

The Cimande Knife

Combat - April 2004

It is said that knife attacks outnumber all other weapon attacks combined! Virtually every single martial art that is street combat orientated contains some knife defense techniques. The sad truth, however, is most are worthless! The defenses are usually made up of a few options:

1. Hit the arm out of the way and then attack the opponent or
2. Redirect the arm and then catch it in some fancy lock to remove the knife.

Some arts (like the Filipino styles) look very nice as they flow back and forth but that happens only so long as the opponent knows the drill and is cooperating completely! All knife defenses have a chance of working against a foolish and robotic type attacker, the kind I have never seen in a real situation. Knives are usually used at close-quarters and the opponent slashes back and forth and stabs randomly and erratically.

When I was teaching seminars with my teacher, Pendekar Suryadi Jafri during the 1980's, he'd pick the smallest person at the seminar usually a girl. He'd ask if everyone knew knife defense Everyone would say "Yes!" Then he would give a magic marker to the student he picked out and ask her to try and write her name on the face and body of each person as they performed their knife defenses. I never saw one unmarked person!

So what's the answer!

Let's go back and look at the development of Cimande for a moment. The founder of Cimande Emhah Kahir began with Sera. which operated on the concepts of misdirection and striking. Sera is a monkey-based art that was found to be ineffective against knife attacks. Next, Emhah Kahir invented Pamacan, a tiger style that used nerve strikes, grabs and taking the opponent to the ground. Again, Pamacan was not very effective against multiple and armed attackers. The art of pinpoint precision striking was developed to a very high degree in the final refinements of Cimande and three of its Jurus deal with knife defenses while three others deal with knife attacks. The concept is simple but brilliant!

Keep your limbs close to your body to protect your vital organs. Use the Jurus to deliver a first strike to your opponent's limbs that sets him up for a second third and fourth strike to the hand holding the knife. These strikes are performed in a lightning-fast manner and are called 'kilap' (lighting strikes) in some schools.

No other part of the attacker's anatomy is attacked until the knife is gone from his grasp! Once contact has been made, the opponent's arm is stuck to with the principles of adhesion. until the knife is gone. So if he recoils with your first strike then moves forward, keep the blows raining down on his limbs.

A way to learn how to hit with this degree of speed is through playing the drums! -These can help build accurate and fast short strikes that we also call 'poison hand hitting'. We call it that because to the uninitiated, it seems like we have poison on our hands in order to take out the adversary so quickly with almost nothing seen!

But what if you are using a knife to fight with! Well that's where the other three Jurus come into play. The empty hand is replaced with the same quick fast snap cuts and slashes of the knife.

A snap cut is a wrist-action technique in which the edge of the blade cuts across the bone severing tendons and ligaments on the way.

A person using the Cimande on-guard knife position is less likely to be attacked than someone using another ready position! I can honestly say this is the only defense I feel totally confident with. Nothing is guaranteed to work every time but this is the best insurance policy I know of when faced with a knife wielding assailant!

Silat Fighting Magick

Combat - August 2003

Many of today's martial arts today have grown sterile. Extreme physical conditioning, often resulting in overstretched tendons and ligaments, have replaced inner power and meditation. The body has grown bigger while the mind and inner strength have deteriorated.

The internal aspects known as Kebatinan (mysticism) and Ilmu (sorcery/magic) are intrinsic parts of the Indonesian martial art of Pencak Silat. Students from other arts that do not contain these aspects have mixed emotions when faced with them for the first time.

First, one must realize that our art was designed as a moving ritual intended to gather forces from within and without the practitioner. These include the principles of Father Sky and Mother Earth, and all the elements associated with them - Earth, Wind, Fire, Water and Spirit. The spirit - Raja Naga - symbolizes the embodiment of everything propelling the Tenaga Dalam (Inner Spirit/Power).

Trying to make the art work on purely physical skills alone is akin to using a coffee percolator as a paperweight. It may be partially effective by accident but it certainly is not being used to its designed potential!

After teaching Pukulan Cimande Pusaka Pencak Silat for many years. I can assure you we don't lack outer physical aspects! The art contains 18 Jurus (sequences of upper body movements) performed both left handed and right handed.

Each Juru contains thousands of applications. It also contains Langkas (moving forms), dozens of specialized moves, and footwork patterns such as, Web patterns, War wheels. Pukulan Wall and Wedges. with Tiger, Snake, Monkey and Crane animal styles. So the physical dimension has great depth! Indeed many students from other styles have been completely overwhelmed at all these aspects!

