



by Guru Scott McQuaid

Prologue

During my study in combat, I have come across many irregular weapons that do not immediately take the spotlight in their respected martial art systems. I have been fortunate enough to train in some of these concept weapons, so I decided to share a brief introduction to them.

Minasbad Sword

The *Minasbad sword* is one of the rare few Filipino blades still around that dates back to Philippine pre-history, that is before the arrival of the Spanish.

This blade came from Bicol region situated in the southern part of Luzon. The Bicolanos tribe wanted to manufacture a sword with a slight technological advantage against its counter parts, the Moro swords from the Mindanao, Sulu and Palawan areas of the country.

The effectiveness of the Minasbad sword is evident in the documented Philippine history books, whereby the Bicol warriors had a long history of winning numerous battles.

The sword's overall length is an average of 27.75 inches, the blade is 20.75 inches, the handle is made of Kamagong, that is an iron wood from the country.

The tang on this blade goes from its tip all the way through to the handle. The carving on the handle depicts what looks like a head. Some people say it represents the head of a bat or a dog or even a horse; perhaps it's a combination of all three.

During the Spanish occupation of the Philippines, the Spanish noted the Bicolanos tribes possessed not only the best, but the most complete armor and weapons within the Philippines. This factor could be due to centuries of threat from the Moro tribes which made the progression of the development within the Bicolano weapons.



Jutte

The *Jutte* means 'ten hands' and this name could imply that one must have the strength of ten men, but another theory is that the name may come from the kata position of raised fists.

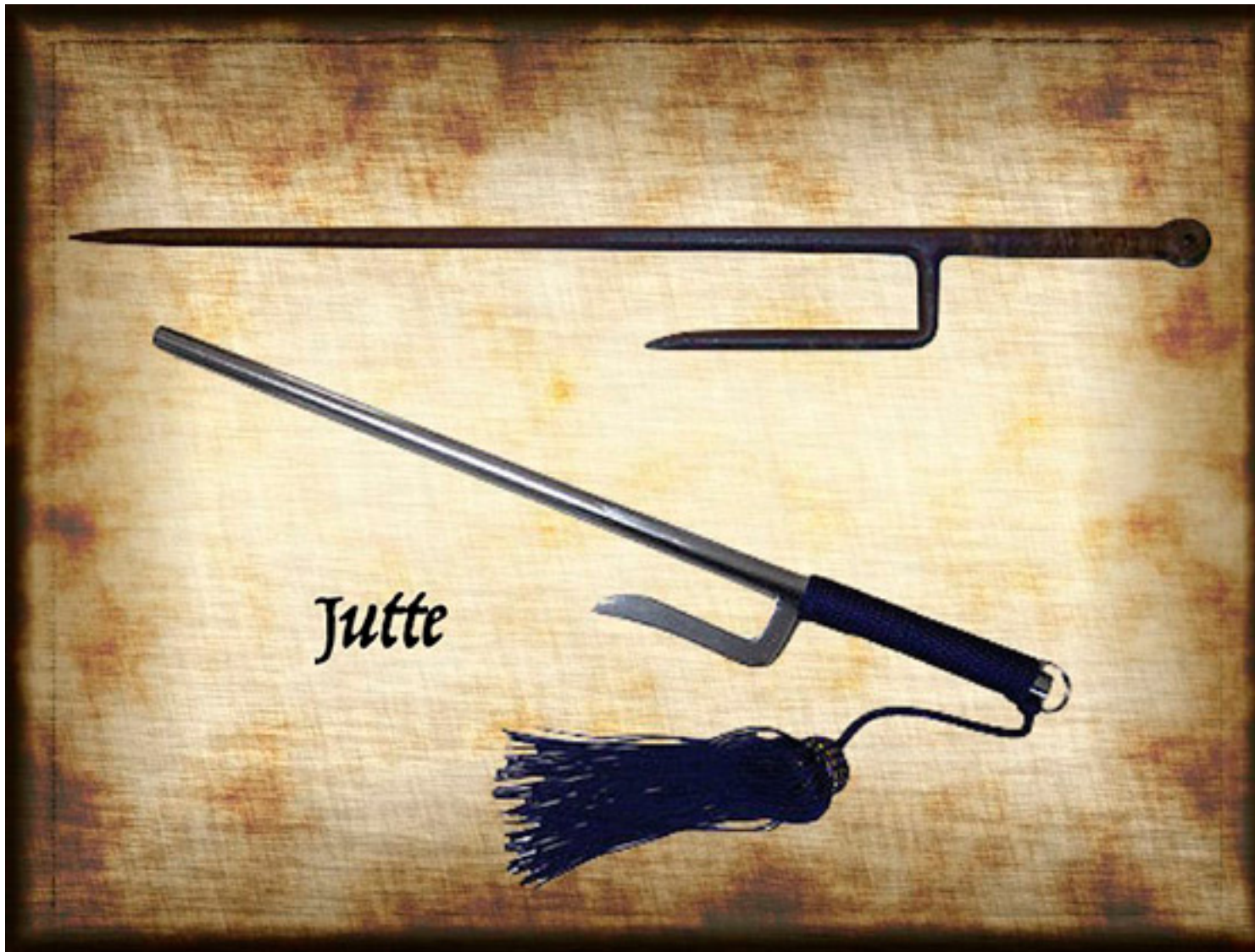
In feudal Japan, the law notes that it was a crime to bring a sword into the Shogun's palace; this included the palace guards. Hence the jutte became a popular alternative choice of weapon on the palace grounds for protection of the Shogun. Eventually, the jutte became the symbol of a palace guard's exalted position.

