the powerful magic of the ancestors (Sd: *karuhun*). Their orders, usually in the form of a threat, were always followed by villagers, whom nonetheless had an unquestioning faith in their ability to get things done. Seen in the context of the political landscape of the time, the establishment of PPSBBI coincided with a drive by the New Order to consolidate its power. One way in which they did this was to institutionalize traditionally troublesome groups and subcultures such as jawara. In the name of promoting 'development', PPSBBI became field agents of the new regime.

### **Civilian Militias, Pendekar Banten and the 1999 General Elections**

Since 1987 PPSBBI members had instructed elite Kopassus troops in pencak silat. Along with SMI, large numbers of PPSBBI members also received basic military training from Kopassus, in order to "increase the professionalism of pendekar".<sup>67</sup> Aside from its ordinary members, PPSBBI has a core group known as the Special Forces Guard (Ind: *GAPSUS*; *Garda Pasukan Khusus*) that consists of around 800 'troops'.<sup>68</sup> Along with proficiency in silat, invulnerability and other types of *ilmu*, GAPSUS also had training in crowd-control and small firearms use.<sup>69</sup> In the lead up to the special legislative session of the People's Consultative Assembly in November 1998, jawara from Banten were among around 125 000 civilians recruited by the army as part of the 'Self-help Security Guards' (Ind: *PAM Swakarsa*). The brainchild of General Wiranto, the civilian security force was intended to bolster the over-stretched police force in the capital as well as other major urban centers. PAM Swakarsa did not exist within the state's security and defense structure, unlike Civil Defence (Ind: HANSIP: *Pertahanan Sipil*) and Security Unit (Ind:

Satpam; *Satuan Pengamanan*) that were under the direction of the police. It was the first time that civilians had been involved in the security of the MPR.

Rumors that there would be an attempt to derail the session and replace the Habibie government led to numerous civil and religious organizations loyal to the president mobilizing forces around the MPR.<sup>70</sup> PPSBBI sent a number of GAPSUS, reputedly on the request of the Minister for Cooperatives Adi Sasono, to join the swelling ranks. According to the group's secretary general, "we will always work with the security forces if asked, but will also act independently if we feel it is necessary".<sup>71</sup> The presence of the PAM Swakarsa prompted clashes with student demonstrators and locals, resulting in fatalities on both sides.<sup>72</sup> According to a one witness, jawara from Pendekar Banten had lined up in front of student demonstrators outside the national parliament and performed inner power jurus with the intention of 'pushing' them back and causing internal injuries.<sup>73</sup> That they were unsuccessful was seen by some as proof that their motivations were "impure".<sup>74</sup> Many were later to accuse the government of tricking them. In the words of Lily Sanjaya, head of the Jakarta based perguruan Debus Satria Beringin Sakti, "those who asked for our help at that time said that there were people who wanted to discredit Islam. For that reason we were prepared to assist. As it turned out we were just used as a political tool".<sup>75</sup>

One month after the November MPR session, General Wiranto proposed the formation of a civilian militia known as "Trained People" (Ind: *RATIH; Rakyat Terlatih*) to help maintain order. The lack of support amongst the national leadership as well as its

legal ambiguity led to the idea being scrapped.<sup>76</sup> Instead People's Defense (Ind: *KAMRA*; *Keamanan Rakyat*) was formed. Beginning in February 1999 the army began recruiting and training around 40 000 unemployed youth. Armed with shields, batons and handcuffs, KAMRA were authorized to make arrests and obtain information from suspects.<sup>77</sup>

Aside from these quasi-official militias, political parties also built up their own security forces. During the campaign period of the 1999 general elections as well as in the lead up to the November 1999 general session of the national parliament, jawara from Banten, along with other jago and silat experts, were in high demand as security personnel for political parties and other interest groups.<sup>78</sup> An atmosphere of both jubilation and anxiety surrounded the first democratically held general elections since 1955. The regained freedom of a multi-party democracy also brought with it a deep concern that the country could descend into sectarian violence. Political parties actively recruited large civilian security forces in anticipation of attacks from rival supporters. Many pencak silat schools were approached, and in some instances offered large sums of money, to work for particular political groups.<sup>79</sup> Most resisted the offers.<sup>80</sup>

Experiencing what one media source described as a "golden harvest", jawara from Banten became a highly valued political commodity.<sup>81</sup> Despite PPSBBI's close association with Golkar, jawara from Banten were also contracted by other parties such as the Crescent Moon and Star Party (Ind: *PBB*; *Partai Bulan Bintang*). In the words of Kasmiri Assabdu, "we are not owned by Golkar or any other political force, but we will

always be in the front line if there is trouble ... it is every citizen's responsibility to defend the nation".<sup>82</sup> Areas such as Tanjung Priok and North Jakarta have long been home to large numbers of migrants from Banten who have moved to the capital to seek a respite from poor economic conditions. Historically they have worked as laborers, packers and security in the harbor at Tanjung Priok, Jakarta's CBD as well as Tanah Abang.<sup>83</sup> In Jakarta there are a number of silat and debus organizations such as Prems-Banten, Satria Beringin Sakti and Debus Baladika whose members are largely from Banten or Lampung. Led by Lily Sanjaya, Satria Beringin Sakti contributed around 60 pendekar to assist Golkar.<sup>84</sup> Other jawara groups such as Sumbu Banten, led by the religious scholar Tubagus Fathul Adzim, also assisted in pro-Golkar security coordinated by the military.<sup>85</sup>

The 1999 general session of parliament, in which a new Indonesian president was to be chosen, again saw the mobilization of civilian militia groups. My first visit to the Pendekar Banten headquarters in Serang coincided with a long awaited national address by Megawati Sukarnoputri. The organization was still smarting from negative media coverage in the aftermath of an assault on their headquarters by supporters of Megawati's PDI-P party. Two days earlier pendekar from Banten aligned with Golkar's security wing were alleged to have attacked a convoy of PDI-P supporters in Serang.<sup>86</sup> Despite apologies from PSSBBI's chairman Tubagus Chasan, PDI-P supporters responded by hurling Molotov cocktails. Within hours of the speech's broadcast, in which Megawati proclaimed her desire to become president, large numbers of PPSBBI jawara and *santri* had been mobilized and placed on standby to travel to Jakarta to challenge Mega



supporters. Local kyai and *debus* experts were deployed to “fill” (Ind: *mengisi*) them with inner power in order to render them invulnerable. The speed with which the large numbers of youth were mobilized was quite extraordinary to witness at first hand, and showed the level of coordination that continues to exist between jawara and local religious leaders.

A string of incidents during the campaign period of the 1999 general elections brought the relationship between Pendekar Banten and Golkar under increasing public scrutiny. Jawara from Banten, along with local preman and youth from a variety of pro-New Order nationalist youth groups were employed by Golkar as security for their Jakarta offices, as well as personal bodyguards for senior party members, including the chairman Akbar Tanjung.<sup>87</sup> Concerns regarding the possibility of conflict between rival ‘task forces’ (Ind: *SATGAS*; *Satuan Tugas*) ran high during the campaign period.<sup>88</sup> Public resentment towards the party that had dominated Indonesia for over three decades was at an all time high.<sup>89</sup> This, coupled with the looming threat of losing its previously unchallenged stranglehold on power meant that party members and officials were unaccustomedly edgy and defensive, an attitude reflected on the behavior of their security personnel.

During a campaign convoy by Golkar chairman Akbar Tanjung, angry crowds hurled abuse, and then rocks. Jawara guarding the convoy as part of Golkar’s security force (*Satgas Golkar*) responded by chasing the crowd away with unsheathed machetes (*golok*).<sup>90</sup> Other similar incidents involving Golkar security and machetes also occurred

in Cikini (South Jakarta), Medan (Northern Sumatra) and Serang, resulting in the popular tongue-in-cheek saying, “if Golkar, use a Golok” (Ind: *kalau Golkar, main Golok*). The national electoral commission threatened Golkar with disqualification over the incidents, and the governor of Jakarta ordered that any jawara from Banten be sent home immediately.<sup>91</sup> Golkar acquiesced, albeit reluctantly, however a large group of Jakarta based jawara Banten were still employed. Comments by Tadjus Sobirin, the chairperson of Golkar in Jakarta, did little to assuage growing public outrage: “In my opinion it’s fair enough. If a cowboy doesn’t carry a pistol, he’s no cowboy. If a pendekar doesn’t carry a machete then he’s no pendekar ”.<sup>92</sup>



38. Major General Djadja Suparman, tests the invulnerability of a Banten *debus* practitioner involved in the security of the Special Session of the Peoples Consultative Assembly, Jakarta, October 1999. Photo from *Republika*, 13 October, 1999.

Aside from their role in ‘security’, jawara aligned with PPSBI also acted as propagandists for Golkar. In 1999 I attended a *debus* performance at the Great Mosque (Ind: *Mesjid Agung*) near Serang that was proclaimed as a “political statement” in support of the Special Session of Parliament. A collaborative effort between PPSBBI and a previously unheard of group, the Defenders of the Constitution Association (Ind: *Paguyuban Rakyat Pembela Konstitusi*), the performance was meant as a “show of force” by those loyal to President Habibie. To a crowd of several hundred the group performed feats such as withstanding blows from an iron spike, washing themselves with sulfuric acid, slicing their tongues with machetes without shedding blood and regurgitating live bats, all done without suffering any physical harm. GAPSUS members dressed in black military style uniforms and boots were a conspicuous presence. The message was clear, that attempts to challenge the status quo would be met with violent resistance.



