

Silat Melayu

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Alam Berkembang Menjadi Guru

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THIS ISSUE: Silat Seni Gayong Galore! Silat Kuntau Tekpi! Who Are The Melayu?

EDITORIAL

Dedicated to the Daeng

Wow. I can't believe it's been two issues already! Forgive me the fantasy that one day, I'll be able to say that out loud with a much higher number. Yes, barely a babe, SILAT MELAYU is now into its second week of publication, with who knows how many more to come before it has to be put to sleep. Fortunately, the ezine is free and published online, meaning it is driven by the strength of only one thing: me.

In a way, it's a blessing because there are no financial constraints to consider as in print media and no advertising pressure to include contents the editorial team deems unworthy. However, this arrangement has its setbacks as well. Readers inadvertently bore easily reading articles from only one point of view.

This is why support from SILAT MELAYU's subscribers are paramount to keeping this project alive. Positive or negative feedback assures me that at least, the ezine is being read and I'm not just crowing to the wind. Creative contributions will also allow for a more varied opinion and knowledge base.

When guru Sheikh Shamsuddin's book, THE MALAY ART OF SELF-DEFENCE: SILAT SENI GAYONG (plug! plug!) was published in America, support was all he needed. He appreciated even my small contribution with a complimentary signed copy of the book, which is being reviewed this very issue. As a thank you to his thank you, this issue will be dedicated to the late Datuk Daeng Meor Abdul Rahman and Silat Seni Gayong.

That being said, a fuzzy thank you goes out to all who have supported me all this while and continue to do so. If you will just stay around a little bit longer, I'm sure I can whip up something even more interesting for you to read.

Now, it only remains to be seen if SILAT MELAYU will garner the kind of support I hope it will, or go the way of other ezines, destined to be pathetic autobiographical electronic junk mail forced upon anyone's inbox it can fit in. Salam persilatan!



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I promise to find a better photo soon.

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Who are the Melayu?

By SABRI ZAIN



Malaysia's political borders (in light colour) (source: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/>)

The Melayu are the race of people who inhabit the Malay Peninsula (what is today Peninsular Malaysia) and portions of adjacent islands of Southeast Asia, including the east coast of Sumatra, the coast of Borneo, and smaller islands that lie between these areas.¹

Anthropologists trace the home of the Melayu race to the northwestern part of Yunnan, in China. These tribal proto-Malay, or Jakun, were a seafaring people. They were once probably a people of coastal Borneo who expanded into Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula as a result of their trading and seafaring way of life.

These sea-tribes, referred to by the Portuguese historian Godinho de Eredia as Saletes (Orang Selat, or People of the Straits), played a major part in the making of the great Melayu empires of Malacca and Johor. The present-day Melayu of the Peninsula and coasts of the Malay Archipelago are described anthropologically as deuterio-Malays and are the descendants of the tribal proto-Malays mixed with modern Indian, Thai, Arab and Chinese blood. Melayu culture itself has been strongly influenced by that of other peoples, including the Siamese, Javanese, Sumatran and, especially, Indians.

The influence of Hindu India was historically very great, and the Melayu were largely Hinduized before they were converted to Islam in the 15th century. For nearly two thousand years, the

unremitting traffic of traders between the Archipelago and India resulted in frequent inter-marriages along the whole of the west coast of the peninsula, especially Tamils and Gujeras.

Some Hindu ritual survives in Melayu culture, as in the second part of the marriage ceremony and in various ceremonies of state. Malays have also preserved some of their more ancient, animistic beliefs in spirits of the soil and jungle, often having recourse to medicine men or shamans (bomohs) for the treatment of ailments.

In the northern states of Perlis and Kedah, inter-marriages with Thais were commonplace. The east coast state of Kelantan still has traces of Javanese culture that date back to the era of the Majapahit Empire of the fourteenth century.

The Sumatran kingdom of Aceh dominated Perak for over a century. The Bugis from Indonesia's Celebes Islands colonised Selangor and fought for rulers in States along the length of the peninsula - from Kedah to Johor. The Minangkabaus from Sumatra had their own independent chiefdoms in what is today Negri Sembilan. This mix of different races to form what is the modern Malay can be clearly seen in the lineage of, for example, Malacca royalty.

Sultan Muhammad Shah married a Tamil from south India. Sultan Mansur Shah married a Javanese, a Chinese and a Siamese-the Siamese wife bore two future Sultans of Pahang. It was this diversity of races, cultures and influences that has given the modern Melayu race the rich and unique historical heritage it has today.

¹ This article previously appeared as 'The Malays' <http://www.sabrizain.demon.co.uk/malaya/malays.htm>

MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS

Difference of a different sort

By MOHD NADZRIN WAHAB



A map depicting Melaka under British rule in 1854
(source: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/>)

The Melayu, as Malaysians of Nusantara stock are so conveniently termed, are in reality comprised of many different peoples. This is due to some social engineering on the part of the Malaysian Government since Malaysia came into being.

Traditionally, the term Melayu referred only to those peoples who inhabited the Sultanate of Melaka as is evident in the account related in Hikayat Hang Tuah. During the famed Laksamana's visit to the Majapahit court, the ruler asked to see the wardancing of the 'Melayu'.

Modern day Melayu in Malaysia, however, is an ambiguous term that encompasses anyone with obvious Melayu complexion in form, custom and behavior; can speak the Melayu language and is Muslim. Over several hundred years of genetic mixing, this can include strains from Arab, Persian, Yunan, Tionghua, India, Jawa, Bugis bloods and everything else in between.

