



**By Pendekar Scott McQuaid**

*A good walker never leaves tracks.*

The Sumatran tiger stalks amongst the deep undergrowth of the Sumatran jungle in Indonesia rarely seen its status is legendary, feared yet worshipped.

A Sumatran tiger measures between eight and ten feet in length and weighs around 264 pounds this predator can pull down an animal four times its size.

Most Indonesian tribes have embraced the tiger using it as a figurehead for religion and example whilst others have utilized the mechanics and ethics of this magnificent predator to protect themselves.

The Menangkabau tribe from West Sumatra have adopted the soul essence of the tiger developing a fighting method that dates back to 1610 the style is harimau (tiger) Pentjak Silat.

Like the tiger the Menangkabau warrior is feared and therefore respected, once the persilat (silat player) engages into battle they have accepted their chance of death, leaving little to fear, total commitment in their annihilation of their opponent is the action and state of mind.

Whether the art is practised in the dense jungles of Indonesia or in the urban concrete jungle of London, the animal instincts of the tiger excised within the practitioner.

The silat warriors have learned to use their strength, weight and power through the dynamics of the tiger. The movements of this big cat they mimic combine the sudden attack that starts high and then swiftly moves to the ground with the ability to jump into the air from almost any angle landing onto the prey, pinning them to the floor before the final kill.



*Pendekar Scott McQuaid - Baring Harimau, or the Lying Tiger*

Most martial art systems attack in a linear fashion as does the general brawler on the street but the silat practitioner rarely uses the headlong approach.

A tiger generally attacks its prey from the flanks, an essential trait in the harimau silat style moving off the centre line around their opponent keeping out of the line of fire as they move into position to unleash the attack.

Once the battle has commenced the silat player will generally end up behind their helpless opponent, as the tiger sits behind its kill sinking its teeth into the neck, they look across the land for any threats to their meal. In turn the silat warrior stays close to his rendered adversary, glancing around the area that was previously behind him, being aware of any of the victims companions that may challenge him, these are the hidden stripes of the silat practitioner. Unlike martial art systems that concentrate on arm locks, throws, and punches to the body and face the harimau silat style favours its attacks to the eyes taking the vision, to the legs bringing them to the ground limiting their retaliation, to the head twisting them for disorientation and to the groin... there's no fair play in war.

Timing is very important to both the tiger and the silat warrior they wait patiently thinking neither of past, present or future, they are simply in the moment, the difference between a long and short life is a moment in time.

When the prey or opponent is in position, the attackers expand into motion using their speed and accuracy to destroy the victim, however the prey maybe armed, be it the antlers of a deer or the knife held by man, the tiger and silat player are light on their feet able to make and close distance with the silence that comes with death.

For as long as man walks the earth he will always fight and whilst the tiger lives they will always hunt, it is the nature of the beasts within. The inner tiger exists within all humans, we are born with the ability to make a fist, to generate power with a kick, these are the very tools that man has protected himself through the ages. Pentjak Silat constantly evolves changing the shape but not the form.

Magnify the small, increase the few.

*There are currently under four hundred Sumatran tigers believed to exist. If you don't want to see this magnificent animal disappear from existence then you can help by using the 'Donate' button on our website or by sending a donation directly to Sumatran Tiger Trust, South Lake*

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