39. A *debus* practitioner displays his invulnerability by attempting to cut his tongue with a sharp knife.



40. A large metal spike, known as an *almadad*, is hammered into the stomach of a *debus* practitioner at a performance at the Grand Mosque, Serang, Banten

Jawara continue to be an influential force in Bantenese society. While they were ambiguous and marginal figures during the colonial period, the New Order period has seen them ‘reintegrated’ into the role of a rapidly mobilized civilian security force ready to defend the interests of the state. Most recently *jawara* have played a role in mobilizing support for candidates for the position of governor of the new province of Banten, using time proven tactics of intimidation and shows of force.<sup>93</sup> Whether Banten’s new status as a province leads to changes in the role and status of the *jawara* remains to be seen. In recent years the PPSBBI has established a ‘Pendekar Corporation’ (Ind: *Koperasi Warga Pendekar*). According to Kasmiri Assabdu, “we want to develop the potential of *pendekar* in all areas, for example promote ‘business *pendekar*’ ”.<sup>94</sup> In 1999 PPSBBI began negotiations with an Australian company with the aim of starting a joint fish farm project

in Banten. The plan is that pendekar from Banten would be employed at the farm. It will be interesting to see how this venture into business develops, and if the pendekar use their ‘influence’ to monopolize what is already a highly competitive enterprise.

The long history of jawara in Banten displays a thread of continuity from their mythic origins as bodyguards of kings and ulama, as instigators of popular rebellion, to their mobilisation as security personnel for political parties and the ruling elite. The physical capital possessed by the jawara was a means to power. Institutionalised during the New Order, jawara became a tool of those in power. More recently the demand for personal bodyguards by executives and celebrities has seen a new role for jawara, many obtaining well-paid private sector employment and a chance of gaining ‘respectability’. As one former jawara turned bodyguard put it, “being a bodyguard rather than just a preman means people respect us”.<sup>95</sup> The dark side of this has been the formation of right-wing organisations used as ‘rent-a-crowds’ and stand-over men. They played a significant role in the violent and manipulative political game playing that marked the end of the New Order, referred to by some as ‘thug politics’ (Ind: *politik preman*). One significant difference between the political opportunism of jawara in colonial times and the *politik preman* of the 1990’s was the degree to which they have been institutionalised by the state.

### **The Indonesian Young Knights**

The institutionalization of the relationship between PPSBBI and Golkar was initially strengthened in 1987 with the establishment of the “Indonesian Young Knights” (In: *SMI*;

*Satria Muda Indonesia*) pencak silat school. SMI was the brainchild of Prabowo Subianto, then an up and coming army officer and son-in-law of President Suharto.<sup>96</sup> Prabowo had long had a deep interest in the martial arts. He was a 7<sup>th</sup> Dan black belt in Karate, and since 1974 a student of Abu Zahar, a Minangkabau silat master and head of the ‘Sacred Banyan Tree’ (Ind: *Baringin Sakti*) pencak silat school. Born in 1920 in Teluk Kabunbungus, West Sumatra, Abu Zahar developed a silat system drawn from the “essence” of the 21 Minangkabau styles that he had studied.<sup>97</sup> Baringin Sakti was popular in military circles, students including Lieutenant General Tanoedjiwa and Major General Ismet Yuzairi.<sup>98</sup> After Abu Zahar’s death in 1982, Prabowo, Tanoedjiwa, Ismet Yuzairi, as well as six civilians; Edward Lebe, Indra Chalib, Syahrin Yulidar, Lukman Raja Gukguk and Robinsyah Gaffar administered the school.

In April 1987 at a meeting of the school’s administrators, and on Prabowo’s recommendation, it was agreed that they would change the name of the school to *Satria Muda Indonesia* in order to lose the ‘regionalism’ of *Beringin Sakti* and its symbolic association with Golkar.<sup>99</sup> Prabowo articulated a vision of a national silat school that taught the essence of the hundreds of aliran found throughout the archipelago, together with fostering the discipline and nationalism of the *ksatria* of Indic Java. SMI was to be a forum for propagating military values such as discipline and patriotism within civil society.<sup>100</sup> The objective of the new school was “to actively prepare cadre of the nation who have the spirit of the Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution, and are also prepared to sacrifice for the honor of the nation”.<sup>101</sup>



41. 'Defend yourself to defend the nation' (Ind: *bela diri untuk bela bangsa*), logo of the Indonesian Young Knights (Ind: *Satria Muda Indonesia*) pencak silat school.

The schools administrators identified three major regional centers of pencak silat in Indonesia; West Sumatra, West Java and Jakarta. Representatives of most of the major aliran from each region were invited to participate in a forum. Tubagus Chasan Sochib and Kasmiri Abbsadu from PPSBBI attended as representatives for Banten. The West Java gurus were initially reluctant to be involved, however they were eventually persuaded after Prabowo arranged for Suharto to visit them in Banten. His father-in-law said that it was in the interests of "preserving pencak silat" that they attend.<sup>102</sup> The meeting took place over 15-16 July 1987 at Cilotot in West Java. Each of the participating teachers performed their jurus for those assembled. Work groups were set up to identify, distill, combine and standardize the *jurus inti* (essential jurus) of each aliran. The meeting was not without problems. Tensions were evident between some gurus who were unaccustomed to sharing their knowledge with those outside of their own perguruan. Others saw the event as an

opportunity to prove the superiority of their own aliran and ‘try out’ teachers of other styles. Despite these disruptions by the end of the two days a rough composite system had been agreed upon. Each of the guru involved was admitted to SMI’s Council of Guru (Ind: *Dewan Guru*). The new motto of the school, inspired by the 1945 Constitution, was “defend the self to defend the nation” (Ind: *beladiri untuk bela bangsa*).

During his second term in East Timor (1988-89) as commander of Battalion 328, Prabowo actively promoted SMI amongst local youths.<sup>103</sup> One senior SMI instructor and ex-Indonesian Special Forces soldier recounted training SMI members in East Timor; “they trained really hard, but then after a while many of them ran off and joined Falantil... they ended up using SMI jurus to fight Indonesian troops!”<sup>104</sup> Wherever Prabowo was stationed, SMI branches soon sprung up.<sup>105</sup> By 1997 SMI existed in 22 provinces with an estimated total membership of around 46,000.<sup>106</sup> In Banten alone SMI claimed to have 9000 active students, most of whom were also affiliated to PPSBBI. Throughout the mid 1990’s Prabowo continued to strengthen the links between Kopassus, SMI and a variety of radical groups existing on the political margins, such as the Indonesian Committee for Solidarity with the Islamic World (KISDI: *Komite Indonesia untuk Solidaritas Dunia Islam*), the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI: *Front Pembela Islam*) and Panca Marga Youth (PPM: *Pemuda Panca Marga*).<sup>107</sup> In 1996 a formal merger took place between SMI and Panca Marga Youth (PPM: *Pemuda Panca Marga*) with all PPM members automatically becoming members of SMI and vice versa. SMI instructors took PPM members on regular three-week training programs held at the base of Kostrad Battalion 315 at Mount Batu, near the city of Bogor.<sup>108</sup> According to Hariyanto Badjoeri,



the chairperson of PPM's Jakarta branch, the merger was in line with PPM's official program of "fostering the spirit of the 1945 struggle", and participating in national development and defense as "in pencak silat not just self-defense is learnt, but also the concept of nation and statehood."<sup>109</sup>

Rather than establish new SMI branches, the method adopted by the school was to develop affiliations with already existing perguruan. Outside of the major urban centers perguruan that became affiliated with SMI underwent little change. Aside from some standardized SMI jurus done at the beginning of each latihan, the majority of material was still local. However branches were financially dependent upon SMI's chair. Prabowo financed all of SMI's activities in full. Prabowo's generosity also extended to his Kopassus troops who were given cash bonuses after a successful mission. Failure however was not tolerated, Prabowo renowned for his harsh treatment of those who did not to live up to his expectations.

This patron-client relationship, referred to as the 'guiding father' (Ind: *bapak pembina*) phenomenon, fostered a type of dependent loyalty that was becoming increasing common amongst larger city-based perguruan. According to Maryono the phenomenon of the bapak pembina in pencak silat is most prevalent in urban centers, and has led to a decline of the group solidarity and mutual cooperation that has been an integral part of smaller perguruan.<sup>110</sup> Ensuring the patronage of a prominent politician, businessperson or military figure was a huge boost as many schools operated with little or no financial resources. Having a financial backer meant that instructors were able to

dedicate themselves fully to pencak silat without the worry of finding other employment.<sup>111</sup> A similar instance was to be found in the pencak silat perguruan 'Basic Power' (Ind: *Tenaga Dasar*) led by Bambang Trihatmodjo, Suharto's second son and head of the powerful Bimantara conglomerate.