[IMHO] It is probable that the United Malay National Organisation (UMNO), the political party which currently heads the government had much to do with this acceptance in its modern sense. Even though the first Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tunku Abdul Rahman was of Melayu royal lineage, the third, Tun Hussein Onn was of Melayu-Turkish descent and the fourth, Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamed, of Melayu-Indian parentage.

(The author himself has a genetic cocktail of Persian – Indian – Arab – Achenese – Ceylonese – Portuguese – Melayu blood and is not one of few Melayu who share the same confusion)

UMNO's roster was open to anyone who fulfilled the three general requirements above. So much so that personalities such as Datuk Seri Mohd Khir Toyo (Chief Minister of Selangor, Jawa descent), Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar (Foreign Affairs Minister, Melayu-Arab descent) Datuk Seri Kadir Sheikh Fadzir (Tourism Minister, Melayu-Indian descent) are deemed full fledged Melayu.

This is no longer a surprise to Malaysians but is accepted since it is also claimed that there are no 'true' Melayu anymore. The almost *en toto* integration of many genetic strains into one racial entity is the cause of wonder for many scholars who attribute this openness as the source of the genial acceptance of ethnic Indians and Chinese into the Malaysian nation-state.

However, cultural segregation doesn't occur amongst the Melayu the way it does between Caucasians and Africans in the West. Since the skin colour of the Melayu range from the darkest dark to the lightest light, this is often not the determinant.

Often, it is cultural stratification that takes place. Once upon a time, stratification occurred along royalty-commoner lines of demarcation. This can be traced back to the historical myth of Demang Lebar Daun and Sang Sapurba Taram Sri Tribuana.

Demang Lebar Daun was the progenitor for the Raja Melayu of the eventual Melaka Sultanate who lived in unrecorded history. In the Sejarah Melayu (Malay Annals), Demang Lebar Daun was of a lineage that descended from Bukit Siguntang

in Sumatera, which in turn descended from an Indian princess who was briefly married to Iskandar Zulkarnain a.k.a Alexander The Great (however, historical scrutiny casts serious doubts on the claim, even though Alexander was rumoured to have taken an Eastern princess as his concubine).

The agreement between Demang Lebar Daun and Sang Sapurba Taram Sri Tribuana², who spoke for the ruled citizens (the people) – and whose descendants eventually held the office of the Bendahara – was that the Raja Melayu would never oppress the people and the people would never commit treason. However, if either event were to happen first, the contract would be void.

This has happened numerous times in history. An example being Hang Jebat's treachery when Sultan Mansor ordered Hang Tuah put to death on suspicion of having an affair with the monarch's concubine. Hang Jebat eventually died in the arms of Hang Tuah who had returned from hiding (the Bendahara saw wisdom in belaying the king's decree). However, to this day, the debate rages on, who broke the covenant first, the Sultan for executing an innocent man upon dubious claims or Hang Jebat who ran amok to avenge his blood brother's 'death'?

[ORAL] Thus, the relationship of the people, the rakyat, towards royalty has been a principal defining characteristic of the Melayu. It is said that the Melayu, as compared to their brethren who live in Indonesia, enjoy peace of mind and body simply because of their loyalty towards their royal rulers, who, in modern Malaysia, occupy only figurehead status with no real executive powers³.

Even the Melayu language denotes stratification. The historical Melayu referred to himself in the third article as 'hamba' (slave) and the second party as 'tuan hamba' (you). In fact, the word 'saya' (me) stems from the original word 'sahaya' which also means slave. Meanwhile, the Sultan is accorded special vocabulary when he speaks or when spoken of to differentiate between him and commoners.

'Beta' (me), 'titah' (decree), 'beradu' (sleep), 'berangkat' (travel), tuanku (my lord) and many other examples show that not only is the monarchy to be respected, but to be revered. Although this is an overt remnant of Hindu influence, the coming of Islam could not change it totally, but merely gave it different validation.

Allah as the Creator of the Realms, appoints

mankind as Khalifah or Vicegerents on Earth to administrate his servants wisely and justly. By this justification, the Raja Melayu assumed the role of the Khalifah of Islam, if not the piety of the earliest ones. As deputies of the Prophet in their region, the Raja Melayu were now to be obeyed by the rakyat the way the Ummah obey him.

Below the status of the appointed Sultan, exist bluebloods who are often granted titles and land by the monarch which further strengthens their position in society. These bluebloods inherited titles such as Raja, Tengku, Daeng, Megat, Abang, Syed and Teuku (the last two specialized for descendants of the Holy Prophet Muhammad) that cemented their progeny's claim in the social pecking order.

[IMHO] I personally believe that it was the late Datuk Meor Rahman Meor Hashim's royal descent and proximity to the palaces of Perak and Johor that greatly enhanced Silat Seni Gayong's spread throughout Malaysia, aside from his own and his students' efforts in promoting the art. Other silat masters who were not of royal patronage or lineage found it harder to be accepted. In fact, their efforts were far more open to opposition by rival perguruan than the royal-undertoned Silat Seni Gayong.

To this day, having such a prefix in one's name facilitates business dealings, political connections, acceptance of marriage proposals and other profitable ventures. It takes a while for expatriates and foreign companies investing in Malaysia to understand that the better connected you are to a high-ranking blueblood, the better your chances are of clinching business opportunities. This isn't just my opinion (that's why no IMHO). Just ask any businessman.

As the dawn of the new millennium brought many changes to the world, so too has modern Malaysia seen more social transparency with the arrival of the Towering Malays⁴ who break national and international records, achieve financial greatness and generally debunk the myth of the Lazy Malay, the Fatalist Malay or the Extremist Malay.

However, it remains to be seen if this archaic vestige of dual caste-ism will disappear from the psyche of the Melayu or forever be entrenched by hundreds of years of socialization.