During the Edo period of Japan, the jutte became a substitute for a badge. It was carried by all police officers, including high-ranking samurai police officials.

Some of the more prominent Japanese martial arts that utilize this are weapon are Karate, Ninjutsu and Bujutsu Ryu. The opening jutte forms begin with the left hand covering the right fist which may suggest roots or at least influence from kung fu.

The primary function of the jutte is to block defenses from blades, its counter attack hits opponents with the hard metal shaft. Its protruding prong is used to trap oncoming swords by twisting the jutte.

It is believed the designer of the jutte was a Japanese sword-maker named Masamune, however the exact origins of its creation and date are unknown. Even the very existence of Masamune himself is questioned. Another folktale claims that the jutte was designed by his father, Munshinai. Most scholars believe that the jutte emerged sometime in the late 13th and early 14th century.



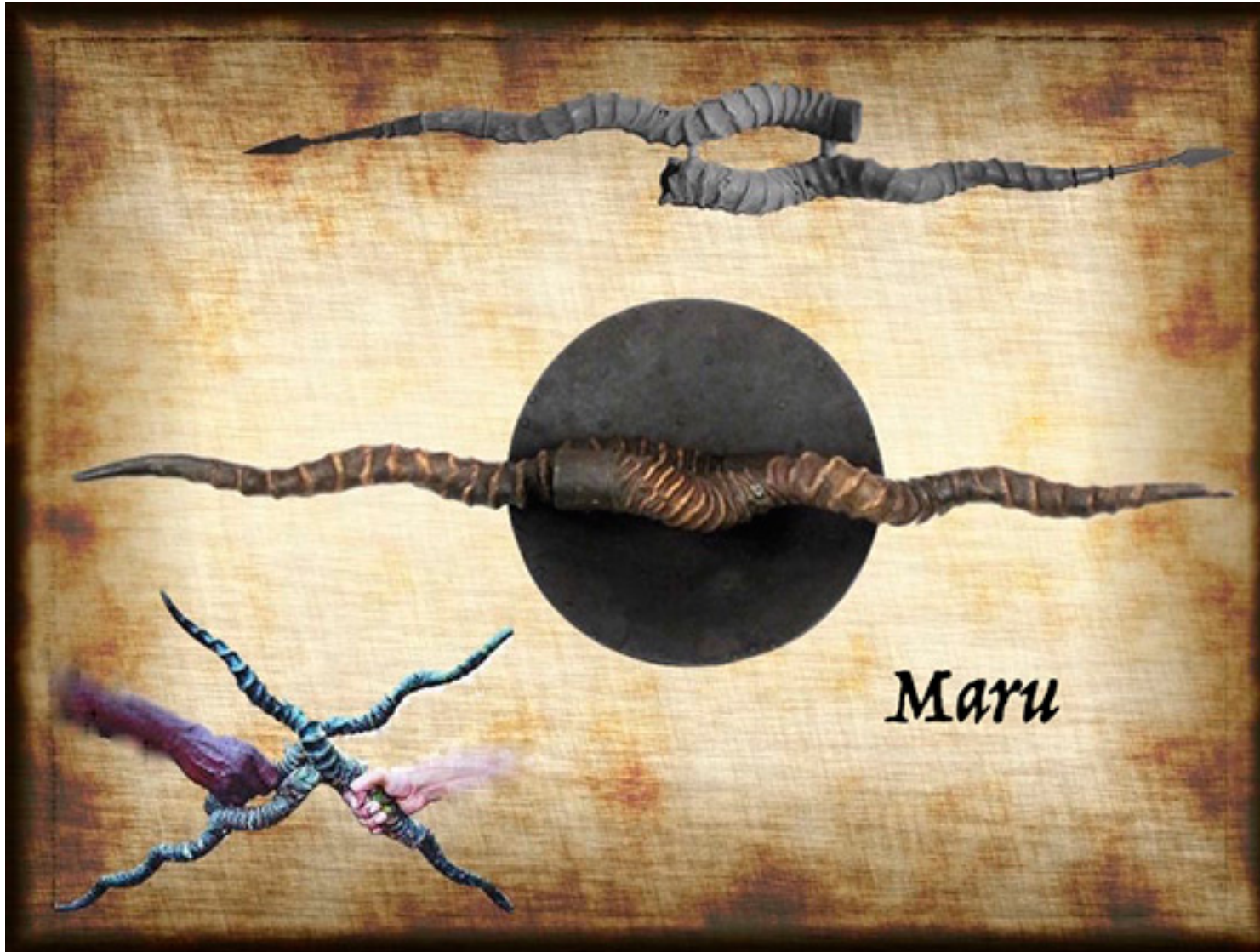
Maru

The *Maru* is a weapon used in the Indian weapon based martial art known as 'Silambam'. This art comes from Tamil Nadu, but it is also traditionally practiced by the Tamil community in Sri Lanka and Malaysia, where it has become a national sporting event.