Prabowo's quick rise through the military ranks, coupled with the rapid growth of SMI and his familial relations with those in power saw him elected as deputy chairperson of the national board of IPSI, under retired Major-General and deputy mayor of Jakarta Edi Marzuki Nalapraya. The appointment was rumored to have been made on the recommendation of Wismoyo Arismunandar, the head of the Indonesian National Sports Committee (Ind: *KONI; Komite Olahraga Nasional Indonesia*), ex commander of Kopassus (1983-85) and Suharto's cousin. In 1993 Prabowo secured land at the Taman Mini 'Beautiful Indonesia' theme park from his mother in law, Ibu Tien Suharto, to build a headquarters for SMI. At the time IPSI's headquarters was a small office in the Bimantara building owned by Bambang Trihatmodjo. After pressure from his IPSI colleagues, and with Ibu Tien's approval, Prabowo donated the land to IPSI's central board. Prabowo, together with Rosano Barack, co-deputy head of IPSI and the Bimantara corporation, were responsible for securing financial backing for the project of building a national pencak silat center on the site.<sup>112</sup> The Indonesian National Pencak Silat Centre was formally opened in August 1997 and has since become a center for national and international pencak silat events.<sup>113</sup>

In 1994 Prabowo was promoted to Deputy Commander of Kopassus, a year later taking the top job. Since 1993 SMI instructors had been training members of the Group III of Kopassus at their headquarters in Batujajar, Bandung.<sup>114</sup> Within two years the Marine Corps, Mobile Brigade (Ind: *Brimob*), Naval Special Forces (Ind: *Paskhas-AU*) and battalions 321, 315, 328 and 330 of the Strategic Reserve (Ind: *Kostrad*) all received self-defense instruction from SMI. This was not the first time that the armed forces had employed pencak silat instructors. In 1968 the Indonesian Defense Force Academy (Ind: *AKABRI*) in Magelang, Central Java had introduced pencak silat training for cadets in an effort to educate them in traditional culture and the nexus within it “between moral/spiritual values and military prowess...to give the term ksatria concrete meaning”.<sup>115</sup>

Whilst it was taught along with a variety of other martial arts for its practical value, pencak silat was of particular importance due to its close historical ties with Indonesian military tradition. The training program had ended before Prabowo himself became a cadet at the academy in 1974, however similar ideas regarding the link between silat and military tradition were to have a great influence upon him. What was so different in the Kopassus case was that the training was reciprocated; civilian SMI members were given military instruction from Special Forces officers. Aside from basic drill exercises, senior silat students were also instructed in small firearm use, crowd-control and some counter terrorist techniques.<sup>116</sup> In Prabowo’s vision pencak silat was a bridge between civil and military life. In a paper presented at a silat trainers and referees course in 1995 he said that:

Pencak silat education can be considered as an aspect of an introductory education regarding state defense and *Sishankamrata* (*Sistem pertahanan keamanan rakyat semesta*; System of Civilian Defense and Security). Through pencak silat we can create people who are ready to carry out defense of the state and *Sishankamrata*.<sup>117</sup>

The doctrine of Sishankamrata constituted the basic strategy of the military regarding the relationship between itself, the state and society. According to the doctrine, the people will spontaneously rise up against any threat to the independence and sovereignty of the nation, and fight together with the armed forces to overcome it.<sup>118</sup> The joint training exercise was never considered a secret, as in Prabowo's eyes the exercise was a legitimate manifestation of Sishankamrata.

Prabowo considered fostering relations between civilian silat groups and the military to be essential for national stability. During the Prabowo led military operation to secure the release of 24 hostages taken by the Free Papua Movement (Ind: *Organisasi Papua Merdeka*) in West Papua in 1996, Kopassus employed the services of three civilian silat experts from Banten.<sup>119</sup> Tubagus Zaini, Tubagus Yuhyi Andawi and Sayid Ubaydillah Al-Mahdaly were given the task of providing "spiritual protection" for the troops as well as countering any supernatural powers used by the hostage takers. The success of the operation was one of the factors leading to Prabowo's promotion to commander of Kopassus and the rank of Brigadier General later that same year. After that it became common practice for Prabowo led operations to involve civilians drawn from SMI and Pendekar Banten.<sup>120</sup>

In 1998 Prabowo was promoted to Commander of the Strategic Reserve Command of the Army. From 25 February to 25 March of that year SMI hosted a training program at Bumi Perkemahan, Cibubur named “Alert Knight” (Ind: *Satria Siaga*). Held in cooperation with Kopassus under the direction of Prabowo, over 2000 civilian SMI members were instructed in crowd control methods and group drills alongside of standard SMI training. Photos from the program in a SMI newsletter show rows of youths in black semi-military type uniforms wearing army boots and black caps emblazoned with the SMI logo.<sup>121</sup> According to the newsletter the purpose of *Satria Siaga* was to “realize the active role of society in ensuring the successful implementation of the 1998 General Session of the People’s Consultative Council”.<sup>122</sup> Participants in the program were expected to “return to their respective communities and become good examples”, supporting the armed forces in anticipating the “upheavals” that were anticipated during the General Session.<sup>123</sup> If this was indeed the sole intention of *Satria Siaga* it seems strange that program did not finish until 10 days after the general session. It would appear that the anticipated upheavals for which the program readied itself were for the month that followed.

The period leading up to the General Session saw increasingly vocal opposition to Suharto’s rule. University campuses throughout the country became the sites of large demonstrations. The prolonged economic crisis, coupled with the cancellation of a subsidy on fuel oil (Ind: *BBM; Bahan Bakar Minyak*) led to calls for Suharto’s resignation. On 10 March Suharto was chosen by the MPR for his seventh consecutive term as president. Actions demanding an end to his 32 year rule grew in momentum, with

many high-profile figures joining the student protests. On 12 May six students were shot dead whilst taking part in a peaceful demonstration on the campus of the elite Trisakti University in Jakarta. On 13 and 14 May mass rioting and looting swept through Jakarta, leaving over 1000 dead, 468 reported rapes, and 40 malls and 2400 buildings looted or destroyed.<sup>124</sup> Ethnic Chinese were a particular target for the carnage.

At first it appeared the riots were a response by Jakarta's poor to the killing of the students and resentment fueled by worsening economic conditions. However rumors soon spread as trickles of evidence emerged that groups of unidentified instigators (referred to as *aparatus berseragam*, 'authorities out of uniform') were responsible for the murder of the Trisakti students and for engineering the riots.<sup>125</sup> Far from anticipating and countering the upheavals, it was claimed that SMI, as a civilian group close to Prabowo, had played an active role in instigating them along with rogue elements of the military. A shadowy group purported to include senior SMI members, known as the 'Tidar Group' (Ind: *Kelompok Tidar*), was named in various sections of the media and NGO circles as being behind numerous outbreaks of ethnic and religiously tinged violence in West and East Java as well as the disturbances in Jakarta.<sup>126</sup>

Named after the hill in the center of the AKABRI military academy where Prabowo once trained, the group was reputed to consist of academy dropouts who were recruited by him and given the task of training civilian vigilante groups.<sup>127</sup> One key figure in this alleged group was Eddy Prabowo. Eddy was reputed to have been recruited into the group after being expelled from AKABRI when he allegedly beat his commanding officer.<sup>128</sup>

An expert in unarmed combat, he acted as deputy executive director of SMI from 1997-1999. Another SMI member named as part of the Tidar Group was Iwan Ompong Abdurrahman who was the operational chairman of the school. Iwan had worked closely with Kopassus over the years, leading them on their Mount Everest expedition as well as training troops in a special form of hand-to-hand combat fighting he is said to have developed.<sup>129</sup>

The commonly held theory regarding Prabowo's alleged role in the events of 13-14 May 1998 was that he marshaled forces at his call to instigate rioting in order to create such a state of chaos that his rival General Wiranto would be unable to restore order.<sup>130</sup> On returning from an official state visit to Egypt, Suharto would be forced to invoke extra-constitutional 'emergency power', declare martial law and send in combat ready Kostrad troops under Prabowo's command. As forces under his command were in fact the cause of the turmoil, Prabowo would be the only one capable of curtailing it, thus undermining Wiranto's authority. Prabowo would then replace him as chief of the armed forces and move a step closer himself to becoming president. The logic of the theory mirrors the style of the jawara, though taken to a national level, and is almost identical to the way in which Suharto seized power 33 years earlier. As Ryter states, the source of the jago's power comes through "maintaining or encouraging social tensions that he is strategically placed to resolve".<sup>131</sup>

If this was indeed Prabowo's plan, it was far from successful. On Suharto's return from Cairo on 15 May, Wiranto quickly moved to publicly support the president, whilst

encouraging reform and a new cabinet.<sup>132</sup> Emboldened by Suharto's fading authority, students took their protests to the Indonesian parliament, refusing to leave until he stepped down. Under increasing pressure from both within and without, Suharto resigned from the presidency in a televised national address on 21 May, transferring power to his deputy Habibie. Reputedly on Suharto and Wiranto's request, Habibie, a long time friend of Prabowo, ordered his replacement as the commander of Kostrad.<sup>133</sup> On 28 May he was transferred to the position of head of the army staff training college in Bandung. It was clear that Suharto thought Prabowo had been plotting against him.

After allegations of SMI's role in instigating the riots appeared in the national and international press, the school hosted a press conference at its Jakarta headquarters where it categorically denied any involvement. Prabowo denied all the allegations made against SMI, saying that such violent actions were in conflict with the most basic principles of pencak silat:

SMI follows the philosophy of noble mind, defending the nation, truth and justice. In fact they often assist the district military command in district security. Their teaching is always towards defending the truth...if there was any involvement it was possibly rogue elements (Ind: *oknum*), so those accusations are totally false.<sup>134</sup>

Significantly however, whilst he stridently denied the involvement of SMI as an organization, he did not totally dismiss the possibility that 'rogue elements' (Ind: *oknum-oknum*) of SMI may have been involved.<sup>135</sup> Accusations were also leveled at IPSI's central board and its headquarters at Taman Mini were targeted by student demonstrators. Prabowo's position as joint deputy-chairman of IPSI led some to assume that IPSI was in league with him. IPSI moved quickly to distance itself from Prabowo, who was promptly



removed as deputy-chairman. In a press release IPSI confirmed the public's suspicion of SMI's role in the riots, stating "IPSI is in no way involved in the actions of a certain perguruan, and does not condone them".<sup>136</sup> The release further stated that, "as a sporting organization IPSI is not linked to any particular political force and fully supports peaceful reform in accord with the Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution".<sup>137</sup> IPSI's public support for "peaceful reform" (Ind: *reformasi damai*) and the dismissal of Prabowo from the organization diverted attention away from the possible involvement of individuals within it.