Do you have any misconceptions or corrections you wish to be heard about Silat? Reply with the subject line: MISCONCEPTION.

² M. Y. Hashim, *The Malay Sultanate of Malacca*, Dewan Bahasa Dan Pustaka, Kuala Lumpur, 1992, p32.

³ Azlan Ghanie, 2002.

⁴ A term coined by Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to describe ordinary Malays who strive for success and achieve them with no compromise in their noble values.

MIGHTIER THAN THE KERIS

The Malay Art of Self-Defence

Silat Seni Gayong

Review by MOHD NADZRIN WAHAB

Remember what Buzz Aldrin said when he stepped on the moon? No one does, because Armstrong went first⁵. In the same way, the West has rarely accorded its fair share of silat credit, often citing it as an Indonesian martial art, with anything of a Malaysian nature (where?) accorded the status of 'variants'.

It is true that although there exist styles such as Cimande, Cikalong, Lintau, Terlak and many others within the borders of Malaysia, but many nationalists are hesitant to call them Malaysian, because of their obvious Indonesian roots.

However, not all silat arts were imported wholesale from Indonesia. There do exist fundamentally and popularly accepted Malaysian Melayu Martial Arts (M3A) that have been flourishing for the past 50 years and more. One of these is the ever present, ever regal, Silat Seni Gayong.

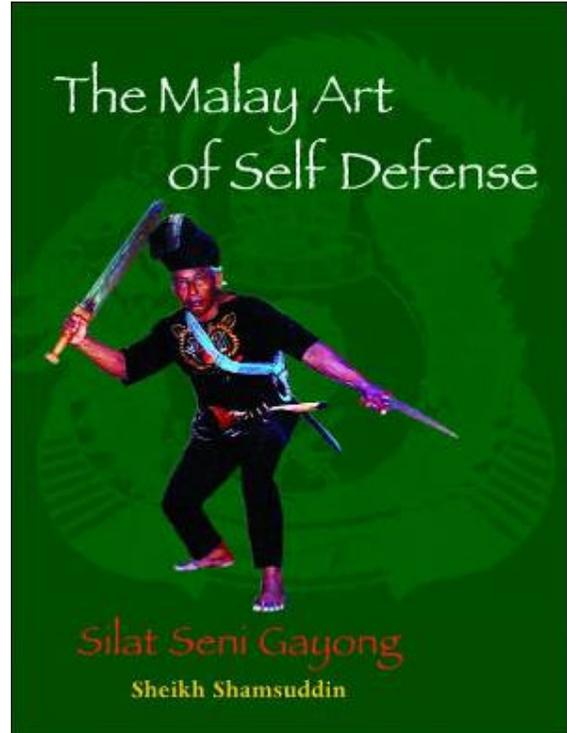
Once looked upon curiously by Indonesian-styled martial artists in the West, Silat Seni Gayong soon became known for its brutal locks and throws, something many Malaysians were already acquainted with.

Several masters who visited or relocated to Western countries eventually became the vanguards of Silat Seni Gayong in that region. Names such as guru Sulaiman Shariff (USA), guru Yeop Ariffin Yeop Mahidin (UK) and guru Sheikh Shamsuddin Salim (USA) are known for their tireless efforts in promoting Silat Seni Gayong across borders.



Cikgu Joel Champ

Now, guru Shamsuddin has taken it one step further, by publishing a comprehensive book on Silat Seni



Gayong for public consumption, to be published anywhere in the world.

Published by North Atlantic Books and available online at Barnes & Noble, the book titled THE MALAY ART OF SELF-DEFENCE: SILAT SENI GAYONG (GAYONG) contains a straightforward primer on silat and its history from a Malaysian perspective and that of Silat Seni Gayong itself.

Sourced from interviews and articles readily available in Bahasa Melayu and tied together with his own knowledge and experience in the art, guru Shamsuddin has created a powerful introduction to M3A by way of Silat Seni Gayong.

GAYONG gives a brief explanation to clear away confusions regarding the many different organisations that purport to teach Silat



⁵ Unabashed dialogue lifting from the 'First Flight' (2nd season) episode of STAR TREK: ENTERPRISE.

Seni Gayong. He makes it clear to the reader, that there is no enmity between the organisations and all of them accept one unifying fact, that the late Datuk Meor Abdul Rahman Meor Hashim is the Mahaguru of Silat Seni Gayong.

Readers are taken through the various customs and rituals of Silat Seni Gayong, including the famed hot oil bath. Unfortunately, the author barely skims the issue of *kebatinan* (spirituality) in Silat Seni Gayong, probably due to the level of credibility such topics attain in the West.



Cikgu Joel Champ and Guru Shamsuddin

However, Malaysians reading GAYONG would be sorely disappointed by his decision because it remains one of Silat Seni Gayong's hallmarks.

Happily though, the next section is filled with pictures and pictures of Silat Seni Gayong techniques with funky translated names such as the Sinking Python, Golden Locked Slicer, Deadly Anchor, Broken Paddle Overcooked Rice and Broken Path Supporting Corpse. Can it really get any better than that? On another note, I would have liked the photos to be larger and with better definition.

Due to the small size and both performers in the technique series wearing black, there's not much detail to be had if anyone wanted to try them out. Be reminded though, there IS an indemnity disclaimer at the beginning of the book, something the author has probably become

recently acquainted with, since in Malaysia I have yet to find a book on M3A with such a creature.

Probably the most valuable addition to the book is a section of questions and answers where the author has collected 34 of the most valid and inane questions ever to be asked by a foreigner (most of them his own students) about Silat and Melayu culture, which he answers satisfactorily.

