



by Guru Scott McQuaid

Many Silat systems from across South East Asia have adopted the *Topang weapon* into their arsenal. This blunt design of weapon was designed mostly for blocking against blades; it generally consists of a pair of sticks with a perpendicular handle attached a third of the way down the length of the stick, measuring around 15-20 inches long. The wood differs from bamboo to red or white oak.

The exact origins of this weapon is unknown, but scholars have refined the emergence of the weapon down to Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and China. Most of Asia ascribe the topang's origin design to a crutch. Both the Chinese and Malay words for the weapon *guai* and *topang* literally mean crutch. In Indonesia the topang sticks are sometimes referred to as 'T' sticks due to their obvious letter 't' appearance. The sticks can differ in length according to the particular style of Silat. The silat practitioner grips the handles of the topang while the shafts of the sticks rest along the bottom of the forearm. This provides protection when blocking opponent's weapons. From this position the topang is swung into strikes using the side of the shaft of the sticks, swung out from the side or inwards as flanking strike or as a direct thrust attack. In the Javanese system of Harimau Berantai Silat the topang is called

Pancawangan Sakti

(bladed tonfa). This version is made from bamboo with a detachable handle which reveals a 5 inch knife blade hidden inside the bamboo shaft. The Berantai style of silat is heavily focused on blade fighting, so this was the reason for the modification.

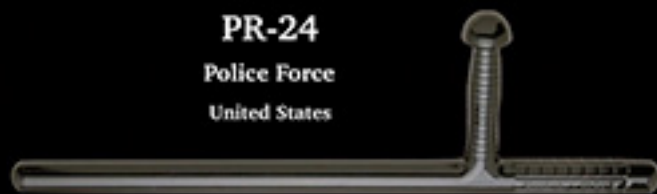




PR-24 POLICE NIGHT STICK



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