In August 1998 a military court found Prabowo guilty of misinterpreting orders. He was later discharged. A government joint fact finding team on the May riots concluded that there was evidence of the involvement of 'provocateurs', however particular groups were not named.<sup>138</sup> The riots were linked to an "elite political struggle".<sup>139</sup> In its report the team recommended that Prabowo be investigated regarding his role in the unrest. Despite the allegations directed at SMI, no formal action was taken against them. The perguruan's close links with the military ended with Prabowo's fall from grace. However Prabowo still continues to be the school's chairman. Even during his period of exile in Jordan throughout 1999 he still kept in close communication with SMI branches.<sup>140</sup>

Whether or not Prabowo orchestrated the events of May 1998, it is clear that he endeavored to build close links between civil organizations and the military, to the point that it became difficult to differentiate one from the other. As one senior military officer commented, "Prabowo was obsessed with the belief that the only way to govern

Indonesia was by military stratagems”.<sup>141</sup> His leadership of SMI displayed a mix of military style discipline and tactics, and an aggressive somatic nationalism where martial prowess was linked to the enhancement of state power. The silat body was politicized in dramatic fashion; to learn to ‘defend oneself’ (Ind: *bela diri*) was inseparable from learning to ‘defend the nation’ (Ind: *bela bangsa*).

In this chapter some of the tensions within pencak silat culture regarding authority, ethics and martial power have been explored via an analysis of the changing role and eventual institutionalization of the jawara. It has also charted another dimension of the politicization of the body of the pencak silat practitioner into a distinct form of social and political capital. The shifting position of the jawara over time, from charismatic leader to power broker to agent of the state, illustrates how political forces redirect the social embodiment of power as traditional becomes contemporary Indonesian society. By organizing traditionally marginal figures and groups such as the jawara, the modern Indonesian state, primarily through the agency of the military, has attempted to gradually incorporate the more militant and potentially disruptive aspects of pencak silat culture, both ideologically and as a functioning apparatus of social and political control.

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<sup>1</sup> For a detailed account of the etymology of the term ‘preman’, see Loren Rytter, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Aam Santoso, Bandung, 1 May 1999.

<sup>3</sup> Notosoejitno, *Khazanah Pencak Silat*, CV. Sagung Jeto, Jakarta, 1997, pg. 103.

<sup>4</sup> Donn F. Draeger, *Weapons and Fighting Arts of the Indonesian Archipelago*, Charles E. Tuttle Company, Rutland, 1992, pg. 38.

<sup>5</sup> Usually this is divided into three levels; *pendekar muda* (young pendekar), *pendekar madhya* (middle pendekar), and *pendekar utama* (main pendekar), analogous to the *Dan* system of black belt grading within

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Japanese martial arts. It seems possible that the Japanese introduced this system during their brief but influential period of occupation.

<sup>6</sup> Notosoejitno, 1997, pg. 102.

<sup>7</sup> For a detailed account of Chinese silat stories in Indonesia see Leo Suryadinata, 'Cerita Silat Tionghoa di Indonesia: Ulasan Ringkas', in Leo Suryadinata (Ed.), *Sastra Peranakan Tionghoa Indonesia*, Grasindo, Jakarta, 1996, pp. 72-130. For silat comics see Marcel Bonneff, *Komik Indonesia*, Kepustakaan Popular Gramedia, Jakarta, 1998, pp. 113-120 and 136-162.

<sup>8</sup> Denys Lombard, *Nusa Jawa: Silang Budaya, Kajian Sejarah Budaya, Bagian II: Jaringan Asia*, Gramedia Pustaka Utama, Jakarta, 1996, pp. 332-333.

<sup>9</sup> Boneff, 1998, pg. 157.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, pg. 158.

<sup>11</sup> Else Ensering, 'Banten in times of revolution', *Archipel 50: Banten Histore d'une region*, 1995, pp.131-161.

<sup>12</sup> Kartodirdjo, 1991, pg. 7.

<sup>13</sup> Michael Charles Williams, *Communism, Religion, and Revolt in Banten*, Center for International Studies, Ohio University, Athens, 1990, pg. 45.

<sup>14</sup> Sunatra, *Integrasi dan Konflik: Kedudukan Politik Jawara dan Ulama dalam Budaya Politik Lokal (Studi Kasus Kepemimpinan Informal Pedesaan di Banten Selatan)*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Padjajaran University, Bandung, 1997, pg. 100-101.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, pg. 101.

<sup>16</sup> Margreet Van Till, 'In Search of Si Pitung: The History of an Indonesian Legend', in *Bijdragen KITLV*, no. 152 (III), 1995, pp. 461-482.

<sup>17</sup> Whilst there have been women *jawara* and *pendekar*, the most well known being Ibu Enny Sukaringrat the current guru of the Panglipur pencak silat school, the tradition has been dominated by men. On the changing position of women within the West Sumatran pencak silat related dance *randai* see Kirstin Pauka, 'The Daughters take over? Female Performers in Randai Theatre', in *TDR*, 42, 1, 1998, pp. 113-121.

<sup>18</sup> "Orang Banten itu Keras...", *Kompas*, Monday 5 July, 1999.

<sup>19</sup> Sunatra, pg. 133.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, pg. 132.

<sup>21</sup> Van Till, 1996, pg. 479.

<sup>22</sup> Schulte Nordholt, 'The Jago in the Shadow: Crime and "Order" in the Colonial State in Java', in *RIMA*, vol. 25/1, 1991, pp. 74-91.

<sup>23</sup> See for example, ' "Penguasa" Tanahabang: Patah Tumbuh Hilang Berganti', *Kompas*, 30 November 1997.

<sup>24</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, *Bandits*, Abacus, London, 2000, pg. 20.

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- <sup>25</sup> Williams, 1990, pg. 79.
- <sup>26</sup> Sunatra, 1997, pg. 137.
- <sup>27</sup> 'Orang Banten itu Keras...', in *Kompas*, Monday 5 July 1999.
- <sup>28</sup> Sunatra, 1997, pg. 141.
- <sup>29</sup> Williams, 1990, pg. 155.
- <sup>30</sup> For example the *warok*, the magical strongmen from Ponorogo, East Java. See Ian Douglas Wilson, 'Sexuality, Spirituality and Power in a Javanese Performance Tradition', in *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context*, issue 2, May 1999, [<http://www.she.murdoch.edu.au/intersections/issue2/Warok.html>].
- <sup>31</sup> Williams, 1990, pg. 196.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, pg. 188.
- <sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, pg. 188.
- <sup>34</sup> Sartono Kartodirdjo, *The Peasants Revolt of Banten in 1888*, Nijhoff, Gravenhage, 1966, pg. 195.
- <sup>35</sup> David Bourchier, 'Crime, Law and State Authority in Indonesia', in Arief Budiman (Ed.), *State and Civil Society in Indonesia*, Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, Clayton, 1994, pp. 177-212.
- <sup>36</sup> Interview with Mochtar Saleh, Bandung, 16/05/99.
- <sup>37</sup> A tradition continued to the present day. In one neighbourhood in central Bandung, members of a pencak silat school have an agreement with local robbers (Sd: *garong*) that they will tolerate their presence in the area as long as they 'work' elsewhere.
- <sup>38</sup> Interview with Mochtar Saleh, Bandung, 16/05/99.
- <sup>39</sup> John R. W. Smail, *Bandung in the Early Revolution 1945-1946: A Study in the Social History of the Indonesian Revolution*, Monograph Series, Modern Indonesia Project, Cornell University, Ithaca, 1964.
- <sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, pg. 108.
- <sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, pg. 109.
- <sup>42</sup> *Ibid*, pg. 124.
- <sup>43</sup> Williams, 1990, pg. 281.
- <sup>44</sup> O'ong Maryono 'Jago: Kawan atau Lawan?', *Gema Pencak Silat*, Vol.1 no.9, December 1997, pp. 12-19.
- <sup>45</sup> Williams, 1990, pp. 49-50.
- <sup>46</sup> Martin van Bruinessen, 'Shari'a court, tarekat and pesantren: Religious Institutions in the Banten Sultanate', *Archipel 50: Banten Histoire d'une region*, 1995, pp. 165-200.
- <sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, pg. 188.

<sup>48</sup> These include facing in the direction of the Ka'abah whilst training, focusing one's gaze upon the letter *Alif* and reciting *dzikir* when performing jurus.

<sup>49</sup> Interview with Kasmiri Assabdu, Serang, 30/7/99.

<sup>50</sup> For a detailed study of the rebellion see C. Van Dijk, *Rebellion Under the Banner of Islam: The Darul Islam in Indonesia*, Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1981.

<sup>51</sup> Kartosuwirjo gained much support in rural West Java due to the belief that he was invulnerable, as well as his possession of two magically charged swords known as *Ki Rompang* and *Ki Dongkol*.

<sup>52</sup> Dinas Sejarah Militer TNI Angkatan Darat, *Penumpasan Pemberontakan DI-TII/SMK di Jawa Barat*, Jakarta, 1974, pg. 108. More recently leaders of the pro-Jakarta militia groups in East Timor, such as Eurico Guterres, were also given the title.