A section of historical and current Silat Seni Gayong photographs illustrate just how far this M3A has come since it was first taught publicly at Pulau Sudong in 1942.

Guru Shamsuddin is obviously familiar with the difficulties non-natives who study silat have with the Melayu language and the terms used in the course of teaching the art. He includes a glossary of the terms and a basic conversational helper which ensures that anyone can at least ask if he's attractive to someone else (Is it hot? - *Panas?*).

All in all, GAYONG is an invaluable resource to have for anyone keen on finding out just what *is* a Malaysian Melayu Martial Art?

I recommend it to those who are currently, intend to or are just curious about studying Silat Melayu. Future books on M3A will discover that this one is truly a tough act to follow.

Guru Shamsuddin can be contacted at shamsudd@cdnet.cod.edu or through the official United States Gayong Federation website <http://home.att.net/~gayong>.

SILAT MELAYU welcomes copies/ scans of manuscripts or books to be translated and/ or reviewed in this column. Reply with the subject: REVIEW.



Silat Seni Gayong is presented as several progressive series of techniques that culminate in a deadlock or strangulation. The book provides details on the concepts and philosophies governing Silat Seni Gayong, evasion, striking and locks that make up the hallmarks of the style.

Silat Seni Gayong Malaysia

By JOEL CHAMP

Silat Seni Gayong is a martial art from Malaysia that has a long and distinguished history stemming from the old Majapahit Empire of pirates, warriors and tradesmen that has found its way throughout Southeast Asia, over to Europe and finally to the shores of America.

Silat Seni Gayong is currently being led in Illinois, America under the guidance of Cikgu (teacher) Sheikh Shamsuddin Salim, originally from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and his band of Instructors and students.

Cikgu "Sam" is the head founder of the United States Gayong Federation who now calls America his home. Cikgu Sam is the highest ranked exponent of Silat Seni Gayong in America that has trained directly under the late Mahaguru Datuk Meor Abdul Rahman and his first batch of instructors.

Silat Seni Gayong is an all encompassing art that has among its arsenal; striking and tearing techniques, grappling and counter grappling tactics, agility and escaping drills, and a large assortment of extensive weapons training that helps complete this devastating art.



This art in its entirety is not some new cross training fusion of many arts. This form of silat is pure and raw holding long established roots that have been infamous in Southeast Asia for years.

The late Mahaguru Datuk Meor Abdul Rahman established the Malaysian art of Silat Seni Gayong, making it the first officially registered and recognized silat system by the Malaysian Government.

Datuk, as he is fondly called by thousands of loyal Gayong practitioners, comes from a long line of Bugis warriors. He is the direct descendent of the famous Bugis Warrior, Daeng Kuning who was given the title of "Panglima Hitam" or "Black Knight".

It was from this Bugis warrior that Gayong first found its roots and spread throughout the Indonesian and Malaysian Archipelago. Daeng Kuning and his brothers spread the art of what was then called Silat Sendi Harimau from Celebes Island throughout Southeast Asia that spread from modern day Indonesia and Malaysia to Singapore and modern day Thailand.

But, it was by the work of the legendary Datuk Meor Abdul Rahman that Silat Seni Gayong is infamous throughout Southeast Asia for its devastating techniques.



Datuk Meor Rahman

It was the Mahaguru that taught the British and Malaysian military hand-to-hand fighting tactics and at the age of 19 received the title of "Panglima Sendo Perak" or "The Invincible Knight of Perak" after demonstrating his Silat techniques before the Sultan of Perak.

Another more famous story of Datuk Meor is when he had a short meeting with an up and coming Chinese action star, Bruce Lee. The two met while Bruce Lee was working on one of his earlier movies.

There have been many rumors as to what happened at their meeting, but in reality Bruce Lee was only looking into the various usages of silat and even offered a small role in his film to Datuk who graciously declined the offer.

There are many belt levels in Silat Seni Gayong. Unlike most arts it begins with Black and ends with Black. This represents the continuous cycle of learning found in the art. Each coloured level also holds a specific meaning, a representation of attributes found in the pesilat (one who does silat), attributes like purity, courage, loyalty, warriorship and the like.

Among the belt levels one may also achieve a title rank like Khalifah Muda (Young Caliph) which

denote recognition for special time and effort brought to the art to help its growth.

Only one restriction is held in the belt system, Datuk Meor Abdul Rahman will always be the only person to carry the title of Mahaguru and carry the marking for achieving the highest level in Silat Seni Gayong which is a 7th level. There are now only trustees to the art of Silat Seni Gayong at its highest level who oversee its growth and high standards.

Since the passing of Datuk Meor there have been off-shoots to the original association. Datuk Meor's closest followers who wear the sixth degree black belt, the highest level any student can attain, lead all these offshoots.

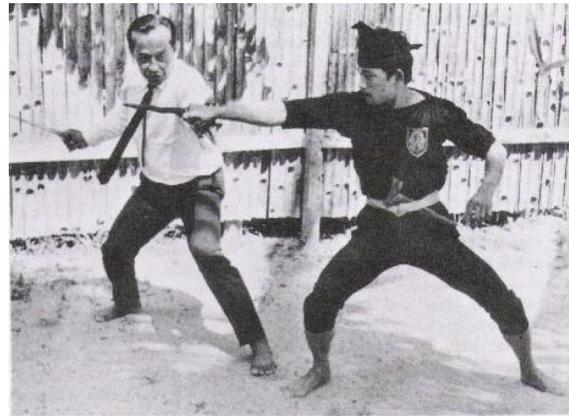
The biggest is Pertubuhan Silat Seni Gayong Malaysia (PSSGM) which is led by the grandmaster's daughter Cikgu Kalsom. The other associations are Pertubuhan Seni Silat Pusaka Gayong Malaysia (PSSPGM) which is led by Cikgu Majid Mat Isa, Silat Seni Gayong Pasak Singapura (SSGPS) by Cikgu Hussain Kaslan, Pertubuhan Silat Seni Gayong Warisan Serantau Malaysia (PSSGWSM) by Cikgu Mat Nayan, and The Silat Association of the UK by Cikgu Yeop Ariffin Yeop Mahidin.