Maru is also referred to as maan kombu after the deer horns from which it is made. This dagger weapon consists of two blackbuck horns pointing in opposite directions connected by two crossbars which also act as a handle. There are variations of the original design whereby the horn tips were fitted with steel points. A plate of leather was added to act as a shield.

The maru originated among the Dravidians of south India and it was favored by the Bhil people. It is primarily a defensive weapon and the handlers use low stances, reducing any openings

when facing their opponent. Usually the maru-wielder will block or parry any attack before countering with a thrust, lock, choke or disarm. Offensively the maru is used in the same way as a dagger, in stabbing.



Patiah Minang

Most of the weapons used within the Minangkabau Silek (Silat) fighting systems were farming tools. The Minang mountain tribes simply didn't have the facilities to forge great weapons for combat. So they used their surrounding resources, wood, bamboo, stone and vines. One of the more rarer weaponized farming tools used in Silek is the *Patiah Minang* (Minang Axe).

This hand held axe was 19 inches long, using wood as the 16 inch hilt with about a 5 inch metal blade. The hilt's slight bend towards the blade allows the weapon to generate a deeper impact upon entry to its target. This slight bend in the design aids the handler to drag their adversary down in the initial attack.

The advantages to this weapon is its point of balance. On an axe the point of balance is towards its end, which means it gains a lot of impact force in its striking. However it's also notable that to use this axe would be much more strenuous, compared to a knife or sword.

This weapon's technique relies on its momentum. It is continuously swung in diagonal lines of attack, building speed, while mixing horizontal and vertical strikes.

The weight of any axe, big or small pulls at the body as you swing it which exposes your side, particularly your ribs, leaving you open to a counter strike from a spear or sword. However, the design of Silek Harimau uses the flanking footwork to counter the opponent, which leaves the pesilats less vulnerable as they are shifting their body mass out of the line of attack.



Shillelagh stick

Ireland's *Shillelagh* stick known by many names, including bata in Gaelic, which means fighting stick, gets its original cane name from the Shillelagh Forest in County Wicklow. The forest was once famous for its fine oak trees that are sadly all but gone due to logging exports. Some of the most famous buildings in Western Europe were built with Irish imported oak.

The knob on the end of the Shillelagh blackthorn stick was actually the tree root. This is the vital point of the stick as it's used for clubbing. The bark is left on, for added toughness. If the Irish-man's fighting Shillelagh had received damage or stress to it, they would bury the stick in a manure pile, or smear it with butter and place in the chimney to cure.

Shillelagh fights were not always a result of gangs. They were also actually held as sporting events, although even these were quite brutal in practice. One such tradition at a fair was for a man to drag his coat upon the ground behind him and throw down the challenge to the crowd, "Who'll tread on the tail of my coat?".

The stick is held towards the lower middle. The strikes would snap out using the dexterity of the wrist rather than over extended telegraphed swings. Only in close quarter distance would short angled swings be used in hitting the opponent. In its pure form, Shillelagh is a simple art in terms of technique, but this still requires years of practice to master.



Kubotan

The *Kubotan* is a self-defense keychain weapon developed by Sōke Takayuki Kubota in the late 1960s. Sōke Kubota is a Japanese American who founded the Gosoku-ryu style of karate.

The kubotan was originally based on a small bamboo weapon known as the "hashi stick", an invention by Kubota's father Denjiro. The kubotan is usually 5.5 inches long and about half an inch in diameter. The material is generally hard plastic, lined with six round grooves with a screw swivel ring attachment for keys.

The keychain weapon is pocket size and at first glance could be mistaken as a marker pen in your hand. Its general appearance carries no threat, however once engaged in combat this keychain soon becomes a painful factor. The initial targets are bone like knuckles, forearms, and the bridge of the nose. Its inside targets are the fleshy sensitive areas such as solar plexus, ribs, temple, groin, neck and eyes. The kubotan is generally held in either a forward hammer grip position, used in stabbing pressure points or held in the ice-pick grasp for over hand downward strikes.

Over the years there has been copycat imitations of the kubotan design, whereby some of the keychains will incorporate spikes on its end or hidden blades, darts and tear gas in its casing. This self defense weapon has proved popular in all corners of the earth and can be easily found

in most western martial art outlets and across Asia's night markets.

The kubaton is perhaps one of the easier self defense weapons to use and it shows instant results in its applications. However, instructors of the kubaton are not as easy to find.



Published in Irish Fighter Magazine 2016