<sup>53</sup> Al Chaidar, *Pengantar Pemikiran Politik Proklamator Negara Islam Indonesia S.M. Kartosoewirjo: Mengungkap Manipulasi Sejarah Darul Islam/DI-TII Semasa Orde Lama dan Orde Baru*, Darul Falah, Jakarta, 1999, pp. 201-202. The doctrine stated that defence of the state "must not only employ the system of weaponry technology, but also the system of social and cultural weaponry". Pencak silat groups were seen as a component of this social and cultural weaponry. Dinas Sejarah Militer TNI Angkatan Darat, 1974, pg. 102.

<sup>54</sup> The 'Middle Way' later came to be known as *dwifungsi* (dual function) during the New Order period. For more on the concept of the Middle Way and its evolution into *dwifungsi* see, Ulf Sundhaussen, 'The Inner Contraction of the Suharto Regime: A starting point for a withdrawal to the barracks', in David Bouchier and John Legge (Eds.), *Democracy in Indonesia: 1950s and 1990s*, Monash Papers on Southeast Asia No.31, Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, Clayton, 1994, pp. 272-285.

<sup>55</sup> Britton, 1996, pp. 94-95.

<sup>56</sup> Ricklefs, 1993, pg. 259.

<sup>57</sup> Dinas Sejarah Militer TNI Angkatan Darat, 1974, pg. 108.

<sup>58</sup> The Republican Army sometimes used the civilian population as a "human shield", one reason why they were often reluctant to participate. See Van Dijk, pg. 125.

<sup>59</sup> *Bandung Pos*, 6 September 1980.

<sup>60</sup> Whether this was in fact the main contributing factor to the establishment of PPSI is debatable, but it is central in PPSI's version of its own history.

<sup>61</sup> *Mandala*, 5 July 1980.

<sup>62</sup> 'Orang Banten itu Keras...', *Kompas*, 5 July 1999.

<sup>63</sup> 'Mengasah Jurus Menjelang SU', *Gatra*, 21 August, 1999.

<sup>64</sup> 'Persilatan Banten Saat Ini...', *Kompas*, 9 November 1999.

<sup>65</sup> According to Bouchier, Murtopo also used other Golkar affiliated associations such as the Indonesian Renewal Youth Organisation (*AMPI: Angkatan Muda Pembaharuan Indonesia*), National Committee for Indonesian Youth (*KNPI: Komite Nasional Pemuda Indonesia*) and Siliwangi Youth (*AMS: Angkatan Muda Siliwangi*). See David Bouchier, 1994, pg. 193.

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<sup>66</sup> Sunatra, 1997, pg. 299.

<sup>67</sup> Interview with Kasmiri Assabdu, Serang, 30/7/99.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> This *ilmu* included, amongst others, *napak sancang* (the ability to walk on water).

<sup>70</sup> These included Pemuda Pancasila, Banser (youth wing of Nahd'atul Ulama), AMPI, FKKPI as well as a number of Islamic organisations.

<sup>71</sup> Interview with Kasmiri Assabdu, Serang, 30/7/99.

<sup>72</sup> See 'Jika Preman dan Bambu Rucing Ikut Bermain', *Gatra*, 21 November, 1998.

<sup>73</sup> Confidential interview, Jakarta, June 1998.

<sup>74</sup> From the perspective of one inner power specialist, this was due to the fact that the *jawara* were motivated by self-interest whereas the students were "pure of heart". Hence the *jawara*'s inner power could not affect them. Confidential interview, Bandung, August, 1999.

<sup>75</sup> 'Pendekar dari Warakas', *Kompas*, 25 June 1999.

<sup>76</sup> The basis for the establishment of RATIH is Law no.20 1982 regarding "particulars for defence and security". The law was never implemented. See 'Militias: Indonesian Intelligence and Security Agencies', *Federation of American Scientists*, [<http://www.fas.org/irp/world/indonesia/militia.htm>], date unknown.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> See 'Mengasah Jurus Menjelang SU', *Gatra*, 21 August 1999, pp. 31-32.

<sup>79</sup> Confidential interview, Bandung, November 1999.

<sup>80</sup> Notable exceptions to this were those perguruan linked with religious and social organisations, such as Muhammadiyah (Tapak Suci) and Nahd'atul Ulama (Pager Nusa) that subsequently formed political parties.

<sup>81</sup> Pendekar Banten dari Warakas', *Kompas*, 25 June 1999.

<sup>82</sup> Interview with Kasmiri Assabdu, Serang, 30/7/99.

<sup>83</sup> 'Pendekar dari Warakas', *Kompas*, 25 June 1999.

<sup>84</sup> 'Tak Perlu Orang Luar Amankan Jakarta', *Kompas*, 29 May 1999.

<sup>85</sup> 'Laskar Jalanan Mencemaskan', *Gatra*, 21 August 1999.

<sup>86</sup> See 'Partai dan Masyarakat agar Waspada: Insiden di Serang, Beberapa Terkena Golok', *Kompas*, 28 May 1999.

<sup>87</sup> These included Pemuda Panca Marga Youth, Golkar's youth wing AMPI, FKKPI (Communication Forum for Sons and Daughters of Retired ABRI Officers) as well as 60 rubbish collectors (*pemulung*). ABRI is *Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia*, the Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia.

<sup>88</sup> See 'Wawancara Herbert Feith: "Mega Presiden, Amien Oposisi"', *Tempo*, 26 April 1999, pp. 30-31.

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<sup>89</sup> Numerous spontaneous acts of sabotage of Golkar's campaign were reported in local and national media. In my own neighbourhood in East Bandung, Golkar banners and posters were ripped down in full view by local youths minutes after being put up by party supporters.

<sup>90</sup> See 'Kalau Golkar Main Golok', *Gatra*, no. 29, 5 June 1999, pg. 30.

<sup>91</sup> 'Gubernur DKI: Pulangkan Pendekar Banten', *Suara Pembaruan*, 29 May 1999.

<sup>92</sup> 'Tadjus Sobirin: "Bawa golok wajar saja"', *Aksi*, vol.3, no. 147, 28-31 May 1999, pg. 24.

<sup>93</sup> See 'Djoko Munandar Gubernur Banten', *Kompas*, 4 December 2001.

<sup>94</sup> Interview with Kasmiri Assabdu, Serang, 30/7/99.

<sup>95</sup> *Jawa Pos*, 2 September 2000.

<sup>96</sup> A brief biography of Prabowo can be found in Kevin O'Rourke, *Reformasi: The Struggle for Power in Post-Soeharto Indonesia*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2002, pp. 67-69.

<sup>97</sup> 'Perguruan Pencak Silat Satria Muda Indonesia: Musuh Tidak Dicari, Bertemu Dihindari, Sekali Dimulai Titik Mati Baru Berhenti', *Jurus: Majalah Seni Beladiri*, no.12, 22 November 1999, pp. 6-8.

<sup>98</sup> According to one informant, the idea to form Baringin Sakti came after Abu Zahar attended the 1955 Asia-Africa Conference, and had the support of General Nasution. Confidential interview, Bandung, September 1999.

<sup>99</sup> The banyan tree is the symbol of Golkar.

<sup>100</sup> Interview with Edward Lebe, Bandung, 21/8/99.

<sup>101</sup> *Jurus: Majalah Seni Beladiri*, 22 November 1999, pg. 7.

<sup>102</sup> Interview with Pak Kasmiri Assabdu, Serang, 30/7/99.

<sup>103</sup> It is claimed by some Indonesian NGO's that Prabowo used SMI to recruit Timorese youth into the Youth Guard for the Upholders of Integration (*GARDAPAKSI: Garda Muda Penegak Integrasi*), a pro-Jakarta youth organisation mobilised by Prabowo to support various actions against the East Timorese resistance. It was a prototype of the militias that wreaked havoc in East Timor after the UN hosted referendum in 1999.

<sup>104</sup> Confidential interview, Bandung 25/7/99. Falantil was the organisation of the armed resistance to the Indonesian occupation of East Timor. It has been claimed that Prabowo used groups of highly trained Timorese youth posing as Falantil guerrillas to terrorise the local population in the hope of breaking popular support for the armed resistance. It is also interesting to note that whilst some pencak silat schools such as Perisai Diri and Setia Hati continue exist in post-independence East Timor, SMI has disappeared completely. Whilst in Dili in April 2001 I was told that many of the East Timorese members of SMI were active in the pro-Jakarta militias that wreaked havoc after the UN administered referendum in 1999, and have since fled to West Timor or Java.

<sup>105</sup> During Prabowo's period as the head of the Kostrad command unit in Lhokseumawe, Aceh in 1991, the army organised civilian militia groups known as "Defend the State" (*Bela Negara*) to assist them in hunting down suspected rebels. See 'Civilian Guards Pose Threat In Indonesia Says Rights Group', in *Human Rights Watch Online*, [<http://www.hrw.org/press98/nov/indo1110.htm>], November 1998.

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<sup>106</sup> 'Profil Perguruan Pencak Silat Satria Muda Indonesia', *Gema Pencak Silat*, No.5 August 1997, pp. 10-12.

<sup>107</sup> KISDI was established in 1994 ostensibly as a solidarity group in support of Bosnian Muslims. With the financial support of Suharto's stepbrother Probosutedjo, the group helped to build a mosque in Bosnia named after Suharto, and sent volunteers to wage holy war (*jihad*). Led by Ahmad Sumargono, the group was a vocal supporter of Suharto throughout the late 90's, holding counter-demonstrations against pro-reformation students. See 'Kalau Status Quo Menguntungkan Islam, Kenapa Tidak?', *Tempo*, no.1/27, 1998. FPI was formed in 1998. The group has been linked to the escalation of Muslim-Christian violence in Ambon, and has headed an ongoing violent 'anti-sin' campaign, attacking clubs, bars, gambling dens and alcohol distributors. In 1999 FPI members were given training in pencak silat by teachers aligned with PPM in Bogor, in preparation for their departure for Ambon. Confidential interview, Bandung, December 1999. PPM has been actively involved in pencak silat and boxing in West Java, hosting annual championships since 1993. The Bogor chairperson of PPM, Helmi, is an influential member of IPSI in West Java.