In Silat Seni Gayong the average beginner is taken through a series of basic fundamental trainings to build upon the more complex techniques that make Silat Seni Gayong so famous. First of all is the set of strikes and kicks called Gerakan Anak Harimau (tiger cub movements), forms called Gulungan to teach weight distribution and balance, and Avoidance Tactics called Asas Elakan to learn footwork, entrance and escaping attributes that take the pesilat into the next level.

There is a dance-like form that is learned that distinguishes the Gayong practitioner as a student of Gayong. This form is called the "Tarian Bunga Tanjung" or bay flower dance.



The Boiling Oil Bath ritual.



Datuk Meor Rahman (in slacks and tie) demonstrating keris technique.

philosophy is that from the flower you have the fruit, this leads the pesilat into the inner understanding of the infamous grappling and counter grappling techniques of Silat Seni Gayong.

Once the beginner pesilat has trained in and learned the fundamental movements they then move into the Buah Tapak Kunci Mati/Tangkapan (Fruit Techniques/ Body Dead-Lock Tactics) and Serangan Maut (Super Combat).

The Buah Tapak techniques are grappling techniques that differ from the more popular "grappling" moves seen in America. These techniques use submissive choking, throwing and breaking tactics that are used by the Malaysian military and police units to subdue violent criminals. These Buah techniques can be used to cause pain and/ or paralysis/ death to an adversary.

The other side of the unarmed combat series offered by Silat Gayong is the Serangan or "Combat" techniques. These techniques are more direct and to the point with a combination of striking, throwing, pokes and tears to vital points on the body to end a confrontation quickly.

The Buah grappling techniques and the Serangan/ Combat techniques can also be unified to deliver a constant flow and adaptable barrage of techniques to any given situation.

After the pesilat has started to learn the Buah Tapak/ Tangkapan techniques, they are then introduced to the two partner set of prearranged Combat scenarios based on the Buah techniques.

These are a set of counter for counter scenarios where one practitioner starts the buah and then is countered by the assailant who then counters that movement. These prearranged scenarios help the Gayong student develop a stronger foundation in flowing from one technique



Silat Seni Gayong demonstration.

to another.

That is one of the meanings of "Gayong" in Silat Seni Gayong. Silat is the art, Seni is the fine tuning of the art, and Gayong is the ability to adapt to any given situation.

There is a common saying in the Silat world, "Silat without knife is not Silat." Silat Seni Gayong and Silat Melayu is no different, there are a series of weapons offered in Silat Seni Gayong other than just knife work though.

It would be safe to say that Silat Seni Gayong is almost a predominantly weapon-based art. The most common weapons training offered is Knife (pisau), Short Stick (Simbatsop), Long Stick (Seni Kayu), Keris (Dagger), Machete (Parang Panjang), Cloth/ Chain (Seni Cindai), Spear (Lembing), Lawi Ayam (commonly referred to as "kerambit"), Sword (Sundang Lipas) and Sai (Tekpi).

The same as in unarmed training, weapons training consists of basic fundamental strikes and footwork, followed by forms and specific combative scenarios followed by pentas or mock combat scenarios of counter-for-counter techniques for each weapon and mixing one weapon against another.

The pesilat should feel as comfortable with a weapon as without one and will be able to flow regardless of what is in their hand. Real edged blades and live weaponry is emphasized in

training that brings a heightened level of awareness and respect for what is practiced.

When a student of Silat Seni Gayong first begins training they are initiated by performing a ceremony called Mandi Tapak which officially welcomes them as a student of Silat Seni Gayong.

There is also a ceremony for the beginning of weapons training as well called Mandi Seni, which is a blessing for safety during weapons training. These ceremonies are rooted in the philosophy and culture of Gayong which are called Adat Istiadat (Melayu cultures and traditions), morals, and adab (respect).

There is no bowing in Silat Gayong, just a known respect level and a brief moment of silence at the opening and closing of every class to clear the mind and to give homage and thanks to your particular religious/ spiritual belief.

Although these philosophies are steeped in the traditions and lifestyle of the Muslim Melayu people, religion is one's own personal quest so religion and spiritual practice are left up to the individual students belief's.

Since its introduction in the United States, Silat Seni Gayong under USGF has added to its original curriculum while keeping its rich traditions alive and continues to add more modern training methods to adapt to the times and follow the true meaning of Gayong.

The use of firearm knowledge and defense and boxing methodologies are among some of the more recent additions.

Other than USGF. there is also the Gayong Amerika group in New Jersey being lead by Representative Bill Reid who follows the tenets of the Pertubuhan Seni Silat Pusaka Gayong Malaysia (PSSPGM) of Malaysia.

This article was previously published in Inside Kung Fu magazine. Pix taken from the Pertubuhan Silat Seni Gayong Malaysia Universiti Malaya website at <http://members.tripod.com/~onnjadi/>



Jeff Davidson: Spreading The Sail Silat Kuntau Tekpi in the USA

By MOHD NADZRIN WAHAB

On a Sunday afternoon, a dozen people have gathered together in a small training hall located in a quiet neighborhood just north of Detroit, Michigan. They take off their shoes, and form a circle around a man dressed in a black uniform.