With all that going for it, why study Kebatinan and Ilmu?

We follow a line of development from purely physical skills, beginning with the first level - joint destruction. This is the most physical and the easiest to develop. It causes energy damage to the opponent because his bones store Tenaga Dalam (Inner Power). However, delivering the strike requires no inner power by the practitioner (though all strikes can be intensified with it, of course!).

The second stage is muscle and nerve damage. This requires more physical skill in terms of accuracy. Again, inner power would intensify the results but it is not necessary to cause damage.

Third stage involves nerve damage. This requires precision and is very effective! Inner energy could greatly increase this kind of damage.

The fourth stage involves energy damage and it is here that we cross the line. because no physical power can cause this kind of damage. Application is transferred directly to the practitioner through the acupuncture points. This can be accomplished at a distance from the opponent with sufficient training.

The student's Tenaga Dalam has been developing all the way through these steps if s/he has been taught the art correctly.

The correct understanding, of the Kebatinan and Ilmu make the development take place. The last step will never occur without this so the potential of the other areas will be weakened.

The moving fighting ritual of Pencak Silat leads to altered states of consciousness which produce the desired combat attitude in the fighter. Attitude has been called a warrior's primary weapon because it allows functioning of the physical body without it being held back by doubt, fear and apprehension. These negative feelings can actually halt physical skills. Altered states allow isolation of physical attributes, which in turn sharpen specific skills.

Altered states in effect open a pathway, linking into the animal spirit fighting skills contained within that most ancient portion of the human brain, often referred to as the 'Reptilian Brain'. This area is most closely associated with survival and real fighting skills - not tournaments or other such games.

An opponent facing someone who has turned off his conscious mind is facing someone without fear; someone who is intimidated by neither size nor talk. This is someone who will fight with what we term 'controlled recklessness'.

This is what Pencak Silat is all about! So embrace the Kebatinan and Ilmu of Pencak Silat, and you will win in the end!

The Tiger of West Java

Combat - February 2004

The mannerisms of the tiger are emulated in many forms of martial arts. The Indonesian martial arts which are usually associated with the tigers are Sumatran based systems such as Harimau.

One of the most common stories about the origins of Pencak Silat (the generic name associated with all Indonesian martial arts) concerns a woman, who by watching the actions of a tiger was able to defend herself from the husband's beatings!

Embah Kahir is the founder of the West Javanese art of Cimande and his style went through a process of trial and error before culminating in Cimande. First he studied the monkey's ability to dodge, deflect and unbalance its opponent. He developed a system called "Sera" from this study.

Once developed and battle tested, he then introduced his characterization of the tiger. So instead of a deflecting blow followed by a strike, the opponent's arm was now simultaneously grasped and struck. The attacking hands take on a claw type form because more nerve centers can be struck at once when a claw hand strike is delivered! Then body weight can be used to drag the opponent to the ground where claw-hand strikes, low kicks, rolling elbows and knees finish him off.

The beginning stance is normally a low crouch with both hands in claw position and slightly extended towards the opponent. From this the practitioner can quickly drop into seated or full supine position (even on the flat of the back!) as a decoy to lure the unwitting opponent into thinking the Pamacan exponent is defenseless.

In the original Embah Kahir tradition, Pamacan in Cimande contains five Jurus (sets of moves) that take the practitioner through strikes, low positions and leaps. Leaps are often used once the opponent has fallen, the Pamacan exponent dropping on then with elbow and knees leading the attack.

The great thing about Pamacan and Sera for the Cimande exponent is the complementary flavor of the moves. The principles and attitudes of the fighter remain intact. The result of this is to give the impression of one system utilizing many techniques. Compare this with a person who attempts to glue together different systems that simply don't match up in terms of intent or type/style of actions. One is a cohesive fighting system; the other merely a cobbling together of techniques.

Embah Kahir used the same framework to build his evolutionary progression of fighting ideals. However, some practitioners took only a portion to practice, and eventually changed it. That is why today it is possible to see Sera that looks nothing like its original version. One person I know believes that he must be doing a different art because what he does looks nothing like the original Sera! Another teacher has removed this and added that, so though his art bears the name "Sera", it isn't any more!

That's why it's so important to find a Cimande teacher, who knows the roots of this great art and can teach Sera and Pamcan in a way that does not alter the final Cimande. This is important because it was the combining of these two concepts that allowed Embah Kahir to develop Cimande. which is considered by West Javanese Pendekars as the most superior in terms of fighting.