<sup>108</sup> Confidential interview, Bandung, March 1999.

<sup>109</sup> 'Seluruh Anggota PPM Menjadi Anggota Pencak Silat SMI', *Suara Pembaruan*, 25 November 1996.

<sup>110</sup> Maryono, 1998, pg. 337.

<sup>111</sup> The financial crisis that hit Indonesia had a devastating effect on many smaller perguruan throughout the country. Unable to pay membership fees, many students stopped training. The demands of making ends meet meant that many instructors were also unable to hold regular latihan.

<sup>112</sup> Significant financial backers of the project included Indra Bakti, Indra Rukmana, Peter Gontha and Sudwikatmono. Maryono, 1998, pg. 344.

<sup>113</sup> For more on the political and cultural implications of Taman Mini generally, see Pemberton, 1994, pp. 152-161.

<sup>114</sup> See 'Taslim Azis:"Wiro Sableng" dari Ambon', *Kompas*, 2 February 1997. Kopassus consists of five groups, based respectively in Serang, (Banten, West Java), Kartasura (Central Java), Batujajar (Bandung, West Java) and two in Cijantung (Jakarta). See 'Batu Sandungan Baret Merah', *Gatra*, 25 July 1998, pp. 29-30.

<sup>115</sup> Peter Britton, *Military Professionalism in Indonesia: Javanese and Western Military Traditions in Army Ideology in the 1970's*, MA Thesis, Monash University, 1983, pp. 288-289.

<sup>116</sup> Confidential interview, Jakarta, December 2000.

<sup>117</sup> Prabowo Subianto, 'Pencak Silat dalam Kaitan dengan Ketahanan Nasional, Bela Negara dan Sishankamrata', document produced for National Sporting Pencak Silat Trainers and Referees Course, Jakarta 12-19 November 1995.

<sup>118</sup> Pengantar Sishankamrata, Markas Besar, Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia, Sekolah Staf dan Komando ABRI, Bandung, 1993.

<sup>119</sup> *Kompas*, 9 November 1998.

<sup>120</sup> Prabowo's appointment as commander of Kopassus saw it rapidly expand its force from 4000 to 7000 troops with new groups specialising in counter-intelligence operations. See George Aditjondro, 'Financing Human Rights Abuses in Indonesia, Part II', [<http://koteka.net/part2.htm>], date unknown.

<sup>121</sup> Field notes, Jakarta, June 1998.



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<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> S. Sinasari Ecip, *Kronologi Situasi Penggulingan Soeharto: Reportase Jurnalistik 72 Jam Yang Menegangkan*, Mizan, Bandung, 1998.

<sup>125</sup> See for example, 'Death Squad Prabowo di Balik Penculikan dan Kerusuhan' message to *Indonesia* mailing list [<http://makelist.com/listsaver/indonesia>], 25 May 1998, and 'Pasukan Siluman Prabowo Masih Berkeliaran', message on *SiaR* mailing list. [<http://www.minihub.org/maillinglists/siarlist/msg02687.html>], 15 May 1999, and 'Ten days that Shook Indonesia', *Asiaweek*, 24 July 1998.

<sup>126</sup> See for example George Aditjondro, 'Tentara Pribadi Prabowo, Cakrabirawa Orde Baru', message to *Apakabar* newsgroup, 6 May, 1998 and 'Kelompok Pesilatan Bantah Tuduhan Rosihan Anwar', message on *SiaR* mailing list, [<http://apchr.murdoch.edu.au/minihub/xp>], 31 July, 1998.

<sup>127</sup> Other outbreaks of unrest believed to be linked to them include clashes between students and pro-government militias at Semanggi, Jakarta 13/11/98, communal violence in Ketapang, Jakarta 22/11/98, communal violence in Kupang, West Timor, 30/11/98 and ethnic violence in Sambas, West Kalimantan, January/February 1999. See 'Was the Conflict Provoked', *Human Rights Watch Online*, [<http://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/ambon/ambon-02.htm>].

<sup>128</sup> Eddy Prabowo is not related to Prabowo Subianto. See 'Pelaku Pemboman Masjid Istiqlal Seorang Mantan Taruna AKBRI', message on *SiaR* news group [<http://apchr.murdoch.edu.au/minihub/xp>], 23 April, 1999.

<sup>129</sup> Confidential interview, Jakarta, 1999.

<sup>130</sup> *Asiaweek*, 24 July 1998.

<sup>131</sup> Ryter, 1998, pg. 66.

<sup>132</sup> Kevin O'Rourke, in his detailed study of the events of May 1998, points to Wiranto as the main mastermind behind the riots, with the assistance of Major General Muchdi and Major General Syafrie Syamsuoddin, with Prabowo as a convenient scapegoat. See O'Rourke, 2002, pp. 98-117.

<sup>133</sup> 'The Scapegoat?: Among questions that need to be asked: Was Prabowo Subianto truly the single "mastermind"?' *Asiaweek*, 3 March, 2000.

<sup>134</sup> 'Bongkar Rapat di Markas Kostrad', message to *Siar* news group [<http://apchr.murdoch.edu.au/minihub/xp>], 13 November, 1998.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid, 13 November 1998.

<sup>136</sup> Field notes, Jakarta, 19/6/98.

<sup>137</sup> Field notes, Jakarta, 19/6/98.

<sup>138</sup> See 'TGPF Harus Periksa Pengurus SMI', message on *SiaR* news group [<http://apchr.murdoch.edu.au/minihub/siarlist>], 6 October 1998. A concise account of Prabowo's version of the events of May 1998 can be found in *Asiaweek*, 3 March, 2000.

<sup>139</sup> 'Assessing the May Riots', *Asiaweek*, 13 November, 1998.

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<sup>140</sup> At a meeting of branch representatives in 1999 he addressed them via a live telephone linkup from Jordan.

<sup>141</sup> *Asiaweek*, 24 July, 1998.

## Conclusions: The Politics of Inner Power

There is no concrete body that is decorated by culture. The body itself is a cultural creation. Although the human body has a physical existence, we can perceive it only in terms of a body image, for the act of perception is itself a culturally constructed process.<sup>1</sup> (Sault)

This portrait of the diversity of pencak silat theory and practice in West Java demonstrates that that pencak silat is not an isolated cultural practice confined to a select group or sub-culture. The discursive field of pencak silat practice traverses a multitude of social, political and cultural boundaries within Indonesian society. The concepts of ethics, morality, philosophy, aesthetics etc. found within it are central to discourse regarding the construction of Sundanese and Indonesian culture and identity. Existing not just at the level of abstract ideas, they manifest in the dispositions, gestures and experience of the body of the pencak silat practitioner. As Comaroff has stated, changes in the social and political order must be accompanied by changes in “the mnemonic scheme inscribed in physical form”.<sup>2</sup> In a more general sense, tracing the history of a cultural practice such as pencak silat draws attention to the ways in which we are socialized into our bodies.

Pencak silat constitutes a pedagogic method aimed at embodying cultural, social and political ideals in the body of the individual. Thus it is not necessarily productive to approach silat primarily as a form of martial arts. These ideals are reflected and affected via certain attitudes towards the body, its dispositions, potentialities and limits. Changes in the practice of pencak silat over time have also been intimately intertwined with

broader processes of social and cultural change in Indonesia. This historical overview has established that the development of each of the most influential aliran in West Java has been linked to distinct eras, social classes and reflected in specific bodily dispositions.

Cimande, for example, reflected the habitus of the Sundanese peasantry; the etiquette and demeanor of the aristocracy informed Cikalong; more recent aliran, especially Tajimalela, reflect their radically different transformed social environment. The different demands placed upon the body led to the birth of new body techniques. Changes in the composition and definition of society must inevitably result in changes in the form and meaning of the body techniques that society produces. For example, to compare the body techniques of Cimande and Tajimalela without taking into consideration the socio-economic conditions in which each evolved could produce only the most superficial of insights.

Having shown how evolving social and cultural landscapes produce different body techniques, I have then outlined how the ‘inner power’ schools sought to find equilibrium between the inner flows, forces and desires of the individual body and the larger social body of which it was a part. Following on from this, we have seen how ‘sportization’ has charted a movement within pencak silat away from a focus upon the specifics of the individual body towards the more abstract ‘body’ of the nation and state. Invoking discourses of both ‘modernity’ and ‘tradition’, IPSI acted as an agent of state approved values. These attempts to create a unified pencak silat body (here as ‘organization’) both reflected and embodied the ideology of the New Order. Finally, analysis of the

mobilization and gradual institutionalisation of pencak silat bodies (here as ‘individuals’) for the purpose of achieving particular political aims. The discourses of Indonesian nationalism, military ideology, modernity, Western science, medicine and global sport have all had substantial impacts upon configurations of pencak silat in West Java, that have manifested at the level of altering body techniques and the social institutions through which they are trained into individual bodies.