Following a few moments of silence, the man in black leads the class through a full hour of Senaman Tua. After this time, the students are dripping with sweat, and panting to catch their breath, some are struggling with trembling hands to open bottles of water. The man calls the class to order and announces: "Today I'm going to start by teaching you Kembang Layar."

The teacher is Jeff Davidson, and the students are part of his Silat Kuntau Tekpi class in Oak Park, Michigan. This particular group meets twice a month for 4 hours per class. Beginning each session with Senaman Tua, the students then spend 1 hour practicing each new buah learned.

"I like to go slow, and make sure everyone has the proper footwork before I make specific corrections on the upper-body portion of the buah" Davidson explains.

"Once a student has the correct technique, I have him perform it on several different training partners, so that he gets a feel for how to apply the buah against someone taller, shorter, or more muscular. It's great that we have students of so many different body types to work with."

When asked if Silat Kuntau Tekpi is difficult for Americans to learn, Davidson says "It's not difficult for them to learn; it's difficult for them to be on the receiving



Steel-eyed pesilat with their bars of steel...

end of the buahs! Americans tend to resist and tighten when they are being locked, instead of just going with the flow, so if I can get them to relax, it will be a far less painful experience."



Mr. Davidson began his martial arts training at age 10, with Korean and Japanese Karate. He earned a black belt by age 16. Throughout his teen years he studied several different martial arts systems including Jujutsu, Aikido, and Kung-Fu, and developed an interest in Silat. "Guru Jeff's eyes shoot the question: You want some of this? over 500 students in total during his tenure."

While attending university, he was introduced to the martial arts of Southeast Asia, specifically Filipino Kali, and Indonesian Silat. In 1995 he opened a commercial martial arts school in his state, devoted solely to the Southeast Asian martial arts. In 2001, he traveled to Central Java to further his knowledge of Silat.

"What impressed me about the Indonesian Silat masters that I met, was that they placed equal emphasis on 'healing' as they did to 'fighting.'"

"That was also when I began to understand the relationship between Silat and Islam. The power to overcome an attacker or to heal does not come from jins or ajimats, but from Almighty God, and without a strong deen, Silat is meaningless."

In 1999, Jeff Davidson became a representative of the Pekiti-Tirsia Kali system directly under Grandmaster Leo T. Gaje Jr. It was through fellow Pekiti-Tirsia practitioners that he

became aware of the highly acclaimed teacher, Omar Hakim.

"All of the people that I respected most in the Pekiti world had one thing in common: they had been trained at some point in their development by Omar Hakim" Davidson relates.



"Strange that asphyxiation wasn't mentioned in the brochure..."

"I contacted Omar by phone, and we had several long discussions on various aspects of the martial arts. Also since Omar is quite knowledgeable on Sufism, he shared many insights with me on some of the more esoteric aspects of Silat." Mr. Davidson is also a member of the Albanian Bektashi Tariqat.

It was at this time that Omar Hakim was making preparations to hold a training camp in Texas for the purpose of developing several "Instructor Candidates" to spread Silat Kuntau Tekpi in the United States.

Mr. Davidson was invited to be among the first group - which consisted of only 4 students - to learn the first and second levels of the Art, as well as Senaman Tua, pelebat, and basic exercises with single and double tekpi.

At the end of this camp, lasting one full week of grueling 8 hour blocks of training, Jeff Davidson was awarded the title of Cikgu Muda of Silat Kuntau Tekpi, and given permission to teach his own students upon his return to Michigan. He currently has 15 students who are devoted to learning Silat, outside of the Pekiti-Tirsia class that he also teaches.

"Pekiti-Tirsia and Silat Kuntau Tekpi are very different in theory and practice." he observes.



A Senaman Tua session kicks off the class and puts sweat where it belongs: on the floor!

"The obvious difference is that Silat Kuntau Tekpi is guided by the principles of Futuwah, which proscribe various tactics that are acceptable in Pekiti-Tirsia. This is not to say that I consider one system superior to the other in terms of effectiveness, but I find that the two Arts are very complimentary of each other."

One of Davidson's students, Bassam Hammoud summarized his view thus: "Pekiti-Tirsia is a very aggressive system, while Silat Kuntau Tekpi is more 'receptive' without being passive."

Davidson devotes a good deal of time during each class to explaining several important aspects of Melayu culture, which includes expounding on the English translations of the names of the buah. He makes certain that the students know the basic history of Silat Kuntau Tekpi from Panglima Taib to Cikgu Sani.

"I emphasize to my students that we do not OWN this Art. Silat is a gift from Allah, first and foremost. Also, there were many generations of Melayu who practiced and developed this Art long before we came to study it, and long after we are gone the Art will continue to be practiced if God Wills it. So we are only the 'caretakers' of the Art at this time in this place," Davidson continues.



Guru Jeff (in black) with his proud class of Silat Kuntau Tekpi practitioners.

"Moreover, it is through the grace of Cikgu Sani that Cikgu Omar was permitted to pass this Melayu Art to us. It is our obligation as students to understand and respect the rich Melayu culture from which it comes. Only if we accomplish that can we realize the true baraka that is inherent in this great system."

Jeff Davidson concludes by saying "One day Insha Allah, I will go to Malaysia to further my study of Silat Kuntau Tekpi and Tariqat, and to immerse myself in the Melayu way of life."

Guru Jeff Davidson may be contacted through his website at www.maphilindo.com

Submit your articles to us, subject: ARTICLE.

RE:SPONSE

After the initial announcement that I was going to publish a Silat ezine, I got a few supportive responses. When the inaugural issue was sent out, I received even more kind emails. Hopefully, the good word will spread-**Editor**.