The Pamacan is a fantastic way to develop the tiger aspects found in all Cimande exponents!

Indonesian Sword - The Blade Within

Combat - March 2004

Today's popularity of films like *The Last Samurai* and *Kill Bill* have caused many people to look at one of mankind's oldest weapons. While the two films mentioned focus on the Japanese tradition, we should not forget that other cultures also have a very long tradition with the sword.

The long sword is referred to as the *Pedang* in the Indonesian arts. The *pedang* is usually a one-handed sword. Heavy body armour was not worn because of the heat of the Indonesian sun, so the sword had to be fast and useful in close jungle fighting.

We have an extensive sword curriculum in *Pukulan Cimande Pusaka*. *Jurus* (movements alone and with a partner) are taught in two formats. The first mostly medium to close movements. The second (*pedang sulwa*) use longer range

techniques that combine multiple empty hand strikes and sword cuts.

So what does this Indonesian art offer you?

Using the *pedang* is part of a spiritual quest and it forms a vital part of this art. As above, so below; as without so within. Everything that exists is within you and it is only through finding an essence within your being. and then expressing it mentally in a physical form that you can master anything. Sometimes that which is without can be used as a key, to find that which is within. To achieve this means forming a union between spirit and form through the '*gerak pedang baden*' (sword body movement) and '*tactic pedang badans*' (sword/body tactics). These exercises are moving mediations that I refer to as '*Washing the body with the blade*'.

You are taught how to place the thick back of the blade against your body and begin by slowly and rhythmically moving your body while keeping the back edge welded to your body. Move it over and back until the blade is gliding over every surface, losing the thought that it is separate from your own body.

At first you feel the cold steel against your body. but it soon disappears from your conscious thought. During such times you may notice emanations rising from your blade. like heat waves, or perhaps a soft glow. So the body turns and twists and spins, as though the body itself has become the blade! That is why I call this. '*The blade within the body*'.

This is the thread I speak about in my books. It is the ideal one aspires to, but it is elusive - like a wild bird that sits on your hand of its own will but can fly off in an instant. The more you persist, the more likely it is to return as conditions suit it.

Of course this all requires careful instruction by a qualified teacher, if only so that you don't cut yourself in the process. This is possible even with experienced practitioners, especially when they use a sword not designed for this type of training.

This then is a type of mediation in which one's will is fused with an object outside of the body, so both function together as a unit. This fusion is very important in actual combat with one or more opponents.

Proper breathing is essential. You learn to breathe through the entire body (the '*badan rogan napas*'). You and your sword move as one as your awareness of holding a sword in your hands fades. The blade

seemingly appears here and there - all over the body - until the blade within the body merges with its physical counterpart to give rise to a 'jimat sakti' (supernatural shield). Now the blade flows over and on the surface of the skin like a drop of water that follows every contour. As the thought goes, so the blade moves.

I hope these words go some way towards explaining the depth of physical and spiritual developments associated with using the pedang in Pukulan Cimande Pusaka.

The Lost Art of the Original Sera

Combat - October 2003

As time goes on it is difficult to distinguish in many cases, if the original intent of any Martial Art remains intact. Eventually as other's mix in their own ideals and meanings or add other systems it becomes difficult to tell the flowers from the weeds. The Art that I teach is Pukulan Cimande Pusaka. Cimande is a West Javanese Art developed by one Embah Kahir in the late 1770's. I have studied a variety of the Cimande expressions to understand as much as possible of the original intent. As Cimande spreads it branched out in a variety of expressions due to geographic and cast diversity, what is not commonly known is that Embah Kahir developed three fighting arts culminating in his finale and most perfect Cimande. Embah Kahir's first Art, Sera is a fantastic key of some of Cimande techniques and where taught in the old manner, teaches one how to build inner power (called Tenaga Dallam in Indonesia).

What then is Sera? Now before we go any further, I must advise what I'm writing of only applies to Embah Kahir original Version. This is easy to verify as it is the art known by the Pendekar of Cimande Villages. While Cimande did have variations they all remain similar. While other systems that I have seen, that use the name Sera or a similar name with a added letter appear to have morphed into an entirely different expression. Indeed one of the teachers in an article a few years ago mentioned that it was composed of a few Chinese Arts, as well as European Boxing with I guess the original. No other Sera is known in than the one I'm referring to, by any of the experts I could find in Tarik Kolot Cimande Village West Java. Embah Kahir is also the sole recognized originator period! That been said to avoid confusion, the original Sera was based mainly on the fighting attitudes of the Monkey.