Silsilah have played an important role in pencak silat culture in West Java by establishing ‘verifiable’ lines of transmission between current teachers and previous masters. More generally in Sundanese culture, issues regarding silsilah are related to the concept of *pancakaki* (five directions), “the relationship between one person and another according to a genealogy”.<sup>3</sup> The word *penca* is thought by some practitioners to derive from *pancakaki*.<sup>4</sup> To do *penca* is to *berpancakaki*, to establish one’s relationship to the horizontal axis (the social), the vertical axis (the divine) and the transversal (the psychosomatic relationship between the ‘inside and the ‘outside’). Silsilah legitimates a perguruan in the present by linking it to a past identified with ‘authentic’ pencak silat tradition. During fieldwork in West Java it was often said to me that the history of pencak silat could only be understood through practice. The invocation of past masters in the silsilah finds form in the physical dispositions that are trained into the body via the latihan. By memorising and internalising these body techniques, the student becomes part of a chain of transmission of *ilmu* that extends back to the founding ancestors.

History in this sense is a type of ‘body memory’, a habitus that is transmitted from one generation of practitioners to the next. As Bourdieu states, “the habitus, embodied

history, internalised as a second nature and so forgotten as history... is the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product”.<sup>5</sup> The ‘character’ of a particular aliran finds its perfect embodiment in this founding figure. The oral tradition of ‘fight events’ is important in this regard, as in these legends the personality, physical disposition and exploits of the founder act as a guide for the student. In the case of perguruan that do not trace a verifiable historical lineage, the invocation of figures such as Abah Kahir and Haji Ibrahim, or mythic ancestors such as Prabu Siliwangi, is a means of paying homage, of recognising their cultural legacy. In this regard one can draw an analogy with academic writing, where a particular methodology or theoretical approach is strengthened or ‘authenticated’ by references to acknowledged ‘masters’ in the field. In other instances, such as that of Tajimalela, a return to the origins of silat, and even movement itself, takes one back to the body. Silat is naturalized by locating it as a potentiality within the body, and made sacred by tracing a vertical line to the divine.

The word *aliran* is commonly defined as “stream” or “style”. From the perspective of some traditionalists, a pencak silat aliran is a set of techniques and combat methods transmitted through a verifiable lineage starting with the founder. Lines of transmission are of central importance, as a guarantee that techniques are taught and practiced in their original form. In the case of West Java, these techniques are considered to be authentically Sundanese, grounded in Sundanese history and an important means of defining Sundanese identity. As has been shown, the expanding network of teachers and students in areas such as Cianjur led to a proliferation of techniques and teaching

methods. Variation could be accepted as authentic if the innovator was part of an established lineage and did not go outside of the ‘standards’ (Ind: *patokan*).

In contrast new groups such as Tajimalela stress an alternative perspective on aliran. Defining each as embodying a particular character or principle found in, but not limited to, specific sets of techniques and movements. For example, the punch of a foreign martial arts style could be done with the character of Kari or Syahbandar. Each technique of each aliran is seen as articulating a particular principle. In the words of Yosis Siswoyo, the head of the Bandarkarima pencak silat school:

The philosophy of pencak silat is contained within movement. This philosophy can be at the level of a self-defense strategy, but it can also be used in the everyday as a method for living an ethical life. For example there are Suliweh steps and Jurus steps. What is the meaning of ‘jurus’? Honest and straight (Ind: *jujur dan lurus*). This means you must move on and on, straight to the point without any improvisation. That is the character manifested in that name. But in life we can’t always move forward can we? So, then there is Suliweh...move to the side a little so an opponent can pass, and you can keep moving. Pencak is *rasa*. If in the past you went to a guru and asked what pencak was like they would answer “stand up!”. Now some may consider that to be rude, but it isn’t. We ask because we really want to understand. In order to understand we have to be able to feel it. The old masters were extremely methodical, in my opinion extremely modern. It was just that they couldn’t articulate it with words, only through movement.<sup>6</sup>

From this perspective, learning an aliran involves internalizing a way of being in the world. Sets of self-defense techniques are transmitted to a student, but more broadly they come to embody a generative principle. For example the Kari style equates with speed, Madi with endurance, and Syahbandar with flexibility and ‘softness’.<sup>7</sup> Jurus are a method for learning, a system without closure that in turn generates new jurus.

Pencak silat in West Java has evolved from small-scale individual and group orientated forms of initiation and practice to larger scaled standardized and

institutionalized forms. This is perhaps best illustrated via the terms *dibekali* (inherited) and *dibentuk* (in this context: 'made'). The contrast between them suggests the shift in stress within the evolution of silat. Earlier individually-orientated forms of training aimed to provide the silat practitioner with a repertoire of skills through close relationships between teacher and student; the small numbers of students allowed focus upon the individual physical and emotional characteristics of each student. The 'modernization' of practice in larger urban centers, largely instigated by IPSI, involved a secularization and 'opening up' of the social arena of the latihan. In the majority of contemporary perguruan, membership is open to anyone who is physically capable; registration fees and the compulsory wearing of uniforms have replaced oaths and ritual initiations. The larger contemporary schools employ semi-bureaucratic organizational structures, often making a distinction between administrative staff and practitioners. Sheer numbers have meant that the close relationships between student and guru are no longer practical and in many cases the majority of students have no contact whatsoever with the guru as actual teaching done by delegated trainers. Single training units can consist of up to 100 students meaning that the process of teaching in many instances has become more generalized with less attention paid to the physical and psychological specifics of the individual student. Bodies are 'made' in line with a methodological template.

The early 1970's emerged as a pivotal period in pencak silat's development. The promotion of sporting pencak silat by IPSI during this period corresponded with the New Order drive to cement its power. IPSI's endeavored to standardize pencak silat and the legitimate use of the silat body. Imaginings of a glorious past golden age of the *ksatria*



were reinvented in the present and linked conceptually to state ideology and the ethics of sportsmanship. A pencak silat body became a body that was also loyal to the state. The medium of sport has acted as an increasingly global idiom that links practitioners to a common set of practices, that in turn reflect prevailing invented traditions. Despite defining pencak silat as consisting of four aspects; sport, self-defense, art, and the mental-spiritual, the emphasis placed by IPSI upon sport reflects the vision it has for it. Sport requires the codification of rules and adherence to a common set of values, a new habitus.

Pierre Bourdieu defines the habitus as a set of bodily dispositions of the individual who continues to relive the past in the present. An individual cannot contain a habitus, as it is a product of the social, “created and recreated, produced and reproduced through interaction and ‘tradition’ or social practices of memory”.<sup>8</sup> As a habitus, sport is a perfect medium for enculturating state approved values. In the words of Bourdieu:

It is perhaps by thinking about what is most specific about sport, that is, the regulated manipulation of the body, about the fact that sport, like all disciplines in all total or totalitarian institutions, convents, prisons, asylums, political parties, etc., is a way of obtaining from the body an adhesion that the mind might refuse, that one could reach a better understanding of the usage made by most authoritarian regimes of sport. Bodily discipline is the instrument par excellence of every kind of domestication.<sup>9</sup>

Sporting bodies are also bodies that are under the public gaze, and hence are transformed into symbols of nation and state, of the legitimate body and its use. As Alter states:

When the individual embodies fantastic ideals such as Teutonic might or knightly courage rather than labor power, then strength, energy and vitality become political metaphors rather than simple measures of values. Fitness can be used to invoke feelings of patriotism precisely because it is not an issue in an industrial economy where workers are chattels: preverbal cogs in a machine.<sup>10</sup>

The reification of forms, such as in the compulsory jurus (Ind: *jurus wajib*) created by IPSI, has constituted a shift away from the experiential and practical dimension towards the purely ideological. Mastery of form has become an end in itself, with jurus taking on an almost iconic value as symbols of nation and state. The reluctance in West Java to adopt the standardized jurus produced by IPSI in part reflects ethnic and regional pride. On a deeper level it reflects radically different views regarding the body, for as Armstrong states, “the body is seen and experienced as a representation of politically dominant cultural models”.<sup>11</sup>

The conceptual differences between traditional approaches to the pencak silat body and that of IPSI are most clearly evident in the approach towards *olahraga*. In traditional pencak silat aliran, *olahraga* is the first basic stage of strengthening the physical body. Jurus are a means to an end, a method for increasing the responsiveness and sensitivity of the body. In Cikalong for example, jurus are understood as teaching one how to process an opponent’s energy, as well as one’s own, both externally and internally. In this respect, borrowing from Foucault, jurus can be considered as “techniques of the self”, that is “the means by which individuals can affect their own bodies, souls, thoughts and conduct so as to form and transform themselves”.<sup>12</sup> External form is only important so far as it stimulates *rasa*, inner thoughts, feelings and perceptions.

The pattern of development towards increasing standardization in pencak silat has not been without exceptions. Despite the continuing influence of the political inscription of the silat body that occurred during the 1970’s and 80s, new configurations of pencak silat

have merged that posit radically different relationships between the body, self and society. The urban kampung of Bandung produced new forms of silat that were a response to the specific socio-economic conditions existent there. The rapid growth of inner power schools reflected another type of response. The discourse of 'inner power' outlines a path to self-realization and self-empowerment framed by the powers within the body. In the context of the sportisation of pencak silat, it constituted a re-enchantment of the body, of its limitless potentiality.

In contrast to sporting silat's focus upon the mastery of form, inner power delved inwards. The discourse of western science was appropriated as a language that could expand the horizon of the body and its capabilities. From the perspective of inner power practitioners, outward relationships are shaped and determined by inner realities. Hence exploring and developing the inner world of the body is not just an individual quest, but also a social responsibility. As a somatic ideology, inner power has attempted to re-humanize the New Order's dry rhetoric of 'development' and the 'complete person'. The body's inner flows and forces are taken as a microcosm of the world. Inner power practitioners would be in total agreement with the words of Marcel Mauss in his seminal essay 'body techniques' when he said:

I believe that precisely at the bottom of all our mystical states there are body techniques which we have not studied, but which were studied in China and India, even in very remote periods. I think that there are necessarily biological means of entering into 'communication with God.'<sup>13</sup>

In considering the social and political role of pencak silat throughout history, more specifically that of the jawara, it is important to recognize that their power derived from

physical skills and various forms of embodied knowledge such as invulnerability. In discussing them as being ‘social actors’, whose character is defined by social location, beliefs and values, there is a tendency to ignore their embodiment, their physicality and charisma. Physical strength and skill is a form of social capital. As has been discussed, fighting skills were the foundations of power in pre-colonial Java.