A Gayong Reception

Brother Nadzrin,
Assalamualaikum,

You know you have my full support and that of USGF. I would be honored to help you in any way with your ezine (promotion, contribution, etc). Just let me (us) know!

Your American brother,

Joel Champ

United States Gayong Federation

SM- Waalaikumsalam. I definitely welcome all assistance in promoting the ezine. For now, creative contributions are all I need, but soon, I intend to set up a method for readers to contribute to a research fund. The fund will be used to buy books and research materials to further enrich the Silat Melayu library I am currently building. Out of print or rare copies of books and manuscripts are also welcome to be sent.

Tekpi Thanks

Asalaam Aleikum Brother,

I'm glad to hear that you are doing well - Al Hamdulillah! I just want you to know that my students and I support you in all of your endeavors. The ezine is a great idea, and I hope that later you will entertain some suggestions that have come to mind since I read your email, but everything in its time, Insha Allah. Right now, we are praying for you and wishing you the very best of luck in your undertakings. Your friendship has thus far been a blessing to me, and I look forward to resuming our discussions at your convenience. Salaam Persilatan.

Your Brother,

Jeff Davidson

Silat Kuntau Tekpi USA

SM- Waalaikumsalam. Thank you for all your prayers! I can't wait to go through any ideas to improve the ezine with you not to mention the resumption of our long overdue discussions.

Gayong Too

Nadzrin,

Very well written and very good info for people like us here. Looking forward to receive all future issues.

Salam,

Sheikh Shamsuddin

United States Gayong Federation

SM- I surely couldn't have done it without your motivation all these years. Your book has been a potent source of inspiration to me and I hope it won't be the last I'll see you in print.

Ideas Galore

Hey Nadzrin,

Well done mate, this SILAT MELAYU ezine could be the start of something excellent. Informative articles written with a ready wit. I'm glad I'm a subscriber. Keep at it. You might want to: talk about and demonstrate different combat principles of Malaysian Silat, methods of generating power, compare and contrasts with other martial arts-what is alike and what is different, compare and contrast different technical aspects of Malaysian Silat systems themselves i.e. how does Kalimah differ from Kuntau Tekpi etc, the hardest thing for anyone to get their head around when learning about 'a martial art', is that there are many variants of something that shares the same name, some of these differences can be highlighted through discussion and demonstration of differing principles. Example, principles that some systems of Malaysian Silat have in common versus differing principles within different Silat styles etc. Interviews with famous, highly experienced or accomplished Silat Teachers. Book Reviews etc. Vast potential there.

Russell Wilks

Skyclad Films

SM- Wow! Those are all fantastic ideas, which I will definitely look into. Book reviews? Check out this issue's first one! Interviews? Coming soon!

Marketing A Must

Assalamualaikum,

I don't know when but I would love to contribute. I'm thinking of doing 'something about nunchaku' in your style column and contribute something about martial arts and legal aspects. Content wise, very good but how about your marketing strategy? Since this bulletin is more towards reflecting Malaysian arts you should work together with the Tourism Ministry to promote this good stuff. Anyway, well done Nadzrin. I'm proud to have you as one of my good martial arts friends.

Regards,

Zaidi Hassim

International Islamic University Malaysia

Matriculation Centre

SM- Waalaikumsalam. I will await your articles with bated breath! Your suggestions are valid and something I will look into soon. Thanks. (Zaidi Hassim is a law lecturer serving with IIUM in Kuala Lumpur and was formerly the university's Martial Arts Unit Manager)

It's About That Time Again

Assalamualaikum Nadzrin,
First and foremost, I'd like to say "It's about time!!" you produce something like this. This periodical can be sort of an 'ambassador of silat' to the world outside the Malay 'realm'. Throughout the years, I've been reading a lot of articles and writings about silat in English that are quite 'one dimensional'. What I mean by this is that, some of the authors seem to be biased towards a particular system or style. We lack a person like you, Nadzrin, someone who can open-mindedly look at silat and write about it objectively. You the man!! Many good articles about silat were written in Malay giving little chance for people who don't read Malay to understand more about it. Thus, misconception arises about silat; its terms and concepts. Your Myths and Misconception column will be a good place to deal about that. Maybe you could translate and reproduce articles from PENDEKAR and SENI BELADIRI in English. That'll be great. Some silat masters also have communication issues conveying silat to foreigners in English. A lack of good vocabulary and understanding prevents them from conveying the real message and ideas effectively. With your skills, I bet you can easily overcome this barrier. I have some questions. How deep will your writings get in this ezine? How far will you go about silat concepts such as 'lam alif' and 'mata angin'? Will you be writing about that as well in your mag? The Malay society is only beginning to open their minds towards 'outsiders'; there might be some who will not agree with your effort to expose the so called 'secrets'. This is temporary actually, until you can safely point out to them that the so called 'secrets' are also found and exist in other martial arts as basics (using other names and are slightly different of course). 'Shuchu-ryoku' (focused power) in Yoshinkan Aikido for example hold to almost the same principle as 'lam alif' and 'mata angin' (correct me here if I'm wrong) such that power from the whole body is concentrated to one point and direction. Looking forward to your next issue. By the way, how much will it cost me to subscribe to your ezine? Keep up the good work. Take care.

Ahmad Hafidz

SM- That's a lot to digest! In all fairness, before this there were many magazines, forums and ezines dedicated to silat. This is just the latest in a long line of efforts. As for the magazines you mentioned, I will probably refer to them in my articles, but will stop short of reproducing them. I prefer to approach a topic from a fresh angle. Also, no, I won't go into too much detail regarding concepts that I myself have a scant grasp of. But

SILAT MELAYU will not be shy about things, that's for sure. Currently, there is no cost involved in owning and reading the ezine. It's free of charge!