Monkeys however are great imitators, so in the Sera's Jurus (Jurus are movements of the Art, like a form) you will see positions of other animals mannerisms, such as the Crane and Tiger. Old Sera contains five such Jurus or sets of movement. However each Juru contains eight postures with a multitude of applications. So since each Juru consists of eight segments, there are a total of forty postures. A very important directive of Embah Kahir was to always begin each practice session with Bunga (a term that means flower and shows the beauty and spirit of the art). This then is free form practice of all of the moves. that the student knows up until that point. If the student knows all five Jurus. then forty postures will be performed in a fluid and beautiful but clearly deadly manner. This is also believed to invite the ancestors to be present for the practice. Visually, the stances are low and crouched, which then at times raises up in one legged crane postures at all times remaining fluid and beautiful, with a variety of elbows. grabbing breaks. heel palm. hammer fists and sweeps all performed. Off - Timing movements famous in Cimande are used. being slow and coiled, to full speed in a flash and back to slow. The only weapon that is associated with this art is Dirt. The practitioner from the normal low and crouched position scoop up the dirt while moving slowly and then flings it in the eye of the opponent. Sometimes the dirt is carried in preparation. Its flow, evasiveness and intrinsic energy development capabilities formed many of the Cimande's most pride attributes. Under no circumstances is the old Sera stiff or upright in stance. If you see any of these things it is a derivation from the real thing. I teach Sera as it is an Embah Kahir Heritage Art, and I am authorized to teach this as well as Embah Kahir second Art Pamacan and of course Cimande and have been awarded the title of Pendekar (Grand Master in physical and spiritual aspects) once from P.P.P.S.B.B.I. (The organization of Old Pendekars) in Banten West Java in Cimande and again in all three Arts Directly by the Elders of Cimande Village TariK Kolot and one of

the highest regarded Pendekars there, Pendekar Mama Sukarma. In the next installment we will look at Pamacan, Kahir's second Art and the Tiger of Cimande.

My Body is My Weapon

Combat - September 2003

It didn't mean much to me when I first heard the words, 'My body is my weapon'. After all, you could apply that claim to whichever martial art you might be learning. It wasn't until years later that I clearly understood the difference between what one could say about various arts. and what what we do.

You see the human body is composed of a variety of organs covered by the skin, and these represent a universe of 'soft' and 'hard' areas. Some areas teem with energy drainage spots or are crowded with nerves and muscles, others are vulnerable joints. Yet others look outwardly similar but are armour plated weapons!

The real secret of using your body like a weapon lies in lining up your amour plated parts against the opponents soft more vulnerable areas. When this is accomplished the opponent is hurt no matter what they do!

When this happens a 115 pound woman can drop a 250 pound man and no one can figure it out: This is our goal and we attain it through a unique delivery system. The body learns to move in an undulating unfathomable manner brought to life by the 'Bunga'. which unites spirit with movement. This means the Cimande artist actually becomes so physically and mentally attuned to the opponent that it is not even necessary to look at them! Pukulan Cimande Pusaka is based can eleven physical principles which build and train the body. These are:

1. Principle of Penetration
2. Principle of Continuous Blow with Camouflage
3. Principle of Adhesion
4. Principle of Bamboo - Whip and Ricochet Hitting
5. Principle of Off-Timing - Mental, Visual and Auditory
6. Principle of Compacting - Thunderbolt strikes and Poison Hand blows
7. Principle of the Thorn
8. Principle of Decoying (Includes Indirect Hitting)
9. Principle of Destruction:
10. Principle of Body Armour
11. Principle of Hit Trapping

Penetration has more than one dimension. It includes the ability to close range and penetrate the opponent's defenses while negating their counters. Once in range, penetration involves various ways of intercepting incoming blows with blows of your own, and going through the aforementioned energy points muscles nerves and joints.

One of the major differences between our art ,and many others is that we do not block anything! Everything that comes into our range is struck! Punches can be struck aggressively by flanking and perhaps with a powerful forearm smash. Alternatively we may be more passive and guide the incoming blow into a more powerful destructive force – like the tip of the elbow. Kicks can be hit straight on with another kick, stopping them before they even start. Or we hit them at an angle. using penetrating toe points or heel kicks.

Head butts, points on the shoulder, and hip are other weapons to use when the opportunity arises. In many ways it's like the old paper, rock, scissors game.

Remember always to line up your superior body parts with the incoming weaker ones. Flank (if this is not possible) and quickly counter with the correct weapon.