In the crowded neighborhoods of contemporary Indonesia this is still the case, with jawara and preman fighting over turf and control of limited resources. With nothing to sell but their own muscles, jawara have been routinely mobilized towards the achievement of particular social and political ends. As individual bodies they have constituted a nuisance to those in power, a potential source of disruption to the established order. When institutionalized they are transformed into a valuable ‘human resource’, “available as – one might say – ‘mine-able’ assistants of the authorities”.<sup>14</sup> Groups such as SMI and Pendekar Banten represent the incorporation of the culture of the jawara within the state apparatus. Martial valor is equated exclusively with national strength. To defend oneself is also to defend the nation, the body is trained not for oneself but for ‘Indonesia’.

If there is an underlying thread to the myriad dimensions of pencak silat it is perhaps to do with the transformative power of the body. The body in pencak silat may be construed primarily as a social, not personal domain, with body techniques being the product of specific social relations that change over time. The continually shifting socio-cultural conditions in Indonesia will continue to effect the theory, practice and organization of pencak silat in West Java. In tracing the history of pencak silat we also

trace the shifting configurations of the body and its modes of construction. The organization and training of the body in pencak silat, via body techniques and the social institutions through which they are transmitted, reflects a politics of the body and the powers ascribed to it.

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<sup>1</sup> Nicole Sault, 'Introduction', in Nicole Sault (ed.), *Many Mirrors: Body Image and Social Relations*, Rutgers University Press, Piscataway, 1994. View online at <http://www.raiz.org/mirrors/bodyimage.html>.

<sup>2</sup> In Lock, 1993, pg. 140.

<sup>3</sup> Ajip Rosidi, 'Ciri-Ciri Manusia dan Kebudayaan Sunda', in Dr. Edi S. Ekadjati (Ed.), *Masyarakat Sunda dan Kebudayaannya*, PT Girimukti Pasaka, Jakarta, 1984, pp. 126-160.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Mochtar Saleh, 15/06/99, Bandung.

<sup>5</sup> Bourdieu, 1980, pg.56.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with Yosis Siswoyo, 27/07/99, Bandung.

<sup>7</sup> Interview with Yosis Siswoyo, 27/07/99, Bandung.

<sup>8</sup> Bourdieu, 1977, pg. 124.

<sup>9</sup> Bourdieu, 1990, pg. 167.

<sup>10</sup> Alter, 1994, pg. 557.

<sup>11</sup> David Armstrong, *Political Anatomy of the Body*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983, pg. 195.

<sup>12</sup> Barry Smart, *Michel Foucault*, Ellis Horwood Limited and Tavistock Publications Limited, Sussex and London, 1985, pg. 108.

<sup>13</sup> Mauss, 1979, pg. 122.

<sup>14</sup> Loren Ryter, 1998, pg. 61.

## **Appendixes:**

### **Pencak Silat Styles found in West Java <sup>1</sup>**

#### *Bandrong:*

Style local to the Banten region, heavily influenced by Sumatran pencak silat.

#### *Benjang:*

A form of wrestling originating from the Ujung berung district of Bandung. Elements of Benjang have influenced West Javanese pencak silat, especially in and around Bandung.

#### *Cigondewah:*

Style developed by Mama Marzuki from the village of Cigondewah, Bandung that combines elements of Kari, Madi and Syahbandar pencak silat. In modern times the style has integrated spiritualist practices involving ritual supplications and seances at Mama Marzuki's grave.

#### *Cikalong:*

From the Cikalong district of Cianjur, this style was developed by the aristocrat Raden Haji Ibrahim (1816-1906) after studying under a number of teachers, including Bang Kari and Bang Madi. One of the most influential styles in West Java, it places an emphasis upon the development of heightened sensitivity in the hands and forearms in order to read and counter an opponent's moves.

#### *Cikaret:*

A style incorporating elements of Cikalong and Cimande developed by Haji Ahmad Sanusi, a student of Raden Haji Ibrahim. Haji Sanusi established a pesantren in the Cikaret area of Sukaraja, West Java, during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century where pencak silat training was combined with religious learning.

*Cimacan:*

Also known as *silat maung*, a style that simulates the movements of a tiger. Reputed to originate from the Mount Gede region near Bogor. Can involve spirit possession in which the practitioner embodies the spirit of a tiger.<sup>2</sup> In the contemporary pencak silat world the possession element has all but disappeared.

*Cimande:*

From the Cimande district of Bogor, reputedly first developed and spread by Abah Kahir in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Generally considered to be the oldest and most influential style in West Java. Focuses upon arm-based counter-offensive techniques as well as dance known as *ibing penca*.

*Jalakrawi*

From the Banten region, this style, in contrast to the majority of West Javanese styles, focuses upon kicks and other leg movements possibly due to Sumatran influence.

*Kari*

Named after Bang Kari, a pencak silat master reputedly from Jambi, South Sumatra who moved to Jakarta around the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There he taught Raden Haji Ibrahim, the founder of Cikalong. Kari is a 'hard' and aggressive style that emphasizes fast combinations of offensive movements.

*Kuntulan:*

Style from the town of Cirebon on the north coast of West Java.

*Madi*

Named after Bang Madi, a native of Jakarta in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. A horse trader by trade, Bang Madi was renowned for his close-range fighting skills, and his ability to

follow and anticipate an opponent's movements. Like Bang Kari, he also taught Raden Haji Ibrahim.

*Nampon:*

Developed in Bandung by Uwa Nampon in the 1930's, this style combines pencak silat movements with breathing techniques with the aim of developing inner power, referred to as *spierkracht*.

*Sanalika:*

Cikalong and Syahbandar derived style, developed by the Cianjur aristocrat Raden Utuk Sumadipraja and formally established as a pencak silat school in 1926.

*Sekaregang:*

Trance based style from the Banjar/ Garut region. No additional information available on this style.

*Sera:*

Developed by Wah Sera, reputed to be a student of the Cimande master Abah Kahir. Most prevalent in the Bogor region, as well as Jakarta.

*Syahbandar:*

Developed by Mama Kosim (1776-1880) a native of Jambi in South Sumatra who moved to Purwakarta in West Java, becoming a student of the sufi teacher Ajengan Cirata. Syahbandar technique is renowned for its 'soft' evasive movements.

*Tajimalela:*

Developed in Bandung in the early 1970s by Raden Djadjat Kusumadinata. A new style not tracing links to any existing pencak silat lineage. Initially focused purely on self-defense, it has been adapted with great success to the sporting competition forum.



*Terumbu:*

From the Banten region, reputed to have been developed in the 17<sup>th</sup> century making it one of the oldest styles in West Java.

*Timbangan:*

Style technically and philosophically similar to the Japanese martial art Aikido, developed by Raden Anggakusumah in Bandung in the 1930's. Without kicks, punches or other offensive techniques, the style involves using an opponent's energy against them.

*Ulin Makao:*

A mixture of Chinese and West Javanese styles, developed in Pandeglang, Banten. First taught by Ki Abu Arwanta in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, who combined techniques learnt from a Macao martial artist whom he defeated in a challenge fight.

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<sup>1</sup> This list does not include styles local to Jakarta and the Betawi ethnic group. During the course of field research, several other reputed styles were mentioned by informants, however no additional information was available regarding them. These include Ulin Papat Kalima Pancer, Tanjakan and Ulin Cibolerang.

<sup>2</sup> For a brief account of Cimacan silat see Wessing, 1986, pg. 56.

## **Jurus Cimande**

### **Jurus *Buang Kelid***

1. *Tonjok bareng*
2. *Tonjok sabeulah*
3. *Kelid*
4. *Selup*
5. *Timpah sabeulah*
6. *Timpah serong*
7. *Timpah dua beulah*
8. *Teke tampa*
9. *Teke purilit*
10. *Batekan*
11. *Tewekan*
12. *Besotan*
13. *Guaran*
14. *Besot guar*
15. *Kelid dibeulah*
16. *Selup dibeulah*
17. *Kelid tonjok*
18. *Selup tonjok*
19. *Peuncitan*
20. *Serong panggul*
21. *Bagolan*
22. *Serong purilit*
23. *Sabet pedang*
24. *Timpah bohong*
25. *Singgul serong*
26. *Singgulan*
27. *Kelid tilu*
28. *Selup tilu*
29. *Beulit kacang*
30. *Kelid lima*
31. *Selup lima*
32. *Pakalah leutik*
33. *Pakalah gede*

**Jurus Pepedangan**

1. Ela-ela
2. *Ela-ela sabeulah*
3. *Selup kuriling*
4. *Selup jagangan*
5. *Selup tagogan*
6. *Selup piceunan*
7. *Balungbang*
8. *Balungbang sabeulah*
9. *Serongan*
10. *Serongan sabeulah*
11. *Samberan*
12. *Samberan sabeulah*
13. *Selup piceunan dua kali*
14. *Opat likur*
15. *Selup piceunan dua kali dabeulah*
16. *Opat Likur sbeulah*
17. *Selup bohong*

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