War-warkan Kewujudannya

Assalamu'alaikum wrt. wbt.

Syabas dan Tahniah atas kejayaan saudara menerbitkan e-magazine SILAT MELAYU yang pertama. Semoga ia menjadi perintis dan pendorong kepada saudara untuk menerbitkan satu lagi bahan bacaan persilatan yang bertaraf dunia. Macamana nak subscribe e-m'zine ini? Kalau boleh saya tak mahu ketinggalan dalam mengikuti perkembangannya serta mendapatkan setiap edisinya. Cadangan saya juga war-warkan dalam web CekakHanafi.com, supaya member-member silat dapat manfaat drp e-zine tersebut.

Sekian,

Ikmal Rashmy Ismail

SM- Waalaikumsalam. Terima kasih atas segala sokongan abang Ikmal. Ezine ini diberikan percuma dan dikirim ke petimel abang setiap Jumaat sebelum tarikh keluaran. InsyaAllah, abang takkan ketinggalan satu edisi pun!

Persilatan Melayu di Malaysia

Assalamualaikum,

Terima kasih kerana memberi peluang untuk melanggan ezine saudara. Saya ucapkan tahniah pada usaha yang dijalankan bagi memertabatkan budaya Melayu kita. Saya ingin mengambil peluang untuk berhubung dengan saudara Mohd. Nadzrin sendiri dan kepada mereka yang berminat dalam melibatkan diri bersama dalam penulisan sebuah buku 'Persilatan Melayu di Malaysia' yang masih dalam cadangan. Bidang persilatan bukan kepakaran saya tapi saya rasa terpanggil untuk merakam persilatan Melayu kita yang makin kabur daripada pandangan kebanyakan muda-mudi yang begitu leka dengan keduniaan dan kebendaan yang punyai nilai kerohanian terbatas. Semoga usaha saudara sedikit sebanyak dapat memperkasakan muda-mudi kita yang sedang bergolok dengan pelbagai cabaran kehidupan moden yang mencabar semangat dan keutuhan bangsa Melayu kita. Dalam mendekati jiwa muda-mudi kepada persilatan Melayu, kita perlu pendekatan yang bersesuaian. Mungkin kita boleh usahakan bersama. Sekian Wasalam

Prof Madya Abd.Rahim Awang

Fakulti SeniBina Perancangan & Ukur

Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) Shah Alam

merangkap Penasihat Persatuan Silat Cekak Hanafi UiTM

IN HINDSIGHT

Columns

SILAT MELAYU has some several semi-permanent columns that deal with different issues.

Malaysia Truly Asia describes Malaysia as a country and its eclectic mix of cultures, political landscape, current issues, etc.

Myths & Misconceptions deal with incorrect beliefs held by non-natives of Malaysia towards Silat and Melayu culture.

Mightier Than The Keris examines Silat in the media and presents published sources that are difficult to find outside of Malaysia.

Style Of The Week focuses on a particular Malaysian silat school in brief.

Feature will showcase submitted articles on a particular style or issue.

However, SILAT MELAYU is still a work in progress. Depending on the amount of content available, the ezine will either balloon or shrink from time to time. Therefore, prepare to be surprised for changes in the next few issues!

Re:Sponse

Direct all your letters to the editor to Re:Sponse. This can include suggestions, questions or even rants. For article requests, pose a question regarding Silat or Melayu culture and we will answer it in the form of an article. If the question is beyond our ability to research, it will be open to other readers of the ezine to answer. So, what are you waiting for? Ask away! In the subject line, type RESPONSE.

Article Submissions

We welcome all article submissions in MS Word format. Lengthy articles will be edited into several parts and published over successive issues of the ezine. Articles should preferably revolve around Silat and Melayu culture. Pictures should be in JPG format and formatted at 100dpi. Submit them by email with the subject line ARTICLE.

Silat Links

For those of you interested in having your website links portrayed in every issue of the ezine, please send it to us with the subject line LINKS and a one sentence description of the site. When we have enough sites on the list, we may start up a review column as well.

Foreshortening guide

The following terms sometimes appear in articles:

[IMHO] – Writer's personal opinion or conclusion based on experience and not on any concrete evidence that can be directly quoted.

[ORAL] – Denotes first hand oral transmission with a footnote stating the source, date and whenever possible a near verbatim account of the original utterance.

M3A – Malaysian Melayu Martial Arts. In reference to any style largely developed within the territories of Malaysia by a person or persons of Melayu Muslim descent from or including martial art strains from traditional Nusantara culture. This includes eclectic arts such as Kuntau, Lian and Pukulan.

Alam Berkembang Menjadi Guru

Some of you may have noticed the motto underneath the SILAT MELAYU masthead. When translated, it reads 'The Vast Universe Becomes Your Teacher'. It is a Minangkabau proverb of knowledge that when articulated in its original dialect reads: *Alam Tokombang Monjadi Guru*. Its meaning is deep for those who know and is a guide for those who don't. Since the SILAT MELAYU ezine transcends culture, belief and border and is open to contributions from all, there is no one 'teacher', simply a vast universe of knowledgeable people in the martial arts sharing what they know with each other. The editor thought it was an apt choice.

Corrections

The first issue of SILAT MELAYU suffered from several typos which we have corrected below. We shall endeavour to keep them to a minimum in the coming editions.

Page 2: "Attempts to wrest **port** Melaka..."

Page 7: "...the general had to relocate his family to **Kerian of** the state of Perak."