



By Pesilat Richard Cabelka

I am a student and *pesilat* of Harimau Silat in the Black Triangle Silat tribe under Guru Scott McQuaid. In this interview, I am going to ask questions that hopefully will be of interest to those closely familiar with Pencak Silat as well as those just finding out about this unique combat system for the first time. I am hoping that Guru McQuaid with his years of dedication and study of Harimau Silat as well as other systems will be able to shed some light on several controversial issues and debate topics that are prevalent in various online forums and discussions on martial arts in general.

For reference, Guru Scott McQuaid has been a student of combat for twenty-nine years. He has been practicing in the art of Silek Harimau (Harimau Silat) for over two decades. He has traveled all over South East Asia tracing his art's history and deciphering the physical tiger system and its extended weapon styles. He is fast becoming a world authority on the Silek Harimau Minangkabau fighting style and I am proud to call him my teacher, and dare I say, friend.

Selamat Guru, for beginners in Silat and other martial artists, can you explain what is Black Triangle Silat?

McQ: Yeah, Black Triangle Silat is the name of the *aliran*, my tribe, and it does state this on the website introduction page. However, there is still some confusion as people think it's a silat style--but its not. It's the tribe's name or association or whatever umbrella you wanna put it under. Because I have moved around a lot, all my students from England, Hong Kong, America and Malaysia come under this banner.

And can you tell those unaware of the origins why you chose black triangle?

McQ: Well, the triangle part naturally relates to the design and blue print of Pencak Silat fighting in general, using the triangle shape for your *langkah* (footwork) and so on. The black triangle part comes from back in the day when Indonesia was under Dutch rule. Silat was outlawed, it was regarded as rebellious and could cause an uprising, so the Dutch banned the practice of it. But *pesilats* (silat players) would still meet up at night to practice, so they would paint a black triangle on the wall of a building where they would be training that night.

Switching gears, is Silat a good choice for someone who is new to martial arts and who just wants to learn to protect themselves, bearing in mind Silat's roots as a war art?

McQ: It depends on what Silat system you're talking about. In the case of Minangkabau Silek Harimau I don't see anybody doing it casual, like a hobby, it just demands too much on your body and mental state. It's kinda all or nothing.

What do you think about the remark of some "reality-based" instructors that Silat is an overkill art, too brutal and excessive for civilian self-defense?





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